



Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church

Monthly Newsletter - February 2025 - March 2025

The Rev. Frederick W. Kopp, Pastor

The Rev. Phillip Vender, Pastor Emeritus

Sharing the love of Jesus in our changing world.

Pastor's Ponderings

"Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy." Proverbs 31:8-9

This Old Testament quote from Proverbs is a prequel for Jesus' ministry and His calling for his followers. The church and its people cannot be silent when people do not have a voice, or when people's voices have been taken away. This quote is written by King Lemuel, who is reporting what his mother taught him. (Mom's are smart!)

People who are destitute are those without necessities of life. People who do not have a voice are people dismissed or not recognized in society. The poor and needy represent the majority+ in the world. Thus, we include in our ministry people who are struggling in our local community and throughout the world. Our support for World Hunger and local food pantries are just a small example. It can be overwhelming, but it is our calling to continue to care for others: the refugee and immigrant, the children who are on the streets, the hungry in different countries, LGBTQIA+ people in this country and around the world who are being hurt and mistreated, the addicts, the widows, the people without health care, the mentally ill, the incarcerated, the elderly, the ill and suffering and so many more. Our job doesn't end with Jesus' salvation for us. It begins with that and continues all our lives as we are called to be the body of Christ in the World. Christianity to me has always been an outward looking, selfless calling. In 2025 together we can continue to impact the people Jesus' calls us to impact.

A fellow servant for Christ, I remain

Pastor Fred Kopp





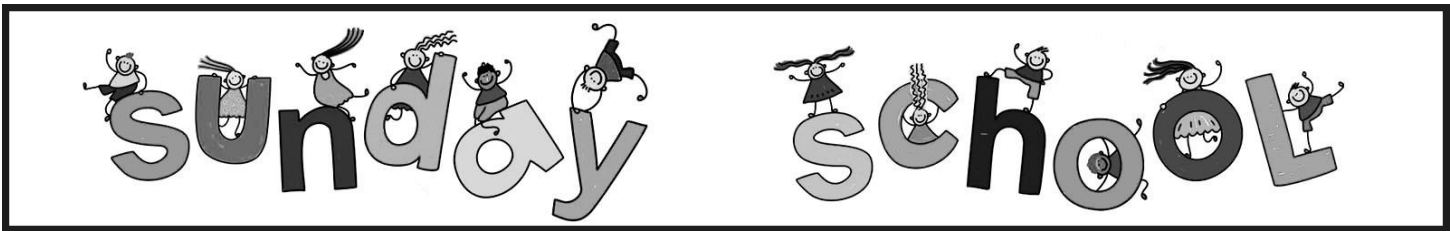
A message from Pastor Fred and Anne:

Dear People of Augustana, We would like to thank you for your prayers, good wishes, cards, Gifts, and the special DELTA gift card this Christmas season and we wish every-one a blessed New Year. **Pastor Fred and Anne**

In Gratitude

Thank you all for the prayers, and loving messages of sympathy at the passing of my mom, Shirley Miller. Your kindness means so much and is deeply appreciated.

Anne and Pastor



Sunday school classes twice monthly --- the **first** and **last** Sundays of each month. Classes follow the readings for the Sundays we have classes.

The children continue to participate in worship, reading lessons and serving as acolyte... It is blessing to have the children participate in worship!

Each Sunday, children bulletins are offered with activities that also follow the readings of the day. They can be used during and after the worship service.

Please spread the news about Sunday School to your friends and neighbors. We'd love to have the children "come and see."

Thank you so much for your help, encouragement, and support.

Dave Ellis, Linda Sokoley, and Johanna Andritz





Reconciling in Christ (RIC)

On Sunday, December 8th, the congregation passed Augustana's welcoming statement. This statement can be found in the announcement section of our weekly bulletin. Thank you!

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27

As a welcoming and affirming congregation, we welcome you in the name of Jesus Christ as beloved children of God. We welcome the doubters, the seekers, those of every race, culture, age, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ability, and financial status. However you express yourself, we invite you to join us as we gather in love and grace for all, sharing the love of Jesus in our changing world. You are unique, you are seen, you are heard, you are safe here, you are needed, you matter --- you are loved.

"Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live, a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive. Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the love of Christ shall end divisions: All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place"

(ELW 641 verse 1 by Marty Haugan).

WNY Church Unleashed

If you are unable to join us for in-person or ZOOM worship, you can watch Lutheran worship on Cable TV Chanel 5 MeTV, Sundays at 10:00 am. "Church Unleashed" is run by Lutheran Pastors, Beigner, Griffiths and Smith. For previous weeks, go to YouTube and search for "WNY Church Unleashed."

Odds *N* Ends **from the Council President**

Council, Celebration, ...

Thank you to all who serve on committees.

Every committee is active and busy!

Thank you to:

- Thank you for your stewardship commitment for this coming year.
- Thank you to all who went caroling. We visited three long-time members. It was great fun!
- Thank you for all of the new hats, scarves, gloves, mittens, and socks you gave for those in need. They will be distributed in Cathedral Park, in the city of Buffalo.
- Thank you for the food you give for the Community of Good Neighbors!
- Thank you for coffee hour! It is filled with love and goodness and goodies!
- Thank you for your donations at coffee hour. We are helping so many people in our neighborhoods and across the world with our gifts!
- Thank you to all the soup makers, dessert contributors, and all the helpers at Augustana's Advent soup supper and service...
- Thank you for all the little things, big things, and all the in-betweens you do for our congregation and the world!
- Thank you to everyone who joins us with Zoom! It is so good to worship together.



Thank you!
God's love and peace,
Johanna





Caroling



Lighting the third Advent candle



Jeremy as a reader with Pastor Dave



Youth Message



**Singing
"This Little
Light of Mine"
and
Shining Our
Lights.**

Refugee Immigrant Driver Education



Drive to Thrive

“Serve one another humbly in faith.” Galatians 5:13

We continue to receive applications regularly for learner permit classes and driving. The need is great!

Our first installment of funding has just arrived, so we will soon begin to invite the first applicants on our waiting to take driving lessons. We hope to begin offering learner permit classes in April.

How can you help? One way you can help is by donating some of your Thrivent Action Team money to the RIDE program. Please continue to keep refugees, migrants, --- immigrants of all kinds --- in your prayers.

Thank you for helping so many immigrants and refugees receive their learner permits and learn to drive so that they can: go to school, go to work, go to the grocery store, pick up their children, take their children to appointments and activities and so much more! It is so important to them. They are very thankful.

Drive safely!
Johanna

From the homepage of AMMPARO

Another commitment of the ELCA, alongside Global Mission.

“God is our refuge and strength,” – Psalm 46:1

AMMPARO is a holistic, whole church commitment by the ELCA, as a church in the world, to accompany migrant families today and in the future.

The word “amparo” in Spanish means the protection of a living creature from suffering or damage. The ELCA’s strategy to Accompanying Migrants with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO) was envisioned after witnessing the plight of children who are forced to flee their communities because of complex and interrelated reasons, including chronic violence, poverty, environmental displacement and lack of opportunities in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. Due to our

connection to companion churches in the region, including companion synod relationships, and existing ministries in the U.S., the ELCA is well-positioned to help ensure that these vulnerable children are protected. In a holistic, whole church response that connects international and US outcomes, the ELCA has developed this strategy based on the following commitments:

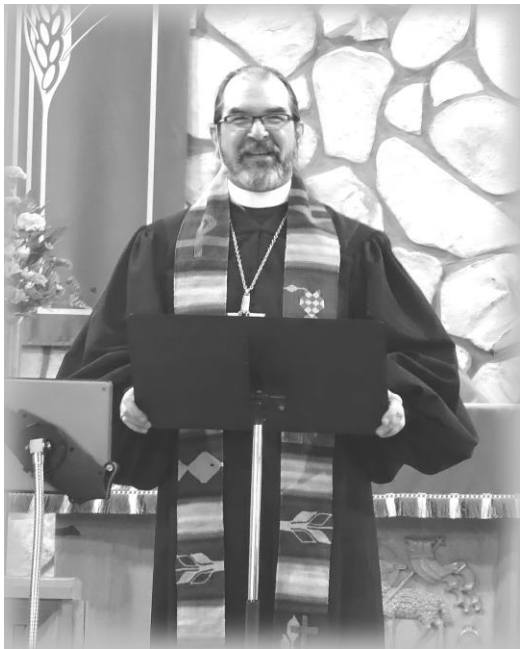
- Uphold and guarantee basic human rights and safety of migrant children and their families;
- Address the drivers of migration around the world and the treatment of migrants in transit;
- Work toward just and humane policies affecting migrants in and outside the U.S.; and
- Engage as a church body with all of its companions, affiliates and partners to respond to the migration situation and its causes and to advocate for migrant children and their families.

As siblings in Christ, the ELCA is called to bear witness to the conditions affecting so many communities and to work to find solutions that will acknowledge the humanity in all of God's children. Join us in making a difference in the lives of vulnerable children and families.

Get involved

- **Pray** for the safety of migrants on the journey and for justice as they reach their destinations.
- **Become a Welcoming Congregation** to accompany these migrant families through their transition to life in the U.S. www.elca.org/Resources/AMMPAR
- **Advocate** for justice for migrant families. www.elca.org/Advocacy
- **Accompany** migrant families through the Guardian Angel Program as the physical presence of the church in the courtroom. <https://Vimeo.com/157458987>
- **Give** to AMMPARO to provide opportunities for migrant families in Central America and in the U.S. <https://community.elca.org/ammparo-donation-form>
- **New program for youth: Bridging Youth to Youth**

Excerpts from synodical Bishop Lee Miller's letter:



Why is an invitation to mercy so controversial?

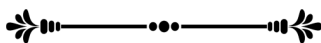
“As we continue our commitment to justice and accompaniment, practicing a G.R.A.C.E. Mindset, it is essential to recognize the interconnected realities shaping those impacted by immigration policies. Immigration justice intersects with racial equity, economic justice, and gender justice. Embracing this intersectional lens in the coming months allows us to:

- Address systemic inequalities by amplifying the voices of immigrants facing compounded challenges.
- Engage intersectional advocacy with partners work-

ing across these areas.

- Resource our congregations with tools to understand the broader social systems impacting immigrant communities.”

...”Our diversity encompasses a variety of ethnicities, cultures, identities, and expressions, including sex, gender, and sexuality. Our church is committed to advocating for and supporting laws, policies, and practices that respect diverse bodies, including people who are transgender and non-binary, and rejecting those which discriminate, objectify, or devalue. Founded by immigrants, this church “advocates for and supports legal reforms, humane policies, and adequate services for migrants, immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, especially those who experience intersecting forms of oppression.” (ELCA Faith, Sexism, and Justice). Advocacy is what love for our neighbors looks like. We join together to stand with who are afraid, speaking a word of mercy, working together for freedom, dignity, and equity for all.”





Community of Good Neighbors

We continue to support those locally who have food insecurity by collecting food items for the Community of Good Neighbors.

We are primarily collecting **CEREAL** - non sugary types.

This is what they are in most need of.

Collection bins are located in the narthex.



Disaster Response Committee

Augustana has a Disaster Response Committee made up of Council members and interested people in the congregation.

All are welcome to join the committee.

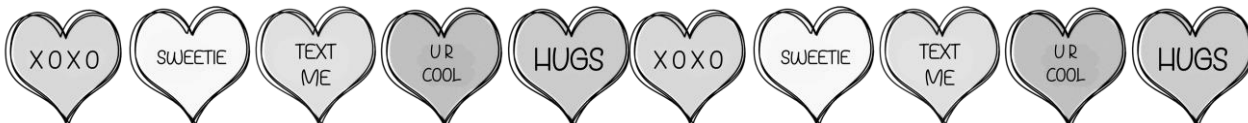
Speak to Johanna if you would like to join the committee.



Sermon Discussion / Input

Pastor Fred invites all to join him in a bag lunch discussion of the texts for the next month of sermons. The sessions are at **Noon, for two hours**, usually on the 4th Wed. of the month, at TOL.

The next session is **Feb. 26**. Please tell Pastor if you plan to attend so he can prepare materials.





Book club will meet
on
Tuesday, February 11
at
7 pm in church.
Join in the conversation!

Augustana Prayer Chain

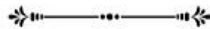


If you have a prayer that you would like
to be shared on the Prayer Chain,
contact Devie Ellis:
RevDevie@aol.com / (716) 909-9583

Woman's Luncheon Group

The next luncheon will be held on
Thursday, February 13th
at

The Roman Cafe
797 Payne Ave
North Tonawanda, New York 14120



The March Luncheon will be held on
Thursday March 13th
at

Lebro's Italian Restaurant
330 Campbell Blvd.
Getzville, NY 14068

All are welcome!

COMING SOON

Saturday March 1st



**CHILI
SALE**



**AUGUSTANA
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

3143 Eggert Rd.
Tonawanda, NY

716-832-5720

11:00am - 2:00pm
Take out only

**Traditional Chili
Chicken Chili
Vegetarian Chili**

\$10.00

Quart

**Check Out
Bake Sale
too!**

*Cookies - Brownies
Corn Bread
and MORE*

BAKERS NEEDED

and

HELP NEEDED

Day of Sale

Please sign up in Narthex

My apology for forgetting to include these letters in the last Newsletter

Sierra Leone Cultural Alliance of Western New York Inc.

November 3, 2024

Augustana Lutheran Church
3134 Eggert Road
Tonawanda, NY 14150

Dear Rev. Frederick Kopp & Congregation:

We need to register our appreciation for your support to the children of Sierra Leone. On behalf of the Sierra Leonean community in Buffalo and the school pupils at the Evangelical Model Primary School at Roknola village, we are pleased to acknowledge receipt of your donation of one hundred and sixty-six dollars (\$166.00) toward the school building project at Roknola village in Sierra Leone. Thank you all for this big contribution to our country and to the lives of our future leaders.

Sierra Leone experienced a record rain fall this year. However, we are looking ahead to plan for work as the rains are starting to subside.

Again, I thank you, Pastor Frederick, your congregation, for all the goodness you have shared with the children of Sierra Leone. I pray that the Almighty God will continue to keep you all in good health and grant you prosperity in the days and years ahead.

Sincerely,

Allan A. Sesay – Secretary



Pastor Frederick Kopp
Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church
3143 Eggert Road
Tonawanda, NY 14150

October 30, 2024



Dear Pastor Kopp:

Thank you for participating in this year's Harvest House Baby Shower. Your kindness, generosity and organization allowed us to have a momentous year. Augustana continues to spoil me by their willingness to help.

The 2023 program had eight participating organizations. In 2024, this total jumped to twenty-five. We were blessed to have participants from every faith group. Presbyterian, Catholic, Lutheran, Protestant, Methodist, Baptist, Muslim, Jewish, the Church of Latter-Day Saints and non-denominational faith groups all united to support this year's baby shower.

This combination produced amazing results.

**2024 results are phenomenal! Look at what a difference a
"Community that Cares" makes!**

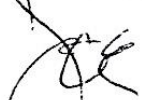
Donation	2023	2024
Diapers	8,000	61,650
Wipes	84,000	324,800
Other Baby Products	850	1,661
Total Market Value	\$13,500	\$63,526

Your kindness helped us fill a 15' U-Haul truck, three-quarters of a 30' tractor-trailer, and three SUVs on moving day.

Pastor, I would like to invite you or a representative from Augustana to join our steering committee for next year's effort. Augustana always exceeds my expectations and is so well organized, it would be a help to have representatives from your church.

Thank you again for your gracious donations. God bless you.

Sincerely,



Joe Somma
Co-Chair, 2nd Annual Harvest House Baby Shower



Deacon Schedule for February and March

Cantor

5 th Sunday after Epiphany	02-09-25	Nate	Beth
6 th Sunday after Epiphany	02-16-25	Paula	Donna
7 th Sunday after Epiphany	02-23-25	Paulette	Ray
Last Sunday after Epiphany Transfiguration of Our Lord	03-02-25	Kathy	Tom
Ash Wednesday	03-05-25	Johanna	Paula
1 ST Sunday of Lent	03-09-25	Ray	Linda
2 ND Sunday of Lent	03-16-25	Pr. Dave	Johanna
3 rd Sunday of Lent	03-23-25	Nate	
4 th Sunday of Lent	03-30-25	Paula	

Host Schedule for Coffee Hour

02-09-25	Lockharts
02-16-25	Linda LiSacchi
02-23-25	Karen Wagner
03-02-25	Ray & Miriam Nagle
03-09-25	Jeff & Judy Thomas
03-16-25	Erma & Clare
03-23-25	Paula Kerr
03-30-25	

Around the Area

Trinity Old Lutheran Church

3445 Sheridan Drive

Amherst, New York 14226

Phone: 716-836-4868 or 716-836-4990

Email: trinityoldlutheranchurch@gmail.com



Lutheran World Relief Quilters Group



The quilters are meeting again on Thursday at 9:00am. All are welcome.

If you can use a sewing machine or iron there is a place for you in the group.

If you are interested or have questions, call Barb Maugans at 716-692-8116

They are collecting flat or fitted sheets in new or like new condition

We will collect them at Augustana and deliver them to the group.

TOL Bible Study Schedule: Biblical Pairs and Trios

Feb. 17 – Hannah and Elkanah

March 3 – Hosea and Gomer

March 17 – Samson and Delilah

March 31 – Ester and King

Xerxes

If you are interested in this series of classes, it is good to get on Charlie's email list so you can be assured of getting updates about any possible changes in the schedule due to weather, etc.

schmidtkecharles@gmail.com

Happy 
Valentine's Day!

Presiding Bishop Eaton Issues Pastoral Message on Executive Orders

January 28, 2025



“When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the native-born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 19:33-34).

Dear church,

I write to you today with grave concern. Over the past few days, ELCA leaders and ministry partners have shared with me the immediate impacts of recent executive orders focused on immigration. I have heard about families frightened of being torn apart and from congregations fearful that their churches can no longer offer safety or support to their immigrant neighbors. I have heard from faith partners ordered to stop services to refugees and from businesses upended by workforce disruptions.

Many of us in the ELCA come from immigrant peoples. As Lutherans, we have a long tradition of hospitality, dating back to the end of World War II, of helping displaced Lutheran refugees, assisting subsequent refugee groups and welcoming new immigrants. Our church has long called for compassionate, just and wise immigration reform. (“Toward Compassionate, Just and Wise Immigration Reform” social policy resolution).

Today, recent immigrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced people are members of our congregations, communities and leadership. The presence of newcomers heightens our awareness of issues of relevance to the church so we can take part in faithful deliberation on public policies, like the ones that have come out in recent days. Our church’s grave concerns grow out of these experiences with the people being affected.

From these experiences, people in our church have learned that the decision to leave one's home country is not made lightly. Many have arrived fleeing persecution because of how they worship, their political views, or their race and nationality. Political instability, environmental catastrophes and lack of opportunities have also compelled many to seek a more dignified life. Out of our own Lutheran experience of knowing many refugees, we have long stood against exclusionary attitudes and policies toward successive newcomers.

Among the policy changes to which our church's social teaching objects include:

- Orders to suspend all refugee resettlement.
- New and sweeping enforcement priorities.
- The summons of military personnel to the border.
- The decision to revoke special guidance regarding enforcement activity at or near sacred or protected places.

Keeping communities safe and supporting the well-being of all people is a goal shared by the ELCA. Yet it's worth naming that these executive actions are increasing fear and division within our society. Some people, including U.S. citizens, are alarmed about immigration enforcement at churches, schools and playgrounds. Some are afraid to seek care at hospitals or to access essential services.

The ELCA supports the view that nations have the responsibility to protect their borders and safeguard their communities. However, these policies must cause "neither undue repercussions within immigrant communities nor bias against them" ("Immigration" social message, page 7). Just policies include recognition of the humanity of immigrants without status, respect for the dignity of those at the border and refuge for displaced people.

The Scriptures are clear. We are called to see anew the image of God in our immigrant neighbors. Following God's call in Leviticus 19 that is echoed throughout Scripture, the time is now.

It is my sincere hope as bishop that various harmful actions will be reconsidered. It is my fervent prayer that we, as church together, will be bold in our witness and actions. ELCA churchwide ministries will continue to provide resources to protect the most vulnerable among us.

Let us together join in:

- **A Call to Prayer** alongside and for immigrants and sojourners, our communities and for our leaders, that they will act wisely and justly, protect all people and not cause harm.
- **A Call to Learning**, using resources such as the ELCA social message "Immigration"; the ELCA's strategy for Accompanying Migrants with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO), including "Know Your Rights" information; and companion resources from Global Refuge (formerly Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service) and Church World Service on the policy changes. Join ELCA AMMPARO and Global Refuge for a webinar, "What Now—Resources for Faith Communities after Executive Orders," on Thursday, Jan. 30, 4-5 p.m. Eastern time. Registration is required. Register here.
- **A Call to Personal Witness** by speaking out against rhetoric that dehumanizes and demonizes anyone made in the image of God, and by promoting accurate information about neighbors and issues of public concern, in the spirit of the Conference of Bishops statement on the need to speak the truth.
- **A Call to Public Witness**, using the resources of ELCA AMMPARO, ELCA Witness in Society and State Public Policy Offices, and joining with our ecumenical partners as we offer faithful, direct witness to government.

As a sanctuary denomination, the ELCA proclaims walking with immigrants as a matter of faithfulness. The ELCA does not call for activity contrary to the law but for congregations, leaders and individuals to explore resources addressing how to interpret this memorial to their own contexts. Most of all, I encourage all to discern together how to live our faith, excluding none from God's overflowing love.

God calls us to welcome the stranger and love the sojourner as we love ourselves. I pray for God's grace to increase understanding of and mercy toward immigrants in these days.

In Christ,



The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

Augustana Lutheran Church 3143 Eggert Road Tonawanda, NY 14150

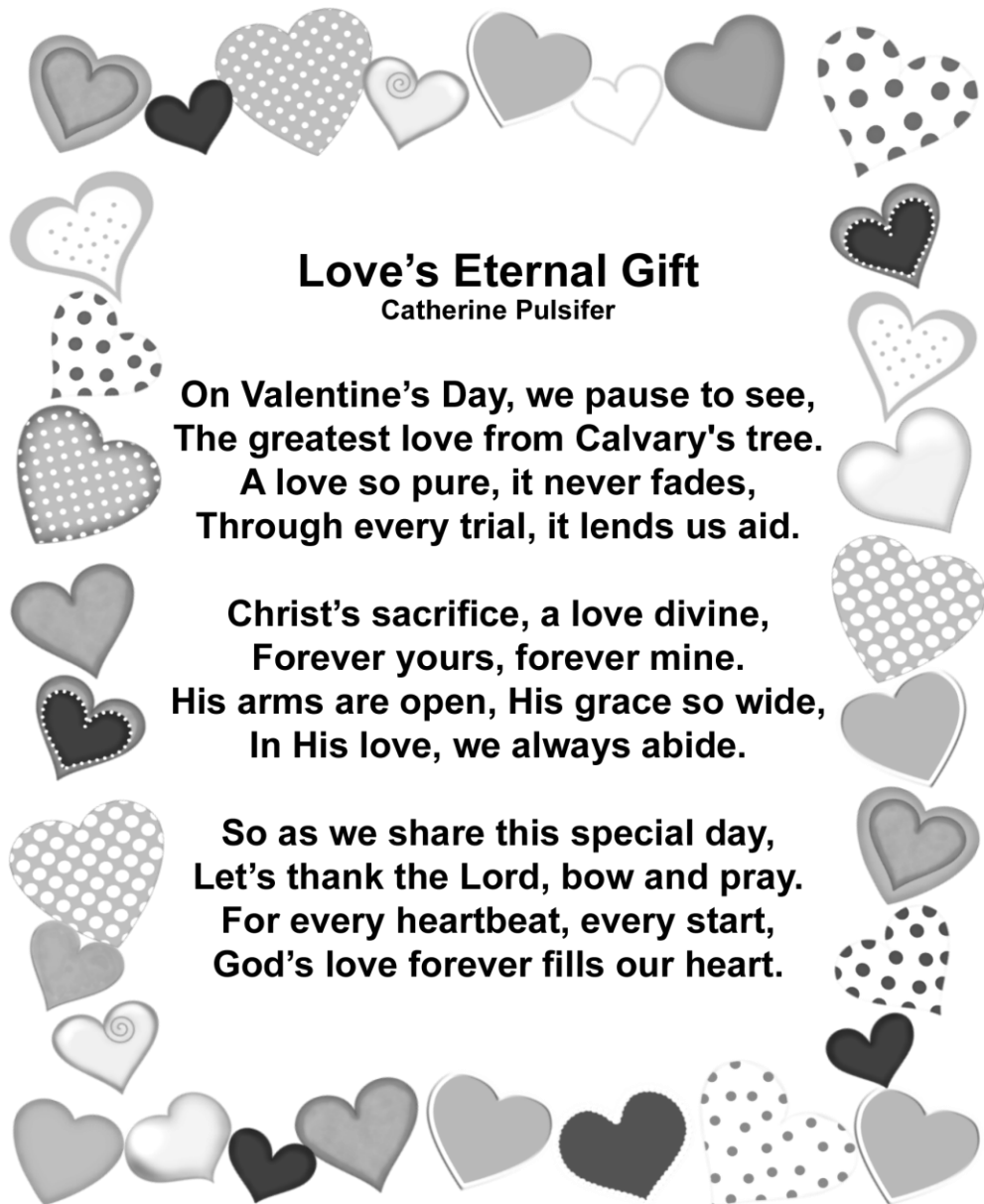
**Sunday Worship at 9:30 in the church and on Zoom.
Contact the church office for a Zoom invite.**

Church Office: (716) 832-5720 / augustchurch@yahoo.com

Pastor Fred Kopp: (716) 984-8541 / augustchurchpastor@yahoo.com

www.augustanaonline.org

Facebook @augustanatonawanda **Instagram** @augustanalutheranchurchtonny



Love's Eternal Gift

Catherine Pulsifer

**On Valentine's Day, we pause to see,
The greatest love from Calvary's tree.
A love so pure, it never fades,
Through every trial, it lends us aid.**

**Christ's sacrifice, a love divine,
Forever yours, forever mine.
His arms are open, His grace so wide,
In His love, we always abide.**

**So as we share this special day,
Let's thank the Lord, bow and pray.
For every heartbeat, every start,
God's love forever fills our heart.**