Topic Descriptions
2015 Augustana Founders Day Reunion
Jenny Lind Chapel and Augustana Lutheran Church, Andover, Illinois

April 25-26, 2015

ORION SAMUELSON
Speaker - "Andover Children's Home and Lutheran Social Services in Illinois" - Saturday noon lunch

Orion Samuelson is one of the top promoters for Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI). The Andover Children's Home was the cradle of Augustana Synod charities, and the first institution of LSSI. He is best known for his association with WGN Radio in Chicago, serving as the station's head broadcaster since 1960. You can be assured that you will be entertained by this celebrity during the Saturday lunch period.

BISHOP GARY M. WOLLERSHEIM
Preacher - Sunday morning service

Bishop Gary Wollersheim, as the leader of the Northern Illinois Synod - ELCA, has been a staunch supporter of the ministry of the Jenny Lind Chapel. His messages are very inspiring.

PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH A. EATON
Preacher - Sunday afternoon service

Bishop Eaton served a church in Ohio that was originally so ethnically Swedish that worship in English didn't start until the 1930's! Yet, by the time she arrived in 1991, church members were marrying their black neighbors, and little black and Filipino children were wearing traditional Swedish costumes for the Santa Lucia festival.

RON PETERSON
"The Augustana Seed is Sown in Andover"

Ron Peterson brings the grass roots of the Augustana Synod into focus. Having grown up at Augustana Lutheran Church in Andover, he saw the diversity generated by its first two pastors - Lars Paul Esbjörn and Jonas Swensson, both founding fathers of the Augustana Synod. This diversity remained evident throughout the 20th century.

DR. PETER ELLERTSEN
"The Psalmmodikon - Pastor Esbjörn's Singing School"

What in the world is that strange looking instrument in the Jenny Lind Chapel Immigrant Museum? That is Pastor Lars Paul Esbjörn's Psalmmodikon, the first musical instrument used at the Chapel. Dr. Peter Ellertsen, who is probably the most noted modern-day Psalmmodikon researcher, has even had a replica made of Pastor Esbjörn's instrument, and will use it during his presentation.

KAI SWANSON
"Augustana College and Theological Seminary"

Kai Swanson basically "grew up" at Augustana College in Rock Island. His dad, Pastor Richard Swanson, was the chaplain at Augustana during this time. He learned much about the Augustana College and Theological Seminary from Dr. Conrad Bergendoff, who served as head of both of these institutions for many years. You can be assured that you will hear stories that you have never heard before.

DR. THOMAS TREDWAY
"Augustana Synod"

With his touch of humor, Dr. Thomas Tredway will present the story of the Augustana Synod. From delving into the history of the Synod and his exposure to many of its leaders, he will present an insight into why it had such an important part to play in the development of the modern-day Lutheran Church in America.

DR. ANN BOADEN
"Emmy Evald and Women in the Church"

After listening to Dr. Ann Boaden's presentation, you can be assured that you will know much about the women in the Augustana Synod. Having researched and authored several books about the important part they played in the history of the Synod, you will have a good idea of why women are playing an even larger role in the church today.
JILL SEAHOLM  
"Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center"

Jill Seaholm was hooked about all things Swedish when she was 14 years old, and has been helping Swedish-Americans find their way back across the Atlantic since 1992 at the Swenson Center in Rock Island. She will tell the story of the Swenson Center, and why it is playing such an important role in the research of Swedish immigrants and their families.

JOHN E. NORTON  
"Swedish Families in the Augustana Synod"

John Norton's background is filled with stories of Swedish immigrants, many of whom helped shape the Augustana Synod. With a lifetime of traveling, studying, serving as a Foreign Area Officer in the U.S. Army with Sweden as primary specialty, as well as hosting countless visitors from Sweden in our country, he is well qualified to cover his topic.

HELENE LEAF  
"Augustana Heritage Association"

Helene Leaf has been active in the Augustana Heritage Association for several years. Having attended and helped with several gatherings of the group, she will tell the history of the Augustana Heritage Association, and what is in store for its future.

PR. JOHN M. LEAF  
Leader of "Sharing our Past" plenary

Pastor John Leaf will be seeking stories from the registrants. The purpose of this plenary session is to share interesting stories about Swedish immigrants and the land they came from and the new land they settled in. This time of sharing is one of the highlights of the Saturday sessions.