

Spring 2026

Dear friends,

Greetings from Augsburg University. The words from Esther 4:14—“for such a time as this”—resonate powerfully on campus in a year that has been marked by violence and grief in our community. The Annunciation Catholic Church shooting in south Minneapolis occurred during our first-year orientation in August. In December, students watched from their residence hall windows as ICE agents aimed weapons at a crowd of witnesses and detained an Augsburg student in a campus parking lot. The spring semester began in mid-January, between the deaths of Renee Good and Alex Pretti just a few miles from campus. Some of our students, along with many of our Somali-American neighbors here in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, have been sheltering at home in recent months, fearing harassment, detention, or worse.

But in the midst of heartbreak, we know that “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:5). The gifts of our Lutheran tradition for times of grief—ritual, lament, prayer—have kept us anchored in the knowledge that God is present with those who mourn. At Augsburg, we have been sustained and upheld by the power of caring community in ways large and small. Our colleague Najeeba Syeed, executive director of Interfaith at Augsburg, calls this a “lived theology of neighborliness;” hearts that break open in service to neighbors rather than breaking apart in despair.

Our faculty and staff have risen to the challenge of supporting our students this year by offering greater flexibility, adding online courses, arranging emergency housing and food support, putting in extra advising hours, and providing individual guidance and counsel. We have also had plenty to celebrate—strong enrollment results; the first cohort of our new Doctor of Medical Science program; thrilling athletic seasons in men’s soccer and women’s hockey, boosted by a revitalized pep band; the approval of a new engineering minor; and much more. Life at Augsburg continues to be vibrant and a reason for hope.

Our work to accompany students in their vocational discernment remains central to our mission. Led by Jeremy Myers, Christensen Chair of Religion and Vocation, we are engaging vocation across the Augsburg experience through a new framework of *thriving*. Our students thrive when they are actively expressing the unique ways they are inspired, equipped, and empowered to create a more just and sustainable world. Two recent examples include Dante Austin ’29, who was recognized as one of GLAAD’s 20 Under 20 LGBTQ Changemakers of 2025 for his advocacy work within the ELCA, and Deacon Ian Heseltine ’21, who was ordained to the ministry of Word and Service here at Augsburg in September and continues to serve a call in our Institutional Advancement office. Alongside academic innovation and sustainability, investing in the future of this work is a core element of our *Promising Futures: Faithful and Relevant* fundraising campaign, which recently exceeded its \$25 million goal.

These generous gifts strengthen the foundation for future generations of Auggies to thrive in their lives. They also serve as a reminder that none of us thrives alone—we only do so in community. We are grateful for your continued prayers and support, and that we are in community together.

Faithfully yours,

Paul C. Pribbenow, Ph.D.
President

Rev. Babette Chatman
University Pastor
Director of Campus Ministry

Rev. John Schwehn
University Pastor