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A president is inaugurated

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Ages of Imagination

The Inauguration of Paul C. Pribbenow October 18-21, 2006

Over four days in October, Augsburg College inaugurated its 11th president, Paul C. Pribbenow.

The days were filled with activities connecting its own community of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and parents with city neighbors, church leaders, and colleagues from across higher education.

Events included discussions on civic engagement, roundtables on public education, service projects, and celebrations filled with music, art, and good conversation. Each day at the “Abundance” lunches, those who attended donated food and money to fill the food shelves at the nearby Brian Coyle Community Center.

Inauguration Day, October 20, began with a Festival Service and Holy Communion, officiated by Mark Hanson '68, ELCA presiding bishop, with the sermon presented by Rev. Dr. Robin W. Lovin, Southern Methodist University. The investiture ceremony was held in the afternoon.

Completing the inauguration was a morning of service in the community, preceding outdoor family activities and an Auggie football game against Carleton College.

For additional information and photos from the inauguration, go to www.augsburg.edu/inauguration.



In a lighter moment, Paul and Abigail Pribbenow, with daughter Maya, enjoy festivities in the tent during inauguration week.



Ages of Imagination

The theme of the inauguration, “Ages of Imagination,” was drawn from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, one of the most influential works of British poet and artist William Blake (1757–1827).

From *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*:

The Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel dined with me, and I asked them how they dared so roundly to assert, that God spoke to them; and whether they did not think at the time, that they would be misunderstood, and so be the cause of imposition.

Isaiah answer'd, “I saw no God, nor heard any, in a finite organical perception; but my senses discover'd the infinite in every thing, and as I was then perswaded, & remain confirm'd; that the voice of honest indignation is the voice of God, I cared not for consequences but wrote.”

Then I asked: “does a firm perswasion that a thing is so, make it so?”

He replied, “All poets say that it does, and in ages of imagination this firm perswasion removed mountains; but many are not capable of a firm perswasion of any thing.”

As Augsburg College celebrated the inauguration of its 11th president, it also celebrated its calling as a college, and imagined itself in future ages, using “AGES” to remind it of the four themes of this new era: Abundance, Generosity, Engagement, and Service.

In moving these four “mountains,” Augsburg College, under the leadership of Paul Pribbenow, will continue to demonstrate how the power of imagination can transform the lives of its students and its community.



(Top) The newly-invested President Paul C. Pribbenow greets his colleagues in higher education following the ceremony. From right to left, he greets Kathryn Jeffrey, president of Hennepin Technical College; Linda N. Hanson, president of Hamline University; Lois (Peterson) Bollman '69, vice president of strategy, planning, and accountability at Minneapolis Community and Technical College; James L. Peterson, president of Gustavus Adolphus College; and (tallest, with mortar board) the president's brother, Dean Pribbenow, dean of the School of Integrative Studies at Edgewood College. (Above) Student Government president Maria Mitchell led the responsive prayer during the Inauguration Ceremony.

Excerpts from the sermon for the inauguration of Paul C. Pribbenow

The Rev. Dr. Robin W. Lovin
Cary Maguire University Professor of Ethics
Southern Methodist University

... I greet you on behalf of all of us who have known and worked with Paul Pribbenow over the years and benefited from his leadership in many different places. ...

I am also welcoming you to your own future, because those of us who have worked with Paul Pribbenow in the past know what you can expect in this new phase of the history of Augsburg College that we inaugurate today. ... as I looked at the [Inauguration] program with its multiple events and its common themes, I spotted the Pribbenow imprint of energy and organization. ...

And I suppose that what you want to know about the future from my knowledge of the past is whether it is really true that this guy can move mountains. I'm here to tell you that he can, and I'm also going to tell you how he does it. ...

The way [he] moves mountains is to figure out what everybody else is already doing and tie those activities together into a single mission with a unified message, so that when the mountain moves, it's because you moved it. ...

Education is supposed to be about expanding our vision of the world and changing the way we see our own place in it. It is about asking new questions, and questioning familiar answers. It should change us in fundamental ways, not just fill our heads with facts. Education is inseparable from change, personal and social, change in ideas, goals, and priorities. ...



(Left) Rev. Robin Lovin, from Southern Methodist University, preached about moving mountains at the Festival Service on Inauguration Day. (Right) ELCA presiding bishop and Augsburg parent Mark Hanson '68 presided at the service.

The word of greeting I bring you from the past is that great things are possible for Augsburg College, beginning today, because you have a leader who will listen to you, who can see the possibilities that you see, and who can bring them together in new ways that will empower you and energize all these people who want a future of abundance, generosity, engagement, and service for this institution.

But the word I bring from the Lord, the word that cuts across past, present, and future, comes to you today in the form of a question. It is addressed equally to students, faculty, and staff, addressed to alumni, supporters, and to the church. And it is addressed to the president. The question is, "Do you really want to move the mountains?"

I think you recognize the opportunity, and I pray that you will enjoy the blessings that come with accepting the vocation: That through humility and even sorrow, your hunger for truth and justice will be satisfied; that through integrity and generosity in judgment, you will see God; and that through the knowledge you create and share, the world will find peace, and you will be called the children of God.



(Left) President Pribbenow gets a hug from his father, Rev. Jerome Pribbenow, who read from the gospel during the service. (Right) Associate Dean Frankie Shackelford stands amid a sea of academic vestments as the faculty line up for the inauguration processional.



Excerpts from “Thanksgiving”

**Inaugural address by
Paul C. Pribbenow
October 20, 2006**

Thank you for being here today for this celebration of Augsburg College. I am inspired by your faithful lives, and I accept the call to be your partner in service to Augsburg with gratitude, resolve, and humility. ...

Authentic life—especially a life of faith—begins and ends in gratitude and in thanksgiving. We come together with the humility of thanksgiving, the recognition that life is a gift and a privilege not to be misused or misled, and, I might add, not to be missed. The late Henri Nouwen once wrote that “Gratitude ... goes beyond the ‘mine’ and ‘thine’ and claims the truth that all of life is a pure gift.”

All of life is a pure gift.

Let these words of mine, then, become my thanksgiving to God and to all of you, my psalm of gratitude for this college, for its mission and values, and for the cloud of witnesses gathered here today and scattered across time and space that hold Augsburg College in their hearts and minds. ...

“In ages of imagination,” [the poet William] Blake tells us, the power of the imagination, the power of belief, the power of a ‘firm persuasion’ can move mountains. We must decide, today, to live in one of those ages of imagination, in fact, to use our imaginations to create a new era for the College. ...

(Above) Augsburg Board of Regents chair Ted Grindal '76 places the seal of the College around the neck of Paul C. Pribbenow, who is invested as the 11th president of Augsburg College. (Below) To conclude inauguration week, the College gathers in community service to clean up along the Mississippi riverbank. (Right) Paul and Abigail Pribbenow lead the recessional out of Hoversten Chapel after the Festival Service.





For the complete texts of Rev. Robin Lovin's sermon and President Pribbenow's inaugural address, go to www.augsburg.edu/president

(Left) Sounds of the big band organized and led by music professor Robert Stacke '71 fill the tent during inaugural week festivities. (Below) Student Government public relations officers Rachel Forsberg (left) and Kati Welt (right) present a giant card with inauguration congratulations from students to President Pribbenow.

There are four themes to my presidency. ... These four themes are Abundance, Generosity, Engagement, and Service. Think of them as the "AGES" in Ages of Imagination. ... Augsburg is already blessed to have all of these things, though we sometimes don't recognize these great gifts—gifts that God has given us, and gifts that we were meant to care for and pass on. ...

During my short time here at Augsburg, I have been challenged to think again about the role of colleges and universities in an urban setting. I am committed to the mutual dependency of colleges and the city. The paradigm for the relationships between cities and higher education must be less about extracting benefits from each other, less dependent on incidental impact, and more focused on the various resources that can be shared in the pursuit of a more robust, healthy, and meaningful urban life. ...

I know that you share with me this deep sense of

thanksgiving for this college and its remarkable commitments. What we do here matters—to our students, our neighborhood, our city, the church, and the world.

What we do here is significant—because our work is grounded in a deep and confident faith, because it enjoys a history of love in a community of memory and tradition, because it believes deeply in intellectual curiosity and personal courage, and because it is full of hope.

What we need now is imagination—and faith, and fearlessness—to hear and follow the call to be a college committed to the liberal arts in all that we learn and teach; a college grounded in faith and values that are the source of our firm persuasion; a college located in a place full of life and urgency that draws us out of our insular selves; a college engaged with a creation rich in difference that constantly surprises us.

What fun we're going to have! ■

