

THE ENDURING HERITAGE OF THE PARSONAGE:

The Rev. Dr. A.E. “Gus” Rehnstrom as Mentor (June 2016)

Remembering and celebrating the consistent influence of pastoral ministry (and the parsonage) in the Augustana tradition may be an overlooked contribution in our record. We all have names to hold up with affection and gratitude. Unfortunately, when we speak of the ordained, none are women, whose names are remembered as wives, mothers, deaconesses, missionaries, and administrators. After some shared memories, we will hear of one particular pastor-scholar-preacher who mentored Pastors Otto Jacobson and Al Ahlstrom in the Augustana Lutheran Church during and after his service in Gardner, Mass. (1949-54).

1. Introductions - gathering names of participants
2. Memories of our (Augustana) pastors from childhood in youthful faith (10 minutes)
3. First “theologies” or “impressionable preaching” (At what point in your life in your “Augustana Heritage” did you realize you were “doing theology?” OR “did lights dawn while hearing a sermon?” Do we recall special words?) (10 minutes)
4. Note Pastor Otto Jacobson’s essay about his youthful decisions in Gardner, Mass. (Confirmation at “Finn-Swede” congregation, Immanuel, Gardner, 1948; Gardner High School 1952) See Otto’s essay from the AHA Newsletter/ Journal of Fall 2013. Pastor Ahlstrom was confirmed there in 1949. Both Otto and Al were confirmed earlier by Pastor Perry A. Carlson.
5. **AUGUST EDWIN ARTHUR REHNSTROM** (1895-1977 in Kane, PA)

Pastor Rehnstrom carried on a frequent correspondence with Al Ahlstrom from 1953 (when Al went to Upsala) to 1968 (while Al served Messiah Lutheran Church in The Bronx). He sponsored Al’s ordination in Detroit, the last Augustana ordination, June 27, 1962. Much reported here is gleaned from Pastor Rehnstrom’s 75 letters during that time.
6. Family: Wife **Elsie** (d. 1998 at age 96) - active leader in Women’s Missionary Society (later, Augustana Lutheran Women) on synodical and national levels ; Daughters **Florence Klemmer** and **Corinne Johnson**, both deceased; son **Arthur** survives in Altoona, PA. [Grandson Mark sang a recital for the AHA at Chautauqua Event, 2006; his father Arthur Johnson was leader in Lutheran Men in Mission in NW Penn. (Augustana and LCA) for many years.]
7. Pastor Rehnstrom as friend, mentor, preacher, and commentator on emerging theology; Lundensian theology (on high school level); Anders Nygren’s *Agape and Eros*; critique and gratitude for contemporary American theologians; tensions in the faith of a pastor.

