



2024 • Issue 2

News

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

Who We Are

THE OPEN BIBLE

God's Word is the foundation of faith and life.



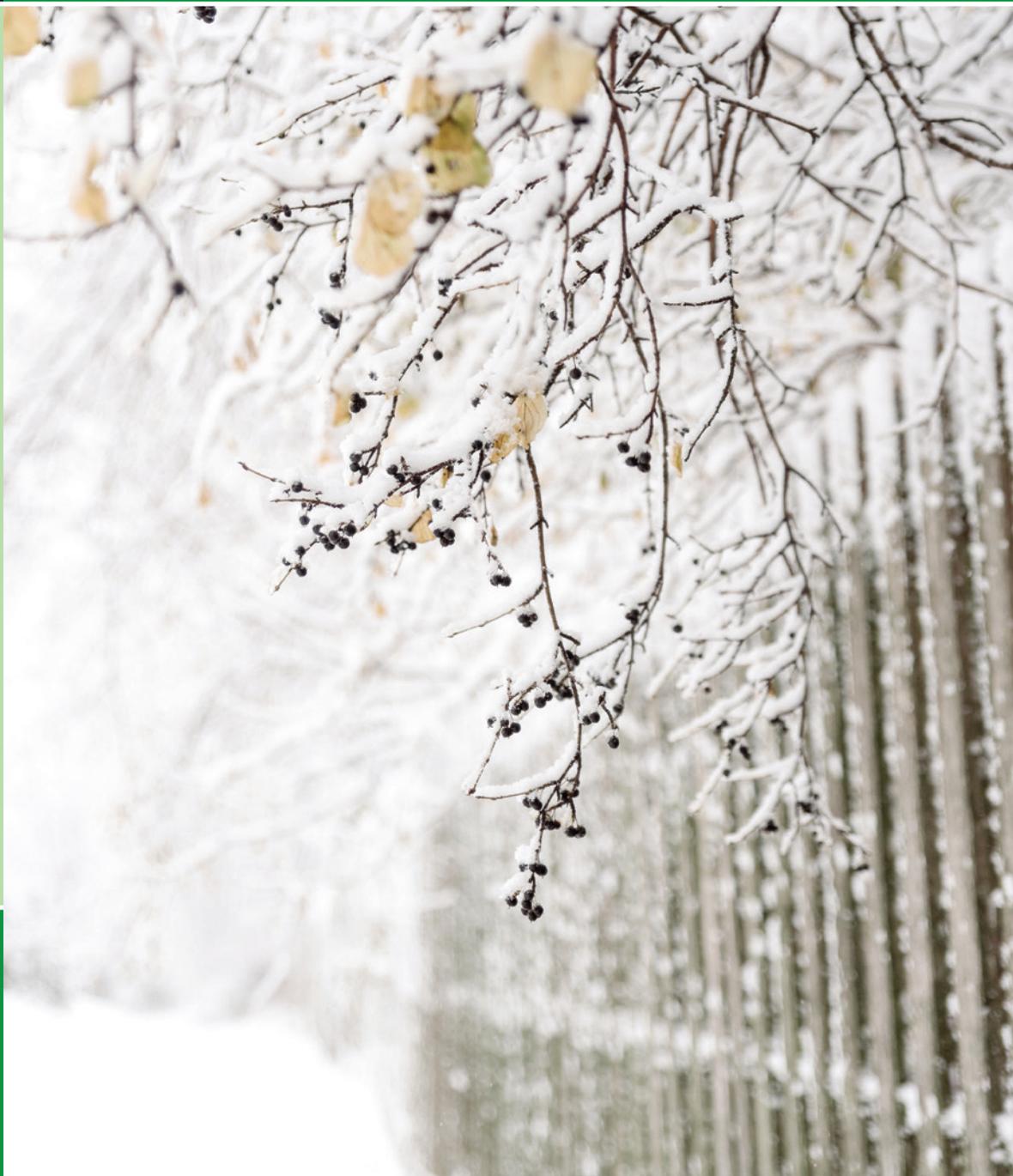
THE ASCENDING DOVE

The Holy Spirit ascending is symbolic of the freedom of the congregation and the power and guidance of the Spirit.



THE GREEN VINE

The vine is the emblem of the living congregation bearing fruit for the Lord.





HIS GOOD PROVISION

I have heard that it's kind of a miracle that the AFLC has not only continued to live but to thrive for more than 62 years now. That's an amusing comment. It could be taken as passive-aggressive criticism in the sense that who we are or what we do doesn't merit existence or even growth.

It reminds me, however, that this venture is ultimately dependent on the work of the Lord, and His continued ministry in our midst invokes praise in my heart. In other words, I thank God for His continued provision and sustenance for us—a miracle indeed.

Furthermore, I'm confident that He will continue this good work. When I look out at the landscape of the AFLC, I see an abundant joy in Christ and the life we have in Him. I see a hunger for the Word of God and a resolute determination to stand on it. It's beautiful, and it's not confined to a certain geographical area or a particular age group. I see it in congregations all over the country and in our mission fields. I see God raising up new generations of Christians who love Him and seek to follow Him.

I pray you will enjoy the ministry updates in the following pages and the miracle of God's work that they describe. You will hear about how your financial gifts are blessing those particular ministries, as well as the ongoing needs that they have. It's true that the President's Office and the Coordinating Committee have financial needs, too. We'd be happy to talk with you anytime about how you can partner with my office in assisting pastors and congregations and promoting the work of the AFLC, or with the Coordinating Committee in the administration of the AFLC.

One of the distinctive characteristics of the AFLC is that we don't require a tithe to the headquarters, or "membership dues," or anything like that. I'm so glad we don't. It frees our congregations and individual giving partners to share from their hearts, spontaneously and cheerfully. In this way, you can say that every year we meet our budget; it's a miracle. While that's not an excuse for poor stewardship, I praise God for the constant reminder that this is His work, and He provides according to His good and perfect will.

Thank you so much for your investment in your congregations and in the shared ministries of the AFLC. Thank you for your prayers, your time, your service, and your resources. God is at work, and He's in the business of miracles. Enjoy that reality, and join me in praise to the God from whom all blessings flow!

~ Pastor Micah Hjermstad

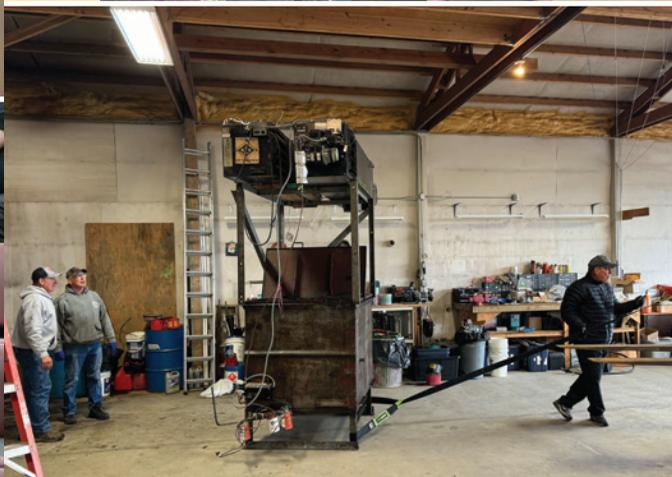


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Keeping our Alaska PLANES FLYING



The last week of September 2024, I spent seven days with Jordan Rumohr, Pastor Henry Mohagen, Bill Holt, and Ted Chick as we visited the wonderful believers who serve the Alaska Mission. Our mission trip consisted of helping Josh Fish, our Alaska Mission pilot and mission maintenance manager, as he worked on several airplane and hangar maintenance projects.

The first project was to remove the old waste oil furnace from our FLAPS hangar. The old furnace had become very maintenance intensive to run, took up a lot of space, and left a black, sooty oil film on the walls. The furnace removal and patching of the chimney and oil supply line holes went quite well. We had this project finished on our first afternoon. Having the furnace gone left extra room in the hangar, making it much easier to work on and store two airplanes at once.

The next project was to clean the soot off all the walls and repaint them. Eleven gallons of white paint later, the inside of the hangar looked much cleaner and brighter. Projects can be accomplished quickly and pleasantly with Christian friends working together. We also built a new stand for the heating fuel tank outside the hangar and repainted the tank.

We then turned our attention toward the required annual inspection on the FLAPS Cessna 182. It took two days to remove all the inspection panels, clean the spark plugs, reset the engine timing, clean and grease the wheel bearings, and then put everything back together. We also installed rock deflectors on the main landing gear wheels to prevent rock dings. These dings are common when you operate on gravel runways. An AFLC Foundation grant this year made the purchase of the rock deflectors possible. Jordan also discovered that the propeller governor on the 182 had an Airworthiness Directive, requiring it to be replaced with a different approved governor. Thankfully, he was able to locate one in Anchorage and have it shipped out on Alaska Airlines. Amazingly, it arrived five hours after he ordered it! While the maintenance was being done, we cleaned and waxed the 182 to protect it from the harsh salty conditions that are a constant problem near the Bearing Sea.

With the 182 completed, the FLAPS Piper Cherokee 140 and Cherokee Six were moved into the hangar. We washed and waxed both planes while Josh and Jordan removed and replaced a difficult-to-access worn control cable pulley on the Cherokee Six.

It was a blessing to finish these projects and have the airplanes ready for the work of the Lord. We were also able to attend several Sunday worship services, Bible studies, and a men's study and coffee gathering. Fellowship with our AFLC Alaska believers is always very special. Perhaps God is calling you to help at the Alaska mission in some way in 2025.

~Kevin Lee

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Celebrating GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

Home Missions would like to express our gratitude for the ways the Lord has been at work within each of these congregations. We are truly thankful for the dedication shown by the individuals and families who have built and nurtured these congregations. We celebrate Waikiki Beach Gathering, Hope Lutheran Church, and The Source as they transition off Home Missions support. We give praise for God's faithfulness throughout their journey. Each congregation has made a significant impact in their local communities and we are excited to see how they will continue to grow and expand the Kingdom of God. Thank you for your unwavering support and prayers. Together, we look forward to the bright future ahead for these churches.

• Waikiki Beach Gathering, Honolulu, Hawaii

As I look back at these first eight years of the Waikiki Beach Gathering, I am thankful. I am thankful for Pastor Paul Nash who believed in me from the beginning and let me pursue this dream through the AFLC. I am thankful for Pastor Jim L. Johnson who embraced the Waikiki Beach Gathering and led us through the steps of becoming established. I am thankful for Pastor Andy Coyle and his continued leadership and passion in helping us plant. I am thankful for everyone in the AFLC who has been praying for us or giving financially to the Gathering!

~Pastor Brady Arneson



• Hope Lutheran Church, Enderlin, N.D.

"Then it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made" (Genesis 8:6).

The faithfulness of God is revealed to us in the simplest thought such as Noah opening the window of the ark. Over the last 14 years, members of Hope AFLC of Enderlin, N.D., have seen God's faithfulness through the open window of God's provision. Through AFLC Home Missions, church plant supporters, 103 members, and several visitors, our congregation has become financially stable. Through God's faithfulness, we will be able to continue to declare God's Word to our congregation and community, strengthening believers and reaching the lost.

~Pastor Thomas W. Olson



• The Source, Mesa, Ariz.

We are grateful to share our testimony of God's faithfulness at The Source Church in Mesa, Ariz. Throughout the history of The Source, God has shown his unfailing love and provision. God unifies our leadership team and provides for every need through the faithful support of our congregation, AFLC Home Missions, and timely donors. He brings individuals with needed talents and ideas into our community. We are praising God for the work he is doing now to make our coffee shop ready for a public opening! Please help us pray for the day it will open and complete our vision "to provide a daily environment where ordinary people encounter the extraordinary God." We are grateful to be part of the AFLC community, working together to advance the gospel.

~Pastor Eric Johnson

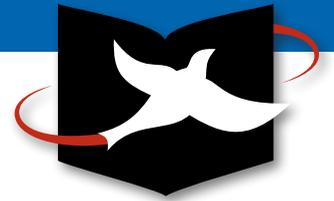


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Investing in BIBLICAL RESOURCES



One training accomplishment that we enjoy sharing about our Ambassador Institute graduates is their memorization of 2,200 verses of Scripture. But what does that look like, say three years after graduation? Could you walk up to our graduates and ask them to recite a random verse from our curriculum? For instance, could you ask, “Hey, what is Matthew 4:7?”

No, it doesn’t work like that. That verse comes from curriculum lesson number 30, “Jesus’ Baptism and Temptation.” It is true that our graduates mastered memorizing 27 verses in that lesson halfway through our program during their third term. But unless our graduates have routinely shared that story since their mastery of it, it is unlikely that they could still deliver all 27 of those verses with the same level of accuracy. Memories fade. Review is necessary.

Then why do we go to all the work of memorizing 2,200 verses? We are building something larger than a well-stocked memory bank. Somewhere along that journey, our students gain a sharper focus of their kingdom identity: We are disciple-makers. We are disciple-makers who make disciple-makers. Part of that means becoming a constant storyteller. Our teachers impart in our students a weekly desire to review and relearn Scripture so that the hungry listeners who wait for us both inside and outside our classrooms can devour God’s Bread of Life.

This is where our special project to invest in biblical resources comes in. Not all of our graduates can easily afford to print their own copy of our teacher guidebooks. Guidebooks are in short supply and often need to be passed around. Giving to this project allows our graduates the ease of returning to a familiar lesson and bringing it yet again to fresh listeners. This project also helps provide a Bible to every graduate to assure their Scripture selection can go beyond the 84 passages that have been chosen for our curriculum.

Finally, the project helps distribute audio Bibles and audio curriculums to give the same advantage to our illiterate students and teachers. I can remember one persistent older woman in the remote community of Galiyira. With the help of a translator, she would ask me about an audio curriculum every time she saw me. She also passed along messages to me through other people. Unfortunately, it was some time before I could help her as we have not yet found access to good quality micro-cards in Uganda. Our supplies have to be imported in our suitcases. I guess we could call this project a sort of spiritual arms dealing.

You can find the Biblical Resources Project on the AFLC World Missions approved special projects web page.

~**Michael Rokenbrodt, missionary to Uganda**

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afclworldmissions.org/approved-special-projects



They belong to JESUS CHRIST, THEIR SAVIOR

Praying for teens in need of the Holy Spirit's presence in their lives



This fall, we are welcoming two new junior high students into our youth group. One of them is at his breaking point and in need of hope. For this student, joining the youth group will be a lifeline we hope and pray will help deliver him from the same sad song that his older brother and sister sang when they were in the same difficult period of life. But his verse comes with a twist. One additional trauma has been added to his young life. His family is poor—not enough money for food, clothes, or even shoes. He has moved frequently because his fighting parents cannot pay the rent. And in addition to that, he witnessed a traumatic event with an older sibling at home. It's no wonder he is on the verge of exploding.

But he belongs to Jesus, and the Spirit of the living God is his helper. He's been in our Kid's Club since he was in kindergarten, and the "right" answers fall from his lips like autumn leaves. He has hidden God's Word in his heart, so in this spiritual fight he is not alone. He is armed with the best weapon a believer can have: the full armor of God. He has people who love him, and he has you—a fellow prayer-fighter who can help him by praying.

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."

~John 14:26–27

We pray that the Holy Spirit will put a new song in this young student's heart. A song of praise and peace to the God who delivers him from his troubled life. This troubled life is only made new through the Spirit of Jesus, the Captain of his salvation who can bring peace to his troubled soul.

~Pastor Todd and Barb Schierkolk
AFLC World Missionaries to Jerez, Zacatecas, Mexico



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Seeing the
Light of *God*
in the
Face of *Christ*

A study of light in the Gospel of John
by Vicki Johnson

Passing on the LEADERSHIP BATON

The WMF leadership baton was passed to our new president, Karen Pederson, and communications secretary, Linda Fugleberg, after elections were held during the AFLC Annual Conference in June. In II Kings 2, a similar baton or mantle was passed from Elijah to Elisha, and God's work continued as it does today. Your WMF officers met at the AFLC campus in Plymouth, Minn., at the All Boards conference this fall to pray over our WMF, meet with our AFLC department heads, and select projects to be funded by our WMFs across the country.

The "M" in WMF stands for missions. Here is a look at each of the projects we desire to fund as gifts come in.

- AFLC Parish Education: Putting missionary stories into leaflet format for Sunday school lessons.
- World Missions: Supporting missionaries in Brazil, Paraguay, Mexico, and Uganda.
- Home Missions: Funding mission church plants as needed.
- Seminary students: Funding for textbooks and a subscription to *The Lutheran Ambassador*. Encouraging seminary wives by giving them spiritual training to assist their husbands as they study in our Free Lutheran Seminary.
- Free Lutheran Bible College: Furniture replacement in dorm rooms and lobby.
- General Fund: Funding our yearly Bible studies and operating expenses, which cover the necessary expenses for the work of WMF to carry on.

The WMF's main desire and prayer is that women in our churches are involved in studying God's Word. The WMF's Bible studies focus on books of the Bible or Bible topics in 11 lessons that can be used monthly or weekly, however fits your needs. The 2025 study is *Seeing the Light of God in the Face of Christ*, a study of light from the Book of John, written by Vicki Johnson. Studies are available through the Executive Secretary (aflcwmf@gmail.com).

~Karen Pederson

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Liz McCarlson, second vice president
Karen Floan, recording secretary
Linda Fugleberg, communication sec.
Margie Lee, treasurer



Celebrating our 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Journey Missions has had a great 2024 as we've celebrated our 10-year mark serving our AFLC. My wife, Heidi, and I continue to rejoice in the Lord for the many opportunities we've had and we look forward to having many more in the coming years. It's been truly a pleasure to be involved with our local congregations, missionaries, and of course our ministry team members and missionary assistants.

Journey Missions continues in the desire to give people opportunities to visit our AFLC World Missions ministries through short-term ministry trips. This is an avenue to see and experience an AFLC foreign field that has often been prayed for and supported over the years. We hope that personally participating in the work in a hands-on and tangible way gives people a better avenue for sharing about the ministry work being done as well as better opportunities to pray for the ministry and people involved. Whether on a short-term ministry trip or serving as a missionary assistant, the vision for this ministry is for people to serve our Lord Jesus cross-culturally and be able to pray for those who are serving internationally full time.

Throughout this year, Journey Missions has led/coordinated a Mexico trip through the Free Lutheran Bible College (FLBC) cross cultural ministry program and a Brazil trip led by Bill Gellert.

As we look at 2025, Journey Missions has trips scheduled for churches and congregation members to join. However, if there's an additional trip you'd like to take to one of our fields, we can have those discussions, too. We are here to serve our congregations and help our church members see the mission field.

Journey Missions has two trips this coming spring. In February we will travel to Brazil to participate in the AFLC Brazil Carnival Camp. In March we will lead the FLBC team to Mexico through the cross-cultural mission's program. This has been an ongoing blessing to see young adults plugging into international ministry and seeing how they have a place in missions. Looking towards summer and later 2025, Journey Missions is hopeful for another Oaxaca, Mexico, trip in August and we are finalizing a schedule for an Israel opportunity in the October/November time frame.

As I think about the people who are serving, and who have served, with and through Journey Missions, I praise the Lord for those who "go," fulfilling the call the Lord has placed on their lives for this time. People are excited to travel and see the work the Lord has done and we're thankful that they have chosen to utilize Journey Missions.

I also rejoice as the Lord calls and sends out others through your finances and prayers. You have provided, and continue to provide, fellow believers an opportunity to serve the Lord in a new and powerful way. We give glory to God and praise Him for you senders; you are having a great impact on the world for Jesus!

Thank you for your prayers and support of Journey Missions and those called to "go" for such a time as this.

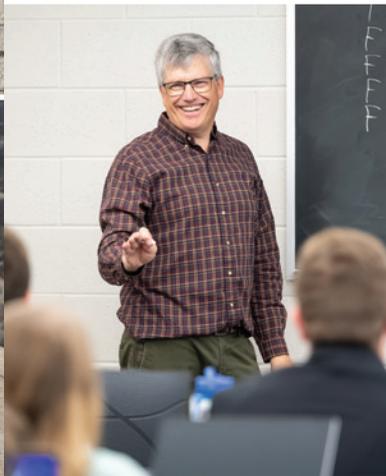
~Jon Nelson



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Stewarding OUR GIFT



**Dr. Wade
Mobley**
FLBCS
President

CONTACT

Do you know a potential student? Connect them to the resources on our website at flbc.edu/admissions or email admissions@flbc.edu.

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Plymouth, MN 55441
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One of my favorite recurring experiences is welcoming new people to campus. I watch their faces as they meet people, get a feel for campus, and look at our neat, clean facilities. What really shocks them, though, is our program. It is not just for future pastors and missionaries, but we have a Bible and ministry program that is a foundation for all of life in Christ.

Perspective is a gift. It is helpful to see through the eyes of another what has become familiar to you. I experience this more than most, and it is extremely encouraging. People are impressed, even relieved, to know that a place like this exists, offering some combination of “I wish I would have known about this place when I went to college” and “Man, I hope my kids go here!”

Three thoughts come to mind:

1) Our Bible College and Seminary is a gift to the kingdom of God. The AFLC began in 1962 and almost immediately began a seminary for pastoral training. A Bible school soon followed. Intuitively, this institution began for the benefit of the AFLC, but its impact has grown far beyond. We are doctrinally Lutheran by confession and in class, but we teach students from a broad variety of Christian expressions in the classroom and through dorm discipleship. In that way, FLBCS has influence far beyond the AFLC.

2) When you give to FLBCS or encourage students to attend you are giving a gift. Parents, pastors, and youth workers are still the number one reason students attend FLBC, and the majority of our pastors sensed a call to pastoral ministry while they were observing healthy congregational life. You have a major impact in what, where, and how well students will study. When you see Christ’s work through graduates in your congregation thank God for His work— you are seeing the impact of your gift in action.

3) The mission of FLBCS is ours to steward, not to own. This place means a lot to many of us. It almost becomes part of you. But that can be a danger: God is the giver of every good and perfect gift. We will be *establishing students in the eternal and inerrant Word of God for life in Jesus Christ and faithful service in His kingdom* long after any of us as individuals are gone. We are stewards—not owners—wholeheartedly believing that what is good for the kingdom of God is good for FLBCS.

You are a part of that stewardship. As you and your congregation give to the mission of FLBCS, introduce us to potential students, or pray fervently for God’s provision and direction, you become a direct part of establishing students in the Word of God for life in Jesus Christ. Individual souls, entire families, congregations, and societies benefit from your investment. And that’s a gift to celebrate.

~Dr. Wade Mobley



Seminary: Preparing the man

Preparing to be a servant pastor involves more than just learning Greek and Hebrew. It includes more than learning how to understand and exegete a passage in the Old and New Testaments. It encompasses more than learning how to preach the text, counseling the confused and hurt, learning the difference between orthodoxy and heresy. All of those are very important, but they matter little if the man himself is not right with the Lord.

Ministry of the Word proceeds from the heart of the Pastor. If the heart of the Pastor is not right, if the Pastor is arrogant, if the Pastor is without integrity, he cannot be a proper minister of the Word.

We begin then with the personal lives of our seminarians. Are they trusting Jesus alone for their salvation? If Jesus is not their Lord, they cannot preach Jesus as Lord. We have devotions every morning with the seminarians themselves leading a time of study in God's Word along with a time of prayer on our knees. I meet with them personally and our faculty mentors the men individually. The full-time faculty consists of men who have spent years in parish ministry so that they can invest in the training of parish Pastors.

The goal is that our men will minister to the congregation and love them. I don't know if loving the congregation can be taught, but it can be observed in our men. This is why our residential program is vital in preparing the man for ministry.



Dr. James Molstre
Seminary
Dean

Bible College theme: Behold Our God

This fall, we are praising God for 116 students who have devoted themselves to the study of God's life-giving and life-directing Word. The theme we have chosen for this academic year is "Behold Our God." This is the focus of our program. We direct students to God's Word, where they can behold him, most clearly in the person of Jesus Christ. We are working our way through the Gospel of John during our Tuesday chapel services. John's account of Christ's life gives us a narrative glimpse of "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

We are also excited to see God's working through a couple of new opportunities and ministries on our campus. We have welcomed our first cohort of bachelor's and associate's degree students to our campus. These programs gives our students a more robust opportunity to delve more deeply into the content we have offered to prepare them for a life of faith in Jesus Christ, and for faithful service in their congregation. As part of our new program offerings, we have added courses in educational foundations to help students think, speak, write, and listen to apply what they are learning from God's Word to ministry application.

Secondly, we have partnered with a ministry called Beyond Limits to serve students with disabilities. This ministry gives students with disabilities an opportunity to grow and develop their faith and life skills in a Christian community with their peers. Five students are participating in this program, and their presence on our campus and in our dorms have been a blessing and encouragement, both to them and our traditional students.

We appreciate your prayers as we continue our mission of establishing students in this Word of God in a community setting. Your support for our students and our school is greatly appreciated!



Pastor Adam Osier
Bible College
Dean



Living out our mission

Your generosity in giving helps us live out our mission.

- Our faculty teach students to love Scripture and the Author of it.
- Students are taught to see life through the lens of God’s Word.
- Students learn on a beautiful campus in well cared for facilities.
- Athletics build character, strength, and endurance through programs built on Scripture.
- Students minister in AFLC congregations around the country.
- Friendships thrive long after students leave campus.
- Discipleship staff support spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of students.

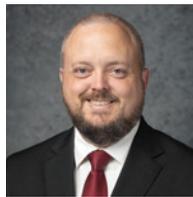
Your giving fuels the action to “Start Here. Go Anywhere. Grounded in God’s Word.”

~Sherry Mork, Director of Donor Relations



Strengthened in my faith

In seminary, I have encountered the realities of a personal God, who died and rose again for me. This personal God draws me to Himself, strengthens my faith, and builds me up through a community of believers. As I prepare to graduate from seminary I will continue to cherish the relationships I’ve formed with my brothers in Christ.



Troy Hanson
Seminary Intern



Thankful to be a student

I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude for being able to grow in my relationship with Jesus Christ through spending time with Him in His Word at an institution proclaiming God’s truth despite a culture that embraces so many lies.



Ella Kleve
FLBC Sophomore

CONSIDER GIVING TO OUR MISSION

Thank you for your faithful support of the Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary. You can give to the Annual Campaign at FLBC.edu/give. Contact Sherry Mork, director of Donor Relations, for more information about planned giving, charitable remainder trusts, or required minimum distributions:

sherry.mork@flbc.edu
763.412.2004

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Dec. 6–8: Christmas Concerts
- Jan. 15–16: Seminary Symposium with Dr. Reed Lessing
- Feb. 21–23: NIAC Basketball Tournament
- March 15–30: Spring Break
- April 4–5: Campus Days
- May 2: Spring Concert
- May 3: Graduation

Info and event registration at flbc.edu/events

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Tools to help you SHARE YOUR FAITH

“As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he rose and followed him” (Matthew 9:9).

It can be confusing to use the term “Christian” these days. It seems that everyone has a different idea of what that means. However, Jesus was much more direct. Throughout the Gospels, he called those who would believe in him to, “Follow me.” In that time, it was quite common for religious teachers or rabbis to take disciples, followers who would commit to staying with their teacher, learning from him, internalizing life lessons, and following his example so that they would become exact duplicates of their master.

This is what God calls us to do, as well. In the Great Commission, before Jesus’ ascension in Matthew 28, Jesus called his disciples to “make disciples,” those who would become followers of his teachings so that they would become more like him each day.

It is this picture and call to “follow Jesus” that we hope to encourage and inspire through our new podcast, “Living as a Disciple.” Beginning with a deep dive into the Great Commission and what it practically means for us, we hope that our listeners will find our 30–40 minute episodes to be informative, practical, and encouraging to all who would desire to “live as a disciple.” Future episodes will also include interviews, resource reviews, and many practical insights from real people who are also seeking to live as a disciple in this post-Christian culture. “Living as a Disciple” episodes are available now through our website (aflc.org/evangelism) as well as through Spotify and Apple podcast services. We hope you will join us for an episode very soon!

Have you ever wondered, “How can I share my faith in Christ in today’s cultural climate?” Or even, “Should I?” We have a new resource titled “Preparing to Share Your Faith” that will help you think through these questions and begin to equip you for those unique opportunities that God has for you in your everyday life. Please check this resource out in our website, where you can download and print your own copies, or contact us at evangelism@aflc.org to purchase bulk quantities.

Thank you so much for your continued prayers and support for this ministry. It is our goal to encourage, equip, and assist our AFLC congregations and pastors in making and equipping disciples. We appreciate your support. If you would like to help us in making these and other resources available, you can support this ministry online at aflc.org/evangelism/donate. Thank you so much!

~Pastor Randy Nelson



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- Micah Johnson
- Pastor Brady Arneson
- Pastor Tom Parrish
- Ignacio Davalos
- Tom Philips

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CONTACT



Investing in YOUTH WORKERS

One of the ways AFLC Youth Ministries encourages and supports healthy congregational life is by offering training to our teens and youth workers. This training not only provides benefits to individual congregations now but it will pay future dividends that will impact the whole of our AFLC for years down the road. This starts as we look at the individual teens and youth workers and ask how we can best meet their needs and provide training so that they can be confident in their identity in Christ, to participate in their local congregation, and to love and serve their neighbors in the world around them. Historically, this question has been answered, in part, by two events: Youth Workers Weekends and FLY Beyond.

Youth Workers Weekends (YWW) is a retreat for volunteer and paid Youth Workers that takes place every January. An important component of this retreat is training. In 2024, there were 6 presenters and 10 coaches that were asked to come and pour into our youth workers. There were a variety of topics, including resting in the Lord, fortifying your theology as a Youth Worker, working with Congregations and parents in Youth Ministry, doing outreach, how to train volunteers, improving speaking skills, and walking alongside teens that are in crisis.

FLY Beyond happens every other year in the summer. This event is designed for teens who are looking for practical training to serve in their congregations, families, and communities. We train the head, heart, and hands of the teens that attend FLY Beyond, with the intent they are sent home ready to put into practice the training they received.

In July 2024, FLY Beyond invited 6 presenters, 8 panelists, 23 Small Group Leaders, and a variety of other staff who all came to intentionally train our teens. Topics and opportunities for training included: apologetics for reason and truth; tactics for engaging culture; congregational life; music ministry; bible study; leading a small group; questions surrounding identity; biblical theology; and more.

Each year the teams that organize Youth Workers Weekends and FLY Beyond attempt to offer an abundance of high-quality training at a registration rate that our teens and youth workers can afford. There are already many who financially support AFLC Youth Ministries. We rejoice and give thanks to the Lord for those individuals and congregations, without whom our labor of love would never be possible! Now, we are inviting others to join us in our work through a financial contribution. A donation to AFLC Youth Ministries is an investment in the training of youth workers and teens and an investment in the future of the AFLC. Come and join us!

If you have questions about the training that AFLC Youth Ministries provides or would like to discuss further the possibility of a donation, we'd love to hear from you.

~Adam McCarlson



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A publication FOR THE LOCAL CONGREGATION



The Lutheran Ambassador is a monthly magazine published by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Each month features a specific theme, carrying articles both practical and devotional. Our writers—all volunteer lay people and pastors from our local congregations—are a key feature in our publications. Our magazine also includes monthly columns geared toward building a strong devotional life, tackling the basics of our beliefs, and sharing life experiences in order to build up the Body of Christ. All of our articles and columns center around biblical, Lutheran doctrines and heritage.

Our magazine also features news and information from our local congregations, schools, and AFLC departments.

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DEVELOPMENT

EXPANDING OUR DEPARTMENT

These are exciting days for the Development Department as we move forward in the process of adding more staff: a vice president of Development and an administrative assistant. I will stay on as the director. The job descriptions have been posted online, and prayers are continuing to be lifted to God to supply the right individuals for these two new positions.

It has been a longtime prayer of mine that this department would grow and have more on its staff. Now, the Lord is answering my heartfelt prayer. Many who have seen the need for more staff in the department have been praying for such a time as this. It is wonderful that God has blessed the AFLC so much that the Development Department needs more staff. There has been much prayer and planning that has gone on for several years, and I believe the Lord will supply the exact persons for these two positions.

It is an exciting time for me to think of the training that will go into these two positions and the adjustments for all involved. It will be a learning curve for both me and the two hired. Please pray with and for us as we navigate through the months ahead with all the changes and training.

I want our faithful givers to know that with these additions

we will still be prayerfully serving you. We will still share information about all of the ministries of the AFLC, including their financial needs, funding opportunities, and projects they would like to accomplish. We will also be here to assist you in any planned or estate giving that the Lord is leading you to do.

The roll of the Development Department is to serve you as givers to the AFLC in ways that brings honor and glory to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are His stewards here to manage the resources that He has given to us to expand His Kingdom. This includes our time, talents, testimony, and treasures. If you have any questions or information that you need, please contact the AFLC Development Department.

~Pastor Tonnes Pollestad



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Pastor Tonnes Pollestad, Director
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FROM FREEDOM TO LIFE

A gift to the people of the AFLC



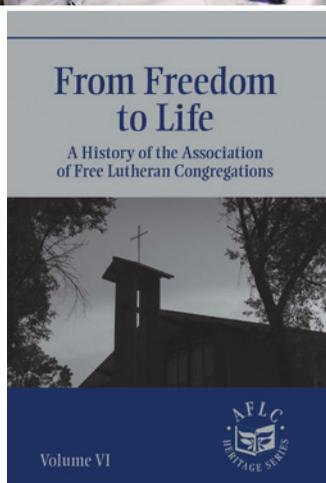
Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is a peculiar name to many, though some of us have grown accustomed to it. Our church body is an *association*—a fellowship of free Lutheran congregations. Our AFLC history begins in 1962. But our free Lutheran history has its formal beginning in 1897 in a movement led by Sven Oftedal and Georg Sverdrup which became the Lutheran Free Church. So what? some may think. What does it matter? In a recent book published by Ambassador Publications, author Rev. Robert L. Lee explains why it is important that we learn our earlier history, providing a warning through a quote by Carl Sandberg, “When a nation goes down, or a society perishes, one condition may always be found: They forgot where they came from. They lost sight of what had brought them along.” *From Freedom to Life: A History of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations* is intended to help us remember where we came from so that we can flourish rather than perish and stand firm on God’s Word rather than slide into compromise.

Lee chose the title *From Freedom to Life* “to express the conviction of our founders that polity or denominational structure is never an end in itself but a context in which true spiritual life might abound.” Lee writes, “My hope is that your reading of this book will not only supply the story of the birth and growth of a small Lutheran denomination. A greater goal is that you might catch the vision that captured me as a teenager, of a unique fellowship bound together not by organization but by Spirit-led commitment to the task of building and nourishing free and living Lutheran congregations.”

Lee’s love of history, gift of memory, and longtime service to the AFLC as pastor, teacher, church history professor, editor of *The Lutheran Ambassador*, interim dean of the seminary, AFLC vice-president, and AFLC president all equip him well to write a history of the first sixty years of the AFLC. Thanks to many of you who supported this project with prayers and gifts!

Parish Education sponsored celebratory events at the 2024 AFLC Annual Conference in gratitude to God for bringing to completion this important book in the AFLC Heritage Series. During the opening service of the conference, it was a great joy to honor Pastor Lee in a ceremonial presentation—a unique, historic moment for the assembly of AFLC friends to corporately thank him for his extensive work on the book as a gift for future generations, and also to recognize his lifetime of dedicated service with the AFLC. A reception and book signing following the service allowed a large number of people to greet the author individually. The next day, attendees enjoyed Lee’s personal commentary on AFLC history during an interview conducted by Pastor Andrew Kneeland and Kirstie Skogerboe. You can enjoy highlights of the events, read a transcript of the interview, and order a copy of the book on our website.

~Marian Christopherson



Funding Needs

- Reprinting *Journey Through the Old Testament* Bible curriculum
- Publishing *2 Peter* Bible study

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ASSOCIATION RETREAT CENTER

ABIDING IN HIM

For the last 45 years of ministry, the ARC has been utilized as a place for people to come away and rest as they meet with Jesus. Our staff have been and continue to strive to be His hands and feet as we minister to those we meet. Over the years, our theme verses have set the tone for ministry. Some of my favorite themes have encouraged us to call on Him (Psalm 17:6) and remain steadfast in the hope that only comes from Him (Colossians 1:23).

As we think about turning the page to 2025, we are encouraged to “Abide in Him.” This is not a picture of stagnation. The Scripture pictures someone bearing fruit. Jesus said, “Remain in me and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me” (John 15:4). We pray that we can remain—abide—in Him and bear fruit that will last.

As we continue in our growth process we are calling on you to pray for our ministry. We also ask you to give, whether through finances or through your time and talents. We have many projects that will sustain the ARC for 50 or more years to come. The 2025 calendar is showing growth, as well. Ninety percent of the groups we hosted in 2024 have re-booked contracts, and we are in conversation with the rest. We also added five new groups, all of them substantial in numbers. Here are a few updates:

- **Current debt load:** \$298,000
- **Gym roof re-construction:** Our contractor has a solution for the leaky roof. We are looking to acquire another \$30,000 in funds for this much-needed project.
- **Covenant & Daniel AC reconfiguration:** Family Camp funds were given to support this project. We are hoping to have air conditioners installed in Covenant and more than half of Daniel by the AFLC Annual Conference in 2025.

~Kirk Rautio, Executive Director



ARC 2025 Events

Side x Side & Sno-Daze:

Jan. 31–Feb. 2

Women’s Retreat:

April 25 –27

Family Work Weekend:

May 23–25

Fire Up & Onward:

June 22 –26

Family Camp:

July 287–August 2

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