

Augustinian

Augustus Lutheran Church

An Historic Church for Today's People

OCTOBER 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I rejoice that in September we were finally able to welcome our First Communion Class to the Sacrament of the Altar and confirm our Second Year Confirmation Class. We continue to live in strange times, but we are adapting to an ever-changing situation with faithfulness and good cheer. Our later Sunday Service is now available both as a live-stream and as a recorded video. Our Bishop continues publically to praise our example of careful adaptation to the whole synod.

I continue to thank God for the faithfulness, patience, and generosity of our members and friends. I am awe-struck by your example of dedication and commitment. Well done!

We are beginning to plan the Christmas Eve Services. It appears that social distancing will still be required of us, so even Christmas Eve worship will be affected by Covid-19. Further details about Christmas Eve worship at Augustus will be in the November *Augustinian* or in a separate mailing.

We are never alone during this stressful time. Jesus walks alongside us every step of the way.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Weleck

First Holy Communion

May God bless these young people who received their First Holy Communion on Sunday, September 20, 2020.



Lauren Fishell
Lila Olsen
Olivia Smith

David Judisch
Madeline Reiser
Abigail Stalker

Nate Long
Bret Schutz



The Rite of Confirmation

Congratulations to these young people as they are welcomed as full members of our Augustus Family on Sunday, September 27, 2020. May God bless them as they take this important step in their faith journeys.

Piper Bouchard
Casey Demark
Kevin Dubeck
Lillie Hunsberger

Aaron Crothers
Ethan DePaul
Dylan Funk
Cole Leigl

Griffin Crothers
Samuel Dogonniuck
Leo Hunsberger
Thomas Lyaro

Coordinator of Faith Development

If you've visited Augustus recently, you'll notice lots of artwork on our parking lot done by our Sunday school students. We had a great Rally Day on September 13th and our Sunday school families enjoyed some socially distanced time outdoors connecting with one another. It was wonderful to see everyone! Twenty-five students signed up for our take-home/online Sunday school which will continue until the PV school district begins in-person instruction.

Our next Sunday school in-person gathering will be the Blessing of the Animals on October 4th in the parking lot at 11:45 a.m. We'll bring our pets, stuffed animals or pictures of beloved pets who are waiting for us in heaven for Pastor to bless and give thanks for. We'll also get to meet Pastor's new dog, Ernie.

At this writing I'm looking forward to the delayed First Communion for last year's class on September 20th and to Confirmation on September 27th. Please pray for all our Augustus' wonderful young members during this difficult time and always.

Grace & peace,

Sonya Sowards

Coordinator of Faith Development



Our Gigantic Family Tree



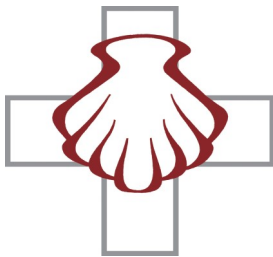
Many people try to learn about their family's history by going back through many generations to discover who their ancestors are. People do this because they're curious about their family tree and they're looking for their roots. That's what All Saints' Sunday—the first Sunday after November 1—is all about. All Saints' Sunday is like a family tree for the whole Christian family. We are reminded of all the saints who have lived and died, and those who are living now. It's not a sad time; it's a time that gives us great strength.

Life isn't always happy. It's not fun to be sick or to feel lonely. Can you imagine living somewhere where there are no other people? Some things make us feel lonely and sad even when there are many people around us. When someone we love dies, it can be very hard to understand why this has happened. But that's one of the reasons we celebrate All Saints' Day. It reminds us that we are never really alone. We know that the people whom we love who have died are resting in God's arms. It reminds us that billions of people have sung, danced, cried, laughed, eaten, and drank in God's house throughout the centuries, just like we do now.

Think of all the people alive now who love you and whom you love. If someone really special has died, look at pictures of that person and share stories of him or her.

From Family Newsletters on Disk, copyright 1995 Augsburg Fortress.

Holy Baptism



Holy Baptism was administered to Lydia Mae Herr, daughter of James and Ashley Herr. May God bless this little one and her family as she begins her journey of faith.

From the Bench

OCTOBER 2020

Fall is my favorite season. Many people think of new life in spring, but for me, the cool air of fall means easier breathing, better sleeping, and clearer thinking. It has really helped me to want to get working again. This past Sunday, ALL of our first communicants were present in church with family members. Pastor preached that it is not for us to “beat our chests” with pride over such things, but I felt really proud of Augustus and happy for our future. On the same morning, I spoke to people who are still really hurting from all the pandemic has taken away. Their grief is as real as my hope.

I’ve seen lots of internet memes reminding me that the church is not about the building, it’s about the people. But friends, the building is where we can meet each other and share our grief, hope, and joy as people of God. For us at Augustus, the historic buildings are tangible reminders of God’s faithfulness over centuries, and the many saints who came before us. It’s not impossible to do the work of God alone. But it’s impossible to be the people of God alone. We were created to be in relationship with each other – to praise God together and to share with each other our joys and burdens.

I am so happy our bell choir will ring again this month (but only 4-5 people so we can distance). A bell choir is a good metaphor for relationship and connection. Each person controls only a few notes, but all the notes are important. If even one person is missing, the music will not sound right. It will be like having a piano with keys missing. But together, the music will ring God’s praise, and bring our focus to worship God.

My husband’s church has a phrase on their outdoor sign that I really like: “Socially distanced; Spiritually Connected.” Even if you can’t be with us in person for reasons of health or distance, I hope you can find ways to be connected to your Augustus family. If you’re feeling particularly isolated, please call the office and ask for help – we are here for each other.

In case you didn’t know – our 10:30 services are now live-streamed. So if you are home, you can listen and watch at 10:30 on Sunday morning. Just go to our home page, www.augustustrappe.org – you’ll find it from there!

I find these words of Jesus, spoken to the disciples before he was arrested and crucified, very comforting (and oddly appropriate to our pandemic situation):

A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:32-33)

Take heart, friends! We are God’s people, and we are not alone.

~Laurie Mueller



ALTAR GUILD VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Have you ever wondered about the drapes on the altar? What do the colors mean? What are the pieces for? Who puts them there, anyway? What about the candles? There are many important pieces that make up our weekly worship at Augustus! The people who make sure everything is where it needs to be, that communion is available, and that the candles are ready to be lit are a group of volunteers called The Altar Guild.

These folks are well trained and serve usually one month each year—in pairs. It takes a few minutes each week to set things up, and you don’t even have to be present for the church service to participate during these crazy times.

If you’re interested in learning more about this very important opportunity to help with our weekly worship, please contact Deb Scholl at schollde@aol.com. She’d be happy to give you more information and show you what’s involved.



A NEW WAY TO WORSHIP!

We are happy that our beloved church is again open for 'in-person' worship, albeit with some guidelines and restrictions. This said, there are many people who feel uncomfortable venturing out due to the threat of COVID-19 or their physical condition limits their ability to attend church in person. You can now 'attend church', either LIVE or view on-demand thanks to the new state-of-the-art video streaming & recording system we installed which was funded by the memorial gifts for Judi Lien.

The 10:30am Sunday service is streamed LIVE on YouTube if you want to watch as it happens and is also available as a recording throughout the week so you can view at your convenience. In either case, go to the church website: <https://www.augustustrappe.org/> and click on the white button.

Our 10:30 am service is recorded and available Sunday afternoon here.

CLICK HERE TO SEE THE SEPTEMBER 20th SERVICE

Service will be streaming live at 10:30 am Sunday morning

NOTE: When watching LIVE, there will be a delay, from 20 seconds up to a few minutes until you see the service start. Be patient! The service is not starting late, all digital technology has 'latency'. The streaming system needs to process the signals, which takes time. The stream will start just prior to the Prelude so you will not miss anything, though you may not see it until a few minutes after 10:30am.

In addition to the weekly services, special events such as weddings, funerals, special services, and concerts may also be streamed LIVE! We were honored to live-stream Eric Schwirian's ordination service to his new parish and ELCA Synod in Minnesota.

Would you like to learn more about this? Contact Jim Lien, he will be happy to have you visit the 'Control Center' in the balcony and show you the 'nuts and bolts' of how this all works.

Regards,
The Communication and Technology Committee

HELP WANTED!

Have you ever wanted to work in, or are thinking of a career in audiovisual or television? Or are you a techy who just loves to play with 'toys'? While Jim loves doing this, there will be times he is not available and will need a back-up person. Contact Jim Lien: jimlien@comcast.net or 610-909-3268 and he will make you a TV producer/director in no time! Well... that may be a stretch, but he may be able to point you down the right road.

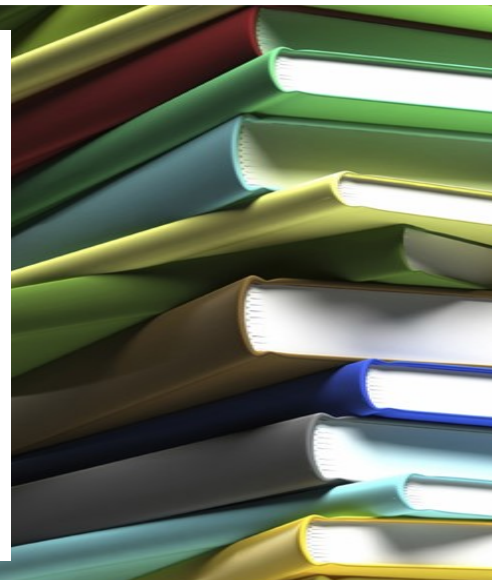
Augustus Book Club

The next meeting of the
Augustus Book Club will be held on Monday, October 19.

We'll discuss Indian Horse by Richard Wagamese

New members are always welcome.
Come to discuss the book and get to know some new folks!
We're meeting via Zoom. Call or e-mail Karen for the meeting
codes.

Questions? Contact Karen McClain
610-489-9625 or office@augustustrappe.org



Sharing God's Bounty

Lay Reader Message

The Importance of Trust

Trust is an important part of a relationship between spouses, between parents and children, between employers and employees, and between friends. To illustrate the importance of trust, I will share a story from former President Eisenhower who described an event from his earlier days on a Kansas farm.

“An older farmer had a cow we wanted to buy,” the President said. “We went over to visit him and asked about the cow’s pedigree.”

“Don’t know,” replied the farmer.

“Well, how’s her butterfat production?” we asked.

“Don’t know.”

“Let’s see,” my dad finally said. “How many pounds of milk does she give each year?”

“Don’t know that either,” said the farmer shaking his head. “But I do know she’s an honest cow and she’ll give you all the milk she has!”

“Well,” Ike concluded. “I’m kinda like that old cow. You can always trust me to give you everything I have.”

Life would be so much easier if we could take people at their word. It doesn’t take long to discover that talk is cheap, so we are forced to decide whom or what we will trust. Where do we place our faith and confidence? Do we trust God as our source of life and things? Trusting is not an easy thing to do. We may trust God in some things but not all things. By nature, we are self-reliant, and we live in a society that admires self-reliance and discourages trust in anyone other than oneself.

Trust knows that God loves us and wants the best for us. Complete trust in God is seeking God himself, rather than his gifts. Knowing God, through Christ, brings about a self-surrender and total trust in him. Then our trust is not dependent on what he gives, but who he is.

In the same manner that God proves he is trustworthy, God wants us to prove our trustworthiness. The apostle Paul wrote, “*Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful*” (1 Corinthians 4:2). How blessed we are that our God can be trusted totally and that he loves and trusts us enough to be his ambassadors and representatives here on earth. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, we can be faithful to his trust.

Sharing God's Bounty

Humble Stewards

As stewards, we are the recipients and caretakers of God's goodness, love, mercy, and grace. Stewards are managers of God's creation. We acknowledge God as the owner; therefore, we are to act not as owners, but as managers because our lives and resources are simply on loan from him.

The book of Daniel gives an account of a man who failed to recognize God as Creator and provider and exalted himself. King Nebuchadnezzar, walking on the roof of "his" royal palace, surveying "his" kingdom, was overcome by pride as he announced, *"Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty"* (Daniel 4:30)? He thought he was asking a rhetorical question, but God condemned him to live like an animal as a consequence of his pride.

Pride is destructive. It destroys gratitude to God for all his kindness to us. It destroys our desire and ability to serve others. It destroys contentment for it feeds our competitive nature so that we are not satisfied with just being wealthy or intelligent, but we want to be wealthier and more intelligent than anyone else.

Pride has no place in the life of a servant. First Peter 5:6 reads, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand that he may lift you up in due time." It is God alone who can exalt us (Psalm 75:7). If Christ himself, God's only begotten Son, humbled himself, should we not follow his example and humble ourselves? Because Christ humbled himself, God exalted him (Philippians 2:9)

David, the shepherd-king, put our situation in proper perspective: *"When I consider Your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him"* (Psalm 8:3-4)? The inference is that we are insignificant, yet David goes on to remind us of what we can be proud: *"You made [us] ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under [our] feet."*

Humility allows us to accept our smallness and God's goodness. Humility is the decision to let God be God. We are stewards through humility. We are to honor God with what we have, what we are, and what God will make of us.



Whatever standard we, choose, be it tithing or some other, it must never be confused with the reason for giving. We give because God has blessed us and because we want with all our hearts and minds to return to God that which God has given. This is the motive.





THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE

September 23rd – October 31st

The Collegeville Borough Police Department is collecting non-perishable food items in support of Montgomery County Children & Youth Services for Thanksgiving Dinners for families in financial hardship.

Suggested items are:

Canned green beans
Canned corn
Canned sweet potatoes/yams
Canned turkey gravy
Canned cranberry sauce
Boxed instant mashed potatoes
Biscuit/corn bread mix
Boxed or bagged stuffing mix
Boxed dessert mixes

Also needed are Giant Gift cards from \$10 to \$15, to be used by the families to purchase a turkey.

Donations may be dropped off at the Collegeville Borough Municipal Building- 491 E. Main St., Collegeville, PA, Mon. – Fri.
between
9 AM and 4:00 PM



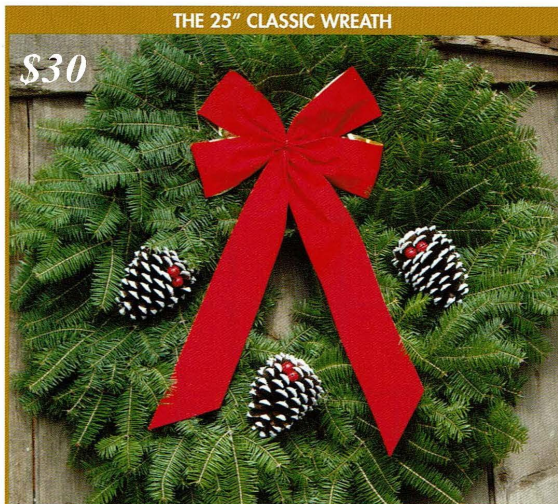
HOLIDAY FUNDRAISER

DELIVERED TO YOU BY OUR FUNDRAISING ORGANIZATION

HELP SUPPORT OUR YOUTH AND JOIN IN THE SPIRIT OF THE HOLIDAYS!

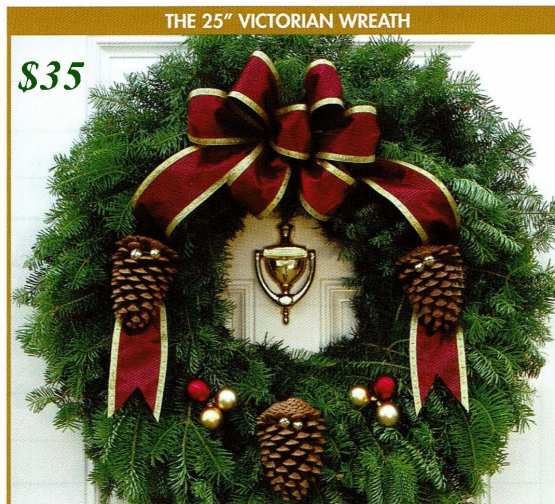
Fundraiser For: **BOY SCOUT TROOP 87**

THE 25" CLASSIC WREATH



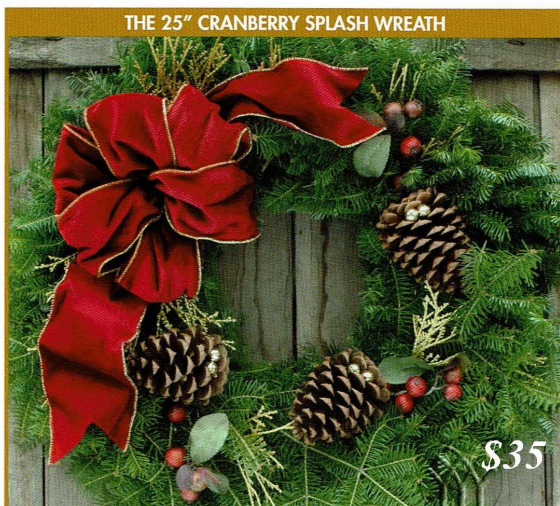
This popular Wreath is as traditional as Christmas itself. Decorated as pictured, the large white tipped/glittered cones laced with red jingle bells are the perfect complement to the gold-backed, red velveteen bow.

THE 25" VICTORIAN WREATH



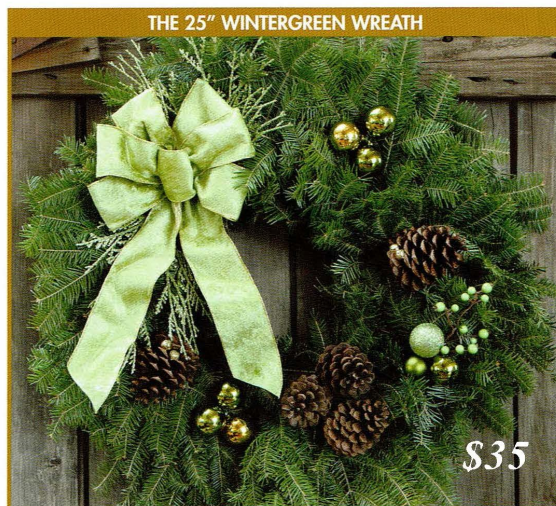
The exquisite Victorian Wreath is tastefully decorated as pictured. The generous bow features 6 loops with a 'button' and long tails tucked behind 2 of the 3 cones laced with gold jingle bells. The 2 sets of complementing bulbs add to the Seasonal Look of this most popular Wreath!

THE 25" CRANBERRY SPLASH WREATH



This elegant Wreath features a beautiful, 4" wide, wired fabric bow with tails - backed with a golden spray. The 3 jingle bell laced pine cones are backed with faux cranberry picks/glittered juniper branches which adds to the stylish look of this impressive Wreath.

THE 25" WINTERGREEN WREATH



The soft green, wired bow featured on this uniquely designed Wreath creates a wonderful contrast with the forest green Balsam Fir boughs which is backed with a green, glittered faux Juniper spray. The green bulb sets finish off the striking artistic look of this wonderful Wreath design.



LED LIGHTS – \$4.25

WREATH HANGER – \$2

Holiday Evergreens Supplied By:



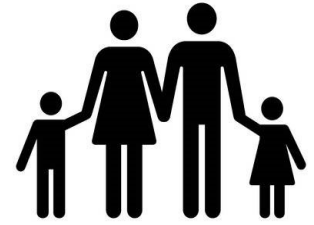
To place an order:

E-mail Tom Lesage at tom.lesage@comcast.net or Call Tom at 267-640-5135 or

E-mail Vicki Detwiler at scoutervicki@gmail.com

DELIVERY AVAILABLE!

Who is God?



God doesn't change, but our children's perceptions of God change as they grow. A child's first impression of God is most often based on the behavior and beliefs of one or both of his or her parents. As children enter the middle elementary grades, they become aware of the beliefs of people outside their family. Their image of God may change as their beliefs are challenged and influenced by friends and teachers. But, even during this time, the beliefs of their family will have the strongest impact.

How can you help your child to know God as the leading force in their life? Make God a central part of your family life. Talk about God in your daily conversations. Point out ways that God is present and active in the world. Pray and read the Bible together. Ask for God's guidance as you make family decisions. Faithfully attend worship. Serve God through your church and other organizations. If God is a central part of your family, your children will likely become adults who recognize God as the center of their lives.

From Family Newsletters on Disk, copyright 1995 Augsburg Fortress.

These commandments that I give you today are
to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children.
Talk about them when you sit at home
and when you walk along the road,
when you lie down and when you get up.
Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				Alicia Allebach Scott Detwiler Ronald Oelschlager Megan Schaffer	Janet Rhoads	Robert Imes Bryce Ziegler Tye Ziegler
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Wayne Williams		Marianne Schatz	Marsha Franz Dawn Halteman Brooke Perkins	Dawn Cooney	Eric Hart Leo North Deborah Riegner	Lillie Hunsberger
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	Eugene Bechtel Megan Cunningham	Ted Lewis Lizabeth Niskala	Paul Gallagher Tammi King Cheryl MacMullen Ike Matoney	Molly Hynes	Cormac Miller	Eugene Frank
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Cheryl Imes Richard Weicheld Michael Wells	Tami Firth		Michael Krasley Dorothy Rieger	Evan Griggs Brian Price Mildred Stuffie	Kelsie Mourar Amy Wells	Curt Allen
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Gavin Strasinski	Abigail Catagnus	Jennifer Beattie Addison Smith	Bryan Fishell Jonathan Lumley	Kathryn Bubeck Nicholas Lari Robert Slauch	Dale O'Hara Abraham Van Alstine	Alfred Dubeck Phil Lehman Alfred Stufflet Douglas Sweeney



Money Matters

Personal Financial Stewardship

Long-term Care Insurance

As our society grows older, more and more people face the probability of some day needing nursing care assistance. Therefore, many people are asking the question, “Should I consider purchasing long-term care insurance?” The purpose of long-term care insurance is to pay for the nursing care facility or other institution or a variety of home health care situations. This insurance can be of importance because, in most circumstances, Medicare and Medicaid do not pay for prolonged stays or needs of the elderly and disabled.



Suze Orman, the New York Times number-one best-selling author, gives an example of the potential benefit with long-term care insurance:

Let's say you are 55 and will need to be in a nursing home at age 84: The projected yearly cost of a nursing home 30 years from now, if you live in middle America (assuming an annual rate of inflation of 5 percent), would be \$148,176. Given that the average stay is 2.75 years, that would mean a total cost to you of about \$407,484. The total cost of a long-term care policy if started at age 55 and paid each year until you were 84 would be \$36,395. Look at the numbers: you will pay over 11 times more for the total cost of a long-term care stay than you did for the entire time you paid your premiums.

When you buy insurance, you buy it in the hope that you will never need it. The truth is that you are actually more likely to use your long-term care insurance policy than you are to use your fire or car insurance. One in 1,200 people will use his fire insurance, one in 248 people will use his car insurance, but one in four people will use his long-term care insurance.

The premiums you pay for long-term care insurance will depend on your age, health, and the choices you make, but the annual premiums can be in the thousands. If you choose to buy long-term care insurance, your policies should contain the following:

- 1. A prior stay in the hospital should not be required.*
- 2. The policy should be adjusted for inflation.*
- 3. The policy should be guaranteed renewable for life.*
- 4. Home care should be included.*
- 5. The policy should allow for a waiver of premium if its owner is institutionalized.*

Insurance premiums will be much cheaper if you begin paying the premium in your 40's or 50's. Remember, it's buyer beware. It is to your advantage to compare several policies before you make your final choice.

As a Christian, “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed” (Proverbs 16:3). Insurance is a vehicle that helps us plan for the future. Through insurance we prevent the possibility of being a burden to others (2 Corinthians 11:9).

Spring Turkey Dinner

CRAFT & VENDOR FAIR
SILENT AUCTION

PRAYER & PLEDGE DRIVE

Dear Friends of the Spring Turkey Dinner,

Despite the global pandemic, Stephen and Jodi Lynn Swanson and their family, missionaries whom we have supported for several years, have decided to stay in Tanzania and continue their roles as healthcare professionals. We would still like to support these missionaries and the wonderful work that they are doing to train Tanzanian health professionals, develop a neonatal intensive care unit and establish a feeding program for malnourished children.

Because of the cancellation of the 2020 Turkey Dinner and Craft show, we were unable to raise funds for missionary work. As a result, Augustus Women of the ELCA have initiated a Prayer and Pledge Drive to engage the local community to help missions on a global level. *With your support, we can raise over \$3,000 to financially support our pediatric missionaries, and to foster health and wellness education in parts of the globe that are less fortunate than ours.*

*Would you consider contributing a faithful prayer, financial pledge, or both to help us work toward our mission? **ALL DONATIONS RECEIVED BY 11/08/2020 WILL BE MATCHED** by three generous gifts: a generous gift from the **Augustus Women of the ELCA** (up to \$1,000), a generous gift from **Pastor Kochenderfer** (up to \$1,000), and a generous gift from **Pastor Martha and Pastor Howard Kriebel** (up to \$1,000). So every dollar you contribute will be increased four-fold! And as an added bonus, you will be eligible to be entered in a drawing on November 22, 2020 for an afghan. The afghan is 48" x 54" and is crocheted with soft, bulky, polyester yarn.*

On behalf of the Swansons, the Augustus Women of the ELCA, and the Christian community at Augustus Lutheran Church, we would like to thank you in advance for your support. For your convenience, you can make your contribution by one of the following two ways:

1. *Donating online at <www.augustustrappe.org>. Just follow the "DONATE" prompts under the "GIVING" tab. Don't forget to add "WELCA-Turkey Dinner" and your phone number in the comments box so we can add you to the drawing.*
2. *By mailing-in your financial commitment. Checks and money orders can be made out to 'Augustus Women of the ELCA'. Additionally, please write "Turkey Dinner" on the memo line. Send your donation to the following address to ensure your donation is delivered to the applicable location:*

Augustus Lutheran Church

c/o Women of the ELCA
717 West Main Street
Trappe, Pa, 19426

Thanks again for your support of the Augustus Women of the ELCA pledge drive, and for helping to ensure the long-term sustainable future of the children in Tanzania.

**RESPOND BY
11/08/2020
to be ENTERED in an
AFGHAN DRAWING**

Proceeds Benefit:

Dr. Stephen and Jodi Lynn Swanson, Missionaries in Tanzania

Printing & Mailing Services Donated by:

Print Copy Design Solutions, 521 W Main St, Trappe, PA, 19426

(610) 489-4540

717 W. MAIN STREET WWW.AUGUSTUSTRAPPE.ORG 610-489-9625

AUGUSTUS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sunday Services: 8:00 AM Communion * 9:00 AM Sunday School * 10:30 AM Worship



May 2020 update from:

Dr. Stephen & Jodi Swanson

ELCA Global Personnel

Dear Augustus Lutheran Church,

Stepping into the Rain

On March 17th, our organization, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), recalled all its global personnel back to USA.

My response to ELCA Global Missions explained why we were requesting to stay in Tanzania. It was not an easy letter to write:

“As a physician, I have taken a vow to care for the sick and hurting, in all situations and every season. Over the past 20 years, I have directly cared for patients with every manner of life-threatening viral, bacterial, parasitic and fungal diseases, including meningococemia, measles, rabies, tuberculosis, etc. It is a physician’s calling to be there for their patients, in health and disease.

As I spoke with my Tanzanian doctors about the potential of my being recalled back to USA, I could see the anxiety on their faces. We have developed a deep relationship of trust over the years, and I have been there alongside them at 3 am to care for unstable patients. Now, when uncertainty and forthcoming challenges exist, they see me leaving?

As such, I do believe that this moment in time is a once-in-a-generation event, that none of us will ever forget. As healthcare providers, Jodi and I feel it is our place to be here, where we are called to serve. For myself, it’s in the hospital, with my Tanzanian doctors. Caring for the smallest, and most vulnerable of all— children.”

Since late March, coronavirus has entered Arusha. Over the past 6 weeks, we have been busy making face masks for Arusha-area hospitals, partnering with local tailors and workshops to produce over thousands of cloth face masks at \$1.50/each. N95s and protective gowns are largely non-existent in every hospital. Glove costs are rapidly outpacing the hospital’s ability to purchase. We are making washable PPE gowns, foot covers, plastic face shields to provide at no-cost to faith-based hospitals. Soon we will be providing them to Lutheran Hospitals across Tanzania. We have located a local brewery

that was making 80% ethanol-based sanitizer and have obtained it for all hospital staff. We've reduced our hospital visitors, screened patients outside, and adopted a face mask requirement for all healthcare workers (HCWs). Our pediatric and NICU team led the way, being the first to adopt a face mask requirement— all the masks were provided by NICU Fund (www.tanzanianchildren.com). All spare moments, when not seeing patients, are engaged in raising funds and getting PPE to hospitals.

The extent of COVID-19s impact in Tanzania is unknown. PPE needs are great. Testing and reporting follows different guidelines than we are accustomed to in the United States. All laboratory testing is exclusively conducted through the National Reference Laboratory in Dar es Salaam. The Ministry of Health is responsible for all reporting and hospitals and individual HCWs may not discuss in a public forum their experiences, to avoid public panic. Among many Tanzanians, the use of local boiled plants (mango and guava leaves, etc) is believed to prevent or treat COVID-19. The president dispatched a plane to Madagascar to obtain a herbal tonic solution from the artemisia plant, which has been touted as a [dubious] cure for coronavirus. Local social media is afire with claims of lemon, ginger, aspirin, and various plants all touted as cures for coronavirus.

In this time, core measures around widespread mass testing, accessible information, and scientifically-validated treatment regimens are not always embraced by public figures. I do not always understand why. Over the past weeks, reports of nighttime burials and increasing numbers of unexplained community deaths exist. Most Tanzanians are largely afraid to get tested, to avoid the label of "COVID infection". Testing is also difficult to obtain. Many hospitals are in a difficult place, and care for suspected COVID patients is difficult because of a lack of finances, supplies, and fears on the part of both patient and HCWs. And here we are. The situation is full of unknowns, flights out of the country are mostly nonexistent.

In the midst of all of this, I deeply admire the fortitude and bravery of our Tanzanian doctors and nurses. They still go to work every day and care for patients. The NICU babies continue to arrive, unaware of the pandemic that the world is staring down. It is for these doctors, nurses and children and babies that we stay—they are our family. And I have stepped into the rain without an umbrella, so that I can be with them... perhaps more afraid than I have ever been, and more in love than I could imagine.



There are so many examples of local initiatives and collaboration. In the photos above you will see our locally made face masks, a hand washing stations at the entrance of Selian Lutheran Hospital and the roadside. Government and private hospitals are working together to create safe places for COVID patients to be cared for, local and expat companies have pulled together to design and produce locally made cloth face masks (thank you Evanna & Alexis at Dunia Designs, Jessica Peterson at Dorobo, Beate at Blue Heron!) paid for by the NICU Fund, local Rotary Club, and private donations from within the expat community! Some of the cloth face masks have been donated to Ace Africa who are providing COVID training and information sessions in the outlying wards of Arusha District.



A design for a prototype for COVID19 protective face shields has been created by our son and his two friends, using the 3-D printer at our school. They are now being produced and assembled for hospitals. Special shout out to Cody, Magnus and Caedmon, their UWCEA school and Dunia Design! Though it has been challenging, it is also encouraging to see the determination, creativity, and collaboration that has risen during difficult times.



Anna's baby. She was born 13 weeks premature, weighing barely 1 kilogram (2 lb- 2 oz).

Now she is 8 weeks old, still learning how to breastfeed. Supported by our NICU Fund.

These little ones are so unaware of the what rages outside.

They continue to need our love, support, and medical care.

www.tanzanianchildren.com

When Indya was evacuated to South Africa in 2016, Isaiah 40:31 became "our theme verse" for that time. Again, we have found comfort in these words:

"Those who trust in the Lord will find new strength.

They will soar high on wings like eagles."

I (Jodi) have found myself anxious in this unknown situation where facts are hard to find and guidelines are vague or sporadically practiced around me. When we came to Tanzania in 2013, Psalm 139:9-10 was a guiding verse for me and it is amazing how in these times, this verse has again been spoken to me through a song here and a friend's text there... it seems to me, a timely reminder.

*"If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast."*

These are difficult and uncharted times, but we are not alone. We are so grateful for God's ever present help in times of trouble (Ps. 46:1) and for your love and support. Thank you reaching out to us, for standing with us in these times.

Steve and Jodi