

Messenger



AUGUST 2023

## Augustana Lutheran Church

Pastor - Sharon Van Dam

Secretary - Angela Christie

Pianist - Patty Surguy

Office Hours: 9am - 1pm Monday – Thursday



Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church

18499 Twenty Mile Rd.; P.O. Box 198

Tustin, MI 49688

Sunday Worship: 9 am

Church Office: 231-829-3837

[www.augustanatustin.org](http://www.augustanatustin.org)

*"We are called through Jesus the Christ to nurture spiritual growth, welcome all into worship and serve the needs of others."*

Church Mission Statement

## Pastor's Message



*“See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”* (Matthew 10:16)

Learning how to apply this advice from Jesus in today's society can be confusing. In our complex world, we can never lose sight of our need to trust in others. However, knowing who is worthy of our trust can be difficult. As beneficial as much of our modern technology is, it has created opportunities for an ever-increasing variety of scams: ways to trick unsuspecting people into giving away their hard-earned money. Those who resort to this kind of deceitful dishonesty are the wolves that Jesus warns us to avoid by being both wise and innocent.

Recent unfortunate events have reminded me of our need to be wise enough to avoid the “wolves” in our society. Some unknown individual or individuals, sent a phony text to a few of our members. It appeared to come from me, asking for help in the form of gift cards (totaling \$600) in order to help someone in need. Fortunately, our members were indeed wise enough to realize it was an extremely unlikely request and to wisely check on its validity. Thankfully, as far as I know, no one actually fell victim to this scam; however, I am deeply offended at having my name and my position used in this manner.

I am both proud and honored to be called Pastor; to serve as pastor of Augustana Lutheran Church. And I've always done my best to never take advantage of my position. Because I feel a great responsibility to uphold the values of being a clergy member, I try to never take any unfair advantages of it. For example, I'd never privately solicit funds from any of you. I try to never hug anyone unless they let me know that they're comfortable with being hugged. Although I am on Facebook (and Instagram) I'll never send anyone a friend request, which might feel intrusive! However, if you send me a request, I promise to accept it.

So, that's my thoughts about being “wise as serpents.” What about “innocent as doves.” Perhaps what Jesus is asking us is to avoid letting scams and dishonest behaviors cause us to become bitter or lose sight of God's infinite love. To not forget that we've been called to share that love and to do our part to bring about God's kingdom here on Earth.

Peace and Blessings,

*Pastor Sharon*



## Augustana Council

Approved June Minutes will appear in the September 2023 issue of MESSENGER

### Harvest time!

With harvest underway or imminent, fields of ripe grain, tall cornstalks and soybeans turning brown recall Jesus' words to the disciples: "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38, ESV).

Nowadays farmers use fewer laborers and bigger machines than in decades past. But what about harvests of faith? Leading people to know God's love can't be done "mechanically." Studies show that newspaper ads or door-hangers left anonymously are less effective at bringing people to church than a warm personal invite.

Right after urging his disciples to pray for harvest workers — in a classic instance of "You might be God's answer to your own prayer!" — Jesus sends them out as those very laborers! How will they work the harvest? Not by guilting people into faith. Not by pronouncing judgment or biblical law. But by using Jesus' authority to counter evil, illness and brokenness among those they befriend.

Ponder and pray about where Jesus is sending you as his laborer to cultivate and reap Christian faith and assurance of God's love.

The following items serve as "little guideposts on the footpath to peace," according to author and pastor Henry Van Dyke (1852-1933):



- to be glad of life, because it gives you the chance to love and to work and to play and to look up at the stars;

- to be satisfied with your possessions but not content with yourself until you have made the best of them;

- to despise nothing in the world except falsehood and meanness, and to fear nothing except cowardice;



- to covet nothing of your neighbor's except [their] kindness of heart and gentleness of manners;

- to think seldom of your enemies, often of your friends and every day of Christ;

- to spend as much time as you can with body and with spirit in God's out-of-doors.

## WELCA Meeting

There was no WELCA meeting in July. Approved minutes from the June, 2023 meeting will be published in the September, 2023, MESSENGER.

---

## Stewardship of your whole life

Before you read further, stop and list the top five things you value most in life? Then rank them by importance. Go!

All done?

If you're like most people, your top-five list includes family, health, time, God, friends, job, home or community. Does money even show up? For many of us, it doesn't, and yet most of church talk about "stewardship" involves how we use our gifts of money.

Yes, we are "stewards," or caretakers of the material wealth with which God has blessed us, but we are also responsible for nourishing and cherishing all the OTHER blessings that God has put into our lives. That goes especially for the things we value most.

Now refer back to your top-five list. For each, consider these questions:

Why is this item in the top five?

How well am I caring for this?

Am I treating it as one of the most valuable items in my life? Why or why not?

How could I care even more for this item?

How would God want me to care for this, and why?

How would my life change if I really cherished and nourished this gift?

Being a good steward of all the blessings and opportunities God gives to us opens our lives to the full joy and potential that God intends for us. How can you be a better steward of what God has given you?

*-Rob Blezard*

*Copyright © 2022, Rev. Robert Blezard. Reprinted by permission.*

---

**PRAYER CONCERNS\***: Peggy Burns; Sandie Leach; Carlton Plyler; Tom H.; Andrea Foster; Julie Bierema; Janice Peterson; Scott Thompson; Jeff N.; Scott Martinson; Gordon B.; Beverly Reimer; Sophia Hinkley; Marian Byers; Greg Emanoil; Men and women serving in the military – Ian Little.

**PRAYER**  
*list...*

## WELCA News



Please note that our August meeting will be held on **THURSDAY, AUGUST 17 at 10:30**. This change is for August only and is due to the church parking lot being sealed the prior two days.

Additionally in September we are again holding our meeting at Green Acres so that our members residing there can join us. That meeting is scheduled for **September 19 at 10:30 am** and we welcome all women to come. Car pooling can be arranged.



## WELCA Christmas in July

WELCA's Christmas in July for 2023 was another great success with 19 women attending. We had a wonderful lunch at Cast Iron Kitchen in Cadillac, celebrated Shelby Plyler's birthday, and played our traditional "Right Left" game to exchange gifts.



Shelby Plyler would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for all the birthday cards and well wishes for her birthday. She's very appreciative and so thankful for the cards and gifts. Thank you!





## Support for Sophia

Sophia Hinkley is a 9-year-old little girl from Cadillac with stage 5 Wilms tumors on both kidneys. She was diagnosed on 5/7/22 and the tumors haven't responded to chemo at all. If you would like to help Sophia and her family, Joan Chavè is collecting money for a Meijer gas card to help with all the traveling the family does from here to DeVos. Alternatively, the family has a [GoFundMe page](https://gofund.me/7411a730): <https://gofund.me/7411a730>

---

## Prayer from the heart

John Bunyan said, "In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart." A story told by a 19th-century Jewish rabbi shares the same idea:

A disheveled old man entered a synagogue for the first time. Not realizing he was holding the prayer book upside down, he tried to follow the congregation's singing, but his words were incorrect. Finally, he simply looked toward heaven, repeating one Hebrew word over and over.

After worship, some people complained to the rabbi, "Why didn't you ask him to leave?" He replied, "That man said more to God with his one word than some of us will ever say in our whole lives. God hears the words of the heart."

## A cheerful what?

*Guideposts* editor Mary Ann O'Roark recalls hearing the phrase "cheerful liver" so often in church as a girl that she asked her grandmother what a liver is. "It's a part inside you, like your stomach or your heart," Grandma replied.

Rather confused, O'Roark tried to figure out how to be cheerful from the inside out. Then during Sunday school one week, a classmate explained that God loves a cheerful *giver*, not liver. Years later, however, O'Roark realized that her younger self wasn't too far off the mark. After all, God does indeed love someone who *lives* cheerfully, spreading the hope and joy that he longs for all people to know!

After all, it was Jesus who said, "I came that [all] may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10, NRSV).

## A prayer about slowing down

God beyond time ... teach us to pause in this moment, to tuck ourselves into the curve of your slow arm, that we may know the miracle of now, the gift of this moment: you beside and beyond us, welcoming us outside of all we measure, and standing with us in it. May we see the goodness of our still hours and days, sunrises, sunsets, and the darkness where our rest is found.

—Micha Boyett in *A Rhythm of Prayer* (edited by Sarah Bessey)

If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

## The ministry of quilting and of mending hearts

To sew is to pray. ... We mend ... turn things inside out and set things right. We salvage what we can of human garments and piece the rest into blankets. Sometimes our stitches stutter and slow. ... Other times the tension in the stitches might be too tight because of tears, but only we know what emotion went into the making. —Louise Erdrich, *Four Souls*

## Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS



DEWING CENTER • 202 S. Albert St • LeRoy, MI

Discover the Hispanic and Latin people, culture, and heritage! Representatives from the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan will be at Dewings Center with a presentation, to lead a discussion, and with display items. Fourth in a series of Culture & Heritage events. Join us for a memorable cultural experience that will awaken your appreciation of this rich heritage! Cost: Donation of Any Amount

## TUSTIN DAZE 2023

August 25<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup>

**Theme:  
Western**



Northern District Fair Cadillac

August 14-19th



# August 2023 Assisting Ministers

Date	Projector Operator	Communion Assistant	Communion Preparer	Greeters/ Open/Close Church	Lector/ Prayer Leader	Tellers	Coffee Hour Host
August 6	Heather Hammar		Mary Raven	Ted & Mary Raven	Mary Raven	Ted Raven	
August 13	Julie Seguin	Joan Chavè	Sue & George Klingler		Harvey Miller	George Klingler	Sue Klingler
August 20			Arv & Jeanette Otberg	Arv & Jeanette Otberg	Joan Swanson	Arv Otberg	Jeanette Otberg
August 27		Sue Carmody			Jim Carmody		Sue Carmody



## Upcoming Dates to Remember



- Mon., Aug 7th -9:00 AM-Noon – Food Pantry
- Tues., Aug 8th– Parking repairs begin
- Sun., Aug 13th-Annual Meeting following service
- August 15th & 16th– No Parking available
- Thurs., Aug 17th at 10:30 AM – WELCA
- Mon., Aug 21st - 9:00 AM-Noon – Food Pantry
- Mon., Aug 21st at 6:30 PM – Council Meeting
- Thurs., Aug 29th - Deadline for August Messenger

### Happy Birthday!

Joan Swanson – August 10  
Sue Carmody – August 16  
Connie Burgess – August 23  
Mary Annette Gorden – August 28  
Pat Otberg – August 30  
Sue Klingler – August 31



### Happy Anniversary

Pastors Phil and Sharon VanDam – Aug. 1  
Doug and Becky Miller– Aug. 2  
Terry and Jan Marckwardt – Aug. 3

### August

God in his own right hand doth take each day —  
each sun-filled day — each rare and radiant night,  
and drop it softly on the earth and say:  
“Touch earth with heaven’s own beauty and delight.”  
—Jean Blewett (1862-1934)

### Ingredients for true success

How far you go in life depends on your being  
tender with the young, compassionate with  
the aged, sympathetic with the striving and  
tolerant of the weak and strong. Because  
someday in your life you will have been all of  
these.

—George Washington Carver

### Friends with binoculars

At a beautiful outdoor wedding reception in the  
Colorado foothills, a group of us noticed a family  
of black bears on the next hill. We were so excited  
because we’d never seen them in the wild! When  
some friends grabbed binoculars from their car,  
however, we realized the creatures were merely  
grazing cows.

Now I tell this story whenever I’m asked what  
exciting wildlife I’ve encountered in the  
mountains. It gets a good laugh but also reminds  
me that I desperately need friends with binoculars.  
Instead of surrounding myself with people who  
automatically agree with me and don’t challenge  
my perceptions, I need friends in my life who  
search with me for answers, accuracy and truth.  
Let’s all be on the “lookout” for friends with  
binoculars!

—Janna Firestone



# August 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b> Quilting Club every Tuesday 1pm 	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Recycling 9-11am 
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Food Pantry 9-12pm 	<b>8</b> Parking lots paved and sealed 	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Quilting Club 1pm	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b> Annual Meeting	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Parking lots paved and sealed 	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> WELCA Meeting 10:30am	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Food Pantry 9-12pm Council Meet- ing 6:30pm	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> September Newsletter Due 	<b>31</b>		