

# The Augustana Heritage Newsletter

Volume 8 Number 3 Fall 2013



## Highlights of AHA Board Meeting, April 26–28, 2013

The 2013 Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Augustana Heritage Association was held on the campus of Midland University in Fremont, Nebraska, April 26 to 28. The Rev. Dr. William C. Nelsen, University Minister for Advancement and Church Relations at Midland and Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee for the **2014 AHA Festival** to be held there, served as host for the weekend and provided much-needed information about current plans for that event, as well as much-appreciated hospitality for the board meeting and activities surrounding it.

In addition to approving the Minutes of its previous meetings in June of 2012, reviewing the Minutes of the 2012 AHA Biennial Business Meeting in St. Peter, receiving and accepting reports from the President, the Treasurer, the Executive Director and each of its standing committees, the Board:

- 1) reviewed with gratitude and satisfaction the evaluations of Gathering VIII in St. Peter;
- 2) appointed a Nominating Committee for the 2104 Biennial Business Meeting in Fremont;
- 3) approved, if needed, a transfer of funds from the Book Fund to the current operating fund;
- 4) authorized the creation of an index of all articles that have appeared in the *AH Newsletter*;
- 5) authorized republishing the book, *Prairie Grass Dividing*, by Iverne Dowie;
- 6) approved lowering the sales price of several books still in the AHA inventory;
- 7) agreed to explore the possibility of an AHA valedictory event in Philadelphia in 2016;
- 8) reviewed the original purposes of AHA and determined that, for the most part, except for final archival deposits, all of them have been fulfilled;
- 9) expressed appreciation to all those who have contributed to the life and the mission of AHA across the years for all that they have done and all that the Association has accomplished;
- 10) decided to recommend to the voting members of AHA at the 2014 Biennial Business Meeting in Fremont that December 31, 2016 be the termination date of AHA as a separate 501(c)3 non-profit organization;
- 11) decided to recommend to the voting members of AHA at the 2014 Biennial Business Meeting in Fremont that the current AHA Bylaws be changed in order to allow the present Board members to continue in office until the end of 2016;
- 12) authorized the commissioning of a commemorative art piece to be presented to each remaining Augustana-founded agency or institution prior to December 31, 2016;
- 13) requested each of its standing committees to draw up a check list of what that committee needs to do to help close down AHA by the end of December 2016;
- 14) authorized advancing, if the decision is made to have an AHA valedictory event in Philadelphia in 2016, \$5,000 to a Local Planning Committee there;
- 15) delegated to its Executive Committee the responsibility of selecting the presider and the preacher for the closing Worship Service at the **2014 AHA Festival** in Fremont; and
- 16) set Friday, June 13, 2014, at 9:00 a.m., in Fremont on the campus of Midland University as the date and time and place of its next meeting.

David E. Baker, *Executive Director*  
Augustana Heritage Association

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*The Augustana Heritage Association defines, promotes, and perpetuates the heritage and legacy of the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church.*

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# Western Pennsylvania and Swedish immigration

Loran Bohman

When one thinks of the nineteenth century Swedish immigration to the U.S., one usually thinks of Illinois, Minnesota, the Midwest and maybe the Pacific Northwest. But there were Swedes who immigrated to upstate New York and Western Pennsylvania.

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Irwin, PA, was a church founded by Swedish immigrants. It is really the only former Augustana Synod church in the Southwest Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA that has not closed or merged with other ELCA congregations. The original name of Immanuel, which was founded in 1872, was "The Swedish Evangelical Westby Congregation of Irwin." The name "Westby" was adopted because



Immanuel ship

For thirty years Immanuel has celebrated Sankta Lucia each winter. In the Irwin "Lite up Night" parade the reigning Sankta Lucia rides with her attendants. On or near Dec. 13 she comes to the church supper and brings light and sweets. On Christmas Eve she brings in the baby Jesus to the manger to begin the Christmas season. A ship votive hangs from the ceiling of the nave to remind the Church to pray for those who sail the seas.

While the Swedish language is mainly forgotten, a few phrases continue. And of course, Swedish food is enjoyed.

On Dec. 20, 2012, Keith E. Grill was called to serve as pastor. Being of Scandinavian origin, he took an interest in the Swedish heritage of Immanuel. In May of 2013 he and his wife, Pastor Janet Grill, took a trip to the Väsby parish and were welcomed by the council and staff. The bonds of history and shared faith were reunited and strengthened. The churchly piety of the original members continues in the life blood of Immanuel as they continue in solidarity with the ELCA and welcome people to share their faith in Jesus.

*Loran Bohman, a member of the Board of Directors of the Augustana Heritage Association, lives in Youngwood, PA. He grew up in the Augustana background congregation in McKeesport, PA, just five or six miles away from the parish of which he writes. His mother came from a family of several generations in that parish.*

*We thank Loran for his submission and welcome other readers to share stories of interest to those of us in the AHA.*

—Editor



Immanuel Lutheran Church in Irwin, Pennsylvania

the charter members had come from the Väsby parish in Skåne province, Sweden. Many of them were miners, farmers and fishermen who were able to find work in the coal mines of Westmoreland County, east of Pittsburgh. Immanuel has continued to retain its Swedish roots while at the same time reaching out in mission to those of different national origins. After the turn of the century they gradually switched to English for all church usage.

# AHA Festival 2014

## “Prairie Roots, Global Impact”

### Letter of Invitation from the Local Planning and Arrangements Committee

Dear Members and Friends of AHA:

We have been working hard to provide an exciting, informative, entertaining, and meaningful AHA Festival 2014 to be held June 13-15 at Midland University in Fremont, Nebraska. The chosen theme is “Prairie Roots, Global Impact” because we will for the first time focus on those people, churches, agencies, and institutions that started with prairie roots of Christian education, caring souls, and amazing visions that resulted in national and global outreach and impact.

We invite you to come and experience the legacies and modern outreach of Mosaic that began with a mission in Axtell, Nebraska, serving the disabled; Immanuel and Lutheran Family Services of Omaha that began under Augustana pastors and Deaconesses and continue to reach out to serve in new and powerful ways using the same goals; and the Luther College legacy that will live on through a new creation at Midland University that will be celebrated on our first evening together. We will be inviting delegations from the early Swedish-background Augustana congregations in the region to celebrate their legacies and current ministries.

We will also feature great entertainment, good food, fascinating interest sessions, and inspirational worship services in the great Augustana tradition. (See the tentative schedule and list of interest groups elsewhere in this issue.)

There are other compelling reasons to come to the Festival and taste “the good life” of Nebraska. Nearby Omaha has some great attractions including historical Boys Town, the Henry Doorly Zoo (rated among the best zoos in the world), the large urban oasis Lauritzen Botanical Gardens, the Durham Museum, housed in the historical Union Station, the Joslyn Art Museum, the unique shops and restaurants of Old Market in downtown Omaha, and much more. Also the College World Series of Baseball will be taking place in Omaha, from June 14 to 23, so stay and enjoy these opportunities. And it’s not far to Nebraska City, home of Arbor Day Farms and the Lewis and Clark Center. Or you can visit special Swedish sites in Oakland, north of Fremont, or Wahoo, south of Fremont, or stop by Axtell and visit the very active historical Bethphage Mission before or after the Festival. Or come early for the pre-Festival tour

of the vibrant social service agencies with Augustana roots in Omaha.

We look forward to welcoming AHA members and friends from all over the nation as we celebrate AHA Festival 2014: “Prairie Roots, Global Impact.”

The Rev. Dr. William C. Nelsen  
*University Minister for Advancement and Church Relations*  
*Midland University*  
(on behalf of the Local Committee)



**Bethphage Zion Chapel**

#### **Committee Members:**

Luther College, Luther Academy, and Augustana Congregations: Alan and Sharon Seagren, Jerry and Arlene Johnson, David and Joan Nordstrom, Ardes Zakovec, Dan and Mary Monson, Carl Kramer;

Mosaic: Brenda Solomon

Immanuel: Beverly Todd

LFS: Ruth Henneman and Joanne Hull

Nebraska Synod: Lisa Kramme, Diane Harpster, Tom Miller

Midland University: Bill Nelsen, Denise Pratt, Teresa Houser, Carrie Reed, Nancy Harms (Midland and Immanuel Nursing)

# AHA Festival 2014: "Prairie Roots, Global Impact"

June 13-15, 2014  
Midland University  
Fremont, Nebraska

## Tentative Schedule

(Subject to change as speakers and speakers' schedules get finalized.)

### Friday, June 13

Pre-event Tour of Augustana Agencies, Omaha, NE, including Immanuel, Fogelstrom Chapel, Lutheran Family Services, Mosaic, Mosaic Museum, and the Nebraska Synod headquarters. (Details to be announced.)

- 2:00 p.m. Registration begins, AHA Bookstore and Library Open
- 4:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
- 5:30 p.m. Opening Welcome Dinner
- 6:45 p.m. Hymn Sing
- 7:00 p.m. Opening General Session  
"The Lasting Harvest of Luther College and Academy" (panel led by Rev. Dr. Carl Hansen, former president of Midland and co-founder of LutherFest)
- 8:15 p.m. Major Announcement: Celebration of the Creation of Luther College of the Liberal Arts at Midland University with Service of Blessing
- 9:00 p.m. Evening Reception

### Saturday, June 14

- 7:30 a.m. Registration continues; Continental Breakfast
- 8:45 a.m. Hymn Sing and Morning Prayer
- 9:15 a.m. General Session:  
"Celebrating the Augustana Swedish Churches of the Prairie," and "Bethphage and Mosaic: From Beginnings to Global Impact,"  
Linda Timmons, President and CEO  
Mosaic
- 10:15 a.m. Coffee Break

- 10:45 a.m. Interest Groups (See list of various options)
- 12:00 noon Affinity group reunions, with box lunches
- 1:30 p.m. General Session  
"Immanuel and Lutheran Family Services: Common Origins, Current Mission, Future Visions," Eric Gurley, CEO, Immanuel, and Ruth Henrichs, CEO, Lutheran Family Services
- 2:30 p.m. Coffee Break
- 3:00 p.m. Interest Groups (Repeat of the same options from the morning groups)
- 4:15 p.m. AHA Business Meeting
- 5:30 p.m. Smorgasbord and Special Entertainment
- 7:00 p.m. Concert: Winner of Jenny Lind Competition from Sweden  
Extra Special Entertainment: World Renowned Pathfinders Men's Chorus of Fremont, NE
- 8:30 p.m. Evening Prayers and Music
- 9:00 p.m. Evening Reception

### Sunday, June 15

- 7:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast
- 8:45 a.m. Hymn Sing
- 9:00 a.m. General Session:  
Special Speaker from Sweden (to be announced)
- 10:00 a.m. Coffee Break
- 10:30 a.m. Festival Worship Service (Augustana Liturgy)  
Festival Choir led by Jim Logue, Midland Choir Director  
Preacher: Bishop Brian Maas, Nebraska Synod
- 12:00 noon Lunch and Closing Remarks

# AHA Festival 2014: "Prairie Roots, Global Impact"

## Interest Groups (Tentative List)

"Caring for the Disabled: From Bethphage, Axtell, Nebraska to the Global Impact of Mosaic"

"Luther College in Wahoo: An Augustana Legacy Celebrated in Skits and Scholarship"

"Immanuel: Caring for Others, Then and Now through Hospitals, Deaconesses, Senior Centers, and Nursing Programs from Immanuel to Midland"

"From Sailor to Soul Healer", The Inspirational Story of Pastor E.A. Fogelstrom and Five Deaconesses

"The Legacy of Events, Faculty, and Staff at Luther: Small College, Great Memories, Big Impact"

"Ministry in Motion: Faith Journeys for Students and Friends of Midland" (and a tour of the campus)

"Central Seminary of Fremont, Beautiful Historic Site, Beautiful New Mission" (with a site visit to the May Museum and St. Timothy Lutheran Church in Fremont)

"Swedish Churches of the Prairie: Augustana Beginnings, Ongoing Missions in Towns, Rural Settings, and Big Cities"

"Sent Into the World: The Amazing Story of Luther College Alumni Serving in Foreign Missions"

"Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska: Fremont and Omaha Beginnings, Midwest Impact" (with a site visit to the Rupert Dunklau Center for Healthy Families in Fremont).

"Rev. Dr. Dale Lund: Pastor, Teacher, Theologian, College President, Educator, Father, Grandfather, and Friend"



Immanuel Deaconess Institute

"The Church Giveth and the Church Taketh Away: College and Church Relations, Augustana Synod Days, and Today"

"Swedish Immigration: A Look Inside Their Trunk!"



**Augustana Heritage Association  
Festival 2014:  
"Prairie Roots, Global Impact"**

**Midland University  
Fremont, Nebraska**



**Friday, June 13 – Sunday, June 15, 2014**

The registration fee of \$195 includes all plenary and small group sessions, campus meals, coffee breaks, and Festival program costs of Friday evening through Sunday lunch. This price will be honored for registrations postmarked or submitted by May 1, 2014. After this date, registration cost will be \$225. The registration fee does not include lodging. A listing of area hotels, including telephone numbers to call for reservations, is included on the second page of this form. Rooms have been blocked at several locations. Payment for registration must accompany this registration if mailed to us; otherwise please register online at [www.MidlandU.edu/aha](http://www.MidlandU.edu/aha).

**Registrant #1**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Registrant #2:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Gathering Choir:**

Yes, I (we) shall sing in the Gathering Choir. Music will be sent in advance. Indicate the number of persons for each voice sections which apply:

\_\_\_\_\_ Soprano                      \_\_\_\_\_ Alto                      \_\_\_\_\_ Tenor                      \_\_\_\_\_ Bass

*(If a copy of "Songs of Two Homelands" is available to you, please bring it along.)*

**A separate response form will be sent at a later date to gather information about preferences for interest groups and the Saturday affinity luncheon.**

## Festival registration payment:

Discount price of \$195 per person if postmarked by May 1, 2014

If postmarked after May 1, 2014, \$225 per person.

\$60 registration if attending Saturday (Commuter Day) events only.

Number of registrants for entire event: \_\_\_\_\_

Total paid: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Number of registrants for Saturday (Commuter Day) \_\_\_\_\_

Total paid: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Payment enclosed by check payable to Midland University.

## Refund policy:

Prior to April 30, 100% refund

May 1-May 31, 75% refund

After June 1, no refund

(except for medical circumstances which will be determined on a case-by-case basis)

Or registrants can donate the registration fee to AHA if unable to attend and receive an acknowledgement for a charitable donation.

## Mail this registration form along with payment to:

Augustana Heritage Association Festival  
c/o Midland University Alumni Office  
900 N Clarkson  
Fremont, NE 68025

For questions regarding this registration, please contact **Carrie Reed at 402-941-6050**  
or via email: **reed@MidlandU.edu**.

*To complete this form online and pay by credit card, please go to [www.MidlandU.edu/aha](http://www.MidlandU.edu/aha) and click on the Register button.*

## Hotel options: (Make reservations early; rooms blocked until May 14, 2014; College World Series begins in Omaha on June 14, 2014)

*Holiday Inn Express, Fremont*  
(75 rooms blocked; price begins at \$124.95)  
Telephone: 402-753-3850  
Email: holidayxfremont@younes.com

*Oak Tree Inn, Fremont*  
(35 rooms blocked; price \$65.00)  
Telephone: 402-721-3700  
Email: fremont@mail.oaktreeinn.com

*Sleep Inn, Fremont*  
(no rooms blocked, but call early to reserve, recent price \$89.99)  
Telephone: 402-721-8400  
Internet: Use Choice Hotels website

*Countryside Inn & Suites, Fremont*  
Telephone: 402-721-1109  
Email: countrysidefremont@gmail.com

*Super 8, Fremont*  
(20 rooms blocked: 15 at \$79.99, 5 at \$69.99)  
Telephone: 402-727-4445  
Email: super8fremont@gmail.com

*Heritage Inn, Wahoo*  
(10 rooms blocked)  
Telephone: 402-443-1288  
Email: info@wahooheritageinn.com

*Other hotel options are available in West Omaha, only about a half-hour away. Example: Hilton Garden Inn Omaha West, 402-289-9696, [www.hilton.com](http://www.hilton.com)*

# More “Augustana Folks” remember Augustana experiences

*This is a continuation of the remembrances that began in the spring issue of the Augustana Heritage Newsletter.*

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## Otto W. Jacobson

The Augustana Lutheran Church has had a profound influence in shaping my life. Both my personal and professional life choices reflect the heritage in which I was born and raised. In Gardner, a furniture manufacturing city in north central Massachusetts, Augustana goes back to the late 19th century when Swedes established First Lutheran Church in 1884. My maternal grandparents, Emil and Lovisa Nyman and their clan, were Swede-Finns who emigrated from Vaasa, Finland, to become charter members of a second Augustana Lutheran congregation in Gardner named Immanuel, established a decade later. It was there, when I was six months old, that I was baptized on September 4, 1932, by Pastor Otto Bergquist. My father, after whom I was named, of Finnish descent, was baptized in the local Episcopal Church. His father, a carpenter, built the family house and the Finnish Congregational Church next door. There Dad was spiritually nourished and married. He fathered a son, my elder half-brother Richard. His Finnish wife died when Dick was a baby. Although in those days most married within their own national and religious affiliations, my father courted and married my Swedish Lutheran mother, Edith Nyman. Later he joined Immanuel Church which held Swedish services into the 1920s. It's interesting to note that in the 1970s Pastor Vincent Johnson (who later would be my ordination sponsor) worked diligently to unite Immanuel and Bethel (founded by Finns in 1893) into one LCA Church at a new location and named—COVENANT. The original 1884 Swedish FIRST Lutheran remained separate, until finally in 2006 it consolidated with Covenant to become the present FAITH Lutheran Church (ELCA).

My Augustana pastors took seriously their shepherding responsibilities, examples which inspired me in my later ministry. As a youth I secretly rebelled in Sunday School and confirmation, as a Sunday School teacher gave me a hard time and my parents attended services only on special days. Nevertheless, Pastor Perry Carlson encouraged me during confirmation and Luther League years and surprised me when he said, “Otto, you should give thought to becoming a pastor!” I thought it a crazy idea at the time.

The Augustana Luther League became my primary youth activity during my high school years. The excellent resources from Wilton Bergstrand and staff in Minneapolis provided for our growth in Christ. We enjoyed singing hymns from the Luther League Songbook and programs with Luther League groups from neighboring cities were a fun way to meet new kids and exchange ideas. Pastor Carlson encouraged us to join the Pocket Testament League and start a discipline of daily Bible readings. Lutherwood on Lake Webster in Massachusetts was where I first met Pastor Robert Nordlander. Later on when I was a freshman at the University of Massachusetts and uncertain about my future, one of his sermons at a Luther League District Rally inspired me seriously to consider becoming a pastor. Years later when he was Executive Director of Seamen and International House in New York City and I was president of the board there, we reconnected and I shared with him how God used his sermon to call me to pastoral ministry.

Augustana also had a strong sense of mission, and missionaries were often guest speakers in our parishes. One who came to Lutherwood while I was there was Dr. Richard Reusch, who served in Tanganyika as a bold witness to the fierce Maasai warriors. Despite temperatures soaring well over 100 degrees, daily he held us teenagers spellbound, challenging us to be faithful warriors of Christ.

Dr. August Rehnstrom followed Pastor Carlson as my mentor pastor at Immanuel. By then the written Word had blossomed forth as the living Word in my heart, and I was seriously considering the call to be a pastor. On many summer evenings I had long theological discussions with him at the parsonage. Dr. Rehnstrom put a living FACE on the word GRACE, and clarified for me the crucial role the grace of Christ plays in awakening us to a living faith—faith that shows itself in bold witness and deeds of love. These dedicated, caring Augustana pastors shaped my ministry, and in the two parishes I served, it was a joy for me to develop relationships with young men and women who later entered seminaries. Pastor Rehnstrom encouraged me to

transfer to Upsala College in East Orange, New Jersey, which was supported by Augustana churches in the New England and New York Conferences. When my home town scholarship committee approved transferring their financial support for me from the State University of Massachusetts to a church-related liberal arts college in New Jersey, even though it had a much higher tuition, I was again reassured that God was looking with favor on my new career goal.

My three years at Upsala reinforced and enhanced the strong spiritual foundation I received from my Augustana pastors and Luther League. I was active in the Student Christian Association (SCA), becoming Worship Committee Chairman and Bible study leader. I supplied churches in the metro New York area, and on Student Caravans to Augustana churches in neighboring states I preached and/or led services. With fellow Upsalans I traveled to Lutheran Student Association retreats. At Upsala we had voluntary attendance at daily worship and also Sunday Vespers. Christianity courses were part of the required curriculum. I had been concerned about giving up my previous math major, but now I soon discovered that with a new goal and purpose God was also giving me a new love for courses like Greek and philosophy! The witness of Chaplain Dale Lund and President Ewald Lawson and insights of professors like Wolfgang Zucker and Hertha Pauly were profound in helping me see that in losing one's life in a cause greater than self, one finds it.

The Augustana Lutheran Church's witness in higher education impacted not only Augustana's sons and daughters, but all who were open to what was offered. Lee Wesley, a fellow 1954 Upsala graduate and seminary classmate, was in 1958 the first African-American to be ordained in the Augustana Lutheran Church. On a more personal note, in my senior year, a non-Lutheran began her freshman year at Upsala and later became my wife. Gloria Bungo of Clifton, New Jersey, was approached in her high school by an Upsala representative. At that time colleges were actively recruiting top students. Gloria had just received a full tuition scholarship to another college and had never considered Upsala. She was not acquainted with the Lutheran Church. Grappling with whether or not God offers guidance in life's decisions, Gloria became sure the Lord was leading her after her interview and the offer of another full tuition scholarship to Upsala. A Biology major, she was impressed with the scholarly treatment of science and the intellectual honesty and questioning encouraged in all of her courses, including religion. She took as many Christianity courses as her schedule permitted. It was fortunate the SCA also reached out to those who were not Lutherans or Swedish! I was impressed with her knowledge of scripture and theological insights. She served as Student Christian

Association (SCA) Worship Committee chairperson and even delivered a message at Sunday vespers. Our first date was to an Ash Wednesday Communion at First Lutheran Church, East Orange. The minor Lenten music spoke to her soul. Gloria had been baptized in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and was blessed with a rich cultural and spiritual heritage. She was raised in an independent, missionary-minded Baptist Church where she was exposed to 40-minute weekly Bible study sermons. Moreover she had Biblical, college-level Sunday School courses taught by a former missionary to Tanganyika. This woman was acquainted with Augustana missionaries and was happy later to learn of our engagement. She said that those Augustana folks really "knew" the Lord! Upsala inspired Gloria to use her intellectual gifts to be of service to others. In contrast to the idea that the purpose of education is to enable one to get a higher paying job, Upsala's students were reminded that they were there to "help make the world a better place."

During my first two years at Augustana Seminary in Rock Island, Illinois, Gloria and I kept in touch almost daily with long letters and also visits to each other's homes during the summer. My seminary experience was largely very positive. We had a caring faculty who sought to make the curriculum relevant to our future parish ministries. A huge advantage in terms of close fellowship and support among us Augustana seminarians, and later as pastors throughout the country and world, was the fact that Augustana had only one seminary which united us as well as our families. Gloria shared with me this close fellowship. We were married in 1956 by Pastor Clarence Leslie in First Lutheran, Clifton, New Jersey. Pastor Leslie encouraged us in our marriage, and we still keep in touch over half a century later! Gloria left Upsala after her junior year to share with me my intern year at Samuel Lutheran Church in Muskegon, Michigan, 1956-57. (She finally graduated in 1965). Pastor Herbert Swanson, my intern pastor, was an elderly faithful shepherd who ably cared for his 1000-member flock. However, Samuel Church at that time, with its deeply rooted Swedish culture and traditions, was unable to meet effectively the new challenges of a rapidly changing neighborhood.

American culture in the 1950's was also reflected in a seminary professor's counsel to the Seminettes (the seminarian wives): "Married women are to enhance their husbands' careers!" On June 22, 1958, I was one of a class of 70 (all men—no women!) who were ordained with the laying on of hands by Dr. Oscar Benson at the Chautauqua amphitheater. My first call was to develop a new mission church in the Harrington Park area of northeast New Jersey. Several others in our large class were given the same challenge. We were assured of much help from the Board of American Missions, and it

did come: a detailed handbook, frequent calls and visits from Regional Director Reuben Lundeen and other staff of the Board of American Missions. A parish worker preceded me on the field, assigned to do a survey of residents. She asked them if they would be interested in a new Lutheran Church, and came up with a list for me of 60 “hot” prospects. When I visited them, 45 were Missouri Synod who, once they heard I was Augustana, had no interest whatever! Prince of Peace started small and it would be 5 years before we could build a church. Recently I looked over some of my class notes and papers and relived how strongly Augustana was grounded in the Gospel of grace and the early church’s kerygma, centering in the cross and resurrection of Christ. At the same time this was coupled with strong emphases on Parish Education, World Missions, Social Ministry, Youth Ministry and Justice issues. With many denominations the emphasis seems to be on one or the other: Evangelical themes or Social and Justice issues. In the parishes I served I did my best to advocate both, through a total stewardship of life that also encouraged generous benevolence offerings for both local and worldwide ministries. This was true even when Prince of Peace was a struggling new mission in Old Tappan. At the same time just across the state line in New York, ULCA started Redeemer mission. After two pastors tried their hardest to make a go of it, the mission board decided to close it down in 1963, when a survey discovered 90% of the residents in their target area were Jewish! Now we saw the wisdom of God at work in the selection of our church site in NE Old Tappan—not only did it turn out to be near the parsonage, it was only 4 miles from Redeemer! Thus it was that when we dedicated our new “Church-in-the-Round” on June 14, 1964; of the 230 persons present, 30 were former Redeemer members who united with us and greatly enriched our ministry. By Dec. 31, 1964, baptized membership reached 333; Sunday School, including Cradle Roll, teachers and staff totaled 229. That was quite remarkable in view of the weak economy during those years and the small number of Lutherans and even fewer Scandinavians in our pre-empted field. God obviously blessed our proclamation of the Gospel, coupled with aggressive survey and publicity efforts, as well as door-to-door evangelism by both pastor and laity. Prince of Peace Church, in Old Tappan, New Jersey, viable to this day, would not have been born, but for the amazing grace of God and laity dedicated to make Christ known. Nor must we forget the extensive assistance of the wider Lutheran Church: Augustana from 1958 to 1962, and then when Augustana merged with three other Lutheran bodies in June, 1962, the new Lutheran Church in America continued to provide monetary aid and helpful counsel from Dr. Ralph Boyer, new area Mission Secretary.

In March, 1969 I was installed as the 3rd pastor of Messiah Lutheran, Oakland, New Jersey, my second and final parish. Messiah was also founded in 1959, as a mission church of the ULCA. Membership growth was hampered by the high mobility of its members. Some worked in nearby communities in Bergen and Passaic counties; others across the state line in New York lost their jobs when the nearby Ford plant closed. In the almost 29 years we lived in Oakland, I felt I had served three different parishes! By the 1970s Augustana was well absorbed into the LCA. Augustana Seminary had merged with other Lutheran seminaries to form the new Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago (LSTC), and denominational loyalties were fading. Then came the Jesus movement which experimented with contemporary forms of worship, and the Charismatic movement that created divisions in many congregations, especially Roman Catholic and Lutheran. On Palm Sunday, 1977, Messiah became my second parish to dedicate a new “Church-in-the-Round.” In 1987 the ELCA was born, with my Augustana classmate, Herbert Chilstrom, as its first bishop. In my New Jersey Synod, churches with African American and Spanish speaking members were growing, and most Synod conventions used some bi-lingual worship materials. In 1997 I retired from Messiah and moved to southern New Jersey, where for a number of years I supplied over 30 different congregations throughout the state. In May, 2008, we traveled to Chicago where Gloria and I and many seminary classmates were royally welcomed at LSTC to observe the 50th Anniversary of our ordination. Since the fall of 2008 we have resided at Ashby Ponds, a retirement community in Ashburn, Virginia, and attend Holy Cross in nearby Herndon, where we thoroughly enjoy energetic traditional worship, using the new (2006) Evangelical Lutheran Worship, which replaced the Lutheran Book of Worship (1978), which in turn replaced Service Book and Hymnal (1958). Several Augustana Heritage Gatherings have provided opportunities to renew friendships and recall “the good old days!” In various areas of the country there are still large populations of Augustana Swedish folk. But for me personally, there are mostly only “blessed memories” of Augustana. Our children and grandchildren are creating their own new memories. The majority of our dear family are now part of the heavenly hosts.

**What remains from our Augustana heritage that we can continue to share?** For me the answer still is **the GOOD NEWS that is in CHRIST.** Some have ridiculed the personal piety of early Swedish Lutherans. Yet it was the personal devotion and love of the Lord that shone from these faithful for the world to see, that resulted in their works of mercy, caring and justice throughout the world. This piety was not a fleeting, transient emotion, but solidly rooted in the Word of

God and in faithful worship in His Church. Christ's love transforms our hearts, minds and wills and remains even when all else changes.

On the wall of Beck Hall at Upsala College we daily read these words of Lars Herman Beck, Upsala's first president:

**"IT IS GOD'S WORK—NOT OURS."**

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## Edward Corneilson

Home, to me, was Brooklyn, New York, where I was born. Being of Norwegian background, our family were members of Trinity Lutheran Church, part of the "old" ELC! Trinity was called a "Cathedral church" of the ELC. One of the pastors I remember was Frederick Schiotz who later became the president of the newly formed American Lutheran Church. Indeed, once my family moved to New Jersey, we had the Schiotz family visit us there and I remember playing with their son, Nathan.

At age 12, when we moved to New Jersey, it was necessary to find a new church home. The closest Lutheran congregations were in Dover, about a 15 minute drive from our home, where we had two choices: a church of LC-MS, or a church of the Augustana Synod. As I look back on those days I am truly happy that we chose the Augustana congregation, especially in light of everything that has since happened in the LC-MS.

There are two things that helped influence my life in the church. First was the emphasis on youth and the national Luther League. I became very involved in our local Luther League, even traveling to Boston for an international League gathering in 1958. I still remember the mass choir that sang for the worship service at Hatch Shell along the river! The words of Wilton Bergstrand and other leaders of the church still echo in my mind.

The second thing that had a significant impact on me was the Augustana emphasis on liturgy. I remember little of the services in Brooklyn; there was probably little or no liturgy in services there. But to become familiar with the Augustana liturgy was a hallmark of our church. I can still hear the opening worship sounds, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts," as sung by the pastor!

My involvement with the Luther League opened the way to my future. Each year our youth group would visit Upsala College to tour the campus and to attend a football game. I knew, from the start, that this is where I wanted to go to college. While I had no intention of going to seminary when I began college, there were a number of professors who had a great deal of influence on my own spiritual life, among them, Dale Lund and Carl Fjellman. A course on the Old Testament also opened my eyes to the historical criticism of that book

Augustana's contributions through its dedicated people will remain and flourish throughout the ages when its heirs are rooted in **the LIVING WORD, JESUS CHRIST, to whom with the FATHER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT be all the GLORY, both now and through all ETERNITY! AMEN.**

and changed my outlook on seeing the Bible as a whole, especially the opening chapters of the book of Genesis.

Two years into college, after having academic problems with my proposed major and minor, I switched from science to liberal arts, ending up with a major in English and a minor in Greek. Could God have had some other plan in mind for me even then? I know that my home pastor in New Jersey was quietly working behind the scenes to have me consider the ministry as a vocation. It was not until close to the end of my senior year that my decision was made to enter the seminary, and that is what I did, in the fall of 1958.

And so I entered Augustana Seminary as part of the class of 1962. I had no idea at that time how this might change my life and my outlook on life. We knew that a merger of Lutheran churches had taken place in 1960, and that another merger was in the offing. From the very start our class felt a lot of closeness to each other, as we would be the last class to graduate from Rock Island Augustana. Since graduation, our class has met every five years in various places all over the country and they have been absolutely wonderful reunions! In one sense Augustana was unique as there was only one seminary for the church so students would come from all over the United States, as well as from a number of foreign countries.

There is so much to say about those four years that it's hard to know where to begin. From my "eye-opener" course on the Old Testament in college, for me, that just expanded. In a sense, then, so much for the literal translation of the scriptures. Indeed, as I went through those classes on the Old Testament and the New Testament, I was led to a fuller appreciation of the scriptures, their history as well as their message. All of those forms of "criticism" helped me to expand my knowledge of scripture, as well as its interpretation.

For some strange reason, I decided to do my concentration in Hebrew, rather than Greek or English. Did I really want a challenge, or was it because I had Greek in college? Carl Anderson, in Old Testament and Hebrew, was such a wonderfully compassionate and humble man. He truly made the Old Testament come alive! I soon discovered that there was a name that was given him:

Hoshek—the Hebrew word for “darkness.” But he helped us to see the light. Unfortunately he died during my middle year, and we lost a wonderful professor. Augustana seemed to me to be at the forefront of historical criticism.

It was no different when it came to the New Testament. I found a two-fold emphasis here in Eric Wahlstrom. First, he was at one time a missionary to China. Again, the Augustana heritage had an emphasis on foreign missions. I also became aware of the mission aspect of Augustana as it related to Africa. The Swedish church was very active in Kenya and Tanzania, and Augustana became a part of that emphasis. I even had the opportunity to spend almost two weeks in Kenya and Tanzania to see what our missionaries had been doing in those countries. Dr. Wahlstrom also gave us great insight to the New Testament, and we often noted that it was interesting to hear Greek being read with a Swedish accent!

Perhaps the one professor who made the greatest impact on me was A. D. Mattson. I truly had no idea of what the “social gospel” was until I began taking courses with him. He opened my eyes to the responsibility we have as Christians in the society of which we are a part. We must not only hear the Word, we must do the Word. No one expressed that better than A. D. Gruff? Yes! But

as kind as anyone! There is one lesson from him that I will never forget: In speaking about the Parable of the Prodigal Son, he said that, not only are we to take care of the “injured,” we are also to make the road safe for travel. That is something that has remained with me for these 50+ years! Indeed, I do believe that Augustana was also at the forefront when it came to understanding the “social gospel.”

The importance of liturgics was well affirmed by G. Everett Arden. One could not help but be mesmerized when he described the priests taking the blood of the sacrificial lamb, and throwing it at the people! We kind of backed up as he demonstrated that event! But again we found meaningful the emphasis on the liturgy and the role it played in Augustana.

There is no doubt in my mind that all of the above is part and parcel of our Augustana heritage, a heritage that is carried over, not only to the Lutheran Church in America, but also to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

I am extremely gratified that the chapel at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago has been named the Augustana Chapel! Our Augustana heritage lives on! To God be the glory!

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## Karl J. Nelson

My dad was Swedish and my mother Norwegian! As I was growing up there was always a bit of good natured competition between the Swedes and the Norskes. Born in 1941 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, I was baptized into the family of God by Pastor Clarence Granlund at Calvary Lutheran Church, 39th and Chicago, Minneapolis. That Augustana church was a wonderful source of grounding for me as we attended church every Sunday, and at age three I started pre-school classes there during the week and Sunday School on Sundays. When I was five I recited by memory the first 14 verses of the gospel according to St. Luke during the Christmas program.

When my mother was being driven to the hospital to deliver me, the story goes, she was in great pain, and being 23 and having her first baby they stopped at the front door of St. Barnabas hospital to pray. In the prayer, the story goes, they promised God that if the baby was healthy and my mother was able to survive the delivery, they would dedicate me to the service of the Lord. I had that story embedded in my mind in many different ways over the years as I was reminded of it on every birthday card I ever got until I was 35.

Our family moved to Forest City, Iowa, my mother's

hometown, late in 1946, so that my dad could help his father-in-law in the Farmall Implement business. We joined the ELC church, Immanuel, and ate Lutefisk at the annual church dinner. I sang in the children's choir, attended Sunday School, and watched my parents be involved in many aspects of church life. It was during this time some people started calling me “little Elmer” because I liked doing lots of things my dad did. Also, some of the people thought I'd grow up to be a pastor because I so enjoyed talking with our pastor, Arndt Halvorson, later a professor at Luther Seminary. Of course, that was partly because his daughter, Karen, was in my school class!

In 1953 we moved back to Minneapolis and our family joined Diamond Lake Lutheran Church, an Augustana church. Gordon Bergin was the pastor. I was confirmed in 1955 with 72 other 8th graders. I “preached” the Easter sermon to the Sunday School children my 9th grade year (I am sure it was awful!), and served as liturgist for numerous regular worship services. I was completely involved in Luther League, attended Bible Camp at Mt. Carmel near Alexandria, Minnesota, for 4 years and in that setting became more convinced that God was calling me to service as a pas-

tor. I was greatly influenced by the lay leadership of the church as they worked with the youth and gave us young people opportunities to serve, whether it be visiting nursing homes or teaching Sunday School with the younger children. I also handled most of the audio-visual needs of the congregation, having been carefully trained by my dad. I also worked Saturdays with Bruce Sifford in the Audio-Visual department at Augustana Synod headquarters on 24th and Park and there got to know and visit with Augustana Synod President Oscar Benson. In 9th grade I had to write a vocations paper for a class in high school and I couldn't absolutely make up my mind, so I wrote it on three topics: Pastoral Ministry (remember the prayer of dedication), Mechanical Engineering (my dad was a mechanical engineer), and Music (I played the piano, the tuba, and started taking pipe organ lessons in 9th grade.) I became the organist of Diamond Lake church my senior year in high school because the organist and my teacher suddenly died before Christmas.

Because of my love of music, when it became time to pick a college, I looked for a school with an excellent choir. Among a number of choices, I chose Augustana College in Rock Island and sang under the leadership of Henry Veld. My years at Augustana were transformative for me. I was able to tour Sweden with the choir in 1960 and meet several of my relatives in Malmo, learned about the culture and heritage of Sweden and enjoyed the wonderful people of the country. I was active in many college organizations besides the choir. I was the manager of WVIK when it first went on the air as a 10-watt FM station. I was Friendship Fair co-chair, Viking Court, a member of the DON fraternity, Pep Committee and many other activities that expanded my horizons for service and enjoyment. President Conrad Bergendoff and many professors like Henry Veld, Dorothy Parkander, Kenneth Andeen, Louie Almen, Professor Delbrugge, Ted Conrad, Fritof Ander, George Arbaugh, and others were not only great role models but greatly influenced my spiritual, academic and social journey. They made the college experience fulfilling, inspirational and exciting. I made life-long friends during those important college years. I have to credit the Swedish beginnings and Augustana heritage of the college for enriching my college days.

Following college, I continued to pursue the call to ordained ministry and so entered Augustana Seminary, on "the hill" adjacent to Augustana College, while most of my Norwegian relatives were advocating for me to

go to Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. Augustana seminary provided a stimulating environment to test my calling and to learn theology and perspective on being a pastor in the mid 1960s. President Karl Matson, Art Arnold, Ted Swanson, P.R. Swanson, David Lindberg and so many others helped me build a foundation on which to enter pastoral ministry. Their strong emphasis on mission and social justice has stayed with me all these years. I interned in an Augustana church, Immanuel, in Evanston, Illinois. It was the church where my grandma and grandpa were married in 1908 and from which my grandma got a job as a maid for some North Shore families. Again, I made life-long friends and colleagues during those years in seminary.

During my 45-plus years of ordained ministry, I have served on numerous synod and church-wide committees as the Augustana Church became the LCA and, finally, the ELCA. I served as Secretary of the Synod of the LCA Iowa Synod for 6 years. I also served as Secretary of the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the ELCA for over 20 years. I took minutes with a team for the ELCA church-wide assembly for 12 years. However, my primary ministry has been in congregations. I served Trinity, Estherville, IA, for 4 years, St. Paul, Clinton, IA, for 9 years and First United, Sheboygan, Wisconsin, for 26 years. Interestingly, none were former Augustana churches. Since retirement I continue to occasionally help other pastors by preaching, playing the organ or piano or serving in whatever capacity is helpful.

Since retirement, my wife Kathy and I have traveled extensively in our Winnebago motorhome seeking to visit all the National Parks in the US as well as taking some months in the winter in sunny Arizona. Kathy and I have two children, Sarah who lives in St. Petersburg, FL, and David and his wife Sara who live in Chicago, Illinois, and have 5 year old twin children, Avery and Theodore.

Who I am and what I have become as a person, pastor, husband, father, community member and churchman has been significantly influenced by all the subtle as well as direct input from dozens of people linked to my Swedish heritage roots. The many people I have had the privilege to know and learn from, my wife and family, the pastors, my parents and relatives, the professors and teachers, the lay people, friends and colleagues, all have contributed to enriching my life and ministry. I am grateful for all those I have met and known in my journey through life. I have, also, been richly blessed to be part of the Augustana heritage.

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## Bruce T. Anderson

Dad, Dr. O.V. Anderson, was raised in the Augustana Church in Brooklyn, New York. His parents were Swedish immigrants. My mother, who was born in Canada, was also the daughter of Swedish immigrants. So both Dad and Mom were confirmed in Swedish and were both bilingual. Dad would go on in his Masters and Doctoral work at University of Chicago to do a lot of translating of important Swedish church documents: For example—the Ministerial Manual of Olaus Petri and the diary of Erland Carlsson, pastor of the historic Immanuel Swedish Lutheran Church in Chicago, one of the very early Augustana Lutheran Churches. Immanuel suffered fire damage during the Chicago fire in the 1800's, and Dad had access to Pastor Carlsson's diary.

My earliest childhood memories of Augustana are from growing up in LaGrange, Illinois, where Dad was pastor of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church. Dad would take me with him on occasion, making house calls to the sick and elderly. Sometimes Dad would use his Swedish pastor's Occasional Service Book. Grace Church still had one service on Sunday morning which was in Swedish during those years. These are some of my earliest memories. Various pastors and dignitaries from Sweden visited us in LaGrange and stayed in the parsonage, as they did when Dad became President of The Central Conference of the Augustana Church and we lived in Kenilworth, Illinois. So, I realize now many years later, how strong my Swedish/American roots were in my upbringing—all connected with the Augustana church.

It's interesting though, that some of my earliest memories about Grace, LaGrange, have to do with a problem that Dad faced when Electromotive Corporation began making diesel engines for railroads, and set up shop in LaGrange, bringing in great ethnic diversity of people to work there. Grace began to grow—welcoming large numbers of people of different ethnic backgrounds. So much so, in fact, that some of the long-time members of Swedish background became very upset and gave Dad a pretty hard time.

I also remember Dad becoming good friends with Dr. Joseph Sittler, and other ULC pastors and professors from Maywood Seminary. Dr. Sittler would often be a guest preacher at Grace. I just realized a few years ago from a letter I received from Dr. Robert Roth that he was Dad's roommate at Robie House, at the University of Chicago when he was working on his PhD. Dr. Roth was my systematic theology professor at Northwestern Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, when I went back to finish my M.Div. and then, when I worked on my D.Min. from Luther/Northwestern Seminary. Well, I

know from Dr. Roth's comments that Dad was always interested in Lutheran unity.

Not long ago a member of our congregation in Niles, Illinois, Helen Danielson Main, who is my age, sent a picture she found in her mom's belongings, after she passed away, of my sister Sandy and me when we were toddlers. Incredibly, Helen has the same birthday—September 16—as mine, and another Augustana pastor, Dr. Ted Mattson, whose birthday was also September 16, who was godfather to both of us. Augustana pastors and their families were very close. Helen's mother and dad, Pr. George Danielson, were close friends of Dad's and kept up with our family doings, just as my Mom was close to many of the pastoral families in the Augustana church and had saved pictures of their families. All this is to say how very close Augustana pastors and families were to each other. I think the church convened every other year, if I'm not mistaken, and, of course all the pastors were graduates of Augustana Seminary in Rock Island, Illinois. Dr. George Hall, who was pastor of St. John's, Lincolnwood, Illinois, nearby, and taught part-time at DePaul University when I was working on my D.Min., talked often about the closeness of the Augustana clergy. A real ministerium, you might say, that was spread out over the U.S. and many foreign countries, yet pastors retained close contact by letters, phone, and the church conventions. So there were, I believe, a real broad vision and scope to the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church which was not a big church body. The cross of Christ was set very high. Someone said that Augustana pastors really saw the flag of the church raised high. And so that was a part of it. There was a real churchwide feeling of support among clergy families. Often I would hear Mom and Dad talk about a pastor or his wife who was sick, or there was a tragedy in the family and they were praying for them, writing notes or calling on the phone.

Like North Park Seminary and College of the Swedish Covenant Church, Augustana, I think, had a sense of unity, not just because so many of us were of Swedish background, because that was changing, but because so many passed through the one seminary in Rock Island and were influenced by the institution. Although I went to Augustana College for four years, I only had one year at Augustana Seminary, Rock Island, in 1963-1964. But who could forget the professors: Dr. Arthur Arnold, Dr. Karl Mattson and Dr. Conrad Bergendoff, who had retired but whose vision for Augustana College and Seminary, as a Lutheran Christian university, was such an influence...or Dr. A. D. Mattson and his concern for

the Christian call to prophetic and social ministry. There were many other wonderful professors who left such an impression on seminarians at Augustana, just as, in more recent years of course, there were those like Dr. Joseph Sittler and Dr. Robert Roth and many more from other church bodies that merged into the LCA and the ELCA. So, as I think of it, Augustana had a wide and open understanding of mission in Christ. As one local Roman Catholic priest in Niles (Illinois) put it to me some years ago, “Your congregation is a part of the Swedish Lutheran church heritage, isn’t it?” So, the priest went on, “Resurrection is one of the Lutheran churches... a church of the Augsburg Confession and with an open altar. I’ve sent people to you.”

As I remember from my one year at Augustana Seminary, 1963-1964 (I returned in 1971 to Northwestern Seminary to finish my M.Div. and then to Luther/Northwestern Seminary, St. Paul, from 1980-1985 for my D.Min.) Augustana Seminary had a challenging curriculum of up-to-date Biblical and theological courses (and pastoral care and homiletics courses). There was a warm and caring atmosphere centered in the worship of the Lord. Chapel, daily, was universally attended. I always had the feeling that we were being prepared, not for a career, but for a calling from the Lord through the Church as ministers of Word and Sacrament in the Lutheran Church, and that the faculty at the seminary were our spiritual mentors and “parents.”

Like the Swedish Covenant Church in America, Augustana Church had a very strong emphasis on foreign or world missions. I’ll never forget visits from Dr. Richard Reusch to Grace, LaGrange, who was one of the Augustana missionaries in Africa—Tanganyika (Tanzania), today—often called the “father of the Lutheran church” by the Lutheran people of Tanzania). Dr. Reusch had climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro 50 times to prove his strength and his faith in Christ, his Lord, to the proud Maasai.

And I also remember from conversations with Pr. W. Douglas Larson, whose father was an Augustana Synod missionary in China where Doug grew up as a boy, about Augustana’s role in missions.

So what I remember from childhood, not just in the house but also in church, was a real emphasis on world missions. We heard about it even in Sunday School. Augustana was involved in a real direct way with foreign missions. Now, of course, the ELCA continues that work, and then, too, people from other countries come and share their faith with us and we receive from them their love of the Lord and faithfulness.

Augustana Synod congregations strongly supported financially many Augustana institutions—the college, the seminary, Augustana Hospital and homes for the aged. It really reached down to the congregational level. I remember an aunt from Sweden who was a deaconess and a teaching nurse at Augustana Hospital in Chicago. We were her “Chicago family,” and she would take us every Christmas to the famous “Kung’s Holm” restaurant. Deaconesses were always honored for their work. They were placed in foreign mission service, too.

Our congregation, Resurrection, Niles, one of the last Augustana mission churches formed in 1963, has supported Augustana ministries for developmentally disabled children and adults, which is now a program unit of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, through our Jazz Vespers program. My wife, Karen, worked at LSSI, both in the corporate offices and then at Augustana Center for 15 years, before retiring from her last position at The Lutheran Center, first in Global Missions and then Mission Investment Fund, in 2007.

It seems that those close ties with the institutions and seminary are not quite the same, of course, with mergers and the changes in the world and society—things can’t be the way they were 50–60 years ago, and I know from my remembrance of my father’s work that the goal of Lutheran unity and cooperation was very important, as well as ecumenical relationships—to share the faith with others. I think some of this was a result of the historic ties of the Augustana Church to the Church of Sweden. I remember Dad speaking about many of the Augustana clergy having just as much right to claim “Apostolic Succession,” as the Episcopalians do when he was a participant in the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogues. Well, arguably, some of the cohesion that was a part of the Augustana Church has been understandably diminished as we merged into the LCA and the ELCA and became much bigger. Some have also said that while we certainly gained many things from the mergers, there was something lost, perhaps the closeness and unity that can be lost as the church body gets bigger. I’ve heard it said that, “Augustana got swallowed in the merger,” and there might be some truth in that.

To sum it up, I guess I just remember growing up

## An Invitation from the Swedish Council of America

Greg White, Executive Director of the council, based in Minneapolis, invites AHA members to join the council. SCA has a monthly e-newsletter.

Subscriptions should be sent to  
Swedish Council of America  
2600 Park Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55407

A \$50.00 contribution will give both a subscription and support to the SCA. \$10 will keep one on their mailing list.

in such a nurturing church body with particularly fond memories of worship (“HOLY, HOLY, HOLY” at the beginning of each service) and the hymnody, but then youth groups, Luther League and a wonderful youth convocation in Calgary, Canada, in 1959 or 1960 (?) and many memories of summers at Camp Augustana in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. I also remember huge clothing drives for Lutheran World Relief to help Europe rebuild after the war, particularly in Germany—something that’s, of course, still happening with Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response and Hunger Relief today.

I still treasure on a very personal level some of the books in the library I inherited from my father, which were published by the Augustana Book Concern, par-

ticularly a series of devotional books by Pastor Reuben Youngdahl and a wonderful devotional book by Bishop Olle Nystedt called “At Dawn of Day,” translated by P.O. Bersell, one of my Dad’s mentors. The book was written in the 1950s and reflects the challenges for Christians in Sweden during a time of secularization following the Second World War.

Well, times change and we have much for which to be thankful as members of the ELCA, of course, but that sense of identity and church-wide solidarity of the Augustana Synod was quite powerful and I think went beyond just our Swedish-American ethnic ties, as Augustana went on to welcome many people of other ethnic, cultural and racial backgrounds.

## Tradition in Nebraska

Augustana’s tradition in Nebraska ran parallel to that in the rest of the US. Worship was central, but was closely tied to human service to those in need. The liturgy was seen as motivational. People in the pews came to be inspired to be of service to others, even as they had themselves been blessed. Nebraska agencies celebrate well over 100 years of outreach to the wider world.



BETHPHAGE MISSION: INTERIOR ZION CHURCH

**Bethphage, Zion chapel interior, postcard**



**Bethphage Institute, residents outside the shop in Axtell, Nebraska.**



**Immanuel Institute Deaconesses with EA Fogelstrom, ca 1894**

*photos courtesy of ELCA Archives*

# New Sweden, Maine —Supportive Success

**Roger Rotvig**

The New Sweden, Maine, story has virtually no equal any place in the United States. In a post civil war move to welcome immigrants and open virgin farmlands and woodlands, a U.S. government official went to Sweden to recruit settlers to come to America. The 1870 arrival in New Sweden of the first 51 settlers grew to 553 by the end of 1871 and the growth continued for years.

From 1871 to 1970, eighteen pastors served the New Sweden Lutheran congregation. Their first pastor, Andrew Wiren, served them for ten years, as did one other starting in 1911. The remaining 16 served from two to seven years each. The important issue is that their longest vacancies were under three years and they were often served by stated interims during those periods.

For nine years the congregation functioned as part of the New York Synod (later merged into what we know as the ULC). Then in 1883 members voted to join others of Swedish background in the Augustana Synod.

By 1906, potato farming and lumber processing caused the community to expand in numbers and area. The New Sweden church mothered a new congregation in the town of Stockholm, about 8 miles to the northeast. During the history since that time, they often each had their own pastors or, just as often, shared one.

In 1955 with the “cold war” rapid development of a SAC Bomber air base, they sponsored a mission, this one in Caribou, considerably closer to the base. That event resulted in this author’s introduction to Maine’s Lutheranism as he was called to be the organizer of that congregation in June of 1956. First-hand experience can relate to the fact that even though Augustana’s regional staff was in Worcester, MA, nearly a day’s drive from New Sweden, its presence was the factor that kept isolation from becoming a problem. The synod was always present to give the continuity needed.

The congregation in New Sweden was able to turn their native culture into an asset rather than a liability. Pastor Wiren instituted the first public school in the town where he taught the English language. Through his efforts both children and adults could soon not only speak English, but read and write it as well. From earliest time, services were in both Swedish and English. By 1935 all services were in English except for the last Sunday of each month when a Swedish service was added.

Throughout all of this period, Swedish culture was celebrated and observed in the parish. An annual mid-summer’s day festive tradition has been held in June every year since the congregation has been in existence



**Gustaf Adolph Evangelical Lutheran Church, New Sweden, Maine**

and serves to tie the church and community to their common roots. The combination of reaching for the new and yet celebrating the old, with the security of outside support from fellow Lutherans when issues such as pastoral vacancies arise, helps members of the congregation to not feel isolated in spite of their distance from other parishes in New England.

It is worthwhile to trace quickly the development of the Swedish Lutheran support system in the northeast, since it was that factor that made all the difference between a colony of German Lutherans established all alone in Maine from the Colony of Swedes, established in just as remote a place but with a support system.

We tend to think that the massive wave of Scandinavian emigrants in the last decades of the 19th century were picked up and dropped into the American mid-west. The fact was that almost all of them entered through harbors in New York, Boston, Mass. or Portland, Maine. Most of them were met by relatives or contacts and quickly headed west by train. A significant number of them stayed in the east, but they were a minority in an already well developed society and it took them longer to come together than it did the new settlers who quickly became the community builders in their new home states. To its credit, Augustana did not forget its Eastern brethren.

The New York Conference of Augustana, established in 1870, officially had five organized congregations, two around Jamestown, New York, two in northern Pennsylvania, and one in Brockton, Mass. (This congregation officially organized in 1867, makes it the mother Swedish Church in New England). The territory of the New York Conference stretched from Jamestown, New York, to New Sweden, Maine. (The author and his family had many opportunities to drive on mostly Interstate highways from the New Sweden area to their ancestral home in Minnesota. The halfway point of the 1800 plus mile trip, was Jamestown.)

New Sweden members apparently maintained good relationships with the New York General Synod but found more in common with other Swedish Lutherans within Augustana. When the first minister of New Sweden resigned in 1882, the names of his successors reads like a Swedish phone directory: Olof Hedeon, Michael Norberg, S.F. Westerdahl, C.J.A. Westerdahl, F.A. Peterson and Axel Bjorkman. Augustana made the difference.

In 1906 the New York Conference took a key action that indicated the direction things were to go. The Conference-sponsored "orphanage" in Jamestown was overflowing and they were committed to establishing another in a different part of their territory. They chose Avon, Mass., a few miles from the Brockton Church. That location served the needs of children and families until it closed in 1959. It also made New England a vital part of Augustana's growth outside of the upper midwest.

In 1912, the six New England States were separated from New York to form the New England Conference. It officially had 81 congregations, but many more were in the organizational stage. Conference Presidents were parish pastors until the Rev. Dr. Karl E. Mattson from New Haven, Conn. was elected as the first full time president in 1945. He remained in that position but a short time since he was called to the presidency of Augustana Theological Seminary in Rock Island, Ill., in 1948. He was succeeded by the Rev. Dr. Eskil Englund and the Rev. Dr. O. Karl Olander through 1962 when the New England Conference gave way to the New England Synod of the LCA.

The work of Augustana brought wonderful results. It was far and away the largest and strongest Lutheran Church on the territory. We know of at least 144 Augustana congregations in the six New England States at the time of that merger. They brought leadership and stability that was needed in this part of our country.

***About the author:** Roger Rotvig is a graduate of Gustavus College and Augustana Seminary. Both he and his wife Helen, whom he met at college, are "accidental members of Augustana." Roger was baptized in Zion Lutheran in Duluth by the Rev. Dr. Fredrik A. Schiotez, who later became the president of the ALC. When Sunday School days came, his parents decided to send him to the nearest all-English speaking Lutheran church rather than the sometimes Norwegian or Swedish speaking churches of the parents. He ended up in Holy Trinity, under the splendid pastorate of Clarence T. Nelson and his wife, Ruth Youngdahl Nelson.*

*Helen grew up in Bayport, Minn., on the St. Croix River, a boundary with Wisconsin. It seemed that every small town there had at least one Lutheran church of each variety. Her early days were in the Norwegian ELC, but joint American mission work resulted in consolidating small Lutheran churches, merging some into larger strong congregations. In Bayport the merged congregation went to the Augustana Synod.*

*After Helen's graduation from Bethesda Hospital, St. Paul, as an RN, and Roger's pending year of internship from the seminary, they went as a newly married couple to Kelliher, Saskatchewan. They wanted to see Lutheranism in a different context than Minnesota! The same motivation led them, two years later, to request a first call in an area where Lutherans were in lower density; Caribou, Maine, was the answer to that.*

*The Rotvigs served parishes in Caribou, Newport, Rhode Island, and Hartford, Conn. For the final 17 years of service in the church, Roger was the CEO of New England Lutheran Social Services. In 1989 they retired to coastal southern Maine. They have four children, five grandchildren and four great grandchildren.*

# Augustana Heritage Association

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The books, CDs and DVDs listed below may be ordered from the Augustana Heritage Association. (See details below)

### Books

#### *Äkta Augustana: Heirloom Recipes*

Edited by Curtis and MariAn Olson and Luther and Adele Lindberg. A collection of recipes and Swedish traditions gathered by AHA members. \$20 including postage and handling.

#### *The Augustana Story: Shaping Lutheran Identity in North America*

By Maria Erling and Mark Granquist (Augsburg Fortress, 2008). \$20 including postage and handling.

#### *The Augustana Heritage: Recollections, Perspectives, and Prospects*

Edited by Arland J. Hultgren and Vance L. Eckstrom. Essays from presentations at the 1998 AHA Gathering at Chautauqua, NY. (Chicago: Augustana Heritage Association, 1998) \$10 including postage and handling.

#### *The Heritage of Augustana: Essays on the Life and Legacy of the Augustana Lutheran Church*

Edited by Hartland H. Gifford and Arland J. Hultgren. Essays from the 2000 AHA Gathering in Rock Island and the 2002 AHA Gathering in Lindsborg. (Kirk House Publishers, Minneapolis, 2004). \$10 including postage and handling.

#### *Songs of Two Homelands—Hymns and Liturgy of the Augustana Lutheran Tradition, 2nd edition*

Edited by Ronald T. Englund, Glenn C. Stone and John O. Swanson. (Chicago: Augustana Heritage Association, 2002). \$10 including postage and handling.

Available from the publisher, Scarecrow Press—

#### *The Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church in Print*

By Virginia P. Follstad. An annotated list of serial publications issued by the Augustana Lutheran Church 1855-1962 with selected serial publications after 1962. (Scarecrow Press, Lanham, Maryland, 2007) \$45. [www.scarecrowpress.com](http://www.scarecrowpress.com)

#### *Every Morning New*

By Herbert W. Chilstrom and E. Corinne Chilstrom (Chicago: Augustana Heritage Association, 2012). Devotional entries for every day of the year. \$15.00 including postage and handling.

### Journals

#### *Lutheran Quarterly—Augustana issue—Spring 2010*

Edited by Maria Erling and Mark Granquist. \$6 including postage and handling.

#### *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly—Augustana/Covenant issue—April-July 2012*

From the Covenant Conference Proceedings, November 2010. \$7 including postage and handling.

### CDs and DVDs

#### *Nearer, Still Nearer (CD)*

Hymns, Songs, and Liturgy from the 2004 AHA Gathering, St. Peter, Minnesota. (Chicago: Augustana Heritage Association, 2004) \$10 including postage and handling.

#### *Augustana: Five Pastors Share Their Memories (DVD)*

Recollections of Augustana by five pastors: Arvid E. Anderson, Herbert W. Chilstrom, Paul M. Cornell, Donald W. Sjöberg and Reuben T. Swanson. Recorded at an AHA board meeting in 2005. (Chicago: Augustana Heritage Association, 2007) \$5 including postage and handling.

#### *Join in the Dancing: Swedish Folk Dance Mass (DVD)*

Par Harling's Swedish Folk Dance Mass. Filmed at the 2006 AHA Gathering at Chautauqua, NY. (Chicago: Augustana Heritage Association, 2007) \$10 including postage and handling.

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