



# SAINT AUGUSTINE'S HOUSE

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## NEWSLETTER

FALL, A.D. 2022

### ✠ PAX

The Congregation of the Servants of Christ, St. Augustine's House, is an ecumenical Christian community whose life of discipleship is inspired and shaped by the Holy Rule of St. Benedict. We identify with the Lutheran tradition, understood as a movement within and for the one holy catholic and apostolic Church of Jesus Christ.

We are committed to the growth of the permanent resident community, to the pursuit of ecumenical understanding, and to the provision of retreats for members of the Fellowship of St. Augustine and others. We seek to serve the whole Church by our life of prayer and by the use of our facilities.

I recently noticed an article entitled “How to make the most of your remaining years.” As you might expect it was aimed at the sixty-five and older population. This could, of course, equally apply to those of any age, including the very young. It is a version of the psalmist’s prayer: “so teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom” (Ps. 90). Whether our anticipated days are many or few, it is still a finite number on this side of infinity, and that is the operative fact. I have wondered at times about the distinction between growing up and growing old. When we are young, we think of ourselves as growing up, but we are also growing old. Perhaps we should be just as aware that when we are growing old, we still have some growing up to do.

Undoubtedly these thoughts have something to do my having celebrated my 75th birthday this past July. Although I usually consider these milestone birthdays somewhat arbitrary and artificial, I was unexpectedly reflective and even pensive at this birthday. In addition to some surprise at the arithmetic (three quarters of a century!), I am happy to say that my predominate mood was one of gratitude. I have reached a significant milestone in life, which is not granted to all, and have enjoyed good health which continues to this day.

I am grateful for my parents and the stable and loving home life they provided for my myself and my brother and sister; for my extended, multi-generational family; and for the wholesome environment of our small town in the Oklahoma panhandle, which I still think of and call “home.” I can say that my parents and grandparents are the heroes of my life, and their memory continues to inspire, guide, and strengthen me to this day. Childhood is a relatively short time of life, but it provides a foundation and template for the rest of life.

The other great template in my life is the community here at St. Augustine's House and my embrace of monastic life, the “discipleship of Jesus Christ in the way of St. Benedict,” as our literature describes it. In introducing myself I sometimes jokingly observe that I have been institutionalized for most of my adult life; and I can add happily so. Here prayer is supported with discipline and routine and is enhanced with music and ritual. Peace and contemplation are balanced with physical work and intellectual stimulation. I am particularly grateful for the people I have come to know here, both the residents and the guests who visit us. I marvel at



the rather large and diverse network of friends and acquaintances I have come to know here. Somewhat on the introverted side, I am sure that without St. Augustine's House my world would be much smaller.

Now I am in what might be called the fourth quarter of life. I do not expect this next quarter to be the same as the previous ones. I expect it will be more taken up with adjustments to the inevitable deprivations and limitations that come with age and that this quarter may not be as long as the others. Yet I am determined to accept this as one of the seasons of the single gift of life that God has granted me. If we consider a long life to be a blessing, then old age is the fulfillment.

What age of life is the perfect age? The root meaning of "to perfect" is to bring to completion. Seen in that way, old age is the perfect age. It is the age that sums up and contains all the other stages of life. The Scriptures use the language of completion, fullness, or even achievement when they speak of individuals dying "in peace" at "a good old age" or "full of years" or "full of days." Indeed, God himself is often imagined as an old man, "one that was ancient of days," as the book of Daniel describes him.

And what is a perfect body? Or, to put it another way, what body do we expect to have in heaven? Do we want to look like magazine models or our favorite movie stars? And how do we anticipate seeing our loved ones in heaven? Would we recognize our grandparents without their wrinkles and other signs of age? Would we expect—or want—to meet Mother Teresa as a beautiful twenty-something rather than the short, stooped, and no-nonsense woman who ministered to the sick and dying? St. Paul warns against a too material and familiar conception of the resurrection: "What you sow is not the body which is to be...But God gives it a body as he has chosen" (cf. 1 Cor. 15:35ff).

However, there is also continuity in the resurrection. The glorified body of the risen Lord Jesus is still recognizable to the disciples. More remarkable is the fact that his body

still bears the wounds of his crucifixion and that precisely these are the most convincing marks of his identity. Perhaps this is also true of ourselves and our loved ones. The wounds and marks that trace the history of our earthly life will also be present but seen in a new light, seen as a part of our perfected identity.

In this regard I wish that there were more artistic depictions of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a mature woman, seasoned by life. Surely, she did not always look like the young woman the Archangel Gabriel encountered at the Annunciation. I would like to see her as she appeared at the wedding of Cana in Galilee when she commanded the servants (and us) "Do whatever he tells you;" or as she appeared at the foot of the cross when her Son told John his disciple (and all disciples) "Behold, your mother;" or as she appeared after the Ascension gathered in prayer with the apostles (the incipient Church). Surely her "mature years" must now be a part of her glory in heaven.

All of this is to say that old people are in good company, on earth and in heaven. Old age is one of the seasons of life. No less than youth and middle age, it is a part of the single, intact gift of life.

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven" And also: "He has made everything beautiful in its time" (cf. Eccl. 3).

The trajectory of life and living is forward, not backward; it is oriented more toward what is to come, not what has been. This is true in its last season no less than in the time of youth and middle age. The great theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity are the road map, and this is also true in every season of life including the last: faith to guide and lead, hope to encourage and cheer, and the love of God and others to accompany and support us. "O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds. So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me" (Ps 71).

In the boundless love of Christ,  
Br. Richard



# Fellowship Day

Saturday, October 15th

Mass, 9:30 am

Lecture & discussion, 11:00 am

Luncheon, 12:45 (RSVP, please)



## News & Notes

Earlier this year it was decided to donate the “tiny house” that has been on our property for three years, to Billy and Sarah Mark and their community of Christian artists living in Detroit. The community is called Selah House and is a space for artists to deepen their connection to God, to their art practice, and to community. Billy and Sarah and many members of their community regularly retreat at St. Augustine’s House and they look forward to introducing more artists to our monastic community. We and the new owners are grateful to the original donors, David and Ann Strubler, for making all this possible.



Bishop Jeffrey Bischoff is a resident associate member who provides the pastoral and sacramental ministry here at St. Augustine’s. We are pleased to note that at the Annual Synod of the Lutheran Church-International, held last July at First Lutheran Church in Lyons, NY, he was elected to a four-year term as Secretary of the denomination. In this position, he will be responsible for maintaining denominational records and documents. Bp. Jeffrey has been associated with the Lutheran Church-International since 1999, when the group was known as the International Lutheran Fellowship. He also continues to serve as Bishop of the Mid-America Diocese. For more information, see [www.lutheranchurchinternational.org](http://www.lutheranchurchinternational.org).

Daniel Johnson, who has been an aspirant with us this spring and summer, departed early August to complete his college degree at Concordia University Chicago. He is also assisting in the music ministry at Grace Lutheran Church, River Forest. He anticipates visits here during the school year as his schedule allows.



Br. Andy Chang remains in Korea with his parents where they recently celebrated the birthday of his father. We look forward to his return here sometime in the early part the new year. He is pictured below with his parents Byong Kon and Tae Sun.



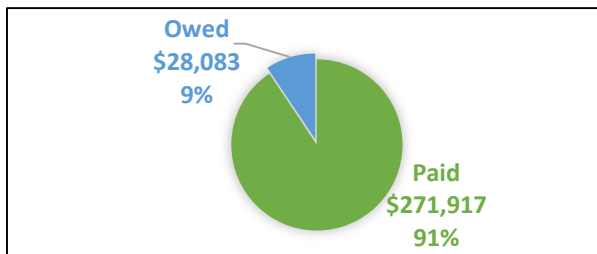
The last Sunday of July Dr. Andrew Meagher, who currently serves as Pastoral Musician at St. Kieran Catholic Church in Shelby Township, presented another of our "Fifth Sunday at Five" organ recitals. The next recital in this series will be on October 30th. Dr. Patrick Kronner is scheduled to perform. He is Organist and Choral Program Director for the Campus Ministry of the University of Notre Dame.

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

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## Mortgage Partners

The monthly mortgage payment is \$3,074. You may participate for any amount from \$100 and up. We gratefully acknowledge the following donors for this quarter from: Leander J. Ecola in memory of Fr. Arthur Carl Kreinheder; Dr. and Mrs. Daniel V. McCallam; Larry and Janine LaBounty; and Britton L. Gordon Jr. in memory of John Baker.



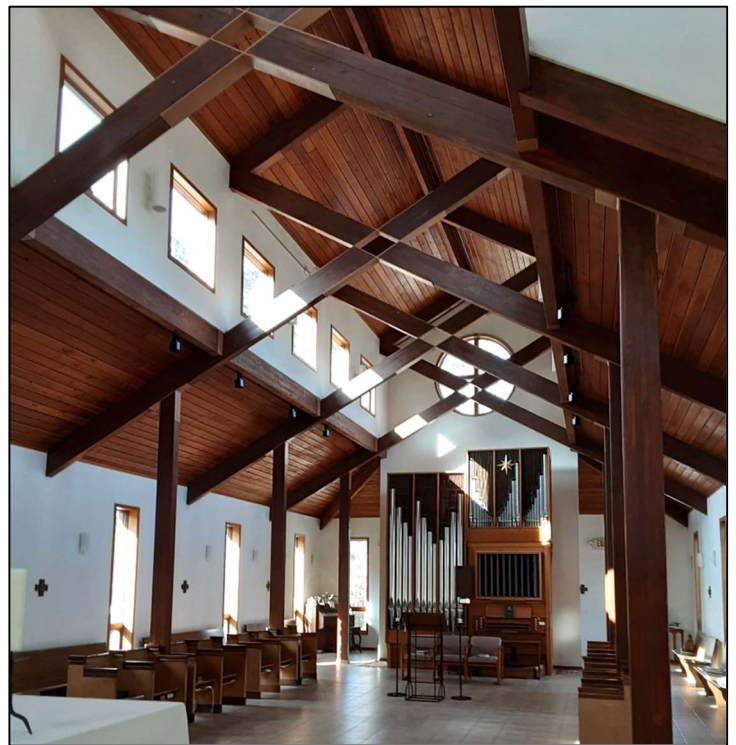
## Fellowship Day

All are invited to join us for Fellowship Day which is scheduled for **Saturday, October 15<sup>th</sup>**. The day will begin with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist at 9:30 a.m. followed by coffee and fellowship. The lecture will begin at 11:00 a.m. and will be followed by a luncheon at 12:45 p.m. There is no charge for the day, but we do ask that you let us know if you are coming so that we can plan adequately.

The lecturer will be the Rev. Benjamin J. Dueholm, pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in Dallas, Texas. His lecture is entitled: *What is "Presence" in an Age of Digital Ministry?* The COVID-19 pandemic initiated or accelerated the adoption of online communication techniques and platforms in many facets of life. Many churches, faced with some combination of official restriction and personal reluctance, adopted video conferencing (making "zooming" into a new verb), live-streaming, and other tools for gathering during a period of "social distancing." This brought new urgency to questions that had already cropped up as

lives moved more and more online: What is the relationship between "virtual" and physical gatherings? In what sense, if any, can a dispersed community participate in the sacraments through these media? And who owns and governs these digital "public squares" in the first place? We will consider both the gains and the losses from ministry online, and the questions Christians should answer as they continue, or adopt, new methods of community in the digital age.

Pastor Dueholm and his wife Kerry have three children. He has written on faith and public life for many outlets, including The New York Times, the Washington Post, the Christian Century, Living Lutheran, and The American Conservative. He made his first visit to St. Augustine's House for a retreat in 2006.



**Grant us, when this short life is past,  
the glorious evening that shall last;  
that, by a holy death attained,  
eternal glory may be gained.**

From the hymn at the office of None prayed in mid-afternoon as the hours of daylight are declining.

Gifts are gratefully acknowledged in memory of

JOHN D. BAKER  
THOMAS A. MCELWEY  
ARTHUR CARL KREINHEDER  
ALPHA SABBITHI  
CLAYTON SEIFRIED