



SAINT AUGUSTINE'S HOUSE

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NEWSLETTER

Summer, A.D. 2025

✠ 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.

“Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name, which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are One” (John 17:11b).

Unity is important. It makes for accomplishment and security in any size group of people from the dyad to the nation, even to the globe. When people work at cross purposes, destabilization and chaos occurs, even if the varied purposes are good ones. However, when people are able to live and work together in unity, then stability and peace is fostered, effectiveness is increased in all areas, and those involved tend to be healthier physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Christian unity is especially important. As the People of God, we are commissioned to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world, and a unified witness is the most effective witness. When those of the world see various entities in the Church working at cross purposes, our witness to the Gospel is clouded and made less effective. When those of the world see the positive unity of the Body, our witness is naturally more credible, which makes it more effective at inducing Faith in the faithless.

A strong figure at the core of a group does much to hold the group together by providing a basis for unity. This can be seen as families shift through the process of birth and death. When a strong matriarch or patriarch arises as the family develops, and then that leading figure is lost to death, many of the established extended family activities and much of the cohesion slips away. Unless another leading figure rises quickly to take the deceased family member's place, or a group of trusted family members work hard to fill the vacuum left by the loss, smaller family groups form and go their separate ways, some developing their own patriarchal/matriarchal figure along the way, and others dissipating into extinction.

So could it be said of Jesus and His disciples. A strong central figure, to say the least, Jesus provided a unifying basis for a disparate group, tax collectors alongside Zealots, in one instance, and maintained unity in that group many times by His sheer will while individual disciples or smaller groups bantered about to gain positions



of influence. However, once Jesus was resurrected and ascended, the unifying figure was no longer present as He was before, and, just as the families described above, the twelve, originally all together, began to break off into this group and that group, some groups developing strong leaders and persevering for a time and other groups dissipating into extinction, resulting in the denominational spread that we witness today.

The faithless in the world see this denominational spread and all its negative effects and shake their heads. “Why would I get together with them?” many say. “They can’t even get together themselves.” So the Church says to them, “You’re right—we really need to get our act together, and begin working with instead of against one another”. One major result of this type of response was the ecumenical movement of the 20th century, when most Christian groups began working toward working together instead of against one another in order to enhance the effectiveness of missionary efforts and efforts to address social ills, hoping that this also would present a more credible witness of the Gospel to the world.

True to the world, though, the ecumenical movement itself has suffered the loss of major unifying figures, and has gone through the same cycle of gain and loss of cohesion as families do. This development highlights the shortcomings of responding to the world. When the Church responds to the world, the Church always misses the mark, since She responds to the world on the basis of the world’s response to Her. Notice that, in this interaction, Her central figure, Jesus, is missing.

But Jesus is not missing. He is present. His going away in his Ascension is not a going away into absence, as when a family matriarch dies, but His going away is a going away into fuller, even the fullest, presence. With His Ascension, the Salvific Act is now

complete, and the world’s situation is changed in the most significant way.

All has now been brought together in Christ. In the Person of Christ, Creator and creation, Heaven and earth, even Life and death are all brought together into One. In his “Sermon on the Ascension of the Lord” St. Augustine stresses that we, the Body of Christ, are with Him in heaven even as much as He is present with us on earth. He has already taken us up with Him, united by the Faith, Hope and Love that He gives. St. Paul gives St. Augustine the basis for his

assertion when he proclaims that it was God’s plan all along to unite all things in Him (Eph 1:10), and that in Him all things hold together through the Peace that was made by the Blood of His Cross (Col 1:17ff.).

We do not need to work toward unity. As surely as we are united with Him, we are already united in Him

through the Grace of Holy Baptism. We cannot work toward unity, not only because that is a task well beyond our capabilities, but also because it is already done. *tetelestai*. It is finished, complete. It is not up to us to work toward unity, but to allow the Holy Spirit to work the already present and complete Unity of Christ in and through us. It is not for us to create a unity that only partially exists; it is for us to live out the unity that already exists.

One of the Eucharistic Prayers used in our Daily Mass, adapted from Eucharistic Prayer D of the Book of Common Prayer, says it well when the Father is asked on behalf of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church to “reveal its unity, guard its faith, and preserve it in peace.” Notice, not praying that the Church would be unified, such as coming to some kind of agreement to develop one overall worldwide denomination as the world usually expects, but that the unity that already exists in Christ would be revealed. The family matriarch/patriarch analogy is false. The Head cannot be apart from the Body.



This is the reality in which we live as believers in Christ, and it is an honor and a privilege to live out this reality here at St. Augustine's House. It is said that Fr. Arthur's original call was to establish a Lutheran monastery and foster Lutheran ecumenism, and such has been accomplished here by the Holy Spirit. Has one Lutheran denomination been developed through St. Augustine's House? No. That is not the point. The point is that the Holy Spirit has made this a place where Christians of all stripes, and even non-Christians, can come together in the Peace and Love of Christ. Not in some kind of idealistic 1970's Coke commercial sort of way, but in the Real Way, the only Way that is really Real, Christ Himself.

Does that mean we all agree in matters of faith and doctrine? Certainly not. Do we ignore or downplay these differences? Certainly not. Rather, we gather in the Church seven times a day, whatever motley crew is present with the saints of all times and all places in heaven and on earth, and sing praises to the Only God. We gather around His Table daily where His Precious Body and Blood brings heaven and earth together in one glorious forgiven and redeemed Holy Host. And thereby, the Holy Spirit fulfills the prayer of Jesus in and through us all.

God be praised.

Peace,
+Jeffrey

News and Notes

We wish to take note of two recent deaths that have affected our community. On February 17th Eugene C. Snooks, an early member of the Fellowship and acquaintance of Fr. Arthur, died at the age of 95. His burial Liturgy was held in our chapel followed by interment in our cemetery. On March 4th James Dean Smith, the father of our resident associate Cherie Bischoff, died at his home in Ohio at the age of 88. His burial service was at the Pemberville United Methodist Church and Bishop Jeffrey from here was one of the officiants.

Just before Holy Week the sunburst stained glass window was installed in the large east window of the



Window Installation

church. We are thankful to artist Robert Kane and his crew at Sunsmith Stained Glassworks for assisting us with the design and then executing and installing it.

Br. Richard underwent knee replacement surgery just after Easter. He is recovering well and looks forward to enjoying improved mobility this summer.

The afternoon of Sunday, May 18th Dr. Scott M. Hyslop presented a recital on our organ. For several pieces he was joined by stringed instruments and solo



Organ and string recital with Dr. Hyslop

voice The recital concluded with the singing of the hymn “Blessed Feasts with Blessed Martyrs” to the tune he composed for the dedication of our organ several years ago and named “St. Augustine.”

In May Br.Andy departed to spend some weeks in Korea to assist his parents as his mother convalesces after surgery on her knee. We expect him to return the latter part of June.



Christian Dubose

The beginning of June we bid farewell to our long-term guest Christian Dubose from Texas. For the past four months he has shared in our life here participating in the daily rhythm of prayer as well as sharing in the work and household chores. During this time, he was also able to complete three online courses:

Hebrew, Latin, and a survey of the literature of Second Temple Judaism.

The next scheduled Fifth Sunday at Five Organ Recital is on **August 31, at 5 p.m.** Our own organist, Daniel John Susan will be the recitalist. He will play works by J. S. Bach, including the complete Trio Sonata No. 1 in E-flat, and a movement of a concerto by Vivaldi arranged for organ by J.S. Bach. Some shorter works by Marcel Dupré and Jehan Alain will balance the program with some ear-friendly 20th century works.

We are happy to announce that Pastor Patrick Rooney, the Senior of the Society of the Holy Trinity will be the presenter at our annual Fellowship Day which will be held on **Saturday, October 11th.** His topic is entitled “The Centrality of the Consecrated Life in the Church Today.” More information will be available in the fall newsletter.

As part of the Fellowship Day weekend, Dr. Dave Wagner, noted Detroit organist, teacher, and disc jockey at classical radio WCRJ, will give a recital at St. Augustine's House at 3 p.m., **Sunday, October 12th.** The recital is free and open to all.

www.StAugustinesHouse.org

Find us on Facebook.

Daily Prayer Schedule

Vigils	5:10
Lauds	6:00
Terce	8:15
On Sundays at 9:30	
Holy Eucharist	8:30
On Sundays at 10:00	
Sext	12:00
None	2:30
Vespers	6:00
Compline	8:30



Let my spirit re-joice in the Lord God my Savior.

Gifts are gratefully acknowledged in memory of

ERNIE and MARY LOU BAKER
JOHN BAKER
ANNE CHERNEY
JOHN R. COCHRAN
JEANETTE GEWEKE
PAUL J. KANE
TOM KNUTSON
BRIAN L. OLSON

and in honor of

CHRISTOPHER TORGLER

Fifth Sunday at Five Organ Recital

August 31st at 5:00 p.m.