

Walking by the Spirit
with the Fruit of the Spirit
LUTHERAN WEEK 2019

Lutheran Week 2019

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh...But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

–Galatians 5:16, 22-23



NALC

North American Lutheran Church

THE WESTIN INDIANAPOLIS

241 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

FIRST FLOOR



FLOOR 2

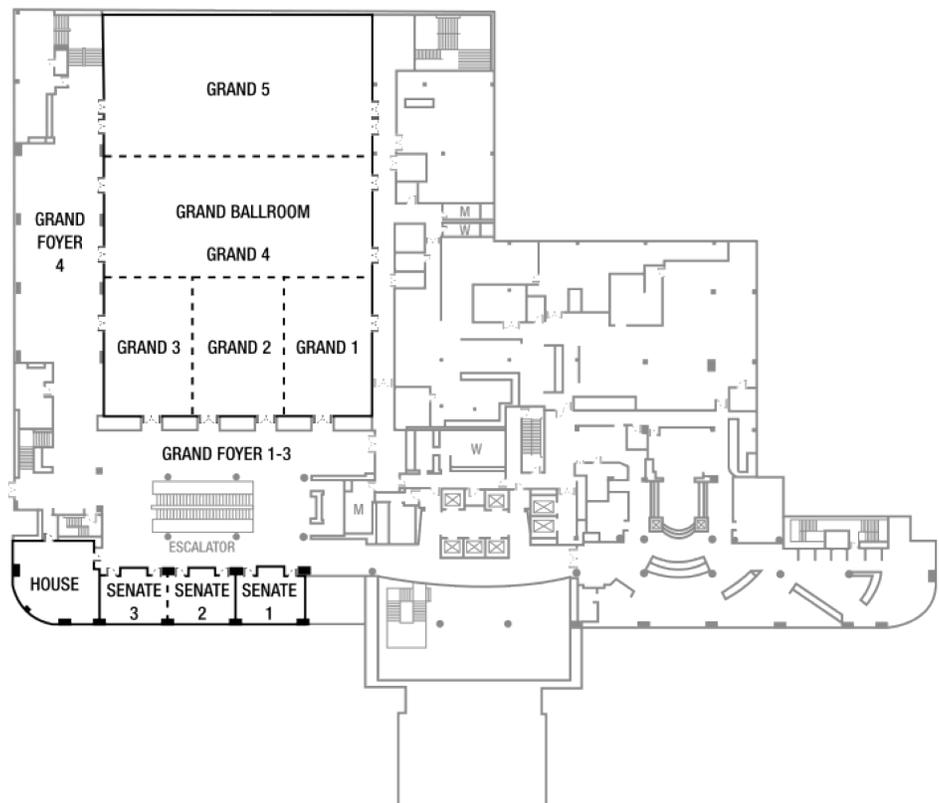


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A WELCOME FROM BISHOP JOHN BRADOSKY



The North American Lutheran Church (NALC) Lutheran Week is filled with opportunities to engage pastors and laity from across this church in enriching, encouraging, nourishing and strengthening our individual faith and our life together. There is something for everyone, from our youth symposium, introduction to NALC Life-to-Life Discipleship, women's gathering, theological lectures and mission festival to our highly anticipated Convocation. Throughout this time together we will be

focused on "Walking by the Spirit, with the Fruit of the Spirit." We will do more than talk about the Holy Spirit. We will be trusting the Holy Spirit to guide and direct our future as we close our time together by installing the new bishop of this church body. To that same Holy Spirit, we entrust the election process, the new bishop and our entire church. We are glad you have joined us for this important moment in the history of the North American Lutheran Church.

Welcome to Lutheran Week 2019,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bishop John F. Bradosky". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rev. John F. Bradosky
Bishop

A WELCOME FROM THE HEARTLAND MISSION DISTRICT



Welcome to Indianapolis! We're excited to have Lutheran Week 2019 in the Heartland Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church. We have mission centers close to Chicago, east to Fort Wayne, in the center of Indiana and one in Kentucky. As are all mission districts, ours is made up of vibrant people of God who take the Great Commission seriously. We work to do mission and outreach in our own communities, but gather centrally at our mission district convocation to do a joint project; this year we assembled baby kits for Lutheran World Relief (LWR). We take joy in supporting one another through the sharing of resources, ideas and prayer. As part of our focus on service, our host congregations are eager to provide hospitality this week. If you have any questions, look for the red vests and red polo shirts.

In ministry together,
The Rev. Pam Thorson
Heartland Mission District, Dean

WALKING BY THE SPIRIT, WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

As anyone who has attended an NALC Lutheran Week will tell you, it is a week full of the Word of God; faithful teaching and learning; practical, useful information related to real life in congregation, ministry and home! Together the Ventures in Youth Ministry Symposium, Women of the NALC Annual Gathering, Carl E. Braaten-Robert D. Benne Lectures in Theology, Mission Festival and Convocation allow us to reflect upon, guide and shape our mission and ministry! Be prepared to be filled, encouraged and inspired as the NALC meets for Lutheran Week!

Continuing our six-year focus on the Holy Trinity, our theme for the 2019 Lutheran Week is the Holy Spirit: "Walking by the Spirit, with the Fruit of the Spirit." The theme Scripture verse is Galatians 5:16-23:

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law (ESV).

In his *Commentary on Galatians*, Martin Luther introduces this section speaking of Verse 16:

With this verse Paul explains how he wants this sentence to be understood: By love serve one another. When I bid you to love one another, this is what I mean and require, "Walk in the Spirit." I know very well you will not fulfill the Law, because you are sinners as long as you live. Nevertheless, you should endeavor to walk in the Spirit, i.e., fight against the flesh and follow the leads of the Holy Ghost.

It is quite apparent that Paul had not forgotten the doctrine of justification, for in bidding the Galatians to walk in the Spirit he at the same time denies that good works can justify. "When I speak of the fulfilling of the Law I do not mean to say that you are justified by the Law. All I mean to say is that you should take the Spirit for your guide and resist the flesh. That is the most you shall ever be able to do. Obey the Spirit and fight against the flesh."

This week, we will be learning what it means for us to walk in the Spirit; to take the Spirit for our guide and resist the flesh. It involves both resisting and rejecting the works of the flesh while adopting and encouraging the fruit of the Spirit! As we walk together, let us pray, "Come, Holy Spirit. Be our guide and our strength. Amen!"

CORE VALUES

Christ Centered

We confess the apostolic faith in Jesus Christ according to the Holy Scriptures. We affirm the authority of the Scriptures as the authoritative source and norm, “according to which all doctrines should and must be judged” (Formula of Concord). We accept the ecumenical creeds and the Lutheran Confessions as true witnesses to the Word of God.

Mission Driven

We believe that the mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel and to make disciples for Christ. We believe that making disciples – in our congregations, in our communities and nations, and around the world – must be a priority of the Church in the present age.

Traditionally Grounded

We affirm the ecumenical creeds and the faithful witness of the Church across time and space. We endorse the form and practices of the universal Church that are consistent with Scripture, particularly the office of the ministry and the tradition of worship under Word and Sacrament. We seek dialogue and fellowship with other Lutheran churches and with faithful Christians of other confessions.

Congregationally Focused

We strive to be a church that is organized to facilitate the ministries of local congregations in a posture of servant-hood and a spirit of partnership, through the provision of resources, connections and information.

LEADERSHIP

BISHOP & STAFF

Executive Staff

The Rev. John F. Bradosky	<i>Bishop</i>
The Rev. Mark C. Chavez	<i>General Secretary</i>
The Rev. Dr. David Wendel	<i>Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry & Ecumenism</i>
The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba	<i>Assistant to the Bishop for Missions</i>
Andrew S. Fuller	<i>Director of Communications</i>

Program Staff

The Rev. Dr. Amy C. Schifrin	<i>President, North American Lutheran Seminary</i>
The Rev. Brad Hales	<i>Director of Domestic Mission</i>
Gary & Laurie Pecuch	<i>Youth & Family Ministry Coaches</i>
Mary Bates	<i>Disaster Response Coordinator</i>
The Rev. Dr. David Baer	<i>Newsletter Editor</i>

Administrative Staff

Anne Gleason	<i>Financial Administrator</i>
Becky Seifert	<i>Assistant to the Executive Staff</i>
Jennifer Brockman	<i>Assistant for Missions</i>
Joan Corniea	<i>Financial Assistant</i>
Maddie Benson	<i>Communications Specialist</i>

CHURCH GOVERNANCE

Executive Council

The Rev. Mark Braaten
Richard Jansak
Rosemary Johnson
The Rev. Melinda H. Jones, <i>Recording Secretary</i>

Lynn Kickingbird
The Rev. Kenneth Kimball
The Rev. Carl Rasmussen
Ryan Schwarz, *Treasurer*
Brian Sutton

Court of Adjudication
James Gale
The Rev. Jeffray S. Greene
Lyle Hollander
The Rev. John Moffett
Carolyn Nestingen
The Rev. Marty Ramey
The Rev. David Schafer

Inquiry Panel
The Rev. Jim Bangsund
The Rev. K. Glen Johnson
Dan Reynolds
The Rev. Solveig Zamzow

MISSION DISTRICT DEANS

Convener of the Deans
The Rev. Daniel M. Powell
Springfield, Ohio

Atlantic Mission District
The Rev. David McGettigan
Atlantic City, New Jersey

Northwest Mission District
The Rev. Jack Richards
Everett, Washington

Canadian Mission District
The Rev. Malcolm (Mac) de Waal
Medicine Hat, Alberta

OHIO MISSION REGION
North West Ohio Mission District
The Rev. William Maki
Saint Marys, Ohio

Carolinas Mission District
The Rev. Dr. Nathan Howard Yoder
Maiden, North Carolina

North Central Ohio Mission District
The Rev. Paul Larson
Mansfield, Ohio

Central Pacific Mission District

The Rev. Douglas Schoelles

Kingsburg, California

North Eastern Ohio Mission District

The Rev. Michael Koch

Medina, Ohio

Eastern South Dakota Mission District

The Rev. Tom Christenson

Huron, South Dakota

Southeastern Ohio Mission District

The Rev. Jeffrey Morlock

Galloway, Ohio

GREAT PLAINS MISSION REGION

Great Plains Mission District East

The Rev. Fritz Brandenburg

Westboro, Missouri

Southwest Ohio Mission District

The Rev. Mark Daniels

Centerville, Ohio

Great Plains Mission District South

The Rev. Richard Solberg

Bella Vista, Arkansas

Rocky Mountain Mission District

The Rev. Ken Hohag

Colorado Springs, Colorado

Great Plains Mission District West

The Rev. Keith Less

Abilene, Kansas

Sonshine Mission District of Florida

Vacant

Great Rivers Mission District

The Rev. Preston Foster

Metropolis, Illinois

Southwest Pacific Mission District

The Rev. Marvin Combs

Huntington Beach, California

Heartland Mission District

The Rev. Pamela Thorson

Elizabethtown, Kentucky

TEXAS MISSION REGION

North Texas Mission District

The Rev. John Scheusner

Arlington, Texas

Iowa Mission District

The Rev. Marshall Hahn

St. Olaf, Iowa

Southeast Texas Mission District

The Rev. B.A. (Tim) Christ

Richmond, Texas

Michigan Mission District

The Rev. Steve Hartten

Stevensville, Michigan

Southwest Texas Mission District

The Rev. Norm Sulaica

Three Rivers, Texas

Mid-Northeast Mission District

The Rev. Carl Johnson

Kittanning, Pennsylvania

Virginia Mission District

The Rev. Bradley Hales

Culpeper, Virginia

Mid-South Mission District

The Rev. Trina Petersen

Lithonia, Georgia

**Western Dakotas, Montana &
Wyoming Mission District**

The Rev. Dr. David Baer

Whitewood, South Dakota

Minkota Mission District

The Rev. Lyle Belleque

Devils Lake, North Dakota

**Wisconsin &
Upper Michigan Mission District**

The Rev. Craig Nehring

Caroline, Wisconsin

PLENARY SESSION SPEAKERS & PREACHERS

JOHN BRADOSKY

Bishop, North American Lutheran Church



The Rev. John Bradosky has over 30 years of pastoral experience with diverse experience in organization and administration. He has served in urban, suburban and multicultural settings. Previously he served as the NALC's General Secretary, and senior pastor of Epiphany Lutheran Church in Dayton, Ohio. He has also served St. John Lutheran Church in Springfield, Ohio; Trinity Lutheran Church in Canton, Ohio; and Grace Lutheran Church in Huntington Beach, California. Bishop Bradosky is a graduate of Hamma School of Theology at Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio, and Indiana University of Pennsylvania in Indiana, Pennsylvania.

ROBERT D. BENNE

Research Associate, Roanoke College



Dr. Robert Benne was Jordan-Trexler Professor of Religion and chair of the Religion and Philosophy department at Roanoke College for 18 years before he left full-time teaching in 2000. He founded the Roanoke College Center for Religion & Society in 1982 and directed it until 2012. He continues at Roanoke College as a research associate in its religion and philosophy department. Before joining Roanoke College in 1982, he was professor of church and society at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago for 17 years. A native of Nebraska, he received his college education at Midland University. His graduate degrees are from the University of Chicago Divinity School. He has written and lectured widely on the relation of Christianity and culture. The most recent of his 12 books are: *Good and Bad Ways to Think About Religion and Politics*; *Quality with Soul-How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with their Religious Traditions*; *Reasonable Ethics*; and *A Christian Approach to Social, Economic, and Political Concerns*. Dr. Benne is also a permanent faculty member in the graduate school of the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT). He has been married to Joanna Benne for 54 years. They are the parents of four and the grandparents of seven.

GEMECHIS BUBA

Assistant to the Bishop for Missions, North American Lutheran Church



The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba is originally from Ethiopia and now lives in Atlanta, Georgia, with his wife and three children. In addition to academic study and ordained ministry, Dr. Buba participates in multiple international ministries through speaking, leading revivals, leadership development conventions and evangelical mission events.

LESLIE HAINES

Executive Director, Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries, Inc.



The Rev. Leslie Haines received an A.A. in Music, a B.A. in Criminal Justice, and an M.A. in Theology. She also completed “Clinical Pastoral Education” through a hospital chaplaincy training program, and she completed a residency training program for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) at the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences.

In 1983, Chaplain Haines enlisted in the U.S. Army and served as a Huey helicopter crew chief until 1988, when she graduated Officer Candidate School (OCS). Since 2001, Chaplain Haines served in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in Detainee Operations, as well as Kirkuk, Iraq, until she was injured and medevac’d to the U.S. for surgeries and treatment. In 2015, she retired as a major, serving in military police.

Chaplain Haines developed and planted Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries, Inc. (LMVFM) during her third year of seminary in 2007. She served her year-long deaconess internship by establishing the ministry in Fort Wayne. Upon graduation in 2009 from Concordia Theological Seminary (Fort Wayne), she accepted the call to serve as LMVFM’s executive director. In addition to her duties as the ministry’s chaplain and executive director, Leslie serves as the lead counselor for LMVFM, programs director and lead trainer for LMVFM’s training programs.

PAUL HINLICKY

Tise Professor of Lutheran Studies, Roanoke College



The Rev. Dr. Paul R. Hinlicky previously held the Jordan-Trexler Professorship of Religion and Philosophy. He also teaches part-time for the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT). He was ordained as a pastor in the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) in 1978, and he was the pastor of the New River Parish, Blacksburg, Virginia, in partnership with his wife Ellen (2003-2008), and previously assistant to the pastor at St. Mark Lutheran Church, Roanoke, Virginia and interim pastor at Christ Lutheran Church, Roanoke.

He was visiting professor of systematic theology at the Protestant Theological Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia, from 1993-1999, where he earned the title “Docent” in 1999 on the basis of the successful defense of his habilitation work, “*Buducnost Cirkvi: Co by pre nas mal znamenat lutheransky-katolicky dialog?*” (“*A Future for the Church: What the Lutheran – Catholic Dialogue Should Mean For Us*”). He holds a B.A. from Concordia Senior College, Fort Wayne, Indiana, an M.Div. from Christ Seminary-Seminex, St. Louis, Missouri, and a Ph.D. (1983) from Union Theological Seminary, New York, New York.

Hinlicky has served on the editorial council of *dialog* and *Lutheran Quarterly* and as associate editor of *Pro Ecclesia*. He serves as a book review editor for the *16th Century Journal* in the areas of religion, philosophy and the rise of natural science. He served as editor of *Lutheran Forum*, 1988-1993. In 1991, Theophilus Press published his *Mission to the Catskills: A History of Immanuel Lutheran Church of Delhi, New York*. He has published numerous academic articles and book reviews and chapter length contributions to books, as well as many popular and occasional pieces. His published books include *The Substance of the Faith: Luther’s Doctrinal Theology for Today* (Fortress, with Mickey Mattox and Dennis Bielfeldt); *Paths Not Taken: Fates of Theology from Luther through Leibniz* (Eerdmans); *Luther and the Beloved Community: A Path for Christian Theology after Christendom* (Eerdmans) and *Divine Complexity: A Theological Account of the Rise of Creedal Christianity* (Fortress, 2010).

He is has been married to Ellen (née Christiansen) since 1974, and their union has been blessed with a daughter, Sarah, and a son, William.

CRAIG S. KEENER

F. M. and Ada Thompson Professor of Biblical Studies, Asbury Theological Seminary



The Rev. Dr. Craig Keener received his Ph.D. in New Testament Studies and Christian Origins from Duke University. Prior to Asbury Theological Seminary, he was professor of New Testament at Palmer Theological Seminary of Eastern University for nearly 15 years, where he was also one of the associate pastors at an African-American Baptist church in Philadelphia (he was ordained in an African-American Baptist church in 1991, but serves students and settings related to a range of traditions). He has authored a number of commentaries on New Testament books as well as books covering a range of topics from Jesus and Paul to the African-American church. His popular *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* has sold over half a million copies. According to Bruce Chilton, Keener's 2009 book *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* "marks a notable moment in the critical study of Jesus" in that Keener uses the study of Jesus' Jewish environment to argue for the authenticity of the Gospels. Keener has taught in various countries, especially countries in Africa; he has also taught in Asia and Latin America, and in connection with various denominations. Keener is the current editor of the *Bulletin for Biblical Research*.

Craig is married to Médine Moussounga Keener, who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Paris. She was a refugee for 18 months in her nation of Congo (their story together appears in the book *Impossible Love*, Chosen Books, 2016), and together Craig and Médine work for ethnic reconciliation in the U.S. and Africa.

JOEL LEHENBAUER

Executive Director, LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations



The Rev. Dr. Joel Lehenbauer joined the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) staff in 1991 as assistant executive director. Starting in 2004, he served as associate executive director and since 2008 he has been the executive director. Prior to his work at the CTCR, he served five years as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Hillsdale, Michigan. His education includes the following degrees from Concordia Seminary (St. Louis): M.Div. (1984), S.T.M. (1991) and Ph.D. (2004).

MATTHEW LEVERING

James N. and Mary D. Perry, Jr. Chair of Theology, University of Saint Mary of the Lake



Dr. Matthew Levering is the author or co-author of over 20 books including *Scripture and Metaphysics*; *Participatory Biblical Exegesis*; *Biblical Natural Law*; *Engaging the Doctrine of Revelation*; *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* and *Proofs of God*, and the editor or co-editor of 14 books including, most recently, *The Oxford Handbook of Sacramental Theology*, *Aristotle in Aquinas's Theology*, and *The Reception of Vatican II*. He is the translator of Gilles Emery, O.P.'s *The Trinity*; co-editor of *Nova et Vetera* and of the *International Journal of Systematic Theology*; and a member of the Academy of Catholic Theology and of Evangelicals and Catholics Together.

ALEX MKUMBO

Bishop, Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania



The Rt. Rev. Dr. Alex Mkumbo was born into a Muslim family, but as he began to read the Word of God, he encountered John 3:16. From that moment, he knew he would end up on a different path and was forever changed. The message of the Good News of Jesus Christ called him to a life of faith and service. Mkumbo published his doctoral thesis in 2008. He was director of the Lutheran Theological College Kiomboi in Singida, Tanzania, from 2008 to 2012, an educational institution for pastors and evangelists. In 2013, he was appointed the new bishop of the Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). The Central Diocese is one of 25 dioceses in the ELCT and located in the central highlands of the country. Bishop Mkumbo is married to Wilhelmina; father to Lynn, Eric, Feodora and Friedrich.

DEREK R. NELSON

Stephen S. Bowen Professor of the Liberal Arts & Professor of Religion, Wabash College



The Rev. Dr. Derek R. Nelson teaches courses in both of those fields, as well as religion and culture (such as literature and film), social ethics and whatever else students are interested in studying with him. Nelson is the author or editor of ten books, including *The Oxford*

Research Encyclopedia of Martin Luther. This multi-volume work is the state-of-the-field resource and comprises cooperation from 122 scholars across the world. His intellectual biography of Martin Luther, co-written with his deceased mentor Timothy F. Lull, is *Resilient Reformer: The Life and Thought of Martin Luther*. He has written about 50 articles and essays in books and reviews. He served on the task force that produced a social statement for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (in which he is an ordained pastor) called *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries*.

After graduating *summa cum laude* from Wabash College in 1999, Nelson earned an M.Div. at Yale Divinity School and a Ph.D. in Systematic and Philosophical Theology at the Graduate Theological Union and the University of California in Berkeley. He taught at Thiel College in Greenville, Pennsylvania, for six years. He was a visiting scholar at Oxford University in 2013.

An avid traveler, Nelson has led groups of students and clergy to Italy, Germany, Mexico and South Africa, among other international destinations. Nelson also directs the Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program, which serves an ecumenical group of Indiana pastors who are developing as civic leaders. This is funded by the Lilly Endowment and hosted by Wabash College. Attentive to his surroundings, he lives in the Sugar Creek watershed, agricultural zone 5b for plant hardiness and sunlight, and the Indiana-Kentucky synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He brews beer and makes furniture. He loves to play golf and catch fish. He is married to the Rev. Kelly Nelson. They are the proud parents of toddler, Madeleine.

JAMES NESTINGEN

Founder, Provost & Professor of Church History, St. Paul Lutheran Seminary



The Rev. Dr. James Nestingen is a 1967 graduate of Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota. Nestingen earned the master of divinity degree from Luther Seminary in 1971 and the master of theology degree in 1978. He received his doctorate in theology from St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, in 1984. Following his ordination in 1971, he served as pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Coquille, Oregon, for three years before becoming curriculum editor at Augsburg Publishing House from 1974-1976. Nestingen has written and spoken prolifically on Luther's catechisms and confessional Lutheran theology. In March 2001, he was one of the featured speakers at The Book of Concord Lectures held at Luther Seminary, which celebrated the latest

translation of *The Book of Concord* and discussed its relevance for the 21st century. Nestingen's books include: *Martin Luther: His Life and His Teachings* (2004, 1982); *Manger in the Mountains* (2000); *The Faith We Hold* (1983); *Roots of Our Faith* (1978); and *Free to Be* (with Gerhard Forde, 1975).

GARY & LAURIE PECUCH

Youth & Family Ministry Coaches, faithwebbing.com



Gary and Laurie have been in youth ministry since the early 1980's when they spent time as summer camp counselors. Their personal mission is "to equip God's people with the necessary faith skills to live out their personal calling in life." The couple has been blessed beyond measure in their 30 plus years in ministry and are being called to give back, expand and reach out to others who care about the formation of faith among children and youth.

Gary and Laurie founded faithwebbing.com, a congregational youth and family consultation ministry. faithwebbing.com and the North American Lutheran Church have entered into an agreement to provide consultation for NALC congregations in the areas of youth and family ministry.

DAVID WENDEL

Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry and Ecumenism, North American Lutheran Church



The Rev. Dr. David Wendel graduated from Indiana University with a bachelor's degree in speech communication. He is a 1981 graduate of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg and served his internship at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Los Alamos, New Mexico. He served as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Hobbs, New Mexico, before being called to Saint Luke's Lutheran Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in 1986.

He earned a Doctor of Ministry in Preaching from the Association of Chicago Theological Schools in 2001. In 30 years of parish ministry, Pastor Wendel gained valuable hands-on experience serving as pastor to two congregations that had suffered under unhealthy relationships, lack of vision and impaired mission and ministry. He now works with many congregations in the NALC assisting with visioning, healing and renewal, especially focusing on pastor/parish relationships. He

writes regularly for the *NALC News*, addressing these topics. Pastor Wendel and his wife, Susan Riches, have two adult children, two grandsons and two granddaughters.

YONAS YIGEZU

President of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus



The Rev. Yonas Yigezu pursued his early education in Horest Spinnings Junior Secondary School in Challia, Wollega, Ethiopia and Ghimbi High School. He then studied at Westhill College in England, where he took his advanced diploma in church management and at Manchester University where he earned a bachelor's degree in development management policy and a master's degree in management and economic policy. He earned

his Master of Divinity at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia in 2006. Currently he is pursuing his Ph.D. at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

President Yigezu was ordained in 2006 in West Wollega Bethel Synod, Danbidolo, Ethiopia. He served as the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) director for mission and theology until 2017, when he was elected president of the EECMY. The EECMY became a national church in 1959. By the end of 2016, it had 8.3 million members in more than 8,500 congregations throughout the country; it is considered the largest Lutheran church in the world. President Yigezu and his wife, Ayantu Dufera, have four children.

CHAPLAIN

BASSAM ABDALLAH

Prospect, Kentucky



The Rev. Bassam Abdallah was born in Jerusalem. He has been married to his wife, Katy, for 42 years. They have one son, Joseph, and two grandchildren. He was pastor of two congregations in almost 40 years of active ministry: Redeemer Lutheran, Bryant, Indiana (1977-1989) and First United Lutheran, Hammond, Indiana (1989-2016).

Reader: The Rev. Patti Morlock, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Grove City, Ohio

Sacristan: The Rev. Amy Little, Trinity Lutheran Church, Monroeville, Ohio

Organist: Dr. John Schuder, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Grove City, Ohio

DEVOTIONAL LEADERS

STEVE BELL & MALCOLM GUTE

Musician & Chaplain of Girton College of the University of Cambridge



Steve Bell and the Rev. Dr. Malcolm Guite, chaplain of Girton College of the University of Cambridge, England. The Rev. Dr. Guite describes himself as a poet-priest of the Anglican Church, giving lectures, concerts and poetry readings. He collaborates with musician Steve Bell, and they have been featured at Lutheran Week 2015 and 2016. The two will blend their unique gifts to highlight this year's Lutheran Week theme.

LUTHERAN WEEK PLANNING TEAM

WILL HARTFELDER

Chair, Lutheran Week Planning Team



The Rev. Will Hartfelder retired in June after 31 years of ordained ministry. He most recently served as senior pastor at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Westerville, Ohio, from 2003-2018. His experience includes parish, campus, ecumenical and hospital settings. He continues to serve as a chaplain for the Columbus, Ohio, Division of Police. He looks forward to discerning God's call in this next chapter of life and service to our Lord and His Church, knowing the life of Christian discipleship never ends.

Many thanks to the many individuals who took time out of their busy schedules to plan for this gathering of our Church: the Rev. Bassam Abdallah, Jenny Brockman, the Rev. Mark Chavez, the Rev. Tony Ede, Jacqui El Toro, Jody Ford, Andrew Fuller, the Rev. Doug Gast, the Rev. Larry Gember, Anne Gleason, Dawn Hahm, the Rev. Ron Hoyum, Gary Pecuch, the Rev. Eric Riesen, the Rev. Pam Thorson, the Rev. Nathan Yoder, and many more!

MINISTRY EXPO

Each year, many parachurch ministries, seminaries, publishers and mission organizations attend Lutheran Week to provide a wealth of resources and partnership opportunities for our churches and leaders. Here is a list of some of our partners in attendance this year.

Awakening Lives to World Missions	Lutheran Lay Renewal
Baker Academic and Brazos Press	Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries, Inc.
Bilingual Ministry Resource Center	Lutherans for Life
Blessman International	Malawi Orphan Care
Call, Inc.	MOTIF
Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute	Mount Carmel Ministries
China Service Ventures	NALC Disaster Response
Classic Organs of Indiana, Inc.	NALC Life Ministries
Concordia Publishing House	NALC Living and Giving Stewardship Team
Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch	North American Lutheran Seminary
East European Missions Network	Sola Publishing
faithwebbing.com	St. Paul Lutheran Seminary
Friends of Hope	Steve Bell/Signpost Music
Friends of Madagascar Mission	Sundouloi Ministries Inc (SMI Haiti)
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary	Thrivent Financial
Great Commission Society	Victory Ministries
Hahn Financial Group, Inc./NALC	Water Mission International
Lutheran Benefits	Wernle Youth and Family Treatment Center
India Transformed!	Women of the NALC
Institute of Lutheran Theology	World Mission Prayer League (WMPL)
In-Tents Camp	
Life Together Churches	
Lutheran CORE	

VENTURES IN YOUTH MINISTRY SYMPOSIUM

Monday, August 5

8:30 a.m.	Registration	<i>Capitol III</i>
9:00 a.m.	Session I: Developing Spiritual Disciplines in Young People Devotional: The Rev. Dr. David Wendel	
10:30 a.m.	Break	
10:45 a.m.	Affinity Groups	
12:00 p.m.	Lunch (Included in registration fee for symposium)	<i>Capitol II</i>
1:00 p.m.	Gary & Laurie Pecuch Group Engagement	<i>Capitol III</i>
1:30 p.m.	Session II: Developing Faith Skills in Young People	
3:00 p.m.	Break	
3:15 p.m.	Affinity Groups	
5:00 p.m.	Closing Devotional The Rev. John Bradosky	
5:30 p.m.	Close of Day One	

Tuesday, August 6

9:00 a.m.	Session III: Developing Spiritual Disciples and Faith Skills Wrap Up	
10:15 a.m.	Break	
10:30 a.m.	Affinity Groups	
11:40 a.m.	Closing Devotional The Rev. Dr. David Wendel	
12:00 p.m.	Close of Symposium	

WOMEN OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH ANNUAL GATHERING

Tuesday, August 6

8:30 a.m.	Registration & Fellowship	<i>Capitol I</i>
9:00 a.m.	Opening Prayer & Song	
	- Council Introductions	
	- Mission District Map Introduction	
	- Annual Report	
	- Minutes from August 14, 2018 Annual Gathering	
	Speaker Presentation: The Rev. Leslie Haines	
	Call for Nominations	
	Break	
	WNALC Financial Report	
	- Budget Presentation for Consideration	
	Bishop's Address: The Rev. John Bradosky	
	Mission Bank Information 2018-2019	
	Mission Bank Recipient Recommendations for 2019-2020	
	Lunch	<i>Capitol II</i>
	(Included in registration fee for WNALC Annual Gathering)	
	Re-convening Prayer & Song	<i>Capitol I</i>
	- Credentials Report	
	- Communications Update	
	- Group Photo	
	Break into Mission Districts to Meet with Council Representatives	
	Break	
	Elections	
	Vote on Budget	
	Vote on Mission Banks 2019-2020 Recipients	
	Team Business	
	Unfinished Business	
	Report of Council Member Elections	
	Closing Prayer & Song	

BRAATEN-BENNE
LECTURES IN THEOLOGY

BRAATEN-BENNE LECTURES IN THEOLOGY SCHEDULE

Tuesday, August 6

- | | | |
|-----------|--|-----------------------|
| 1:00 p.m. | Opening Prayer | <i>Grand Ballroom</i> |
| 1:10 p.m. | Introduction and Greetings
The Rev. Ron Hoyum, Chair
The Rev. John Bradosky, Bishop | |
| 1:15 p.m. | Lecture I: The Holy Spirit and Christian Life
Dr. Robert Benne | |
| 2:30 p.m. | Lecture II: How the Holy Spirit Disappeared in Lutheranism
The Rev. Dr. Paul Hinlicky | |
| 3:45 p.m. | Break | |
| 4:10 p.m. | Lecture III: The Work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament
The Rev. Dr. Craig Keener | |
| 5:30 p.m. | Dinner on your own; free evening | |

Wednesday, August 7

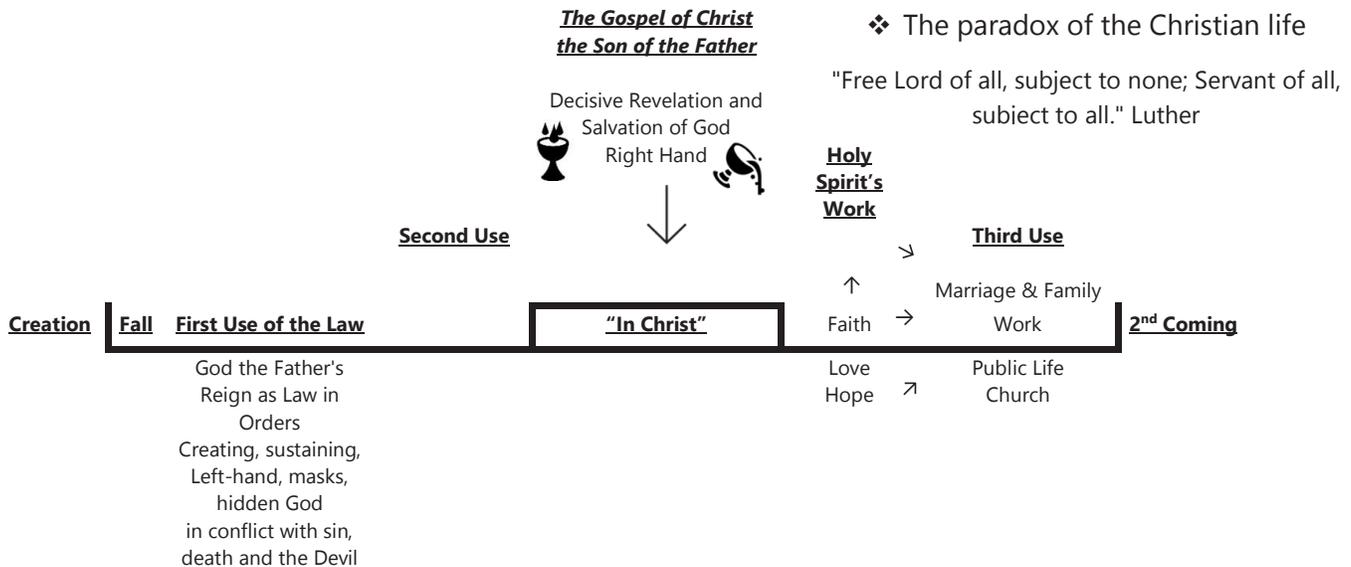
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| 8:00 a.m. | Opening Prayer | <i>Grand Ballroom</i> |
| 8:15 a.m. | Lecture IV: The Holy Spirit and Salvation
Dr. Matthew Levering | |
| 9:30 a.m. | Lecture V: The Holy Spirit and the Stuff of Life
The Rev. Dr. Derek Nelson | |
| 10:45 a.m. | Break | |
| 11:00 a.m. | Speaker's Forum | |

11:30 a.m. Closing Prayer

11:45 a.m. Lunch *Capitol I & Capitol II*
(Included in registration fee for Braaten-Benne Lectures)

LECTURE I ANCILLARY

The Holy Spirit and Christian Life



Faith

- mind of faith-reinterpreting God's world – "be transformed by the renewal of your mind" Romans 12:1-2
- deeper level of meaning as well as a Christian perspective (critical participation)
- focus of faith – one's own niche or mission (calling in the strict sense) in these ordinary places of responsibility

Love

- characteristics of agape love
- summons of love
- evangelism as a work of love in our callings

Hope

- overcoming of paralyzing elements in life
- new beginning every morning
- ambiguity of motive and effect
- obscurity
- pain and separation
- fulfillment of the world

Always saint and sinner

"This life is not righteous, but growth in righteousness; not health, but healing; not being but becoming; not rest but exercise; we are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it; the process is not yet finished, but it is going on; this is not the end, but it is the road; all does not yet gleam in glory, but all is being purified." Luther

MISSION FESTIVAL

MISSION FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

Wednesday, August 7

1:30 p.m.	Service of the Word Preacher: The Rt. Rev. Dr. Alex Mkumbo	<i>Grand Ballroom</i>
2:30 p.m.	Plenary Session <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Introduction- Keynote Address Speaker: The Rev. Yonas Yigezu- Panel Q & A with Table Talk Moderator: The Rev. Tony Ede Panelists: The Rev. John Bradosky The Rev. Dr. Joel Lehenbauer The Rt. Rev. Dr. Alex Mkumbo The Rev. Yonas Yigezu	<i>Grand Ballroom</i>
5:00 p.m.	Breakout Session	<i>Various Locations</i>
6:00 p.m.	Dinner (Included in Registration Fee)	<i>Various Locations</i>
7:30 p.m.	Mission District Meetings (Bible Study Connected with Keynote Address)	<i>Various Locations</i>
9:00 p.m.	Mission Festival Concludes	

GLOBAL WORKERS

The Rev. Neeraj Ekka & The Rev. Nijhar Minz-Ekka

Ranchi, Jharkhand, India with World Mission Prayer League (WMPL)



Serving at: North Western Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church/Navin Doman Theological College

The Rev. Valery Hryhoryk

Belarus with East European Missions Network (EEMN)



Serving at: Belarus Lutheran Missionary Fellowship (BLMF)
Contact Info: good_book@mail.ru // eemn.org

The Rev. Charles & Anita Jackson

Canada with World Mission Prayer League (WMPL)



Contact Info: sonrose@outlook.com

Stephen Katterhenrich

Mbeya, Tanzania with Wycliffe Bible Translators



Wife: Rachel; Children: Hope and Scott
Contact Info: stephen_katterhenrich@sil.org // stephenandrachelintanzania.blogspot.com

The Rev. Dr. Jeff & Miriam (Mim) Nellerhoe

Henan, China with China Service Ventures



Contact Info: jeff@chinaserviceventures.org // bamboopilgrim.com

The Rev. Didi & Serafina Panzo

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with World Mission Prayer League (WMPL)



Serving at: Christian Community Development Network
Children: Nicole and Sarah
Contact Info: dpanzo@wmpl.org

The Rev. James Puotyual

Gambela, Ethiopia with Lutheran Church of South Sudan



Contact Info: jamespuot202@yahoo.com // lutherancss.org

Judy Perry

Shanxi, China with World Mission Prayer League



Serving at: Evergreen Family Friendship Service

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Fruitful Discipleship: Living the Mission of Jesus in the Church and the World

Leaders: The Rev. Yonas Yigezu & The Rt. Rev. Dr. Alex Mkumbo; Host: The Rev. Dr. David Wendel; Location: Congress

"By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples" (John 15:8 ESV). How does God's grace change our individual lives, families, neighborhoods, parish communities and cities? The Rev. Dr. David Wendel hosts a conversation with our brothers and sisters in Christ from Ethiopia and Tanzania.

YONAS YIGEZU

President, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus



The Rev. Yonas Yigezu pursued his early education in Horest Spinnings Junior Secondary School in Challia, Wollega, Ethiopia and Ghimbi High School. He then studied at Westhill College in England, where he took his advanced diploma in church management and at Manchester University where he earned a bachelor's degree in development management policy and a master's degree in management and economic policy. He earned his Master of Divinity at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia in 2006. Currently he is pursuing his Ph.D. at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

President Yigezu was ordained in 2006 in West Wollega Bethel Synod, Danbidolo, Ethiopia. He served as the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) director for mission and theology until 2017, when he was elected president of the EECMY. The EECMY became a national church in 1959. By the end of 2016, it had 8.3 million members in more than 8,500 congregations throughout the country; it is considered the largest Lutheran church in the world. President Yigezu and his wife, Ayantu Dufera, have 4 children.

ALEX MKUMBO

Bishop, Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania



The Rt. Rev. Dr. Alex Mkumbo was born into a Muslim family, but as he began to read the Word of God, he encountered John 3:16. From that moment, he knew he would end up on a different path and was forever changed. The message of the Good News of Jesus Christ called him to a life of faith and service. Mkumbo published his doctoral thesis in 2008. He was director of the Lutheran Theological College Kiomboi in Singida, Tanzania, from 2008 to 2012, an educational institution for pastors and evangelists. In 2013, he was appointed the new bishop of the Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). The Central Diocese is one of 25 dioceses in the ELCT and located in the central highlands of the country. Bishop Mkumbo is married to Wilhelmina; father to Lynn, Eric, Feodora and Friedrich.

DAVID WENDEL

Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry and Ecumenism, North American Lutheran Church



The Rev. Dr. David Wendel graduated from Indiana University with a bachelor's degree in speech communication. He is a 1981 graduate of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg and served his internship at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Los Alamos, New Mexico. He served as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Hobbs, New Mexico, before being called to Saint Luke's Lutheran Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in 1986.

He earned a Doctor of Ministry in Preaching from the Association of Chicago Theological Schools in 2001. In 30 years of parish ministry, Pastor Wendel gained valuable hands-on experience serving as pastor to two congregations that had suffered under unhealthy relationships, lack of vision and impaired mission and ministry. He now works with many congregations in the NALC assisting with visioning, healing and renewal, especially focusing on pastor/parish relationships. He writes regularly for the *NALC News*, addressing these topics. Pastor Wendel and his wife, Susan Riches, have two adult children, two grandsons and two granddaughters.

Life-to-Life Discipleship

Leader: The Rev. Dr. Eric Riesen; Location: House

In this session, members of the Life-to-Life Discipleship Team will cast a vision for faithful, biblical and confessional discipleship in the NALC. The team members will share their common vision for discipleship and introduce the CREDO Initiative. CREDO is an acronym for Confessional Renewal Embracing Discipleship and Outreach. The CREDO Initiative is the “nuts and bolts” of how to begin to renew congregational ministry toward discipleship. If you want to get involved in Life-to-Life Discipleship at the congregational level, or as a pastor, then this breakout is the place to start.

ERIC RIESEN

Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church



The Rev. Dr. Eric Riesen is the senior pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Ashland, Ohio. He is married to Terry Lynne Riesen and they have three grown children: Erica (Scott), Paul (Jessica), and Tristan (Karleigh). Pastor Riesen is a graduate of Indiana University (B.S.), Fuller Theological Seminary (M.A.), Luther Theological Seminary (M.Div.), and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (D. Min). He also studied at St. Vincent’s Theological Seminary (Benedictine). Pastor Riesen has chaired the Life-to-Life Discipleship Team for six years.

Mission Driven: Mission with Discernment and Intentionality

Leader: The Rev. Heidi Punt & Brian Sutton; Location: Council

What do the gifts of the Spirit and the churches in Revelation have to do with discernment and intentionality in your own mission work? Bring your Bible and find out. Being Mission Driven is in our DNA. It should be simple, but the options are endless and it's easy to get stuck. How do you decide without getting overwhelmed? Discernment and intentionality. Find out more with passionate mission encouragers, the Rev. Heidi Punt and Brian Sutton.

HEIDI PUNT

Pastor, Christ United Lutheran Church



The Rev. Heidi Punt was born and raised in South Africa, completing all her formal studies in South Africa and majoring in missiology and New Testament studies at the University of South Africa and the Lutheran House of Studies. Pastor Punt accepted the call to serve in the USA about 15 years ago and began her ministry in Illinois. In 2013, God led her and her family to North Carolina, where her husband was called to serve Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Troutman and her two younger children entered junior high and high school, while her oldest daughter remained behind to finish college in Illinois. By March 2014, she accepted the call to serve Christ United Lutheran Church, Granite Falls, North Carolina. Her passion for mission and desire to bring God's Word to all generations in a tangible and joy-filled manner made her a dynamic force in their midst. The congregation has grown in discipleship and membership, biblical literacy and social outreach.

BRIAN SUTTON

Co-Chair, Mission Connections Team



Brian Sutton is a native of Montreal, Canada. He is married to Hazel, has two married children and three grandchildren. Brian earned both his B.B.A. and M.B.A. degrees at Montreal College in Montreal, North Carolina. He has served St. John's Lutheran Church in Statesville, North Carolina, in many capacities. For four years he served as council president, tasked with steering the church during a time of pastoral vacancy, including obtaining

supply pastors and, in several cases, leading worship and preaching when supply pastors were not available. He also served on the team to establish Grace Lutheran Church in Advance, North Carolina, a mission start of the Carolinas Mission District, and continues to serve on the St. John's disaster relief team, having participated in delivering relief supplies to two North Carolina coastal cities. Brian currently serves on the NALC Executive Council. In that capacity, he chairs the task force charged with developing a strategy of structure for the NALC that will enable us to fulfill our four Core Values as we continue to experience growth; co-chairs the NALC Mission Connections Team; and serves on the Executive Council Personnel Committee. Brian also participates in area ecumenical activities by providing narration for special services of other churches in the region on various occasions. In the community, he also serves as president of the Iredell Health System volunteer organization, providing support to both patients and staff.

Plant, Grow, Bloom – New Starts in the NALC

Leader: The Rev. Brad Hales & The Rev. Tom Hilpert; Location: Capitol I

In I Corinthians 3:6-9 the apostle Paul writes, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field, God’s building” (ESV). Planting the church of Jesus Christ is essential for God to make disciples. And that’s what we are all about in the NALC. Jesus is not outsourcing the work of mission planting to others. Come and learn the basics of how individuals, congregations and mission districts can easily plant and nurture new mission starts. God desires to grow the Church, and wants to use us to make it happen!

BRAD HALES

Director of Domestic Mission, North American Lutheran Church



The Rev. Brad Hales is the NALC director of domestic mission and the senior pastor of Reformation Lutheran Church in Culpeper, Virginia. Previously, Pastor Hales served as the chair of the Renewal Team, New Starts Team, and dean of the Virginia Mission District. Through the power of Jesus, Pastor Hales has helped to renew several older congregations in discipleship, outreach and mission. In 2009, his present congregation was given the “Best Practices Award in Senior Adult Ministry” by the National Council on Aging. Pastor Hales has also authored multiple Bible studies and resources, including, *A Covenant of Aging*, published by Sola Publishing.

TOM HILPERT

Director, Life Together Churches



The Rev. Tom Hilpert, a seasoned church planter, received his bachelor’s degree from Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon, and his Master of Divinity (M.Div.) from the American Lutheran Theological Seminary in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He makes his home in the woods of Tennessee near Nashville, with his wife, Kari Hilpert, and children, but he spent his formative years in Papua New Guinea, the son of missionary parents.

Currently, Pastor Tom serves New Joy Fellowship in Tennessee and as the director of Life Together Churches. A ministry partner of the NALC, Life Together Churches is a network that supports people hosting worship and congregational life in small group environments, such as house churches, missional communities and mission fellowships.

Shining in the Darkness: The Word of God at Work Around the World

Leaders: The Rev. Dr. Paul Gossman & NALC Global Workers; Location: Capitol III

“For it is the God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6 RSV).

God spoke the world into being at the beginning of time. By the same creative mechanism, God speaks faith into our hearts, light into our communities, and hope into human cultures around the world up to the present day. He creates these things by the power of His Word!

In Acts 1:8, we also read: “You shall be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth” (RSV). The ministry of the NALC engages in and supports global missions. Particular emphasis is placed on working with and through existing partners and our global workers. Join the Rev. Dr. Paul Gossman from the World Mission Prayer League (WMPL) as he hosts NALC global workers. This breakout will share stories about the Word of God at work in some of these remote corners, provide an opportunity to ask questions and receive updates from our global workers, and give opportunities for personal involvement.

PAUL & PRIS GOSSMAN

Director, World Mission Prayer League



Paul and Pris Gossman have long understood themselves to be called to mission. After Paul’s graduation from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, they served as missionaries in the tribal highlands of the Philippines, training leaders and planting churches. Along with their daughter Sarah, they later served with WMPL in Peru, doing similar work among the poor in the city of Chiclayo. Since their return to the U.S. in 2000, the Gossmans have served in bilingual and multiethnic parish and parachurch ministries in Illinois, Washington and Oregon. Paul also holds a Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He headed that department at Trinity Lutheran College from 2005–2008 and has been an independent instructor and consultant in a wide variety of countries and settings, currently serving as the director for the World Mission Prayer League.

JEFF & MIM NELLERMOE

Global Workers, China Service Ventures



The Rev. Dr. Jeff and Mim Nellerhoe serve with China Service Ventures' "Bo Ai" summer youth camps in Henan, China, where they work primarily to mentor CSV's Chinese leaders and equip them for lives of service. Pastor Jeff is a called NALC pastor.

Jeff graduated with a Bachelor of Arts, *summa cum laude*, from Texas Lutheran College (Seguin, Texas), and a Master of Divinity, with honors, from Luther Seminary (St. Paul, Minnesota). He completed his doctorate in integrated marketing communication at the University of Utah (Salt Lake City). His recreational pursuits include motorcycles, horses, skiing, archery, golf and biking. Aside from sports, he loves to play guitar and sing, watch movies, and read good fiction novels. Mim graduated with a Bachelor of Arts, *summa cum laude*, from Texas Lutheran College, and a Master of Arts in Education from Augustana Lutheran College (Sioux Falls, South Dakota). Most recently she coached and taught at Another Way School in Park City, Utah. Mim loves all sports and animals. She grew up in Salt Lake City, Utah.

EKKA FAMILY

Global Workers, India with World Mission Prayer League



The Ekka Family serves in North Central India, where they are joined in mission by their four children. The Ekkas have lived in this part of India most of their lives and feel blessed to return to minister there. Together, they serve in the North Western Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church, primarily at Navin Doman Theological College.

STEPHEN & RACHEL KATTERHENRICH

Global Workers, Tanzania with Wycliffe Bible Translators



Stephen and Rachel Katterhenrich grew up at St. John's Lutheran Church in Grove City, Ohio. They were blessed to learn the value of knowing and serving God, as well as serving others. The Katterhenrichs have been serving with Wycliffe Bible

Translators in Tanzania since 2011, working in the city of Mbeya where 13 different language groups are working together on Bible translation. They work primarily with the Bungu language, doing analysis of the language and developing a writing system for Bungu. Stephen enjoys working as a translation advisor, assisting in the translation of God's Word into the Bungu language.

Small and Rural Churches: The Hope of the Future

Leader: The Rev. Christopher Martin & The Rev. Wendy Berthelsen;

Location: Capitol II

It's not about the size, but the relationships. And the small, rural church is truly vital today because of these relationships.

There is a prevailing attitude in some quarters that if a church doesn't "worship" many people, receive an adequate sum of offerings, or isn't saturated with daily programming, it is not a viable center for mission. Some believe that if a congregation is aging and struggling to do ministry in communities which are declining, then it has little hope for the future. Sadly these thoughts and opinions are based on worldly standards rather than what the Holy Spirit is doing. Small and rural churches are the backbone of the Christian community in the United States. Whether these congregations are found in tiny towns, the middle of farmland, residential enclaves in suburbia or nestled within bustling cities, groups of dedicated individuals gather in mission, centered in Word and Sacrament, seeking ways to build relationships and reach out to neighbors. Come and experience how these congregations can grow and witness even more by deepening their relationships with Jesus, one another and the community.

WENDY BERTHELSEN

Call, Inc.



The Rev. Wendy Berthelsen has partnered together with her husband, Joel, both in ministry and at home for many years. Having complementary gifts, they have a passion for each person in the church to know and live out their call from God: the call to know, follow and serve Jesus. They believe that each person is unique and God desires to custom design His church around people. Wendy and Joel believe that God's call has to do with all of life; one's work, family, community and world. They are graced and honored to be the parents of four wonderful children, Amara, Stefan, Philip and Ana. Wendy graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College and Luther Seminary (Master of Divinity). Most of Wendy's time as a pastor is devoted to Call, Inc., a non-profit teaching mission of Hope Lutheran Church where she serves in Cedar Hill, Texas.

CHRISTOPHER MARTIN

Pastor, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church



The Rev. Christopher Martin has been pastor of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church – Vilmar, an open-country congregation near Greene, Iowa, since August of 2018. He brings with him over 11 years of experience in small town and rural parish ministry. He came to St. John's after previously serving as pastor of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Audubon, Iowa (2007–2010), the McConnellsburg Lutheran Parish, which consisted of three congregations (one in town, two open-country churches) near McConnellsburg, Pennsylvania (2010–2012), and most recently, Emmons Lutheran Church, Emmons, Minnesota (2013–2018). During his last year at Emmons, he also served part-time at Bethel Lutheran Church – Vinje, a small, open-country congregation near Scarville, Iowa.

Pastor Chris has been active in the local ministerial association in his previous calls, and served as secretary for the Lake Mills, Iowa, Area Ministerial Association (LMAMA). He currently serves on the Mission District Council of the Iowa Mission District-NALC and the NALC's Renewal Team. Pastor Chris married his wife, Lindsay, on October 29, 2005. She is a stay-at-home mother to the couple's three children: Bradon (8), Zachary (5) and Cassie (3).

Stewardship: We Are in This Together – Shared Purpose, Shared Struggle, Shared Hope

Leaders: The Rev. Dona Johnson & The Rev. Eugene Grimm; Location: Caucus

In Acts, Chapter 2, Luke describes the early Church as a community of faithful stewards who had all things in common (2:44). These believers had mutual love for one another and out of this love came a sense of mutual ownership. No longer were time, money and possessions thought of as personal property (this is mine and that's yours), but all was joyfully and corporately shared. They were "all in" together. They held nothing back. And out of their love for the risen Christ, and a genuine love for one another, emerged a new corporate generosity – a generosity the likes of which had not been seen before.

Imagine for a moment if every congregation and every member had all things in common – shared ownership and shared responsibility. How might this effect how we steward our time, talents, treasure and testimony towards the NALC and our local congregation? How would it increase both corporate and individual generosity? In what ways would being "all in" unleash and expand the Great Commission and further our ability to make disciples and share the Gospel in ways that we could never have imagined?

In this session, we will learn what it means to have all things in common and to be all-in. We will share all our resources – *Stewards of God's Influence* – and lay the groundwork for how to implement an effective annual stewardship program and provide time for you to share both your joys and your struggles.

DONA JOHNSON

Co-Chair, Living and Giving Stewardship Team



The Rev. Dona Johnson has over 20 years of pastoral leadership, having previously served Christ the King Lutheran Church in Centerville, Ohio. In her recent retirement, she and her husband are enjoying the new challenge of planting a house church in Phoenix, Arizona, as well as serving as co-chair of the Living and Giving Stewardship Team. Pastor Johnson has led stewardship intensives, received several educational grants for biblical stewardship initiatives, and chairs a non-profit board. She has led several capital campaigns. Pastor Johnson is a graduate of Trinity Lutheran Seminary,

Columbus, Ohio, and the University of Cincinnati, with a master of science degree in architectural research and planning.

EUGENE GRIMM

Co-Chair, Living and Giving Stewardship Team



The Rev. Dr. Eugene Grimm served as a stewardship specialist for more than 20 years. He believes that the Christian church has just begun to teach and preach stewardship and that it is a vital part of the Great Commission. How can we hope to fulfill even a small part of the Great Commission until we learn to share our resources so that others may know, grow and give. Pastor Grimm is co-chair of the Living and Giving Stewardship Team.

The Academy: What I Wish I Would Have Learned in Seminary

Leaders: The Rev. Trina Petersen, The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, The Rev. Melinda Jones, The Rev. Bob Quaintance; Host: The Rev. Tony Ede; Location: Grand Ballroom

The NALC is committed to the renewal of all our congregations, working to develop and deliver resources that challenge and open the NALC to the work of the Holy Spirit in our ministry and mission. Throughout the year, the NALC Renewal Team hosts a free monthly webinar based on expressed needs by NALC leaders, for NALC leaders. The webinar is normally held online, but for this session, join us live and in person with our regular panel Q&A format!

Our panel is excited to share their experience and answer questions connected with practical matters. When rubber meets the road, being a Mission-Driven church focused on Life-to-Life Discipleship in everyday life comes with an abundance of practical questions. For example: Do I need a streaming license if I want to share worship live on social media? What do I do when a ministry knocks on my door and wants permission to use the building? How do we have an organized and comprehensive vision for our mission work? How does the Lutheran understanding of Baptism connect with Life-to-Life Discipleship and how do I, in practical terms, bring those two ideas together in my everyday life? How do we find out what the needs in our community are? How do I faithfully shepherd families who are engaged in serious family-system conflict?

Our panel, hosted by the Rev. Tony Ede, is here to serve you — bring your questions, stories, challenges and joy. P.S. If you can't join us in person, join us on the livestream!

TONY EDE

Senior Pastor, First Evangelical Lutheran Church



The Rev. Tony Ede graduated from Waldorf College, where he earned an associate of arts in electronic communications and a bachelor of arts in multimedia communications. Graduating from Luther Seminary in 2006, Tony worked as a graduate teaching assistant in the homiletics department, helping to teach classes on using media and technology in worship and preaching. Pastor Ede has served at Immanuel and Bethany Lutheran Churches in the Danish Village of Kimballton, Iowa; as the teaching pastor at Trinity Lutheran in Webster City, Iowa; and currently serves as the senior pastor at

First Evangelical Lutheran in Manchester, Iowa. As part of his commitment to lifelong learning, Tony earned an MBA in 2017 from Upper Iowa University in Fayette, Iowa, with a concentration in organizational development. Following a long family tradition, Tony is a nationally certified firefighter and EMT and has used these skills to serve in the community, as well as in disaster response statewide. Tony was married to LeAnn at Trinity Lutheran Church, New Hampton, Iowa, on August 17th, 2002. They have three sons that keep them busy: Carver, Liam and Burke.

GEMECHIS BUBA

Assistant to the Bishop for Missions, North American Lutheran Church



The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba is originally from Ethiopia and now lives in Atlanta, Georgia, with his wife and three children. In addition to academic study and ordained ministry, Dr. Buba participates in multiple international ministries through speaking, leading revivals, leadership development conventions and evangelical mission events.

TRINA PETERSEN

Founding Pastor, A New Thing Christian Church



The Rev. Trina M. Petersen is pastor of A New Thing Christian Church, Lithonia, GA, a ministry entrusted to her by God, focused on the deliverance, healing and wholeness of his people. Pastor Trina was baptized as an infant, confirmed as a teenager and served as an adult in the Lutheran church prior to becoming an ordained pastor in the NALC. Most recently, she published two books, *Irresistible* and *The Adventures of Clayoton* (a children's book) and became a certified coach of the John Maxwell Team. Being Kingdom minded, Pastor Petersen serves in the position of pastor, operates with an apostolic anointing, and speaks in a prophetic voice as she helps the people of God heal from their pasts, live in the now, and walk in the power and authority given to them by God!

BOB QUAINANCE

Pastor, Good Hope Lutheran Church



The Rev. Bob Quaintance graduated from Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio and was ordained in 1981. He thoroughly enjoyed serving two different two-point parishes in South Dakota and then in 1991, moving to Boardman, Ohio, where his family accepted a call to serve at Good Hope Lutheran Church. At Good Hope, they define a disciple as “a follower of Jesus who is maturing and multiplying.” Pastor Bob has been very excited and blessed to be a part of the NALC’s Life-To-Life Discipleship Initiative and its pilot program in Ohio, saying: “our only mission is the Great Commission – to go make disciples.”

His wife Nina works at Youngstown State University and serves as one of Good Hope’s organists, but they truly enjoy spending time with their children and grandchildren. They love trout fishing, hunting and other outdoor activities, but their greatest passion in life is sharing the love our heavenly Father has for us and for all people.

MELINDA JONES

Pastor, Advent Evangelical Lutheran Church



The Rev. Melinda Jones serves as pastor of Advent Evangelical Lutheran Church in North Charleston, South Carolina. Along with the joy of ordained Word and Sacrament ministry, Pastor Jones ministers to her parish neighborhood which is in the most urban, economically challenged area of the “Low Country.” Homelessness, alcoholism, drugs, human trafficking and poverty are some of the scars on those to whom Advent witnesses. Pastor Jones works with the sheriff’s office, the attorney general’s office, and other local agencies to help bring awareness and the hope of combatting the suffering.

Pastor Jones is recording secretary of the Executive Council of the North American Lutheran Church, which has afforded her opportunities to visit many NALC congregations. For the past nine years, she led and taught annual women’s retreats in Rincon, Georgia, for Lutheran congregations in the NALC, Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Pastor

Jones and her husband (Jim) of 28 years live in Summerville, South Carolina, along with their two teenage sons (Jade and Vasa).

You Can Be An Everyday Ordinary Missionary

Leader: Valerie Hobbs; Location: Chamber

Statistics tell us the United States is becoming a mission field. How can church leaders train their people to be missionaries in their own neighborhoods? Using the five missional practices presented in Greg Finke's book, *Joining Jesus on His Mission*, we can mobilize our people. Hear how one church used the practices and questions to launch their leadership and congregation into being everyday ordinary missionaries. Take home a few practical actions you can put into practice in your everyday life as we join Jesus on His mission.

VALERIE HOBBS

Redeemer Lutheran Church



Valerie Hobbs serves on the staff of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Damascus, Maryland. Her job responsibilities include the support and encouragement of lay leaders of Redeemer's Bible studies and small groups. Her passion is to see God's Word change lives as individuals learn to pray and to hear God speak through Scripture. She also works part-time with Church Discipleship Ministries, a branch of The Navigators dedicated to helping church leadership live out their disciple-making mission.

SESSION INFORMATION & BREAKOUT NOTES

Plenary Session

Keynote Address

Speaker: The Rev. Yonas Yigezu

Speaker Notes:

Key Action Item from Keynote Address:

(transfer to action steps on page 67)

Panel Q&A:

Moderator: The Rev. Tony Ede; Panelists: The Rev. John Bradosky, The Rev. Dr. Joel Lehenbauer, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Alex Mkumbo, The Rev. Yonas Yigezu

Panel Notes:

**To submit questions,
please text:
614-992-2528**

Key Action Item from Panel:

(transfer to action steps on page 67)

Table Talk:

1. Individually, look back at your notes from the sermon, keynote address and panel Q&A. Individually and silently in the space provided, write your answers to the question, "What is God saying to YOU?"

2. Go around the table and share ideas without duplicating them and write down some of them in the space below.

3. Which ideas do you think are most important to share with your home congregation and ministry teams? Discuss.

4. Wrap Up: Take a brief moment to reflect individually. Then go around the group sharing:
 - a. What is the "one small step" you will take before leaving the conference?

 - b. What is the first step you will take when you return home?

Breakout Session

Speaker: _____

Speaker Notes:

Key Action Item from Breakout Session:
(transfer to action steps on page 67)

MISSION DISTRICT MEETINGS

Walking by the Spirit with the Fruit of the Spirit

DIRECTIONS

Mission district meetings are key to the success of our time together, where rubber meets the road. Specific breakout room information will be available at the registration area and also listed in the main gathering area. As you find where your mission district is meeting, your mission district dean will act as a facilitator. Time will begin with this Bible study as it connects to the keynote presentation (approximately one hour), and the additional time provided may be used for administrative mission district business.

Please record your answers, as key reflections will be used later on in the study and throughout the week. Please utilize the following original artwork as a way to meditate, ponder and brainstorm, if it is helpful for you. If you process in a more linear style or fashion, please feel free to use the blank space provided. It may be helpful to choose a scribe who can record information on newsprint during the portions of this study labeled: Encounter, Grow and Application. Please also transfer final action steps and key insights to the report-out form for later use in your mission district.

This study has also been produced to be able to be used at the congregational level outside of Lutheran Week.

Supplies Needed: Bible, Lutheran Week booklet, writing utensil for taking notes, newsprint and markers (provided to mission district dean), large copy of report-out form

OVERVIEW

It is the goal of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) to inspire congregations to be truly Mission Driven. If we went around the room, or asked people in our congregations, it is likely we would hear many different definitions of mission. Mission is lived out through our congregations and our lives in ever-maturing ways as we grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. For the purpose of shared and common language for this evening's Bible study, this is one definition that may be helpful: *"Mission is sharing the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection, bringing the Kingdom near, making disciples, together, following all that Jesus has commanded us."*

In order to sharpen our focus on reaching out to others with the Good News of Jesus Christ, it's important to take a realistic assessment of where your mission district is at the present time regarding vision and mission. This evening, we will be approaching this through the lens of our theme "Walking by the Spirit with the Fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:16-25.

In his small group discussion guide for the book of Galatians, *Galatians: Gospel Matters*, the Rev. Dr. Timothy Keller shares this overview which provides context for our study this evening:

The church in Galatia faced a choice between two 'gospels' – two ways of approaching a relationship with God, two ways of looking at life.

On one side were the teachers who told these young Christians that their performance mattered. To be right with God, they needed to trust Christ... but they also needed to trust their own efforts.

On the other side was the church-planting apostle, Paul. He said that the only performance that mattered was Christ's: His life, his death and resurrection. He warned that following any other "gospel" meant becoming enslaved.

Which "gospel" they relied on really mattered.

The choice between the gospel of Christ-alone and the false Christ-plus version still confronts us today. The false one is attractive... but deadly. The real one sets us free now, now and eternally. The gospel matters.

CONNECT (10 Minutes)

After reading the overview, open with prayer.

Divide into dyads or triads and reflect on the following:

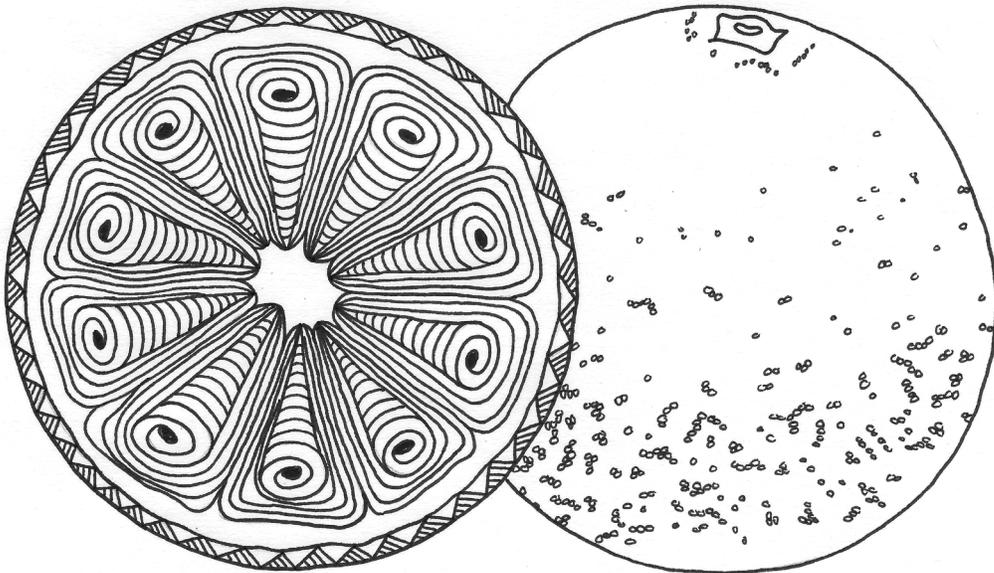
1. Introduce yourself and share where you are from.

2. Begin by reading Galatians 5:1, 13-14 and answering the question: "What is God saying to you in these verses?"

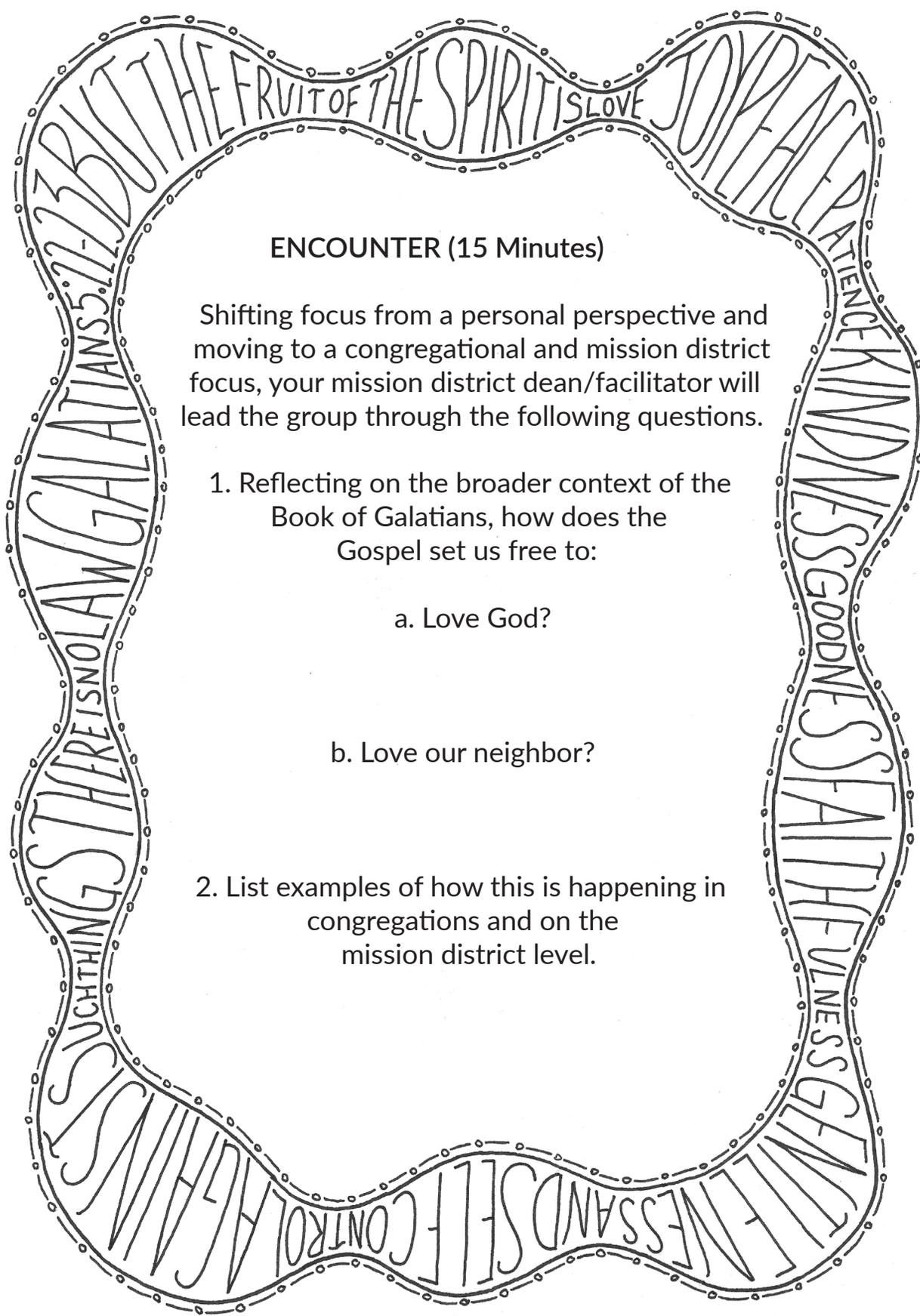


3. Earlier today in worship, our keynote session and panel Q&A, our presenters shared some of the contextual background and culture of Paul's original audience. As we pause to consider our neighbors, communities and particular geographic regions:
 - a. What challenges does our current culture present in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and living as disciples?
 - b. What positive opportunities does our current culture afford us?

4. Reflecting on this conversation, what is one small and tangible action step you can take in the next 24 hours? Please write it here.



Return to the larger group – key reflections from this time will be shared later in the study.



ENCOUNTER (15 Minutes)

Shifting focus from a personal perspective and moving to a congregational and mission district focus, your mission district dean/facilitator will lead the group through the following questions.

1. Reflecting on the broader context of the Book of Galatians, how does the Gospel set us free to:

a. Love God?

b. Love our neighbor?

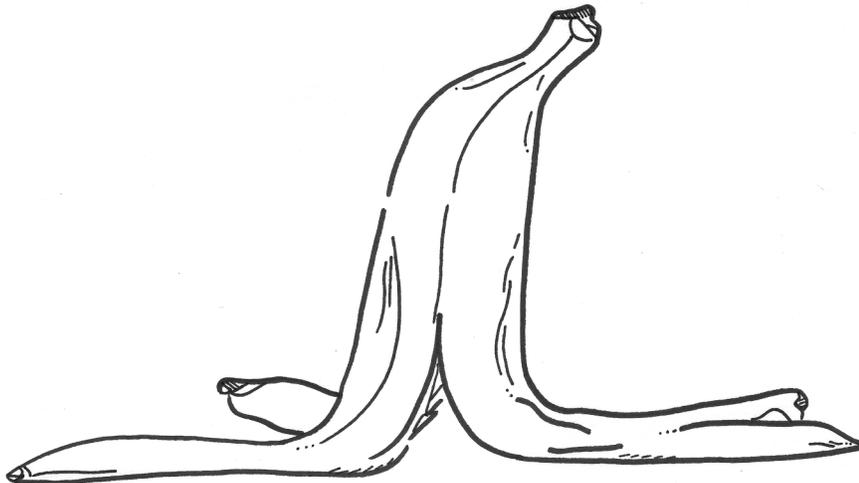
2. List examples of how this is happening in congregations and on the mission district level.

GROW (25 Minutes)

The theme for this year's Lutheran Week, "Walking by the Spirit in the Fruit of the Spirit," is based on Galatians 5. In this excerpt from the book of Galatians, Paul shares very practical wisdom for living into our calling as redeemed disciples of Jesus Christ.

Choose someone to read Galatians 5:16-25 aloud.

7. Where do we as Christians, and specifically inside the NALC, throw away our freedom? Where do we run back to old and/or unhealthy patterns of behavior or cultures?
8. Reflecting on Galatians 5:19-21, which parts of our sinful nature (acts of flesh) are most rationalized in our current culture as tolerable, acceptable or commonplace? (Refer also to notes from the Connect section.) Where do we slip up?



9. Reflecting on Galatians 5:22-23:

a. Which aspects of the fruit of the Spirit are most exemplified within your congregation and/or mission district?

b. Which are least manifested and why? What would it take to change that?

10. Reflecting on Galatians 5:24-25:

a. What's our part in producing the fruit that's listed?



b. How does the Gospel transform our motivations?

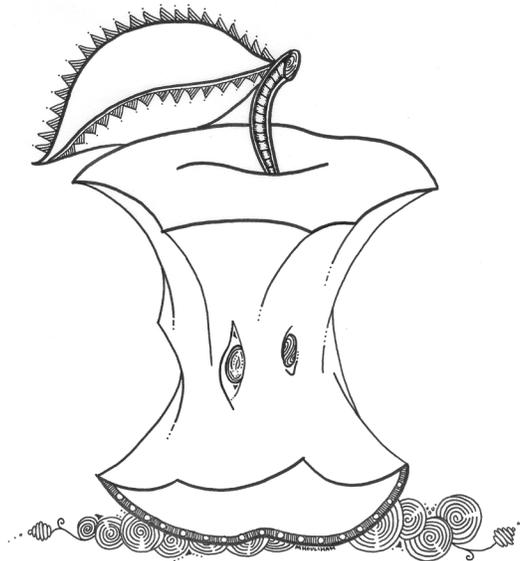
APPLICATION: The Core Goal Needs a Plan (10 Minutes)

1. Reflecting on this evening and processing what we've heard as a group, what is an:

a. Act of the flesh we need to leave behind and confess?

b. Area of gratitude to celebrate?

c. Area of opportunity to follow up with?



As your time together in Bible study ends, please read Ephesians 2:8-10 aloud and close with prayer.

Action Steps

Session	Key Takeaways	Actions Items & Next Steps
Service of the Word		
Session 1		
Panel Q & A		
Table Talk		
Breakout Session		
Mission District Meeting		

Name:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

Congregation/Mission District:

CONVOCATION

- Introduction of Seminararians
- Greeting from the North American Lutheran Seminary
- Introduction of Newly Ordained Pastors
- Recognition of Congregational Anniversaries

12:00 p.m.	Lunch (Included in Registration Fee)	<i>Various Locations</i>
1:30 p.m.	Convocation Session II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First Ballot - Report of the First Ballot - Greetings from Ecumenical & Inter-Lutheran Guests - Report of the Treasurer - 2020 Budget Proposal - Report of the Living & Giving Stewardship Team - Report from Lutherans for Life - Report of the Committee on Reference & Counsel 	<i>Grand Ballroom</i>
3:00 p.m.	Addresses from Nominees for Bishop	
4:15 p.m.	Break	
4:30 p.m.	Informal Conversation with Nominees for Bishop	<i>Capitol I to III</i>
6:00 p.m.	Dinner of Appreciation (Included in Registration Fee) Music and Meditation: Steve Bell & Malcolm Guite	<i>Grand Ballroom</i>

Friday, August 9

6:00 a.m.	Deans' Breakfast	<i>Cameral</i>
8:00am	Devotion	<i>Grand Ballroom</i>
8:30am	Convocation Session III <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Second Ballot (if needed) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report of Second Ballot (if needed) - Unfinished Business from Session II - Report of the Women of the NALC - Report of the Disaster Response Team 	<i>Grand Ballroom</i>

- Report on Missions
- Report from Water Mission International
- Third Ballot (if needed)
- Report of Third Ballot (if needed)

10:45 a.m.	Break	
11:00 a.m.	Convocation Session III (continued)	<i>Grand Ballroom</i>
11:15 a.m.	Devotions led by Nominees for Bishop	
12:00 p.m.	Lunch (Included in Registration Fee)	<i>Various Locations</i>
1:30 p.m.	Convocation Session IV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fourth Ballot (if needed) - Report of the Fourth Ballot (if needed) - Announcement of 2020 Pastors Conference - Announcement of 2020 Canadian Rockies Theological Conference - Announcement of Location for 2020 and 2021 Convocation 	<i>Grand Ballroom</i>
3:00 p.m.	Eucharist/Installation of Bishop & Elected Officers	
5:00 p.m.	Close of Convocation	

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH PROPOSED RULES OF PROCEDURE

1. The business of this Convocation shall be as outlined in the official agenda distributed to the convocation.
2. The rules set forth in the current edition of “Robert’s Rules of Order, newly revised,” shall govern this Convocation in all applicable cases and to the extent consistent with the rules and agenda adopted by this Convocation, and according to the constitution of the North American Lutheran Church.
3. Once adopted, the rules shall not be amended or suspended except by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at this Convocation.
4. The voting body for this Convocation will include all ordained ministers of the North American Lutheran Church, who are properly registered to attend; and those laypersons who have been elected as delegates by congregations of the North American Lutheran Church, who are properly registered to attend. The quorum for conducting business shall be such registered delegates who are in attendance.
5. If not a delegate, each NALC officer and each person serving in a position subject to election by a Convocation will have the right of voice but not vote at this Convocation.
6. Unless otherwise determined by a majority of the Convocation, all speeches during discussion shall be limited to three minutes. A signal shall be given one minute before the speaker’s time ends.
7. All elections shall follow the procedures outlined in the Constitution, which specifies that nominations for the office of Bishop must be submitted to the Nominating Committee no later than 90 days prior to the Convocation. Additional nominations from the floor of the Convocation for this office are permissible. Nominations for all other offices must be submitted to the Nominating Committee no later than 45 days prior to the Convocation, and nominations from the floor are not permissible.

8. For all elections except Bishop, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. Should a first ballot not result in an election, a second ballot shall be cast. The nominees for a second ballot shall include the names of the two persons who have received the highest vote on the first ballot, plus ties.
9. On any ballot for Bishop, any nominee who receives a majority of the votes cast shall be elected. Should a first ballot not result in an election, a second ballot shall be cast. The nominees for a second ballot shall include the names of the four nominees who have received the highest vote on the first ballot, plus ties. The nominees on the second ballot will each make fifteen-minute presentations to the Convocation before the second ballot is cast. Thereafter, if no nominee receives a majority, the nominee receiving the fewest votes, plus ties, shall be eliminated until two nominees remain. The final two nominees will present ten-minute devotions on the Scriptural theme for the Convocation prior to the final ballot. Voting shall continue until one nominee receives a majority.
10. A Committee on Reference and Counsel will serve during this Convocation. On this Committee will be the General Secretary, a member of the Court of Adjudication, a member of the Executive Council, and two additional delegates to the Convocation, one clergy and one lay, appointed by the Bishop. All suggested items for consideration by the Convocation outside the adopted agenda, including amendments to the constitution, shall be presented to the Committee no later than 12:00 p.m. on the first day of the Convocation. The Committee will review all proposed items in consultation with the person(s) presenting proposals. The committee will present a report to the Convocation in which the Committee will recommend a time for the Convocation to consider the proposals.

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2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Our theme for this year's Lutheran Week is "Walking by the Spirit with the Fruit of the Spirit."

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

— Galatians 5:16-23 ESV

It has been a distinct honor and privilege to serve with you during these past nine years. The first year I served as your general secretary and then for the last eight years I served as your bishop. I will forever treasure the relationships that we formed over those years and, in spite of a challenging schedule, I have always been encouraged and renewed by the time we shared in those relationships and by the common faith we share in our Lord Jesus Christ. I have made very few commitments beyond our Convocation and remain poised to assist the new bishop in every way possible, promising to ensure a smooth transition as they assume this role.

Last year in my oral report, I spoke about runners passing off the baton in a race just as I am prepared to pass on this baton of leadership to the next bishop you will elect. Thank you for the trust you placed in me to run this portion of the race. The process of passing on that baton will be completed at this Convocation and your focus, as it should be, will be on your new bishop. To that end I will keep my report brief.

Saint Paul's letter to the Galatians reminds us how important it is to understand clearly what we oppose and to be even more clear about that for which we stand. The "desires of the flesh" are those things that keep us focused on ourselves. These

selfish and self-centered desires always work in opposition to the Spirit. Because of our sinful nature the law serves as a constant reminder of the destructive nature of both the desires and the actions associated with such selfishness. The Church is not exempt from such concerns. The avoidance of most of these “works of the flesh” are obvious, like sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, sorcery, drunkenness and orgies. These selfish behaviors are destructive to both individuals and the community. They destroy trust and undermine the integrity of the congregation. They obviously compromise our witness to the world.

More subtle in their effects are the other “desires of the flesh” that St. Paul mentions, like idolatry, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, rivalries, descensions, divisions and envy. My fear is they can become so common among us that we fail to recognize their devastating effect on our individual lives and our life together. We can make idols out of most anything in the church. Our form of worship can become an idol, our heritage, traditions, our constitution, our pastor, lay leadership, nothing seems to be exempt, not even paint color, carpet or worship times. You will quickly find out how sacred the idol is when there is any suggestion to change it. Much of what produces the enmity, strife, anger, descensions and divisions are the “desires of the flesh” based on personal preferences and past experiences. Instead of considering the needs of others ahead of self, we are motivated by self-serving desires. Instead of making decisions on the basis of the mission of making disciples and maturing in our own faith we spend much of our energy preserving the past and our personal preferences. Since our own selfish desires conflict with the selfish desires of others in the Church, the result is the brokenness that Paul describes. In a church community riddled with such brokenness it is difficult to grow. Those coming into such a community expecting to experience the loving concern and care of Christ within His Body, the Church, are disappointed and disillusioned to find only the brokenness of selfish bickering. Is it any wonder they refuse to stay long or join? It is for this reason that we continually focus on the commitment of the entire congregation in the implementation of discipleship. Following Christ Jesus requires the transformation of both individuals and our life together as a community of faith. It is only when we are focused on the true mission of the Church that brokenness is overcome, and divisions are healed through the mutual commitment to become and grow faithful disciple-makers. This is the culture within our congregations that we must desire and work to create.

As I prepare to leave this position, I remain concerned about two other characteristics that St. Paul mentions to the Galatians, jealousy and envy. There are

some leaders who believe that now that the North American Lutheran Church has “grown up” it is time for us to look and act like every other main-line denomination. Some are concerned that we become more centralized in our structures, hoping for a national office, filled with staff. It is so easy for us to focus on the institution and the trappings of the past that we long to go back to the familiar. The over-institutionalization of the Church is always at the expense of its rightful mission. In most of the mainline denominations the preservation of the institution has become their only mission!

This has never been the goal of the North American Lutheran Church and movement in that direction will lead only to our own demise. My prayer is that we hold fast to those four values that have formed and normed us in these past nine years of our life. We are Christ Centered, Mission Driven, Traditionally Grounded and Congregationally Focused! We are intentionally focused on Life-to-Life Discipleship, through personal relationships that create a more intimate and caring community in Christ. Instead of larger infrastructure, we want to grow smaller and more personal in our outreach. Instead of repeating the mistakes of the past, we are a discipleship movement working for reform and renewal throughout our nation and around the world as we create opportunities for such influence. The Holy Spirit has already been using us for those purposes and abandoning that direction would only shape our identity to be more like the predecessor bodies we abandoned for the sake of faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His mission.

It is the Holy Spirit who provides us with the positive gifts that St. Paul describes in this letter to the Galatians. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” Where the Holy Spirit is present you will find the evidence of that presence in these qualities manifest in the lives of the faithful. These qualities are not personal possessions but marks of the nature of Christian Community. What if the experience of every visitor in our congregations was the experience of these gifts as they observed people interacting with one another? You can imagine the difference that would make! They would want to return and learn more about the Lord Jesus who transforms the lives of His followers and through the work of His Holy Spirit fills them with such gifts! Where these gifts are manifest our witness to the world is powerful and attractive.

Equally important is the manifestation of these gifts in Life-to-Life Discipleship. If we are to fulfill Christ’s mission in discipling others, we must be filled with the Spirit and manifest these fruits of the Spirit. You cannot disciple anyone you do not love. That

love must become evident in showing kindness, goodness and gentleness. Those you are discipling must experience both your faithfulness to Jesus and your faithfulness to the relationship you have with them. In working with others who have a different worldview, lifestyle, family structure and past experiences, we must show patience and self-control. They must see in us the peace that surpasses all understanding, the peace of life in Christ Jesus. Even more, they will see in us the deep joy that fills us because of Christ's presence in our life. Without these gifts of the Holy Spirit, discipleship can easily become legalistic and oppressive works righteousness. With these gifts of the Holy Spirit, discipleship becomes life-giving for the individuals and transforms the culture of the local congregation as it strengthens the witness of the Church to the world.

One of the most helpful books that I have read this past year and encourage you to read is the work of a Lutheran New Testament theologian, Martin H. Franzmann, titled *Follow Me Discipleship According to Matthew*. This quote from the closing chapter of his book is long but his words are well chosen. My closing thoughts to you.

"Make disciples" was the last command that Jesus gave to His own. We know little or nothing of how Matthew fulfilled that command in his lifetime. But we do know how his book has gone on making disciples in all ages. It can make disciples of us again in our uncertain century and give us a disciple's certainty again, if we will give him a hearing. If we will do him the honor of hearing him out on his terms, we can hear again the call he once heard. And the Spirit which works in his book can make us capable of heeding that "Follow Me!" too. The Christ who called Matthew can be our Christ, to shape and mold our wills with His whole gift and His whole claim of grace. He will write the Law into our hearts, make pure and acceptable our worship, and put serene confidence into our lives. He will equip us for conflict with the irreligious and the falsely religious world about us and make us capable of doing what His disciples must do, without harshness and without feverish self-will, with prayer and with love. He will give us courage for the narrow way and the strait gate. He will close our ears to seductive prophesy and close our eyes to the false splendor of "successful" churchmanship. He will enable us to live lives of eschatological responsibility under His Messianic word, a life in which hearing and doing are one.

The Christ whom Matthew proclaims will send us out on missionary paths that run through all the world, paths of defeat and persecution, perhaps, but also paths on which we can witness to Him, speak in the power of His Spirit, and win His victories according to His will. He can and will make us strong to face the divisions and

confusions of our day undismayed. He will give us eyes to see the Kingdom where men see it not, in the Sower who goes out to sow His seed. He will give us ears to hear the footfalls of His judgment in the noisy clutter of our world and teach us to know with fear and trembling the precarious preciousness of His Grace.

He will fit us for fellowship by removing all greatness and all hardness from our hearts, by giving us an eye for His little ones, a heart that can forgive wholly and again and again, and a love which has the courage to tell a brother his fault.

He will plant in our hearts a high hope which will make us faithful to Him within the orders of this world, where He has placed us and where we stand, while we await Him and the new world which He brings. He will give us courage to confess Him and proclaim Him. And He can give us the wise sobriety which can read all history as the trumpets of His advent and the world's rebirth.

He will judge us with His cross and forgive us with His resurrection. He will melt down the stubborn stuff of our heroic manhood and re-mold us into men of God.

He will make disciples of us; He will make of us the holy, catholic, apostolic Church. It will not be a very brilliant church perhaps. Perhaps, we shall not be a large church, this church created by the Christ of Matthew; perhaps not a very successful church, not so well integrated in our communities, not so well accepted as we once were. Perhaps we shall even be a persecuted church again.

But we shall be church, real church, His church, and we shall live forever. We shall rise from our graves and break through the gates of death when He shall come and cry once more, "Follow me!"

There are many days when I reflect on my ministry and these past years of service and think how little I have accomplished. On the other hand, I take great consolation in what the Word and the Holy Spirit have accomplished. With me, or in spite of me, I am gratified and fulfilled by what the Lord has done in our midst. But I am even more thankful for the faithful partners I have been privileged to work with throughout this journey. I have been blessed by the inspiration and wisdom of other faithful leaders through whom the Holy Spirit has continued to guide my ministry these past years. The Rev. Paull Spring, bishop emeritus, has been a treasured friend and wise advisor. I am also thankful for the faithful service and expertise of the Rev. Ralph Kempiski.

The fruits of the Holy Spirit have been clearly manifest in the lives of our staff who have addressed the needs of countless pastors, laity and congregations throughout the year. They have been using their spiritual gifts to build up and strengthen this Church daily. They are deserving of your appreciation and encouragement. Please pray for them as I do.

The Rev. Mark Chavez, General Secretary
The Rev. Dr. David Wendel, Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry and Ecumenism
The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, Assistant to the Bishop for Missions
Andrew Fuller, Director of Communications
The Rev. Dr. Amy Schifrin, NALS President
The Rev. Brad Hales, Director of Domestic Mission
Gary and Laurie Pecuch, Youth and Family Ministry Coaches
Mary Bates, Disaster Response Coordinator
The Rev. Dr. David Baer, Newsletter Editor
Anne Gleason, Financial Administrator
Becky Seifert, Assistant to the Executive Staff
Jenny Brockman, Assistant for Missions
Joan Corniea, Financial Assistant
Maddie Benson, Communications Specialist

Those same fruits of the Spirit have also been manifested in your executive council this past year as they care for one another, meet together, serve on various teams to advance Christ's mission and make contact with hundreds of our pastors and congregations. Along with providing oversight and strategic direction for the entire North American Lutheran Church, they continue to read, study and grow in their faith and encourage our pastors and laity by their own example. They give graciously of their time and commitment to serve Christ. Our witness is stronger because of their service that keeps us moving forward faithfully and efficiently between our convocations.

The characteristic fruits of the Spirit are also manifest among our mission district deans when we meet together, when they lead their respective convocations and as they interact with the pastors and congregation they serve. They are creative and responsive to the needs of the NALC as well as the needs of their local congregations. I could not fulfill my role as bishop without their faithful support. They are focused with great clarity on the mission Christ gave to His Church to go and make disciples of all nations. New mission starts have been developed among

our mission districts and more are on the way. I remain continuously grateful to the congregations of our deans, who graciously provide them with the necessary time and opportunity to fulfill this important office. I am also especially thankful for the leadership of the Rev. Dan Powell, the convener and hub for communication for our deans. At my request he continued to fulfill this role even after he completed his term as a dean. Please pray for the Holy Spirit to continue to fill and refill the deans as they offer themselves in ministry for our pastors and congregations in each of their respective mission districts.

The fruits of the Spirit are manifest in the individuals and the community that comprise the North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS). Among our president, professors, staff and students, that same Holy Spirit is forming and preparing our next generation of pastors for Word and Sacrament ministry in our congregations. We must all be observant and encouraging of those young people in our midst who manifest those same gifts of the Holy Spirit and have the capacity for pastoral leadership. The work of recruiting candidates for ministry and students for our seminary is a responsibility that includes all of us. At every opportunity, I remind our people that our pastors will come from our congregations. Pray for the Holy Spirit to be at work in your congregation and among your youth. I am grateful for the gifted leadership of our board of regents.

Please continue to pray for these gifted leaders as they influence and shape the lives of those who will lead us into the future:

The Rev. Dr. Amy Schiffrin, NALS President; Director, NALS Seminary Center at Trinity School for Ministry; and Associate Professor of Liturgy and Homiletics

Dr. David Yeago, Professor of Systematic Theology

The Rev. Dr. Mary Havens, Director, Lutheran House of Studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

The Rev. Dr. James Nestingen, Professor at St. Paul Lutheran Seminary

The fruits of the Spirit have been manifested in the meetings and work of all those involved in our committees, task forces and commissions. These include:

Candidacy Committee

Commission on Theology and Doctrine

Church and Ministry Task Force

Communications Team

Court of Adjudication
Disaster Response Team
Inquiry Panel
Lutheran Week Planning Team
Life-to-Life Discipleship Team
Living and Giving Stewardship Team
Lutheran Benefits and Review Committee
Mission Teams
NALS Board of Regents
Nominating Committee
Structure Task Force
Vetting Panel
Youth and Family Ministry Task Force

The work of the Holy Spirit in their lives is helping us to advance our strategic objectives, supporting and strengthening the ministry of our congregations and pastors. Our strength is in the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the life of every disciple of Jesus who is a part of the North American Lutheran Church.

I have loved and will continue to love each of you that I have been privileged to know and to serve. Because of our time together over these past nine years, the faith we share in Christ Jesus, our mutual commitment to mission and ministry, the bonds of love in Christ and the powerful work of the Holy Spirit, I have been and will continue to be encouraged, strengthened and renewed. I will treasure these relationships for the rest of my life. Your witness continues to bring encouragement to many more people than you may ever see or know. Be assured of my continued prayers for each of our pastors and congregations.

Below is a list of some of the most significant ways I have used my time in serving you and discharging my responsibilities.

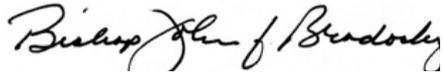
- More than 35 weekends with congregations in the U.S. and Canada
- Ordinations/Installations:
 - The Rev. Amy Carpenter
 - The Rev. John Hoyum
 - The Rev. Caleb Douglas
 - The Rev. Titus Ngebeh
 - The Rev. Patricia Braunscheidel

- Work with the Commission on Theology and Doctrine
- Work with congregations leaving the ELCA
- Meeting with mission district deans
- Mission Festival presenter
- Mission district convocations
- NALS Board of Regents meetings
- NALC Pastors' Conference
- Ecumenical efforts:
 - Anglican Church in North America (ACNA)
 - Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS)
 - Common Ground Christian Network (formerly Association for Church Renewal)
- Gordon-Conwell Advisory Committee
- Executive staff meetings
- Full staff meetings
- Hosting staff in our home
- Executive council meetings
- Candidacy Committee
- Structure Task Force
- Congregational celebrations and anniversaries
- NALC Life Conference
- March for Life in Washington, DC
- Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) meeting in Jerusalem
- Calls on deans
- Ukraine Conference with East European Missions Network (EEMN)
- Missions webinar
- Planning for DiscipleLife 2020 with the ACNA
- International Lutheran Council (ILC) meeting in Antwerp, Belgium
- Seminarian Retreat planning
- NALC Nexus Conference for potential candidates for ministry
- Closing of Christ the King in Centerville, Ohio
- NALC - ACNA Joint Statement on Discipleship
- Life-to-Life Discipleship meetings and video production
- Infrastructure and staff preparation for new bishop
- Global Forum in Ethiopia
- Building a system of international learning between NALS and seminaries in Ethiopia, Tanzania and South America
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) meeting in Chicago
- Ordination anniversaries with pastors and congregations

- ACNA Provincial Assembly

Our Lord's faithful response to your prayers has equipped me to fulfill this office and I leave it grateful for those prayers and for His intervention. May the fruits of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control," continue to be manifest among us on this journey that will continue, even with all the changes, as we faithfully follow Christ Jesus.

I will be with you always following Him,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bishop John F. Bradosky". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B' and a long, sweeping underline.

The Rev. John F. Bradosky
Bishop

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT OF THE MISSION DISTRICT DEANS

Our North American Lutheran Church (NALC) mission districts, and their respective deans, have been faithfully active in these months since our 2018 NALC Convocation. Many mission districts have added congregations, while other mission districts have seen some congregations conclude their ministries.

Several mission districts have elected new deans during these past months, including:

- The Rev. Fritz Brandenburg/Great Plains Mission District East;
- The Rev. Tom Christenson/Eastern South Dakota Mission District;
- The Rev. Steve Hartten/Michigan Mission District;
- The Rev. Michael Koch/North Eastern Ohio Mission District;
- The Rev. Keith Less/Great Plains Mission District West;
- The Rev. Douglas Schoelles, Central Pacific Mission District
- The Rev. Richard Solberg/Great Plains Mission District South; and
- The Rev. Norm Sulaica, Jr./Southwest Texas Mission District

Following the pattern created a few years ago by the mission districts in Ohio, some restructuring has, or is, taking place within some of our mission districts. Virginia is now part of the Atlantic Mission Region and the Rev. David McGettigan serves as dean. The Carolinas Mission District is in transition and, at the close of the 2020 Carolinas Convocation, will form the Carolinas Mission Region. This region will consist of four initial mission districts, with each mission district electing its own dean, to be installed at the 2020 Carolinas Convocation. In the meantime, the Rev. Nathan Yoder is dean in the Carolinas. Our congregations in Texas are now structured as three mission districts – Southwest Texas, North Texas, and Southeast Texas Mission Districts – with the shared title Texas Mission Region.

As our denomination discerns the election of our next bishop, I will conclude my work as the convener of the NALC deans. This is a position appointed by our NALC bishop and it has been my privilege to serve in this capacity since the Rev. John Bradosky, NALC bishop, appointed me nearly three years ago. It has been an honor to serve with this outstanding group of sisters and brothers in the faith and I will make myself readily available to support whomever is appointed as convener by our new bishop.

Sharing in His Service,
The Rev. Daniel M. Powell, *Convener*

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT ON OPERATIONS

NALC Staff

God has blessed the North American Lutheran Church with an incredible staff. Our executive staff gets lots of face time, but not so much our administrative support staff. Please thank them whenever you have contact with them. They do an incredible amount of work behind the scenes and do it very well.

Andrew Fuller, communications director, and Maddie Benson, communications specialist, have now worked as a team for more than a year. I hope you have noticed the amount and the high quality of their work to improve all NALC communications.

As you will learn at this Convocation, the NALC's growth requires us to expand our staff. We are carefully and incrementally expanding commensurate with the growth and demands on our staff. We aim to be nimble and flexible with our staffing so the NALC as a denomination serves primarily in support of congregations.

Congregations Joining the NALC

In the past year, I have devoted a lot more time than usual working with congregations seeking to join the NALC. This ministry has always been steady, but more than a year ago there was a significant increase in inquiries. Until last December, I had never visited a congregation in any denomination on a Sunday in Advent. Last year, I was with a Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) congregation the first Sunday in Advent, and two Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) congregations the following Sundays.

The ELCA Youth Gathering in July 2018 was the primary catalyst that increased inquiries from that denomination, but there are also other factors in play. The proposed social statement for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, "Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action," has woken some people up with its explicit agenda to move away from masculine language for the Holy Trinity.

There are also faithful, orthodox pastors nearing retirement who realize that when they leave their congregations the call committees will be shocked by how few candidates are available and how radical are the ones available. I am working with several ELCA congregations that would like to join the NALC and some of our deans are working with others.

Tragically, as has happened in the past, there will not be huge numbers of congregations leaving the ELCA. The biggest losses will be thousands of people walking away from their congregations and many will not connect with another Christian church.

There is also a steady number of LCMC congregations considering dual membership in the NALC. I am working with several LCMC congregations and several more have said they will consider dual membership in the coming years. These congregations like the support the NALC is able to offer congregations.

Discipline Procedures

The past year has been a difficult year for disciplinary matters. The members of the NALC Inquiry Panel, which does the initial investigation when there are allegations of misconduct, has had an unusually heavy load, both last fall and since the beginning of 2019. Unfortunately their work load will continue for the remainder of this year and perhaps into 2020. The panel was prepared to file formal discipline charges in one matter, but the pastor resigned from the NALC. In the other matter the panel decided the behavior did not warrant discipline charges. There is one matter in the initial stage of investigation and potentially two more that might be referred to the panel.

Mr. Dan Reynolds, a member of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Abilene, Kansas replaced Mr. Vic Stevens last year just in time to help with the heavy load. The other panel members who carried the load are the Rev. Jim Bangsund, the Rev. K. Glen Johnson, the Rev. Ralph Kempinski and the Rev. Solveig Zamzow. Pastor Kempinski stepped down a few months ago. I also thank the Rev. Lissette Colon for assisting the panel with one of the discipline matters. These leaders did a lot of incredibly difficult and demanding work. Words cannot adequately express our appreciation for their commitment of so much time and energy.

Legal Resources

This past year the NALC's chief legal counsel, Mr. Martin Nussbaum, formed his own law firm in Colorado Springs, Colorado that specializes in serving churches and religious organizations. His new firm supports the NALC in all the ways that we were supported when he was in his previous firm. This includes working with congregations to develop employee handbooks. I encourage you to use this service if your congregation does not have an employee handbook or if yours has not been updated for many years. Contact the NALC office at 888-551-7254 or 651-633-6004 to get connected with Martin Nussbaum's office.

We also continue to get excellent support from the law firm of Trimble and Associates, LTD, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on matters related to the NALC's 501(c) (3) status and immigration.

I rely heavily on the NALC's volunteer team of legal experts to provide assistance to congregations on legal and constitutional matters. Mr. James Gale, the Rev. Ron Hoyum, Mr. Ryan Schwarz and Mr. Matt Burkhart graciously make themselves available for congregations in need of assistance. Contact me if you would like their assistance.

Congregational Reports

Annual reports were submitted by 58% of NALC congregations this year, which again is a disappointing response. The number of NALC congregations steadily grows, but we have insufficient data to know overall how congregations are doing. I suspect that on average NALC congregations are declining like most Protestant congregations in North America. The Rev. Brad Hales' work with mission starts and renewing and revitalizing existing churches is critical. So too is the work of the Life-to-Life Discipleship Team.

In the past year here are the sources of the new congregations: eight from the ELCA, four from LCMC, and two from CALC (Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations). In addition, one NALC mission start was received as a member congregation. We corrected our records to note one congregation that had joined the NALC in a prior year as having dual membership with LCMC.

The statistics below are based on data submitted in congregational reports, supplemented with information in our database gathered by other means:

Total number of congregations: 433

Total baptized membership: 142,500

Geographic Setting of NALC congregations

Farming area: 104

Small town or rural: 220

Suburb of large city: 65

Metropolitan area: 44

Total clergy: 669 (462 Active, 185 Retired, 21 On leave from call)

Candidates approved for ordination from August 1, 2018 to July 31, 2019: 5

Deaths of pastors from August 1, 2018 – July 31, 2019: 3

There are now 96 dual NALC/LCMC congregations and 174 dual NALC/LCMC pastors.

Here is a comparison of some of the above figures with prior years:

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Baptized	125K	136K	137K	140K	141K	141.5K	142K	142.5K
Congregations	330	364	384	393	407	421	424	433
Dual LCMC/NALC Congregations	39	34	71	76	82	83	91	96
Dual LCMC/NALC Pastors	n/a	n/a	n/a	40	151	163	168	174

Respectfully submitted,



The Rev. Mark C. Chavez
General Secretary

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT ON COMMUNICATIONS

"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

- 1 Corinthians 15:58 ESV

In April, I completed my first year in this position working to strengthen communication efforts through a focus on developing shared identity, unity and testimony within the North American Lutheran Church (NALC). Much of the 2018–2019 year was dedicated to the coming election of the bishop, as well as ensuring our administrative processes and communication initiatives are operating with clarity and integrity.

As many of you are aware, the Rev. David Baer continues to do excellent work sharing news and highlights within the church through the *NALC News*. This year, we were excited to provide an overhaul to the layout of the newsletter, as well as its email counterpoint. David's journalistic background has been so valuable to the NALC and its ability to share stories and updates of how the Lord is moving across the continent. We were also able to save over \$20,000 by reducing our printing and mailing costs and moving the newsletter to a primarily digital medium.

David Hahn continues to support the church by providing technological and web support to our congregations. Our church's technological arm, the NALC Network, has now aided in the creation and maintenance of websites for nearly fifty NALC congregations and entities, with nearly a dozen more in process. This incredible resource to get our congregations on the web has been wonderful!

Congregations

Advent Evangelical – North Charleston, SC

Black Forest – Colorado Springs, CO

Christ – St. Petersburg, FL

Concordia – China Grove, NC

Emanuel – Elmer, NJ

Faith – Millersburg, OH

Other NALC Entities

ACNA/NALC DiscipleLife Conference

faithwebbing.com

Global Confessional & Missional
Lutheran Forum

Heartland Mission District

Lutheran Week

NALC Life-to-Life Discipleship

Holy Trinity – Mansfield, OH
Immanuel – Fresno (Easton), CA

Immanuel – La Vernia, TX
Joy – Little Mountain, SC
Lebanon – Lebanon, VA
Living Word – Rogers, AR
Mayer Memorial – Newberry, SC
Oasis – Lake Mary, FL
Organ – Salisbury, NC
Peace – Clifton, TX
Peace – Devils Lake, ND
Resurrection Lutheran Cooperative/Elderton Lutheran Parish – Shelocta, PA
St. Albert Ev – St. Albert, AB
First – Gray Manor (Baltimore), MD
First – Kirkland, IL
First – Troy, OH
First – Washington, PA
Good Shepherd – Vickery, OH
Grace Ev. – Westerville, OH
St. John’s – Barrhead, AB
St. Mark Ev. – Butler, PA
St. Mark Ev. – Ft. Wayne, IN
St. Matthew – Baltimore, MD
St. Peter – Stettler, AB

NALC Missions Team
North American Lutheran Seminary
(NALS)
Women of the NALC (WNALC)

I am also pleased with our work on social media during this past year. On our primary social media stream, Facebook, we gained nearly 600 followers and saw a 28.4% growth, a rate of 10 points greater than last year. We also saw a greater average reach in our posts on Facebook. Last year, our most engaging post reached 1,524 people and was an outlier compared to the average reach. This year, our most engaging post reached 6,100 people, an impressively greater reach. Also, while the greatest post from last year reached 1,500, this year saw an average daily reach of

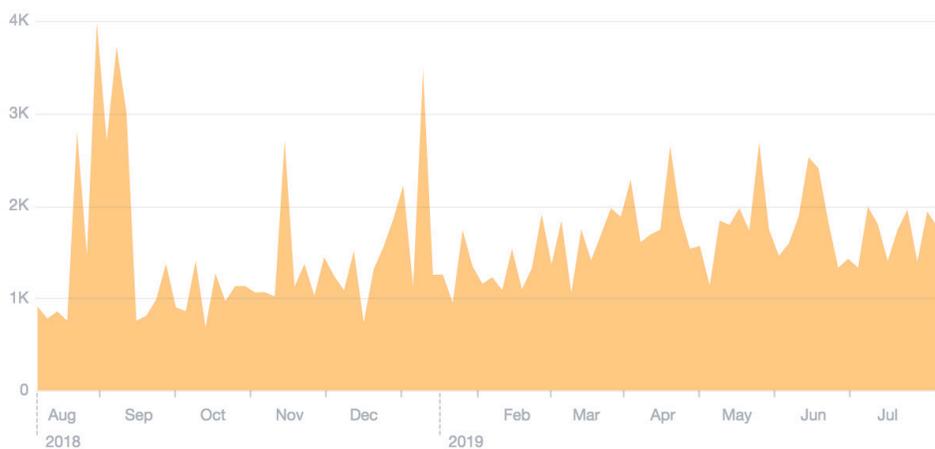
1,600, which is indicative of our success in turning Facebook into an increasingly engaging platform for the NALC.



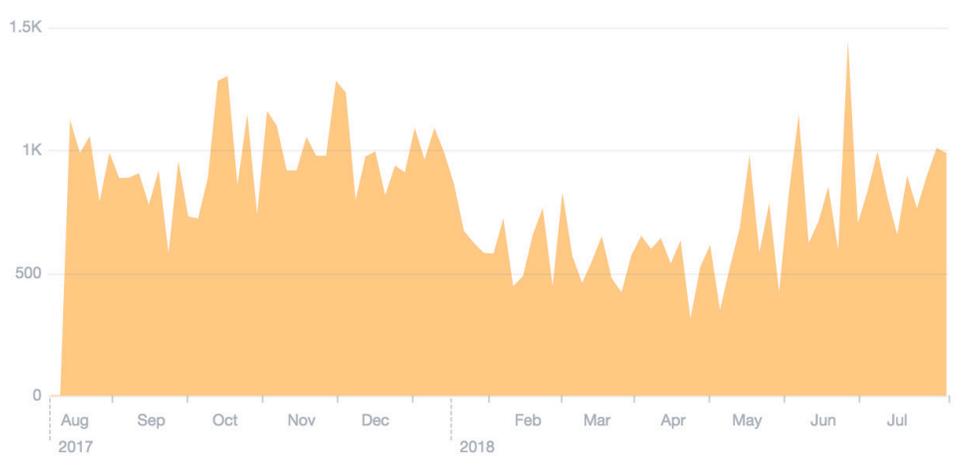
July 2018 to July 2019
2,096 followers to 2,691 followers (28.4% growth)



July 2017 to July 2018
1,762 followers to 2,093 followers (18.8% growth)



July 2018 to July 2019
Highest Post Reach: 6,100 people



July 2017 to July 2018
Highest Post Reach: 1,524 people

Maddie Benson has served in our office as a communications specialist, managing much of our internal communications efforts through daily maintenance of our website and administrative tasks, as well as by providing assistance to many of our committees and task forces. Her role continues to expand, and her leadership has brought immense value to the work of the NALC in a number of ways. I could not do my work without her!

As a team, we are also heavily invested in sharing stories of mission and discipleship nationally and globally. We are continually in the process of evaluating our communication methods and adjusting as necessary.

We have also had the privilege to provide communication support to many committees and entities within the NALC this year, including: the Candidacy Committee, the Commission on Theology and Doctrine, the Ecumenical Consultation of the NALC and the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), the executive council, the Life-to-Life Discipleship Team, the North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS) and the Stewardship Task Force.

Finally, it has been my pleasure to work with the NALC Communications Team — all communications professionals and experts in their own right — in setting the direction and goals for our communication strategies as a church:

The Rev. Dr. David Baer
Ms. Maddie Benson

Mr. David Hahn
The Rev. Bill Maki

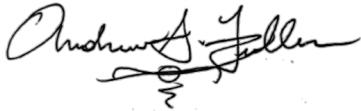
The Rev. Mark Chavez
Ms. Donna Evans

The Rev. Dr. Scott Ness
Mr. Ryan Schwarz

It has been a busy year, to say the least, and one exacerbated by much juggling I perform on a daily basis. While serving the NALC in this three quarters time capacity, I have also attended the NALS as a full-time student, prepared for ordination as a priest in the ACNA and planned an upcoming wedding. All that being said, please pray for energy and endurance to balance the growing demands of communications ministry in our young church.

If one had to state what drives our communications work within the NALC, it could be stated in three values and strategic purposes: **identity** (a continued emphasis on developing and communicating our unique identity and values as a confessional Lutheran church in twenty-first century North America), **unity** (an increased level of unity and affinity between our congregations and parishioners across the continent) and **testimony** (an increased flow of testimony and proclamation of God at work and churches on mission in their communities – both within and outside of the NALC).

Respectfully submitted,



Andrew S. Fuller
Director of Communications

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT ON ECUMENISM

We continue to be blessed by our ecumenical and inter-Lutheran relationships, many of which were initiated at the birth of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC).

After the very positive meeting of the Global Confessional and Missional Lutheran Forum (Global Forum), September 4-6, 2018 in Bishoftu, Ethiopia, we have a team working on developing a global theological education online platform to facilitate the sharing of courses, lectures and learning across borders around the world. We are planning for our next Global Forum, which will take place in Germany, September 1-3, 2020, to be followed by a discipleship conference hosted by German participants of our forum. The Rev. John Bradosky will serve as a keynote speaker for the discipleship conference. We anticipate a large attendance at the 2020 Global Forum, as we are allowing two years for preparation, financial support and scheduling.

Our relationships with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) are currently furthered by our common work in the Global Forum. Representatives of EECMY and ELCT are involved in the planning for the global theological education online platform and we anticipate initial efforts will take place jointly in Ethiopia and Tanzania. We are blessed to have EECMY President, the Rev. Yonas Yigezu, with us for our Mission Festival and Convocation this year, as well as the Rev. Dr. Alex Mkumbo, Bishop of the ELCT Central Diocese. Both leaders will participate in the installation of our newly elected bishop.

One of our primary ecumenical consultations has been with the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). In addition to the *Four Pastoral and Educational Affirmations* (with study guides) which was published jointly by the NALC and ACNA in 2018, we are now finalizing a fifth major affirmation on discipleship and disciple-making. We anticipate completion of this affirmation in late 2019 to be ready for sharing at the joint ACNA/NALC DiscipleLife 2020 Conference, February 13-15, at the Sheraton Orlando North Hotel, Orlando, Fla.

This conference will follow our annual NALC meeting of the ministerium, which will take place Thursday morning, Feb. 13. The DiscipleLife 2020 Conference will begin at 1 p.m. that day. The conference is aimed at clergy and laity, and we are hoping registration may approach 500! Discussing the theme, we agreed Acts 2:42 is the

appropriate biblical text. After Peter's sermon, those who received his word were baptized, "and there were added that day about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41 RSV). After receiving the Word and being baptized, what did the life of the newly converted disciples look like? They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship (the Word), to the breaking of bread (the Lord's Supper) and the prayers (worship, devotion and prayer together with the Christian community). These disciples seemed to have a clear focus on the life of a follower of Jesus.

We continue to be in relationship with representatives of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The Rev. John Bradosky, the Rev. Mark Chavez and I met with the Most Rev. Joseph Bambera, bishop of Scranton and chair of the USCCB Ecumenical Affairs Committee, in Chicago, October 10, 2018, together with the Rev. Al Baca, ecumenical officer, and his assistant, the Rev. Ronald Roberson. This was our annual consultation, although this was the first time the meeting included Bishop Bambera. In addition to providing updates on the mission and ministry of our church bodies, we presented the resolution approved unanimously at our 2018 Convocation, affirming our ongoing work and inviting the USCCB to join with us in a more intentional consultation focusing on the Roman Catholic theme of "missionary discipleship" and our Life-to-Life Discipleship Initiative. There was considerable discussion about this possibility, and we anticipated positive approval from the USCCB Ecumenical Affairs Committee, which met after our October 10 meeting. However, Fr. Baca resigned his position due to family responsibilities, and decisions regarding this consultation on discipleship was paused until a new ecumenical officer is appointed sometime this summer. We are pleased, however, to again welcome the Rev. Erich Rutten, ecumenical officer of the Diocese of Minneapolis, to our Convocation, as representative of Bishop Bambera and the USCCB.

We continue to meet twice a year with leaders of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and Lutheran Church—Canada's (LCC) leadership. At our spring 2019 meeting we discussed the Great Commission, discipleship and our Life-to-Life Discipleship Initiative, finding much agreement regarding the life of the baptized Christian as a disciple and follower of Jesus. Our fall 2019 consultation will focus on study of 1 Peter and "the priesthood of all believers," flowing from our discussion of discipleship.

We are pleased to announce that the Common Ground Christian Network (CGCN) of which we are a founding member, has hired Carmen Fowler LaBerge to be part-

time director of the network. The CGCN is an organization of Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and other Reformed movements and churches that focuses on four areas: church planting, social witness, engaging the culture and leadership development. The original vision for CGCN was to work across denominational lines in these areas to make a common witness to Christ in a secular culture and to mutually build up the Body of Christ in North America. It will be focusing on helping its constituents network at the grassroots level for the sake of mutual support, and cooperation in church planting, social witness, engaging the culture and leadership development. Carmen will be with us during our Convocation to bring greetings from the CGCN and to provide an update regarding the network.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "The Rev. Dr. David M. Wendel".

The Rev. Dr. David M. Wendel
Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry and Ecumenism

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT ON MISSIONS

“As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

– 1 Peter 2:4-5 ESV

The NALC is Mission Driven. We believe that the mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel and to make disciples for Christ. We believe that making disciples – in our congregations, in our communities and nations, and around the world – must be a priority of the Church in the present age. The NALC Mission Office has a primary focus of mobilizing congregations, leaders and mission districts for mission. To achieve this, systematic organization for mission is critically important. It is vital that we continue to work in these five categories in order to mobilize the whole denomination: **New Mission Starts, Congregational Renewal, International Mission, The Great Commission Society and Multi-National Mission.** A plethora of information regarding our work in 2019 is available on the NALC website in each focus area. Some key areas and projects we would like to emphasize are:

- **New Mission Starts: Plant, Grow, Bloom** – We continued to develop resources for church planting in the NALC. This year we have focused on: care of current mission starts, developing a monthly forum for those interested in learning more about new mission starts in the NALC, monthly coaching for mission start leaders, and a strategy to assist congregations and mission districts in planting churches.
- **Congregational Renewal** – Throughout 2019, our Renewal Team has worked hard to meet the articulated needs of our mission districts, congregations and leaders. Through a monthly webinar series called, The Academy, we have found a light-weight and effective vehicle to deliver some of these much-needed resources. This fall, please join the New Starts and Renewal teams as we take the next steps in this vision and dive headlong into Acts 2:42-47. Based on the Rev. John Bradosky’s presentation on baptism and discipleship, each month we will be focusing on a different portion of Acts 2. During the first week of each month, The Academy will introduce the main topic. During each subsequent week, the Rev. Trina Petersen will be connecting with congregations and leaders in a series of interviews, bringing words of encouragement, and reflections on the key portion of Acts 2 assigned to the month. Additional details are available: thenalc.org/media

- **International Mission** – We are focusing on the care of our current global workers, launching a new global worker, and working to possibly launch two more global workers in the end of 2019 and early 2020. We have also been working to form critical relationships for the sake of the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- **The Great Commission Society (GCS)** – We are focused on assisting in the formation of mission district mission teams. They have also taken a year long period of study to research, not just the perceived needs of our mission districts but also the actualized needs. We are grateful to the Mission Connections Team (a part of GCS) that is assisting in the development of a long-term vision that will allow us to assist our mission districts as they embrace their unique visions, gifts, callings and challenges.
- **Multi-National Mission** – We are continuing to provide individual consultations, a training opportunity and working to find more effective ways to maximize opportunities for our current missions as they thrive in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

We have had a very fruitful year, and I would like to personally express my gratitude to our new Director of Domestic Mission, the Rev. Brad Hales, for all of his hard work and his passion for the Gospel. Together with our national mission teams, we are blessed with an abundant amount of gifts, talents and resources. It is truly a pleasure to serve together. During my report at Lutheran Week, I look forward to sharing our strategic plan and vision for the next 20 years as we move forward together in ministry and mission.

Below are a few of the tangible resources produced by our five national mission teams, as we continue to equip and resource our congregations for mission:

- **The Academy** – The NALC is committed to the renewal of all our congregations, working to develop and deliver resources that challenge and open the NALC to the work of the Holy Spirit in our ministry and mission. Each month we are hosting a free webinar based on expressed needs by NALC Leaders, for NALC Leaders. For details: thenalc.org/theacademy
- **Rural and Small Church Ministry** – It's not about the size, but the relationships. And the small, rural church is truly vital today because of these relationships. For resources on this topic, please visit: thenalc.org/smallandruralchurch

- **Mission District Mission Team Resources** – The extended version of resources compiled from various trainings and conferences in the last four years: goo.gl/uFPmfU
- **CROSS Talk** – CROSS Talk is a weekly online lectionary study led by the Rev. Dr. James Nestingen in conjunction with St. Paul Seminary. Join each Tuesday at 4 p.m. EST. For more information or to register – please visit: semhc.org/contact
- **Senior Ministry Conference** – Our second conference was held October 2018 in Culpeper, Virginia. Resources will continue to be made available on this topic at: thenalc.org/seniorministry
- **Multi-National Leader Training** – Joined together in 2019 with the NALC Pastors' Conference, with plans to do the same in 2020, this training is critical to help equip our multi-national leaders and provide access to a variety of resources designed to assist in their unique situations with a focus on discipleship and mission.
- **Mission Finder** – Mission cannot be done in isolation. It is about relationships and building strategic mission networks. Find information about other hands-on mission and ministry projects in the NALC (including short-term mission trips): missions.nalcnetwork.com
- **Mission Grants** – The NALC continues to offer short-term grants for mission starts, global worker support, international mission projects, congregational renewal and emergency aid. This support comes from the NALC Great Commission Fund.
- **Great Commission Society Mission Partners** – Short term grants are only one piece of the puzzle. We invite mission starts, international projects, renewal projects, those seeking emergency aid and others to apply for our Great Commission Society vetting process. Approval of an application places the ministry on a special portion of the NALC's website, comes with assistance in forming long-term relationships and provides partners with an assurance that the ministry is supportive of the NALC's Core Values, meets fiscal and ministry standards, etc. For an application or to see approved ministries, please visit: thenalc.org/GCS

- **Mission Resources on NALC Website** – The resource page is designed specifically to connect pastors, leaders and congregations to requested resources. Video teaching, “how to” and other administrative documents, past training events and more is provided at: thenalc.org/missionresources

“Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”

– Jude 24-25 ESV

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gemechis D. Buba".

The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba
Assistant to the Bishop for Missions

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE
NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

– Ecclesiastes 3:1 KJV

If you are of a certain age, you cannot look at that verse of Scripture without hearing it. *To ev'rything, turn, turn, turn, there is a season, turn, turn, turn, and a time for every purpose under heaven.* Whether you first heard it in '59 when Pete Seeger sang it with his banjo twangin' out the simple chords, or in '66 when Ed Sullivan had *The Byrds* sing it on his weekly show, or in '70 when Judy Collins and Johnny Cash, coming from two different musical worlds sang it together, the words and the melody have stayed with you. *To everything there is a season, turn, turn, turn.*

It wasn't just the catchy tune, but the tune opened a path for many folks to hear a particular truth about this life, a truth that knows something through experience, a truth that we reflect on from anniversaries, retirements, marriages and cross-country moves, to births, deaths, graduations and deployment ceremonies. All people, regardless of their religious affiliations or faith commitments, experience the transitory nature of our common human temporal existence. Through our life of faith, we may come to understand these transitions and changes with greater meaning, but we experience them like everyone else with all their sorrows and tears, all their goodbyes, and all their hopes for a warm embrace when we land in a new place, whether that new place is existential or geographical. *To everything there is a season.*

In the opening season of a child's life — from birth to age five — a child learns many things; including how to crawl, walk, speak and relate to their family and neighbors. If they have kind and dependable parents, they learn to trust. If they have a secure and safe environment, they learn to play. What they learn in those first five years shapes the pattern for how they will learn when they are in the new environment of school and schoolyard. Will they climb on the school bus with confidence? Will they have the internal resources they need to flourish among their peers? However their lives have been structured thus far will determine the internal resources they have to meet the new challenges they face in a new season of their lives.

The first five years of our life as the North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS), the seminary of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC), has also been about building structure, a structure that is sound, flexible and healthy, a structure that is prepared to meet the growing needs of the NALC as it shapes the next generation of pastors and church leaders for faithful service. As a denomination, we've taken our first steps in theological education and so we are ready to move into the future with knowledge, understanding, and with a bit of wisdom (Proverbs 24:3-4). We've learned from both success and failure, and we're thankful for all those who have been teaching us along the way.

So as this next season begins I would just like to speak briefly about three issues that are vital to the future of our seminary and its role in the NALC.

1. Being Ambassadors of the Seminary of the NALC: If we are to succeed in being the seminary of the NALC, in terms of becoming the primary place where our pastors are formed, rather than being one of a number of educational choices, then we need to find a way to bring everyone (congregations, mission districts, deans, candidacy, seminary and national staff) into this relationship in a way that helps them to become partners and recruiters. We need to find a means to communicate the vision and mission in a compelling way, so that the NALS will be the first choice for pastoral formation, not simply one of multiple options.

We've done a fine job of communicating via print with our NALS Newsletter and brochures, and we are now in the process of redesigning our NALS website. One of our next steps will be to produce some short videos that will speak to potential seminarians and that can be distributed to mission districts and congregations. I am especially thankful to the Rev. Dr. Maurice Lee, who has served this year as our interim director for recruitment and partnerships, who has been working diligently on promoting our joint programs with our three undergraduate partner schools, Concordia College–Bronxville, Concordia University–St. Paul and Grand View University.

2. Maintaining Theological Integrity: There is no other seminary in the U.S. or Canada who is doing what we are doing at our seminary center in Ambridge, PA. By that, I mean being a confessional Lutheran witness happily located in an ecumenical setting. We are living out the goodness and love of our Lord in conversation with our Christian neighbors and creating a culture of *koinonia* that our graduates will carry with them as they move into their first parishes. The centrality of Scripture, the foundation of

the catechisms and confessional writings, the beauty and strength of our sacramental practices, and the ability to preach with a Law/Gospel dialectic: Lutheran theology is not being compromised in any way. Frankly, it is flourishing. It is my sincerest hope that we can continue to work in such a partnership for many years to come. Our Anglican neighbors have helped to fill out our educational lives with their charisms and the witness of their gracious hospitality.

And, in addition to our Anglican neighbors we are pleased to announce that we are working on an agreement with Concordia Seminary, in Edmonton, Alberta, a seminary of the Lutheran Church—Canada. Our Canadian NALC students will be able to do the majority of their studies at Concordia—Edmonton, supplemented by some of our core courses at the NALS. As we enter this new season of growth, we will continue to seek out partners in learning.

3. Nurturing Character Development: You all know that seminary is not simply about book learning, even though learning history, theology and those ancient languages is essential to the formation of a pastor. Seminarians need to know the content of their faith, but not simply by the memorization of dates and facts, they need to know it in their bones. They need to know what it means to trust God with their lives. Some of that formation comes through a life of daily prayer and regular reception of the Sacraments. But, just as little children learn what it means to trust God by first having trustworthy parents and guardians, so seminarians need to be surrounded by trustworthy mentors and teachers so that they learn the shape of integrity and character that is necessary for the pastoral office. As we grow our faculty and staff, we will continue to seek out godly people who will serve as living witnesses to God's goodness, not only in the classroom, but in their everyday lives. Here I am also especially grateful to the NALS Board of Regents who have demonstrated such character to our seminarians. Your faithful witness has not gone unnoticed.

So as this first season of our life comes to an end and a new one begins as a new president is called to serve — just as when a child moves from the Preschool years to the elementary years — our life as the seminary of the NALC will take on a new and larger role in the life of the NALC. As many of us reach an age of retirement (*To everything there is a season...*) more and more of your pastors will be graduates of the NALS who have been shaped for faithful service in Christ's church. They will be the pastors who will be with you in all of your life's transitions: everything from when children and grandchildren are newborn into this world and brought through the baptismal waters in the name of the Father, +Son and Holy Spirit, until the days when

our breathing is labored and we are at last laid to rest, *earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.*

May the next season of the NALS be one that is so filled with the life of Christ that his eternal joy may abound. It is my prayer that the structures we have put in place for learning and for community in these early years will help make that happen.

To everything there is a season...

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Amy C. Schifrin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rev. Dr. Amy C. Schifrin
President

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

The North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS) is now five years old and I have been chair of the Board of Regents (BOR) since the first students were admitted. This report will summarize the progress made in these five years by responding to three questions.

Q1. What progress has been made in developing a seminary for the North American Lutheran Church (NALC)?

The answer is that the NALS is an educational program designed to form pastors for the NALC. It is not, however, a free-standing educational institution. Rather, the program has been “grafted” as a Lutheran track onto an existing seminary, Trinity School for Ministry (TSM). It uses TSM’s land, buildings, faculty, educational resources, administrative offices, degree-granting authority and accreditation to conduct the NALS Lutheran Track training. NALS contributed to this partnership three full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty, students, financial support, and curricular offerings taught from a Lutheran perspective. This NALS Lutheran Track has been under the able leadership of the Rev. Dr. Amy Schiffrin, NALS president, since the founding of the NALS.

The Seminary is governed by a board of regents composed of ten dedicated members, including eight clergy and two lay representatives.

Q2. What has the NALS achieved in the past five years?

The answer to this question includes the following:

- The NALS has made this “hybrid”/unorthodox arrangement with TSM work! This merger has broadened and deepened educational opportunities for students in both institutions, and this integration of the NALS Lutheran Track has been achieved with minimal disagreements and conflict between the two parties
- The NALS has admitted, trained and graduated with M.Div. or M.A. degrees 18 residential students, many of whom are now serving the NALC as parish pastors or

interns. Additionally, it has educated online learners.

- Slightly over two million dollars has been raised through “earmarked” contributions to help defray the costs of operating the NALS.
- The NALS has established agreements with three “feeder” institutions. One (Concordia College, Bronxville, New York) will shorten the time it takes to complete the M.Div. degree by two years, while two (Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn. and Grand View University, Des Moines, Iowa) will save one year. This will significantly reduce the cost of an M.Div. degree and reduce student debt. A fourth memorandum of understanding (MOU) is being developed with Concordia Lutheran Seminary in Edmonton, Canada.
- The NALS is fulfilling the mission of the seminary as envisioned by its founders and has done so in a cost-effective manner.

Q3. What have we learned in the past five years about operating a seminary?

The answer to this question includes the following:

- We have learned, and are learning, what it means to be a “church owned seminary.”
- We have learned what the original “hub-and-spokes” seminary model entails. This includes a strong home base (the hub) and the need for a seminary presence at other locations (spokes). As originally planned, the “outreach spokes” portion of the seminary was to be Houses of Study (HOS). HOS were envisioned to be permanent locations where full-time faculty and staff offered seminary courses and acted as recruiting centers for seminarians.

Such organizational units are costly and require a significant financial commitment from the NALC. In addition, they depend on a steady flow of students to justify the financial expenditures and the effort to establish and maintain an HOS. This painful lesson has been learned by other seminaries who have, in recent years, closed 32 satellite seminary campuses.

Because it is difficult to meet the two requirements outlined above, the HOS idea has morphed into the concept of Extension Centers (EC). EC are temporary locations where seminary resources, including faculty and staff, may come for

short periods of time to present continuing theological seminars, meet with local pastors and be a resource for prospective students. Based on demand, the EC can move from one location to another or it can return to the same site on a repeated basis. EC have no permanent faculty or staff and there is no ongoing financial commitment to a single location.

- We have learned many lessons of what won't work at this early stage of the NALS development and what will work but will take a long time to achieve. This is why we must be extremely strategic in our future planning for the NALS. Given our resources, both human and financial, this is of paramount importance.
- We have learned what the roles and duties of a president are. We have learned that it is nearly impossible to be a full-time president and a full-time faculty member at the same time, as President Schiffrin has been for five years. Thus, the new NALS president will be primarily an administrator and only occasionally involved in formal teaching.

Future

The biggest challenge the NALS will face in the future is the same challenge faced by every other seminary in the USA, namely, a shortage of students. This shortage is occurring at the same time as the pool of ordained pastors decreases. Pastors are reaching retirement age without an adequate number of seminary graduates to replace them. This is the overwhelming threat to the survival of the NALS and a challenge for every member of the NALC. With God's help, we will successfully meet this need.

Submitted by,
M. Roy Schwarz, M.D.
Chair

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT OF THE TREASURER

As the North American Lutheran Church completes its ninth year of existence, our church body remains on solid financial footing. The NALC is blessed with generous and dedicated donors, particularly for specific initiatives such as disaster response and theological education, strong financial reserves, and an efficient, dedicated staff which works hard to accomplish much with limited resources.

Nonetheless, a significant financial issue facing the NALC is that over the past few years, regular operating income has not been sufficient to cover operating expenses. Operating expenses have risen somewhat, principally due to the addition of new resource persons to serve NALC congregations – domestic missions staff, a communications director and a youth and family ministry specialist among others. Regular operating income, which is primarily provided by congregational benevolence, has not kept pace. Moreover, while 73% of NALC congregations contributed some amount of congregational benevolence in 2018, approximately 27% of NALC congregations did not.

While the NALC's operating budget is not yet balanced, significant progress has been made in reducing these deficits to manageable levels. Moreover, by the grace of God, the NALC has regularly received one-time gifts such as memorials and bequests which have balanced the operating budget. However, such extraordinary gifts cannot be planned for, and in any event, it would be preferable to utilize such gifts for longer term initiatives. Accordingly, the executive council believes it is important to move towards balanced budgets without utilization of one-time or non-recurring gifts.

NALC Budget Overview

A brief orientation to the NALC's financial reporting: The NALC's Operating Budget includes all the expenditures associated with the general operations of our church body, such as Convocation and conferences, communications, executive council, committees and task forces, missions events, staff compensation and general administrative expenses. The operating budget is funded primarily through congregational benevolence. In addition, the NALC has several dedicated funds which provide resources for key ministry priorities. Of these, the three largest are the Great Commission Fund (missions and evangelism), the Theological Education Fund (North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS) and seminarian support) and the Disaster Response Fund (domestic disaster relief). These funds receive dedicated donations

from congregations and individuals.

The NALC's dedicated funds are generally amply funded at present, particularly the Theological Education and Disaster Response Funds. Donations to the Great Commission Fund have not equaled expenditures in past years but the fund remains sufficient to provide further mission grants in the near term. With regard to the operating budget, as discussed above, benevolence and other recurring income have fallen below NALC operating expenses the past three years. These deficits were financed with surpluses accumulated in the early days of the NALC. While the NALC is fortunate to have those accumulated surpluses, they are not unlimited.

For 2019, the NALC operating budget called for an operating deficit of roughly (\$47,000). Due to a large one-time gift which offset increased expenditures, we now forecast that the actual deficit for 2019 will be approximately (\$50,000), though without the significant one-time gift received in 2019, the deficit would have been almost (\$139,000). For 2020, the proposed operating budget includes a deficit of approximately (\$80,000), through prioritization of spending around key ministry initiatives and greater use of digital technology to replace in-person meetings and print materials.

2018 Financial Results

The fourth page of this report summarizes the NALC's audited financial statements for 2018. The full audit report with details on expenses by functional area is available on the NALC website at thenalc.org/financial-reports.

Congregational benevolence in 2018 totaled \$1.65 million, an increase of 2.3% from the amount in 2017. Individual and other donations totaled just over \$320,000, boosted by \$207,000 in bequests and similar one-time gifts. Excluding those one-time gifts and similar amounts in 2017, individual and other donations decreased (2.3%) compared to 2017. Other income totaled \$170,500 in 2018. Donations to the NALC's dedicated funds totaled almost \$950,000, a decrease of (13.5%) from the prior year excluding bequests and other one-time gifts, largely due to a decrease in gifts to the Disaster Response Fund likely reflecting the lower level of natural disasters in 2018 compared to 2017

Total expenditures for 2018, including operating costs and grants from the dedicated funds, were almost \$2.82 million, a decrease of roughly (4.0%) compared to the prior year. Of these expenditures, NALC staff compensation and benefits totaled just over

\$1.1 million and NALS operations totaled almost \$325,000. Grants to mission start congregations, missionaries and NALC ministry partners, along with disaster relief expenditures and seminarian scholarships, totaled just over \$570,000. Convocation and conference expense totaled just over \$240,000, which included a net subsidy provided by the NALC towards the cost of Lutheran Week of approximately \$83,000.

Due to the one-time gifts and bequests, the NALC experienced an operating surplus in 2018 of approximately \$136,000 and a consolidated surplus including the dedicated funds of almost \$278,000.

As of December 31, 2018, total balances in the NALC's dedicated funds and unrestricted general operating funds were:

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Reserves</u>
Theological Education Fund	\$ 1,300,108
Great Commission Fund	229,737
Disaster Response Fund	535,102
WNALC and Misc Restricted Funds	124,830
Emergency Reserve Fund	500,000
Unrestricted Operating Reserves	<u>\$ 397,366</u>
Total Financial Reserves at 12/31/18	<u>\$ 3,087,143</u>

2019 Forecast

Based on year-to-date data as of June 30, we forecast total congregational benevolence of \$1.69 million in 2019, which represents 2.4% growth over 2018 and is consistent with historical trends. Total operating income excluding one-time gifts is forecast at nearly \$2.06 million, which is approximately \$25,000 less than budget.

Operating expenses are estimated to total \$2.20 million. This amount is approximately \$67,000 more than budget, chiefly due to unbudgeted costs expected to be incurred in connection with the 2019 Convocation. Accordingly, we presently forecast an operating deficit of approximately (\$139,000) in 2018 and a net deficit after one-time gifts of almost (\$50,000).

Turning to the dedicated funds, we forecast total grants in 2019 from the Great Commission Fund of \$132,000, which is roughly \$42,000 less than budget due to fewer than anticipated grant proposals meeting approval criteria. We estimate

total expenditures from the Theological Education Fund of more than \$616,000, which is approximately \$30,000 greater than budget due mainly to NALS operations expenses. For the Disaster Response Fund, we forecast total expenditures of \$132,500, including \$80,000 of direct disaster relief. Donations to the Great Commission Fund and Theological Education Fund are running modestly behind budget, while donations to the Disaster Response Fund have once again been extremely strong. For the full year, we forecast a moderate deficit of (\$32,000) in the Great Commission Fund, a substantial deficit of more than (\$200,000) in the Theological Education Fund, and a surplus of \$67,500 in the Disaster Response Fund.

2020 Proposed Budgets

For 2020, the proposed operating budget calls for 2.6% growth in congregational benevolence to an annual total of \$1.74 million, consistent with average growth over the past several years. Total operating income is budgeted at almost \$2.11 million, including an anticipated decrease in Convocation registrations in 2020 compared to the Bishop election Convocation in 2019.

Total operating expenditures are budgeted at almost \$2.19 million for 2020, which is a very slight decrease from the 2019 forecast but a 2.8% increase over the 2018 budgeted amount. This small growth reflects cost of living salary increases and benefits cost increases for NALC staff and increased costs for the joint NALC-ACNA discipleship conference in early 2020, offset in part by cost savings from a less expensive Convocation location in 2020 and an anticipated reduction in total legal fees due to fewer matters requiring legal assistance.

As a result, we forecast an operating deficit of approximately (\$80,000) in 2020. While we are disappointed not to be able to propose a fully balanced budget, we believe that this deficit is manageable in the context of the NALC's present operating reserves.

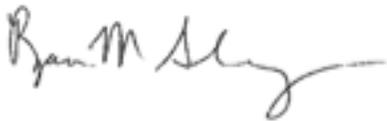
The Great Commission Fund budget for 2019 proposes total expenditures of \$197,500, an increase of \$22,000 from the 2019 budget level, to fund one additional NALC global worker in the mission field and one or more additional new start domestic mission grant(s). Donations to this fund are budgeted at \$110,000 in 2019. While this fund currently enjoys sufficient reserves for the near term, a significant increase in donations will be required to sustain the 2020 budgeted level of mission congregation seed grants and financial support for global workers in the mission field in the long term.

The 2019 proposed Theological Education Fund budget calls for a significant increase in total expenditures to almost \$725,000, primarily due to the anticipated hiring of a new president for the NALS while the current president remains on the teaching faculty for the next few years. The budget also contemplates increases in the number of seminarian scholarships and new financial assistance to an important annual conference for NALC high school students discerning a possible call to the ordained ministry. The budget contemplates total donations to the NALS and Theological Education Fund of \$435,000 in 2019, resulting in a substantial deficit of almost (\$290,000). This deficit will be funded from the NALS's very considerable financial reserves accumulated from past bequests and other donations.

Finally, the 2019 proposed Disaster Response Fund budget contemplates donation income of \$175,000 and expenditures of \$123,500, of which \$60,000 is direct disaster relief and the balance is disaster response team operations. Naturally, it is difficult to project the amount of disaster relief expenditures in any given year; the budgeted amount is an average of the past several years.

The following pages provide a summary of the audited financials for 2018, as well as detail on the 2019 financial forecast and the proposed budgets for 2020. Significant additional information is available on the NALC website at thenalc.org/financial-reports, including the treasurer's presentation to the Convocation, the full 2018 audited financial statements and a memo providing disclosure of compensation information for the NALC's executive staff.

Respectfully submitted,



Ryan M. Schwarz
Treasurer

NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
Summary 2018 Consolidated Audited Financial Results

Statement of Activities

Income

Unrestricted Donations	
Member Congregation Donations	\$ 1,655,711
Individual, Mission District and Other Donations	320,635
Other Income	170,500
Subtotal - Unrestricted Income	2,146,846
Restricted and Designated Donations	946,499
Total Income	\$ 3,093,345

Expenditures

Convocation and Conferences	\$ 240,476
Other Organizations and Meetings	198,830
Mission Support and Other Grants Distributed	571,352
NALS Operating Expenses	323,336
Staff Salaries and Benefits	1,101,635
Staff Travel	169,088
Communications, Administrative Expenses and Other	210,858
Total Expenditures	2,815,575
Change in Net Assets	\$ 277,770

Balance Sheet

Assets

Cash, Cash Equivalents and Short-Term Investments	\$ 3,106,887
Accounts Receivable	114,438
Prepaid Expenses	72,640
Property and Equipment	10,261
Total Assets	\$ 3,304,226

Liabilities and Net Assets

Liabilities	
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$ 120,035
Accrued Compensation	67,446
Other Accrued Liabilities	29,602
Total Liabilities	217,083
Net Assets	3,087,143
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 3,304,226

NOTE: Complete Audited Financial Statements are available on the NALC website.

2020 BUDGETS

**NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
2020 Operating Budget**



FOR CONVOCATION ACTION

	<u>Budget 2019</u>	<u>Forecast 2019</u>	<u>Draft 2020</u>
<u>Income</u>			
Donations - Congregations	\$ 1,700,000	\$ 1,695,000	\$ 1,740,000
Donations - Individuals, Mission Districts and Other	100,000	90,000	100,000
Convocation and Conference Registrations	256,250	244,723	246,750
Other Fees and Income	25,000	26,700	22,170
Total Income	\$ 2,081,250	\$ 2,056,423	\$ 2,108,920
<u>Expenses</u>			
Organization and Programs			
Convocation and Conferences	\$ 333,017	\$ 384,700	\$ 333,991
Staff Travel	137,400	130,450	145,000
Executive Council	48,800	48,800	48,000
Committees and Task Forces	106,200	115,400	120,000
Stewardship Team	26,000	27,500	19,500
Mission Teams	23,000	16,450	25,000
Subtotal - Organization and Programs	674,417	723,300	691,491
Communications			
Communications Task Force	5,000	2,500	2,500
Digital Communications	29,500	30,000	37,000
Newsletter and Postage	1,000	1,500	1,550
Printing-brochures/stationery	6,550	7,800	7,700
Subtotal - Communications	42,050	41,800	48,750
Administrative Expenses			
Rent	15,400	15,400	15,862
Professional Fees	33,000	56,250	35,600
Phone	14,000	15,500	17,000
Insurance	7,500	9,450	9,750
Software and IT support	17,000	16,000	17,500
Office supplies and equipment	7,300	8,200	7,350
Depreciation	10,331	6,850	7,450
Subtotal - Administrative Expenses	104,531	127,650	110,512
Staff Salaries, Taxes and Benefits	1,189,686	1,174,927	1,210,566
Miscellaneous			
Miscellaneous	17,700	27,500	27,650
Bishop's Discretionary Fund	10,000	10,000	10,000
Placeholder - New Regional Staff	-	-	-
Support for Ministry Partners	90,000	90,000	90,000
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 2,128,384	\$ 2,195,177	\$ 2,188,969
Net Operating Surplus / (Deficit) before One-Time Gifts	\$ (47,134)	\$ (138,754)	\$ (80,049)
One-Time / Non-Recurring Gifts	-	89,050	-
Net Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	\$ (47,134)	\$ (49,704)	\$ (80,049)

**NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
2020 Dedicated Funds Budgets:
Missions and Disaster Response**



FOR CONVOCATION ACTION

	<u>Budget 2019</u>	<u>Forecast 2019</u>	<u>Draft 2020</u>
<u>Great Commission Fund</u>			
Anticipated Donations	\$ 110,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 110,000
Expenditures			
Mission Congregations - Seed Funding	\$ 85,000	\$ 63,000	\$ 95,000
Congregational Revitalization and Renewal	10,000	4,000	10,000
Missional Leadership Development	10,500	2,000	10,500
Global Workers	60,000	57,000	72,000
Global Mission Projects	10,000	6,000	10,000
Total Expenditures	\$ 175,500	\$ 132,000	\$ 197,500
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ (65,500)	\$ (32,000)	\$ (87,500)
Fund Balance - Beginning of Year	\$ 221,563	\$ 229,737	\$ 197,737
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(65,500)	(32,000)	(87,500)
Fund Balance - End of Year	\$ 156,063	\$ 197,737	\$ 110,237
<u>Disaster Response Fund</u>			
Anticipated Donations	\$ 65,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 175,000
Expenditures			
Direct Disaster Relief	\$ 50,000	\$ 80,000	\$ 60,000
Operations and Disaster Preparation:			
Stipend for Coordinator	20,288	31,200	40,000
Task Force/Coordinator Travel	8,000	10,800	12,000
Local Trainings	4,500	4,500	4,500
Main Warehouse Rent	4,500	4,500	5,000
Promotion Materials/Media	1,500	1,500	2,000
Total Expenditures	\$ 88,788	\$ 132,500	\$ 123,500
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ (23,788)	\$ 67,500	\$ 51,500
Fund Balance - Beginning of Year	\$ 390,437	\$ 535,102	\$ 602,602
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(23,788)	67,500	51,500
Fund Balance - End of Year	\$ 366,649	\$ 602,602	\$ 654,102

NOTE: Actual amount of Direct Disaster Relief expenditures will depend on occurrence of disaster events during the year.

**NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
2020 Dedicated Funds Budgets:
Theological Education**



FOR CONVOCATION ACTION

	<u>Budget 2019</u>	<u>Forecast 2019</u>	<u>Draft 2020</u>
<u>Theological Education Fund</u>			
Anticipated Donations			
Theological Education Fund - General	\$ 110,000	\$ 95,000	\$ 100,000
North American Lutheran Seminary	335,000	320,000	335,000
Total Anticipated Donations	<u>\$ 445,000</u>	<u>\$ 415,000</u>	<u>\$ 435,000</u>
Expenditures			
NALS - Operations (see detail below)	\$ 362,032	\$ 413,565	\$ 469,621
Scholarships for Seminarians	169,900	154,125	178,875
Annual Seminarian Gathering	21,715	16,114	30,802
Subsidies for Theological Conferences	22,742	26,302	32,450
Global Exchange Programs	10,000	5,000	10,000
Program Development	2,500	1,195	1,500
Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 588,889</u>	<u>\$ 616,301</u>	<u>\$ 723,248</u>
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	<u>\$ (143,889)</u>	<u>\$ (201,301)</u>	<u>\$ (288,248)</u>
Fund Balance - Beginning of Year	\$ 1,349,794	\$ 1,300,108	\$ 1,098,807
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(143,889)	(201,301)	(288,248)
Fund Balance - End of Year	\$ 1,205,905	\$ 1,098,807	\$ 810,559
 <u>Detail: North American Lutheran Seminary</u>			
Total NALS-Specific Donations	\$ 335,000	\$ 320,000	\$ 335,000
Operating Expenses - Seminary Center, Ambridge:			
Faculty and Staff	\$ 306,232	\$ 337,565	\$ 391,371
Travel, Marketing and Miscellaneous	13,300	33,000	36,000
Board of Regents	11,000	11,500	10,750
Communications	3,500	3,500	3,500
Development	20,000	20,000	20,000
Contribution to TSM Overhead	8,000	8,000	8,000
Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 362,032</u>	<u>\$ 413,565</u>	<u>\$ 469,621</u>
Net NALS Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	<u>\$ (27,032)</u>	<u>\$ (93,565)</u>	<u>\$ (134,621)</u>

2019 CONVOCAATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT ON LUTHERAN BENEFITS

The Hahn Financial Group in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, continues to serve the NALC very well in its administration of Lutheran Benefits, the NALC's health insurance and retirement plans. Mr. Verlyn Hahn and his team continue to keep the cost increases in health insurance way below average for denominational plans. They also succeeded in moving the plan to a calendar renewal cycle. As you can see in the information below the retirement plan is steadily growing. Perhaps the greatest blessing is the outstanding personal service the Hahn team provides to pastors and congregations.

The Rev. Paul Larson, Mr. Ryan Schwarz, Ms. Anne Gleason and I are the Review Committee for Lutheran Benefits. Their expertise and advice has served the NALC well in support of Hahn Financial Group's work to strengthen and improve Lutheran Benefits. Verlyn Hahn will be reporting at this Convocation on Thursday morning. He, Mr. Luke Hahn and Mr. Mike Lendt will be available throughout Lutheran Week to meet with individuals. Make an appointment at the Lutheran Benefits table in the ministry display space.

Here is a summary of the status of Lutheran Benefits as of May 31, 2019:

The Lutheran Benefits Health Plan

- 187 employee (150 congregations) currently enrolled in the health plan
- 72 employees (54 congregations) currently enrolled only in the ancillary (non-health) package
- 259 total employees covered (603 including dependents)

The Lutheran Benefits 403b Retirement Plan

Employees

- Total number of employees enrolled in the plan: 512
- Total number of active participants (with an account balance): 343
- Total number of participants (with balances): 443

Employers

- Total number of enrolled churches: 245 divisions set up in the system
- Total number of churches enrolled actively submitting dollars: 212 divisions submitted contributions during the period of 6/1/2018 to 5/31/2019

Transfers

13 new transfers were processed in the last year totaling \$4,299,523.41.

Plan Assets

Total plan funds under management – \$87,861,924.35 as of 5/31/2019

The table below shows how the above figures compare with previous years:

Lutheran Benefits Trends

June 30 each year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Health Plan						
Employees	282	250	176	172	194	198
Congregations	181	178	152	145	148	157
Ancillary Plan						
Employees	18	50	76	80	71	69
Congregations	8	24	62	61	47	61
Retirement						
Total employees	282	343	398	423	478	504
Active participants	n/a	n/a	364	358	365	388
Total employers	181	216	236	251	267	282
Active employers	155	n/a	186	177	221	234
Total plan funds	\$45.4M	\$56.2M	\$60.7M	\$61.1M	\$77.9M	\$84.6M

Respectfully submitted,



The Rev. Mark C. Chavez
General Secretary

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT OF THE LIVING & GIVING STEWARDSHIP TEAM

The Living and Giving Stewardship Team was formed in 2015 and consists of the Rev. Dr. Cathi Braasch; the Rev. Dr. Eugene Grimm (co-chair); the Rev. Dona Johnson (co-chair); Mr. Michael Johnson, CFP; Mrs. Polly Lamkin; and the Rev. Ron Voss. The Rev. Dr. David Wendel, assistant to the bishop, and Mr. Ryan Schwarz, NALC treasurer, also work with the team.

The goals of the Living and Giving Stewardship Team are, among other things, to:

- Implement the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) vision for stewardship so as to equip both pastors and leaders throughout our mission districts to grow in faith, generosity and the practice of faithful stewardship;
- Inform congregations regarding the overall mission and ministry of the NALC, including the Great Commission Society and the North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS), with the intention of strengthening those ministries and their bases of financial support;
- Encourage and assist congregations to grow in their total mission support (to all mission/ministries) to 12-15% of congregational income, with equal support to the local, continental, global and larger church;
- Help congregations celebrate the work we do together;
- Evaluate and assess how development will “work” in the NALC, including the relationship to the NALS;
- Inspire joy and eagerness to give for the sake of ministry;
- Engage congregations with new educational opportunities and resources;
- Communicate announced goals for annual giving in the NALC to meet the budget; and
- Evaluate and assess endowments (congregational, NALC, NALS).

We are in this together! As stewards of God's grace, as stewards bound and set free in Christ, we are in this together. Collectively, we live out of a shared purpose, we live through shared struggles and we most certainly live with a shared hope. More importantly, we live out of a shared responsibility that promotes not only individual but also corporate generosity.

Teaching and Formation: Since our last Convocation, we have found in our visits to mission districts that both pastors and congregational leadership have a profound hunger for and interest in biblical stewardship. The Living and Giving Stewardship Team traveled to Northeast Ohio, Southwest Ohio and the Mid-Northeast Mission District where, combined, 23 congregations and 75 leaders participated in *Stewards of God's Influence: Time, Talents, Treasure and Testimony*. The Rev. Dr. Eugene Grimm, co-chair, attended the Carolinas Mission District Convocation, May 17, 2019, to invite the district to take an active part in our current stewardship intensive. On September 7, 2019, we will be traveling to the Heartland Mission District. In addition, the Rev. Ron Voss will be leading workshops in the Iowa Mission District.

We will continue to offer *Stewards of God's Influence: Time, Talents, Treasure and Testimony* through 2019-2020. In addition to this study, a video is now available, which accompanies the *Stewards of God's Influence* biblical study and stewardship program.

Continuing Education: The Living and Giving Stewardship Team is dedicated to life-long learning in stewardship. Therefore, every year we will participate in faith-based learning opportunities offered by many well-known stewardship and fundraising organizations. The Rev. Dona Johnson, co-chair, attended *Faith and Fundraising: Building A Culture of Generosity*, June 3-6, 2019, at The Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Indiana University in Indianapolis, Ind.

Rev. Johnson will develop new approaches in stewardship and how to better reach out to our congregations.

NALC Stewardship in 2020: Looking ahead, we will continue to reach out to congregations by providing educational opportunities and *Stewards of God's Influence* workshops. We are already working on a new stewardship study and program: RESET. This study takes a new approach in that it's both experiential and interactive. All of our stewardship resources can be downloaded from the NALC website, thenalc.org/stewardship.

We continue to explore the possibility of a development team for the purpose of offering congregational members new opportunities to give through legacy giving. Legacy or preplanned gifting, by definition, is a gift made in the lifetime or at death as part of a member's overall financial and or/estate planning. This is another way to continue Christian witness post-death or during one's lifetime.

And lastly, thank you! We are grateful to each of you for your generous gifts of time, talents and treasure. We are especially grateful for the testimony of every member of our NALC congregations to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we thank each member of our stewardship team who gives faithfully and passionately to this ministry. We are in this together – shared purpose, shared struggle and shared hope!

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Dona Johnson & The Rev. Dr. Eugene Grimm
Co-Chairs

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT OF THE COURT OF ADJUDICATION

The Court of Adjudication respectfully presents this report.

I. Cases Handled

No cases within the Court's jurisdiction were filed, considered or decided in the last year.

We all are privileged to serve and we stand ready to fulfill the responsibilities assigned by the Constitution to the Court of Adjudication. We are, however, gratified that no conflicts have yet required our attention.

Respectfully submitted,
Mr. James H. Gale
The Rev. Dr. Jeffray Greene
Mr. Lyle Hollander
The Rev. John Moffett
Ms. Carolyn Nestingen
The Rev. Marty Ramey
The Rev. Dr. David Schafer

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The 2019 Nominating Committee presents the candidates named below for positions to be elected at the August 8-9 Convocation in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Bishop

Every four years the NALC Convocation delegates elect the bishop of the NALC for a four-year term. The 2019 candidates for bishop are as follows (name, current call and first congregation to nominate):

- **The Rev. Dr. Catherine Braasch**, STS, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Jackson Center, Ohio; nominated by Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church, Waterville, Iowa
- **The Rev. B. A. “Tim” Christ**, STS, Joy Lutheran Church, Richmond, Texas and dean of Southeast Texas Mission District; nominated by Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church, Waterville, Iowa
- **The Rev. Phillip Gagnon**, STS, St. Albert Evangelical Lutheran Church, St. Albert, Alberta; nominated by Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church, Waterville, Iowa
- **The Rev. Dr. Jeffray S. Greene**, Word of God Lutheran Church, Peachtree City, Ga.; nominated by Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church, Waterville, Iowa
- **The Rev. Marshall E. Hahn**, Marion Lutheran Church and Norway Lutheran Church, St. Olaf, Iowa and dean of Iowa Mission District; nominated by Word of God Lutheran Church, Peachtree City, Ga.
- **The Rev. Ronald Hoyum**, Port Madison Lutheran Church, Bainbridge Island, Wash.; nominated by Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church, Waterville, Iowa
- **The Rev. Melinda H. Jones**, Advent Evangelical Lutheran Church, North Charleston, S.C.; nominated by Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Troutman, N.C.

- The Rev. Kenneth C. Kimball, STS, Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church, Waterville, Iowa and Old West Paint Creek Lutheran Church, Waukon, Iowa; nominated by Hope Lutheran Church, Cedar Hill, Texas
- The Rev. James T. Lehmann, STS, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Thomasboro, Ill.; nominated by St. Paul Lutheran Church, Rosenberg, Texas
- The Rev. Dr. Eric M. Riesen, Trinity Lutheran Church, Ashland, Ohio; nominated by All Saints Lutheran Church, Arlington, Texas
- The Rev. Dan Selbo, St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, San Jose, Calif.; nominated by Emmanuel Lutheran Church, State College, Pa.
- The Rev. Dr. David M. Wendel, NALC Assistant to Bishop for Ministry & Ecumenism, Jacksonville, Fla.; nominated by Shepherd of the Woods, Jacksonville, Fla.

Executive Council

Each year the NALC Convocation delegates elect one pastor and one layperson to the executive council for four-year terms. The 2019 clergy candidates are as follows (name, current congregation and first congregation to nominate):

- The Rev. Bassam Abdallah, House of Prayer, Elizabethtown, Kentucky; nominated by Trinity Lutheran Church, Norwalk, Ohio
- The Rev. Rebecca M. M. Heber, Oasis Church, St. Mary, Fla.; nominated by Oasis Church, St. Mary, Fla.
- The Rev. Dr. Keith G. Less, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Abilene, Kan.; nominated by Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Abilene, Kan.
- The Rev. K. Craig Moorman, River's Edge Ministries, Mount Airy, Md./First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Gray Manor, Dundalk, Md.; nominated by Hope Lutheran Church, Cedar Hill, Texas
- The Rev. Carl L. M. Rasmussen, First Lutheran Church, Kirkland, Ill.; nominated by First Lutheran Church, Kirkland, Ill.

The 2019 lay candidates are as follows (name, current congregation and first congregation to nominate):

- Ms. Rebecka V. Andrae, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Latrobe, Pa.; nominated by St. Paul Lutheran Church, Latrobe, Pa.
- Ms. Rosemary Johnson, Hope Lutheran Church, Ladysmith, Wis.; nominated by Hope Lutheran Church, Ladysmith, Wis.
- Mr. Scott Kramer, St. John Lutheran Church, Boerne, Texas; nominated by St. John Lutheran Church, Boerne, Texas

Court of Adjudication

This year two individuals, clergy or lay, will be elected by the NALC Convocation delegates to four-year terms on the court of adjudication. The 2019 candidates are as follows (name, current congregation and first congregation to nominate):

- The Rev. Jennifer Gold, St. John Lutheran Church, Boerne, Texas; nominated by St. John Lutheran Church, Boerne, Texas
- The Rev. Leslie Haines, St. John's Lutheran Church, Lake Township, Fort Wayne, Ind.; nominated by Immanuel Lutheran Church, Thomasboro, Ill.
- The Rev. Martha Ramey, Grace Lutheran Church, Clemmons, N.C.; nominated by Grace Lutheran Church, Clemmons, N.C.
- Mr. Allyn Ray Rub, St. James Lutheran Church, Llano, Texas; nominated by St. James Lutheran Church, Llano, Texas

The Nominating Committee requested nominations from the NALC congregations by two emails to the congregations, mission district deans, announcements in the monthly *NALC News* and an announcement at the 2018 Pastors' Conference. Individuals nominated were asked to provide biographical information using a form approved by the executive committee.

Biographical information on the candidates was published in accordance with the NALC Constitution, which requires the Nominating Committee to provide information on the candidates 90 days prior to the NALC Convocation. In accordance

with the NALC constitutional requirements, the list of candidates and their qualifications was posted on the NALC website on May 10, 2019, published in the NALCNews for May and sent by e-mail to NALC congregations. Although sufficient nominations for bishop were received during the nominating period ending 90 days prior to the Convocation, a reminder about the possibility of making additional bishop nominations was included with the biographical information published in May. Again, although sufficient nominations for the executive council and the court of adjudication were received, additional nominations for the executive council and the court of adjudication could be made through June 24, 2019. No additional nominations were received by the committee within the additional nomination period that ended 45 days prior to the convocation, on June 24, 2019.

We would also like to mention that this year “Airtable,” a cloud-based collaboration service, was used for nominations and biographical information. It was very beneficial, and it is recommended that we strongly encourage the use of “Airtable,” or similar electronic systems, in the future.

We are grateful to have received the names of so many well-qualified individuals for service to our church. God has blessed the NALC with many dedicated servants. Please pray that God will raise up the leaders who will best serve us at this time in the life of our church.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Wendy Berthelsen
The Rev. Hugh W. Brewer
Mr. Erik Osness
The Rev. Rich Tomlinson
Mr. Marc Voigt, *Chair*

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON STRUCTURE

Introduction

For more than three years, the Task Force on Structure has engaged in developing a vision for the future of the North American Lutheran Church regarding infrastructure and human resources. The purpose of the effort is to recommend changes that will support and meet the needs of congregations and pastors for the sake of mission as the North American Lutheran Church continues to grow. Specifically, the goals are to:

- Provide greater and more timely support to pastors and congregations of the NALC;
- Relieve the heavy travel schedules and workloads of the bishop, staff and deans;
- Assist mission districts and congregations in fulfilling the Great Commission;
- Help ensure a smooth transition to the NALC's next stage of development as we elect a new presiding bishop; and
- Be ready for what God has planned for us.

The Vision Proposal

The task force's goals will best be fulfilled by the following vision as presented to the 2018 Convocation of the North American Lutheran Church:

- Evolving smaller mission districts, where appropriate, ideally composed of 12-15 congregations. This facet of the vision will allow for a manageable workload for deans as they seek to fulfill their primary role as a pastor to pastors.
- Creating four geographic regions within North America with oversight by "regional bishops" (*title yet to be determined*) who report to the presiding bishop. Implementation of this portion of the vision is vital to ensure the presiding bishop is able to fulfill the role of bishop as stated in 1 Peter and Article 8 of the NALC Constitution in the most effective and timely manner without being subjected to an exhausting travel schedule.

Implementation

Several mission districts have already begun implementing the resizing aspect of the vision by either planning or creating additional mission districts to reflect a more workable size. Mission districts already involved in this activity include Ohio, Great Plains, Carolinas, Atlantic and Texas. The task force commends those mission districts for taking the lead in this endeavor. Communication between the deans and the task

force continued in 2018-2019. The deans discussed and studied the options and provided input to the executive council.

The executive council, with the new bishop elected in 2019, will implement the vision in phases, in ongoing consultation with mission districts, the executive council, congregations and other bodies within the NALC. The implementation process will always consider financial feasibility, be consultative and flexible.

Decisions yet to be made concerning implementation include:

- What is the title of the new regional positions?
- How to select the new positions?
- How to divide the North American territory?
- How to raise the funds to cover the costs?
- What constitutional changes, if any, may be required?

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Sutton, *Chair*

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT ON CANDIDACY



The Candidacy Committee is currently an 11-member panel of clergy, representing the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) from coast to coast. The members are: the Rev. Bassam Abdallah (Hammond, Ind.), the Rev. Cathi Braasch (Jackson Center, Ohio), the Rev. Gib Botten (Everett, Wash.), the Rev. Beverly DeBord (St. Louis, Mo.), the Rev. Joyce Dix-Weiers (Elderton, Pa.), the Rev. Brad Everett (Strathmore, Alb.), the Rev. John Hopper (Delano, Minn.), the Rev. Stephane Kalonji (Rosenberg, Texas), the Rev. Amy Little (Norwalk, Ohio), the Rev. Garrett Siemsen (Pittsburgh, Pa.) and the Rev. Patti Morlock, Chair (Grove City, Ohio).

Together, we work to support future leaders of the church. In partnership with the bishop, his staff, mission district deans, seminary representatives and internship supervisors, we seek to prayerfully guide qualified candidates as they move through the educational process and discern God's call to ministry. The committee oversees internship site development and placement. We also review applications to the NALC Theological Education Scholarship Fund, giving our recommendations to the NALC executive staff. In addition to our work with seminarians, the committee also works in the colloquy process for ordained pastors seeking to come into the NALC from non-Lutheran traditions.

The committee meets each year in March, June and October to conduct interview panels for individuals at various stages in the candidacy process. Whether coming to us for an entrance, endorsement or approval decision, or perhaps a developmental interview for additional guidance, the committee seeks to aid the candidate's discernment process and theological development while at the same time bearing in mind the requirements and expectations of the wider Church. Through the three milestones of the candidacy process, candidates are reviewed to determine their progress using seminary transcripts, candidacy essays, clinical pastoral education (CPE), internship evaluations and individual conversations with members of the committee that are focused on biblical, theological and confessional matters. Personal and pastoral references, as well as full criminal background checks and a psychological evaluation, are required of all NALC ministry candidates.

Since 2018's Convocation, the Candidacy Committee has met three times for interviews: October 2018, March 2019 and June 2019. The outcome of those interviews is as follows:

OCTOBER 2018

	Total # Interviews	Positive Decisions	Denials	Postponements	With Contingencies
Entrance	2	2			
Endorsement	5	5			
Approval	3	3			
Lay Minister	1	1			
Developmental	4				

MARCH 2019

	Total # Interviews	Positive Decisions	Denials	Postponements	With Contingencies
Entrance	4	4			
Endorsement	3	2		1 (No Decision)	
Approval	2	2			1
Lay Minister					
Developmental	2			1 Suspended	

JUNE 2019

	Total # Interviews	Positive Decisions	Denials	Postponements	With Contingencies
Entrance	4	4			
Endorsement					
Approval					
Lay Minister					
Developmental	1				

Entrance – Interview to begin the candidacy process in the NALC

Endorsement – Interview for internship in a NALC congregation

Approval – Interview for ordination into Word and Sacrament ministry as a NALC pastor

Lay Minister – Interview for commissioned lay ministry

Developmental – Interview for those on a slower path toward ordination to touch base

The Candidacy Retreat was held this year on the weekend of January 18-20. It was held at the Embassy Suites in Columbus, Ohio, and 24 students registered, with 22 in actual attendance. Katherine Coolidge, of the Catherine of Siena Institute, was the keynote speaker with Rev. John Bradosky preaching at worship on Sunday. It was a wonderful opportunity for seminarians across the country to spend meaningful time with one another.

We continue to give praise to God for His faithfulness in calling men and women to serve in Word and Sacrament ministry, as well as commissioned lay ministry, and pray for those who continue to seek a call.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,
The Rev. Patricia A. Morlock
Chair

2019 CONVOCAATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT ON CERTIFICATION

The NALC steadily receives pastors from other Lutheran churches and non-Lutheran churches. Most are from the ELCA and LCMC. I see no decrease for the foreseeable future, and perhaps even an increase. As I reported last year, the reception of these new pastors along with a steady number of candidates for ordained ministry will help the NALC get through the shortfall of clergy resulting from the high number of baby boomer pastors retiring in the next several years.

The Rev. Ron Hoyum, the Rev. Harvey Mozolak, the Rev. Solveig Zamzow and the Rev. Mike Tamorria serve on the Vetting Team that assists with the certification process. The Rev. Beverly DeBord also served but stepped down earlier this year because of her many other commitments, which include serving on the NALC Candidacy Committee. I am grateful for Pastor Tamorria joining the team to take her place. They do a lot of good work throughout the year, for which we are greatly indebted to them.

Respectfully submitted,



The Rev. Mark C. Chavez
General Secretary

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT ON THE CALL PROCESS, PASTORAL CARE AND TRANSITION TEAMS, AND INTERIM MINISTRY

Call Process: The call process continues to work smoothly and without difficulty in the North American Lutheran Church (NALC). The average call process is concluded within 9-12 months from the time a congregation has submitted a Congregational Profile. Certainly, part-time calls and rural, small-town vacancies can take longer and are more difficult to fill. However, most of these congregations are being served by faithful, retired or semi-retired pastors.

Although the number of vacancies varies monthly, at the time of this writing, we had 22 full-time vacancies listed and 12 part-time. We have 125 pastors who have submitted a Profile of Pastor Available for Call, although this does not mean all of these pastors are actively engaged in the call process. Many submit a profile as they prayerfully consider the vacancy list each month.

It may be helpful to provide a thumbnail sketch of the call process in the NALC, as most are unaware until a vacancy occurs. The process is well described in the *NALC Manual on the Call Process*, which may be found at thenalc.org/call-process. Job number one when a pastor leaves and creates a vacancy is to provide for Sunday-by-Sunday Word and Sacrament ministry, as well as day-to-day pastoral care and leadership. We do not currently have a large number of pastors who are trained in interim ministry, but working together with the local mission district dean, we are usually able to provide pastoral support for vacant congregations. Next, the congregation forms a call committee in accordance with their constitution. At this point, I provide a 45-minute conference call to orient the committee and provide information. At the same time, the congregation works with the mission district dean to schedule the Congregational Workshop in Preparation for the Call Process. This is usually facilitated by members of the mission district Pastoral Care and Transition Team (P-CAT team), or the dean. The workshop assists the congregation in reflecting upon mission and ministry, with much of the summary conclusions being included in the congregational profile. Once completed, the vacancy is posted on the NALC website, the congregational profile is uploaded to the NALC Network Call Process group and the vacancy is listed on the NALC Vacancy List, which is updated every four weeks and emailed to all NALC pastors.

Pastors then prayerfully consider to which congregations they wish their profile sent. The sending of their profile is then facilitated through our office. Once receiving pastoral profiles, the call committee begins the process of contacting candidates, conducting interviews, checking references and finally arranging for an on-site visit. The call committee then recommends one pastoral candidate to the council and congregation. In addition to the initial financial and criminal background check required of each pastor certified in the NALC, we have also made available an updated background check, if desired, before a congregation votes on the recommended pastoral candidate. Once the congregation votes affirmatively to call the pastor, and the pastor accepts, they work together to plan the pastor's move to the new congregation, scheduling an installation service at a reasonable and convenient time.

The NALC call process is flexible, open and responsive. We do not dictate what must happen, but offer advice and counsel, shepherding and guiding our call committees and pastors through the process. We like to remind those involved in the call process that the only agenda driving our office is to facilitate sufficient connections so that pastor and congregation find one another and are convinced God intends for them to be serving together! We do not “gate-keep” or manipulate the process — if a pastor would like to be considered by a congregation, we will forward his or her profile to that congregation. We trust our call committees and congregations, as well as our pastors, to be able to discern God's movement and intention.

Pastoral Care and Transition Teams: Each mission district or mission region is encouraged to form a Pastoral Care and Transition Team (P-CAT team) to assist with the Congregational Workshop in Preparation for the Call Process, as well as to serve as “first responders” when congregations and pastors may be in the first stages of miscommunication and misunderstanding. Although not every mission district/mission region has formed a P-CAT team, the strategy is bearing fruit and assisting in situations of conflict and tension before reaching a crisis point. At last count, we had 61 P-CAT team members serving in the NALC, representing 13 mission districts/regions. We have developed a useful and effective congregational conflict intervention template that I have been using, as have our P-CAT teams. We cannot stress strongly enough that the key to assisting pastors, councils and congregations in avoiding reaching a crisis stage in tension and conflict is early intervention! When strains begin to arise, please contact me or your local mission district dean for assistance.

Interim Ministry: As mentioned above, we do not have a large number of trained interims ready to step into congregations with a vacancy. We are blessed and thankful for the one or two who are committed to interim ministry full time and are ready to go wherever needed. We could use two or three additional interims who are also available and willing to serve wherever needed. At the same time, we truly appreciate those retired and semi-retired pastors who have a heart for ministry and serve as part-time interims or regular supply pastors for vacant congregations. The local dean and I usually work together to find interims to serve vacancies, but we are always looking for other pastors who would consider serving as an interim. We are currently planning to offer an interim pastor gathering in 2020 for those currently serving, as well as those who may be interested. A date has not yet been set, so watch for upcoming publicity this fall.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "The Rev. Dr. David M. Wendel".

The Rev. Dr. David M. Wendel
Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry and Ecumenism

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THEOLOGY & DOCTRINE

The members of the Commission on Theology and Doctrine are Dr. Robert Benne, the Rev. John Bradosky (NALC Bishop), the Rev. Gregory Fryer, Dr. David Hahm, the Rev. Ron Hoyum, the Rev. Dr. Maurice Lee, the Rev. Dr. Orrey McFarland, the Rev. Dr. James Nestingen, the Rev. Dr. Eric Riesen, the Rev. Dr. Amy Schifrin, the Rev. Paull Spring (Bishop Emeritus), Dr. David Yeago and the Rev. Dr. Nathan Yoder. The Rev. Dr. David Wendel also participates in the commission's meetings. In May 2019, the Rev. Paull Spring announced that he would not continue on the commission. Recommendations for new appointments to the commission have been submitted to the Rev. John Bradosky.

During the past year, the commission met once, in May 2019. (A meeting scheduled for November 2018 was canceled due to inclement weather.)

The commission routinely reviews the planning processes for the Braaten-Benne Lectures in Theology and for the Younger Theologians Colloquium, both held in conjunction with the North American Lutheran Church Convocation every August. The members of the steering committee for the Braaten-Benne Lectures are the Rev. Dr. Paul Hinlicky, the Rev. Ron Hoyum (chair), the Rev. Dr. Maurice Lee, the Rev. Dr. Mark Mattes, the Rev. Dr. Orrey McFarland, Dr. R. David Nelson and Dr. David Yeago. The meetings of the Younger Theologians are coordinated by the Rev. Dr. Amy Schifrin and the Rev. Dr. Nathan Yoder.

The commission also receives reports from the Church and Ministry Task Force. The members of the task force are Dr. David Hahm, Ms. Marianne Howard Yoder (chair), Dr. David Yeago and the Rev. Dr. Nathan Yoder, with the Rev. Dr. David Wendel as NALC staff liaison. The task force met in March 2019 and is scheduled to meet again in September 2019. The primary focus of the task force has been the study of ministry, both as to form and function, in Scripture, in the early church, and in the Lutheran tradition, toward the purpose of recommending possible structures for meeting the ministerial needs of the NALC. The task force is currently in the process of drafting proposals to address specific ministerial and leadership problems encountered by small and sometimes isolated NALC congregations. It continues to seek input from NALC members.

The commission has recommended the publication for wider distribution of its 2018 teaching document, "The Bible as the Word of God," previously available only online.

Two further documents, one regarding marriage and sexuality, the other regarding sacramental practices, are being drafted. A variety of other topics are under discussion by the commission, possibly to be taken up more formally in the future.

The commission is regularly informed concerning the NALC's involvement in ecumenical dialogues and international partnerships. Additional updates on the NALC's ecumenical relationships will be found in the Rev. Dr. David Wendel's report to this Convocation.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Dr. Maurice Lee
Convener

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT OF THE DISASTER RESPONSE TASK FORCE

2018-2019 Task Force Members: Mary Bates (Caldwell, Ohio), Susan Riches (Jacksonville, Florida), the Rev. Michael Giese (Gallipolis, Ohio), Jessie Phillips (Watertown, Wisconsin), the Rev. Jack Richards (Everett, Washington), the Rev. Mark Werner (Elmer, New Jersey), the Rev. David McGettigan (Atlantic City, New Jersey), Patricia Dittrich (Rosenberg, Texas – WNALC), Dennis Thorp (Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin – Active Shooter Training), the Rev. Ernie Sheldon (Statesville, North Carolina – Chair), Michael Dittrich (Rosenberg, Texas)

In the midst of chaos, God shines a light on His children — especially during times of disaster! Thank you, North American Lutheran Church (NALC) congregations and the Women of the NALC (WNALC), for your prayers and support throughout the past year for NALC Disaster Response.

In addition to active responses, deliverables included disaster preparedness trainings, servant event mission trips, regional disaster warehouses, and bi-monthly Disaster Task Force meetings.

On August 31, 2018, Hurricane Florence struck the Carolinas, damaging the homes of more than 139,000 families.

On November 8, 2018, wildfires swept through Paradise, California, killing 88 people and destroying over 13,000 homes.

On March 12, 2019, over half of Nebraska was devastated by a “Bomb Cyclone,” causing flooding and the destruction of 60,000 homes, farms and livestock. Subsequently, the Missouri River, the Mississippi River and the Arkansas River all flooded communities and families south of Nebraska.

From March 2, 2019 through Memorial Day, tornadoes and flooding have impacted the southern (Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama — 23 fatalities), the Midwestern (Illinois, Indiana and Ohio — one fatality), and the Great Plains (Iowa, Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas — eight fatalities) states. It has been a very active disaster season and as of June 1, 2019 hurricane season has arrived.

I have frequently been asked if there has been an increase in natural disasters in the United States. Since record keeping was initiated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the late 1800s, there has not been a significant increase in natural disasters. The 1930s saw extreme weather across the United States, exceeding today's weather patterns. Thankfully, we are more aware, have better communications and better able to prepare for disasters.

Case Management Report: Case managers have been hired for Hurricane Florence in Wilmington, North Carolina. Thank you, Randy Magruder and Rod Paulson. Thank you, the Rev. Alan Daughtery from Reformation Lutheran Church, New Bern, North Carolina. Mary Bates, NALC Disaster Response coordinator has been providing case management in Nebraska/South Dakota, with support from the Rev. Jeff Cottingham.

Volunteers have been providing case management in Ohio for the three Memorial Day tornadoes, all of which were EF-3 tornadoes. Thank you, Tim Schubert and Diane Walker.

Through the case management process, families who need help to recover are identified and their need is verified, so NALC Disaster Response volunteer teams are able to serve those who desperately need the love of Jesus.

Volunteer Coordination Report: Long term recovery for Hurricane Harvey 2017 continues in Rosenberg, Texas. In 2018–2019, 134 disaster response volunteers from 11 congregations have served families who still need help rebuilding their homes. Thank you, Michael and Pat Dittrich.

St. Matthew, Wilmington, North Carolina and Reformation, New Bern, North Carolina, have been hosting volunteer teams since Hurricane Florence made landfall in 2018. Over 70 early response volunteers helped distribute flood buckets and emergency relief kits. In January 2019, the Mid-Northeast Mission District formed a team that traveled to New Bern for long-term recovery rebuilding. Thank you, the Rev. Susan Fox and the Rev. Joyce Dix-Weiers. In February 2019, Larry VonHof and his Minnesota team rebuilt 19 homes in two weeks in Wilmington, North Carolina. Since that time, NALC Disaster Response has coordinated over 400 disaster volunteers from Ohio, Iowa and other states. Our Savior, Auburn, California, has reached out to families impacted by the Paradise, California, wildfires and continue their support through prayer and spiritual Christian care.

Donations Management Report:

Hurricane Florence: Nine truckloads of emergency relief supplies, such as flood buckets, health kits, school kits, layettes, quilts and Bibles, were delivered through St. John, Statesville, North Carolina, to New Bern and Wilmington, North Carolina – plus multiple trailers and pick-up truck loads.

Nebraska Flooding: One semi-truck load and seven trucks were delivered to Nebraska and two Indian Reservations (Pine Ridge & Rosebud).

California Wildfires: Gift cards and Bibles were delivered to Our Savior, Auburn, California.

Ohio Tornadoes and Flooding over Central US: Five truckloads of emergency supplies were donated through Living Water, Centerville, Ohio, and Salem, West Alexandria, Ohio. Over \$1 million in Bibles, gift cards, flood buckets, quilts, health kits, school kits, layettes, flooring, mattresses, kitchen/bathroom cabinets and other building supplies were delivered to devastated families.

Spiritual Christian Care: The most important part of NALC Disaster Response is the Christian care we provide. Over 5,000 Bibles, including Spanish language Bibles, were delivered to families in addition to lots of prayers and testimonies by volunteers. A message of hope and the love of Jesus was proclaimed!

Warehousing: The national warehouse is located in Caldwell, Ohio. There is also the South Texas Regional Warehouse in Rosenberg, Texas and two in the Carolinas Mission District – St. John, Statesville, North Carolina, and Advent, Kings Mountain, North Carolina, whose dedication was held on March 24, 2019. Peace, Edmond, Oklahoma, is building a disaster warehouse and St. Matthew, Middle River, Maryland, now has a storage building being used for disaster warehousing. Two additional warehouses are under consideration at this time.

A box truck, a 24' trailer, a pickup truck and two shower trailers are available to NALC congregations when disasters strike. The Carolinas Mission District now owns a disaster response trailer, located at Advent, Kings Mountain, North Carolina. The Atlantic Mission District is currently building a tool trailer for NALC Disaster Response.

Disaster preparedness trainings have been held in Auburn, California, and West

Alexandria, Ohio.

Servant event mission trips continue to be hosted at the national disaster warehouse and over 30 youth have learned about disaster response and answering God's Call. Schedule your youth through NALC Disaster Response in 2020.

The Women of the NALC are fantastic at collecting donations of material goods. They lead the efforts to support thousands of families when disasters strike. By keeping each warehouse fully stocked, volunteer teams can load and go immediately when those disasters happen – NALC volunteers are often the first to arrive with help! Thank you WNALC!

The national Disaster Task Force continues to meet regularly, coordinating and maintaining the necessary structure to support our congregations when disasters strike. By teleconferencing monthly, and as needed, communications and information are shared throughout the NALC.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Bates
Disaster Response Coordinator

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT OF THE LIFE-TO-LIFE DISCIPLESHIP TEAM

Dear members and friends of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC),

Six years ago, when the Rev. John Bradosky, NALC bishop, asked me to chair the Life-to-Life Discipleship Team, I thought and prayed about it; then agreed to accept. However, I had little idea of what this would mean. Very soon I learned that this is a very large undertaking. I also became aware that not everyone was on the same page theologically when it came to discipleship. Therefore, one of the first things we needed to do was to build a common vision of discipleship.

The word “disciple” (*mathetes*) simply means student, pupil, adherent or apprentice. The first disciples of Christ were those who lived under His tutelage. He was their teacher. So, when Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission to, “Go and make disciples of all nations” He was telling them to make people who lived under His teaching. Therefore, to this day we “baptize and teach” in order to make disciples.

However, the problem is that often we treat people as “brains on sticks” (with thanks to James K. A. Smith). The assumption is that if we teach people the right information it will lead to transformation. Unfortunately, it doesn’t.

Discipleship is much more than simply helping people to gain knowledge of the Bible, the catechisms, or the creeds. Rather, discipleship is about learning to know a person – the person of Jesus Christ. When we look at the Great Commission there is a tendency to focus on the command to “baptize and teach” while neglecting the promise: “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20 ESV). It’s also significant to note that when Jesus promises to be “with you,” the “you” is plural. Discipleship is nurtured and lived out in the community of faith, the Church. Discipleship is personal, not individualistic.

Discipleship is learning together to live in the promise of Christ’s presence, before an audience of One. The Latin phrase *coram deo* captures this. It literally means, *before the Heart of God*. Jesus is God’s Heart. Disciples are those brought by the Holy Spirit to Christ in Baptism and who are learning to live together in His presence. He promises to be present for us in His Holy Supper, the center of our fellowship with Him; in His Word, through preaching and absolution; and where “two or three” are gathered in His name to comfort, challenge and encourage one another with the

truth of Holy Scripture. Disciples are those who are learning to live in His presence and attentive to His Word. The Good News is that the heart of Christ Jesus is gracious towards us and His Word is always “for us.” He lives and rules eternally to grant us peace, righteousness and forgiveness. Therefore, our baptismal vocation as disciples is primarily to listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd. Disciples follow because “they know his voice” (John 10:4).

The question the Life-to-Life Discipleship Team has been wrestling with is, “How do we help congregations develop cultures in which people are learning to live in the awareness of Christ’s presence, listen attentively to His Word, and naturally share His Word with others?” Our response is CREDO.

CREDO (*Latin, “I believe”*) is an acronym for Confessional Renewal Embracing Discipleship and Outreach. This is not a technique or a program. It is an initiative for supporting congregational renewal. Our vision is that the NALC reclaim the confessional Lutheran emphasis on Life-to-Life Discipleship though Christ-Centered conversation centered on His Word. Our goal is to develop a set of suggested resources and a series of transferable processes that can be used in congregational settings throughout the NALC.

A key part of the CREDO Initiative is the formation of a cadre of skilled clergy and lay leaders who will act as **discipleship guides**. These guides will work with pastors and laity to encourage them in their own discipleship and to help them build a fellowship of intentional faith formation. Again, this is a process, not a program. It is a process for intentionally changing congregational culture to focus on discipleship. Initially, discipleship guides will hold regular conversations with pastors to provide spiritual guidance, prayerful support and vocational accountability. Eventually, the CREDO Initiative will make discipleship guides available for lay leaders.

The CREDO Initiative is not simply aimed at helping pastors, interns and lay leaders. It is a congregational initiative which will be supported by our discipleship guides. The recommendation is that the pastor will form, lead and mentor a **CREDO leadership team**. This team will meet for an initial 12-18 months to experience life-to-life discipleship. During this time, the CREDO leadership team will also:

- Practice the mutual conversation and consolation centered in Scripture;
- Support each other and the congregation in prayer;

- Assess the current state of congregational catechesis and personal discipleship and faith formation;
- Using Scripture and the Catechism, develop an overall portrait of life together in Christ in the congregation;
- Create a plan to address specific areas where growth in the congregation needs to happen; and
- Learn graciously to share the Gospel in word and deed with the surrounding community.

It is our sincere hope and prayer that the CREDO Initiative will be a means by which the Holy Spirit renews congregations by equipping the saints for the work of ministry and building up the body of Christ (cf. Ephesians 4:12 ESV). If you desire more information, please contact me or one of the other members of the Life-to-Life Discipleship Team. The contact information can be found on the NALC website.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
The Rev. Dr. Eric M. Riesen
Chair

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
REPORT OF THE CARL E. BRAATEN-ROBERT D.
BENNE LECTURES IN THEOLOGY PLANNING TEAM

It has been my great privilege to chair the planning committee for the Carl E. Braaten-Robert D. Benne Lectures in Theology. I want to thank the members of the planning committee for their hard work and dedication to these lectures:

Dr. David Yeago
The Rev. Dr. Paul Hinlicky
Dr. R. David Nelson
The Rev. Dr. Mark Mattes
The Rev. Dr. Orrey McFarland
The Rev. Dr. Maurice Lee

In 2009, Dr. Braaten and Dr. Benne identified a critical need for solid, faithful conversation about the Christian faith. They correctly understood that to heal the divisions within our churches we must reflect deeply upon the biblical and theological roots of our faith.

The vision of the Braaten-Benne Lectures in Theology is to address the challenges that churches face today. The goal is to equip clergy and lay alike with the knowledge and insight necessary to proclaim the Gospel with clarity and conviction.

In 2018, we focused on the “Person of the Holy Spirit” and our speakers were:

The Rev. Dr. Kathryn Schifferdecker: **Scripture’s Witness to the Holy Spirit**
The Rev. Dr. Orrey MacFarland: **“The Lord is Spirit”: The Person of the Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul**
The Rev. Dr. Maurice Lee: **Filioque Piety: The Holy Spirit in the Triune Life**
The Rev. Dr. Mark Mattes: **The Holy Spirit in Luther’s Catechisms**
The Rev. Dr. Matthew Burdette: **God is Free: Robert Jenson’s Doctrine of the Holy Spirit**

In 2019, we continued our discussion of the Holy Spirit with an examination of the “Work of the Holy Spirit.” Our speakers were:

Dr. Robert Benne: **The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life**

The Rev. Dr. Paul Hinlicky: **How the Holy Spirit Disappeared in Lutheranism**

The Rev. Dr. Craig Keener: **The Work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament**

Dr. Matthew Levering: **The Holy Spirit and Salvation**

The Rev. Dr. Derek Nelson: **The Holy Spirit and the Stuff of Life**

Every year we continue to improve both the content and format of the lectures. We want your feedback and we solicit your recommendations. On behalf of the committee, I thank you for your support and participation in the Braaten-Benne Lectures in Theology.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Ronald Hoyum
Chair

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT OF THE LUTHERAN WEEK PLANNING TEAM

The executive council established the Lutheran Week Planning Team in 2018 in response to the continuing robust growth of our annual Lutheran Week and the need to research and recommend future Lutheran Week locations to the executive council. Thus, working directly with the general secretary and NALC staff, the planning team functions as a forum to provide effective Lutheran Week planning and responsible budgeting in a manner that reflects the NALC's mission, ministry and Core Values. The planning team has met monthly via "GoToMeeting," an online meeting service.

Current planning team members with specific areas of responsibility are: Jody Ford (Women of the NALC); the Rev. Ron Hoyum (Braaten-Benne Lectures in Theology); the Rev. Dr. Nathan Yoder (Young Theologians); Jenny Brockman (Mission Festival); Gary Pecuch (Youth Ministry Symposium); the Rev. Dr. Eric Riesen (Life-to-Life Discipleship); the Rev. Tony Ede (A/V & technology); Andrew Fuller (communications); the Rev. Pam Thorson, the Rev. Doug Gast, the Rev. Larry Gember, and Dawn Hahm (local hospitality/logistics); the Rev. Bassam Abdallah (chaplain); Jacqui El Torro (hotel contracts); the Rev. Mark Chavez (general secretary); Anne Gleason (finance); and the Rev. William Hartfelder (chair).

During 2018, it was determined that a subcommittee be established specifically tasked to identify, evaluate and negotiate with potential vendors to recommend future Lutheran Week locations to the executive council. The subcommittee's work included on-site visits. After due deliberation, the subcommittee submitted its recommendations to the executive council. Lutheran Week 2020 will be August 3-7 at the Omni William Penn Hotel, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Lutheran Week 2021 will be August 2-6 at the American Bank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas. Lodging for the 2021 gathering will be available at the Omni Corpus Christi Hotel. Members of the subcommittee are the Rev. Mark Chavez (general secretary); Anne Gleason (finance), Jacqui El Torro (hotel contracts); the Rev. Mark Graham; and the Rev. William Hartfelder (chair).

As we look to the future, it is a goal of the planning team to include an intentional focus on the NALC's Holy Families! Initiative with the hope that Lutheran Week may also serve as an experience of what it means to be the Body of Christ — our Lord's Church — for the entire family.

Respectfully and joyfully submitted,
The Rev. William A. Hartfelder, *Chair*

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT OF THE WOMEN OF THE NALC

It is my honor and joy to share with you some of the wonderful things that the Women of the NALC (WNALC) have been doing. At last year's Annual Gathering we elected three ladies to the council: Jody Ford of Kendallville, Indiana; Rachel Busch Jones of Champaign, Illinois; and Jill Nesheim of Devils Lake, North Dakota. Lane Magera of Trufant, Michigan, was re-elected to a second term. Heartfelt blessings went out to Linda Brower and Robbie Conley as they left the council due to term limits. Jennifer Madsen left for personal reasons. The new council elected Lane as the new treasurer, Pat Dittrich of Orchard, Texas, remained as secretary, Marcella Nelson of Brookfield, Wisconsin, was elected vice chair and I became chair.

Our annual retreat was held in Brookfield, Wisconsin, at Calvary Lutheran Church. Special thanks to Pastor Ken Nelson and the Calvary family for housing, feeding and entertaining us for four days. They are such a blessing. The retreat's focus was on prayer and developing relationships with each other. If I had to give a name to this council I would say that we are the "Praying Council." As in Acts 1:14, "They all joined together constantly in prayer" (NIV). We planned our Annual Gathering and searched for ways to do more for the kingdom of God while holding true to our mission and purpose.

Mission

To encourage our members to love God, develop a deeper relationship with Him and study His Word.

To achieve this, we expanded our visibility with a WNALC Facebook page that permits all members to post and share Scriptures, inspirational writings and uplifting messages. Our bi-monthly newsletter now is part of the NALC's Constant Contact group and is sent out to the entire church rather than just those for whom we have e-mail addresses. We are utilizing more of the resources of the national church and are in relationship with more of the staff.

Love our neighbors—local, domestic and around the world—lending them assistance with their life and spiritual challenges.

For local and domestic missions, our focus was the Tonka truck that made its way from Brookfield, Wisconsin, to Denver, Colorado, in 2018. The Women of the NALC

stuffed that Tonka truck with 366 gift cards totaling \$12,912 for disaster response. NALC Disaster Response is also one of our domestic Mission Bank recipients. The little Tonka is bringing two larger siblings with him to Lutheran Week in Indianapolis. Our international Mission Bank recipient is Water Mission, because clean drinking water is essential to life wherever you live. As for spiritual challenges, it was decided to have a “Bibles for Jesus” drive. We were able to bless NALC Disaster Response with 1,252 new Bibles at Christmas to share God’s Word with those in the midst of disaster. Thank you to all who made that happen. Great job!

Spread His Gospel throughout the world by supporting His missionaries in prayer and assistance as needed.

We continued to support our global workers in prayer, as we are the “Praying Council.”

Foster numerous personal relationships with our sisters in Christ.

We are sharing more of your stories of service and faith through our re-vamped newsletter, Facebook page and new website. A special thank you to Juhree Polkowski who served as our webmaster since 2012.

Our logo is now registered with Lands’ End so WNALC apparel can be purchased through Lands’ End to strengthen our branding presence. We are proud to be Women of the NALC. More branding items will become available soon.

Purpose

A place for women to find spiritual guidance, support, mission and fellowship.

WNALC links NALC women’s groups together as a community of faith, hope, and love as they focus on their individual organization and assists them in God’s mission, studies of His Word, service to others in Christ’s name, and fellowship with each other and other Lutheran women.

We are making intentional efforts to build relationships with our sisters across the faith community, starting within this body of believers.

Thanks to your generosity, this past year we were financially sound. At the end of May, our Mission Bank total is \$8,545.94 – which will be divided between NALC Disaster Response and Water Mission. That is \$1,600.00 above where we were

last year at this time. Gifts to the General Fund totaled \$4,900.00 – just shy of a \$2,000.00 increase from last year. We praise God for you and your gifts.

We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers.

– 1 Thessalonians 1:2 NIV

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqui El Torro

Chair

2019 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT ON YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

faithwebbing.com is in its fourth year of providing web-based youth ministry coaching services to NALC congregations.

It continues to be a pleasure and a blessing to connect with churches, partners and affiliates throughout the United States, Canada and around the world. The greatest joy we experience is connecting with individual churches and church members as we learn and grow together.

Here is a synopsis of the past year...

- We attended Lutheran Week 2018 in Denver.
- During Lutheran Week, faithwebbing.com hosted the Ventures in Youth Ministry Symposium for a day and a half.
- While in Denver, we also hosted a table in the display area for connection and discussion.
- Nine monthly webinars were offered during the past school year. The topic was, "Old Testament Bible Story Lessons from Gary and Laurie's 'Trot through the Bible Sunday School Course.'"
- The monthly webinars were again edited into smaller, topical clips for easier viewing, and posted on the faithwebbing.com website.
- The website continued its development with the addition of 30+ video clips from the monthly webinars.
- We were the main speakers for the Canadian Mission District Youth Gathering.
- The all-NALC Nexus Institute Theological Conference for Teens was created. All the spots for the first year were filled.
- We continue to work with congregations involved in the outcome-based youth ministry year-long intentional coaching program.

- Online youth ministry courses were created and continue to be offered.
- A set of books (*Faith Webbing* and *What's in Your Bag?*) continues to be sent to all new NALC congregations as well as an invitation to connect with faithwebbing.com via email and the faithwebbing.com website.
- There was continued development of the communications system through email distribution lists.
- The NALC Youth Ministry Facebook page had regular postings of information and video clips from the website.
- There was an increase during calendar year 2018 from the previous year in individual church contacts.
- Verbal or in-person updates were given at each NALC staff meeting.
- Written updates appeared in NALC monthly newsletters.
- Upcoming projects include a virtual version of the visionary notebook and online cluster meetings.

We are excited about multiple projects that are in the works for the coming year(s) as we continue to network our congregations together in life, faith and ministry.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gary & Laurie Pecuch
Youth & Family Ministry Coaches

APPENDIX

UPCOMING EVENTS

**DiscipleLife 2020: A Vision for Forming Disciples Through Word and Sacrament
A Joint Conference of the North American Lutheran Church and the Anglican Church in
North America (with the NALC Ministerium)** *Orlando, Florida*

Sheraton Orlando North

Beginning: February 19, 2019 at 8:30am

Concluding: February 21, 2019 at 12:00pm

Description: The Anglican Church in North America and the North American Lutheran Church would both describe themselves as “Great Commission” churches – committed to the Lord’s charge to “Go, make disciples...baptize...teach...” (Matthew 28:19-20). Other Christian bodies in North America share the same focus, but lack the commitment to the key role of Word and Sacrament in forming Christians who will be disciples and followers of Jesus, intentionally, authentically and with accountability. Essential to such forming of disciples is community, and developing congregational cultures which foster and support disciple-making. As simple as it sounds, disciple-making and creating congregations with disciple-making cultures are not familiar or comfortable to most Lutherans and Anglicans in the 21st Century!

For more information, visit thenalc.org/pastors

Lutheran Week 2020 *Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

Omni William Penn Hotel

Beginning: August 3, 2020

Concluding: August 7, 2020

For more information, visit lutheranweek.com

Lutheran Week 2021 *Corpus Christi, Texas*

American Bank Center // Omni Corpus Christi Hotel

Beginning: August 2, 2021

Concluding: August 6, 2021

For more information, visit lutheranweek.com

RESOURCES

Mission Connection Resource List

NALC Mission Teams

thenalc.org/missiondriven

Videos, handouts, audio and archives from Lutheran Week

lutheranweek.com

Evaluating Mission and Ministry Involvement

thenalc.org/emmi

Great Commission Society

Finding a Domestic or Global Mission Partner: thenalc.org/gcs

Applying to be a Mission Partner: thenalc.org/gcsapplication

Global Workers: thenalc.org/international

Tools to Teach, Discuss and Change Culture

Being Mission-Driven: thenalc.org/mission-videos

Mission Intensive: thenalc.org/missiondrivenvideo

Discipleship Moments: thenalc.org/discipleship-moment || vimeo.com/channels/nalcmoments

Connect to Missions: thenalc.org/mission-videos

Being Christ-Centered: thenalc.org/drops-from-the-well

Connecting with Fellow Missionaries: community.nalcnetwork.com

Building Faith Skills and Spiritual Disciplines: faithwebbing.com/outcome-based-youth-ministry.html

Senior Ministry: thenalc.org/seniorministry

Small and Rural Church Resources: thenalc.org/smallandruralchurch

Additional Resources Available

The Academy: The NALC is committed to the renewal of all our congregations, working to develop and deliver resources that challenge and open the NALC to the work of the Holy Spirit in our ministry and mission. Each month we will be hosting a free webinar based on expressed needs by NALC leaders, for NALC leaders. For details: thenalc.org/theacademy

Ignite: Join the New Starts and Renewal Team this fall as we dive headlong into Acts 2:42-47 and run back to the basics. Based on the Rev. John Bradosky's presentation on baptism and discipleship, each month we will be focusing on a different portion of Acts 2. During the first week of each month, The Academy will introduce the main topic. During each subsequent week, the Rev. Trina Petersen will be connecting with congregations and leaders in a series of interviews, bringing words of encouragement and reflections on the key portion of Acts 2 assigned to the month. Additional details are available: thenalc.org/media

Prayer: The Fuel for Mission: A free Bible study resource written by the Rev. Brad Hales. Additional resources provided by the NALC Renewal Team including access to a prayer calendar. For more information, please visit: thenalc.org/prayer-fuel-for-mission

CROSS Talk: CROSS Talk is a weekly online lectionary study led by Rev. Dr. Jim Nestingen in conjunction with St. Paul Seminary. Join each Tuesday at 4pm ET. For more information or to register – please visit: semc.org/contact

Reading the Word of God: A daily Bible reading guide has been prepared for Lutherans to use over the next three years. The reading guide was conceived and prepared as a result of ongoing discussions between representatives of the NALC, the Lutheran Church—Canada (LCC) and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). The reading guide includes monthly calendars with daily readings starting in January 2018 and continuing until December 2020. As a companion to the daily Bible reading guide, 52 suggested readings – one for each week of the year – are offered from the book *Luther and the Scriptures* by Johann Michael Reu (1869–1943). For details, please visit: thenalc.org/readingthewordofgod

Faithwebbing.com: Gary and Laurie Pecuch are ready to connect with you on all things related to children's, youth and/or family ministry through the resource and service links, oodles of template forms and files, Safeguarding tutorials and archived

webinars and video clips on the faithwebbing.com website. You can connect with them on Facebook through the NALC Youth Leaders group, or directly through faithwebbing@gmail.com.

NALC Youth and Family Ministry Webinars: Gary and Laurie offer monthly webinars during the school year on topics related to youth and family ministry. Webinars are also archived for future viewing. If you have questions, contact them at faithwebbing@gmail.com.

The Nexus Institute: The Nexus Institute is an annual theological conference for deeper-thinking high school students held each summer at Grand View College in Des Moines, Iowa. The Rev. John Bradosky, NALC bishop, and Gary Pecuch attended this past June and give it two thumbs up! Interested? Contact Gary or visit thenexusinstitute.org. Did we mention that an Eli Lilly grant makes this experience free of charge except for travel to and from Des Moines? Don't miss this incredible opportunity!

Life Promotions: Looking for a school year retreat or summer experience for your youth? Consider attending a "Quake" (weekend retreat) during the school year quakeevent.com or the "Lifest" national summer experience lifest.com.

GOODNEWS! Media: This weekly video blog provides short reflections on discipleship, being mission driven and stories from across the NALC from the NALC staff and congregations. To connect, visit: missions.nalcnetwork.com

GOODNEWS: This weekly staff blog from the Mission Office shares stories, travels and updates from life on the road. As we journey together as the Body of Christ, this allows for continued prayer requests, shared creative ideas and increased communication. To connect, please visit: missions.nalcnetwork.com

Mission Resources on NALC Website: Designed specifically to connect pastors, leaders and congregations to requested resources. Includes video teaching, "how to" and other administrative documents, past training events and more: thenalc.org/missionresources

Mission Connect: A weekly update from the Mission Office sharing stories of discipleship and mission across the NALC. You can sign up to receive a weekly email or text message. Sign up: Via SMS: Text "MissionConnect" to 24251 or Via email: go to callingpost.site/MissionConnect and complete the form, "Sign Up Now" at the

bottom of the page. (Note: If you wish to only receive an email, do not enter your phone number in the form.)

Mission Finder: Mission cannot be done in isolation. It is about relationship and building strategic mission networks. Find information about other hands-on mission and ministry projects in the NALC: missions.nalcnetwork.com

Short-Term Mission Trips: Connected with the NALC Mission Finder, a list of short-term mission trip opportunities from various NALC congregations and partners can be found at: thenalc.org/missiontrips

Drops from the Well: Utilizing the readings from Sunday morning, Drops from the Well can be delivered to your phone (US phone numbers only) via a text message or to your email inbox. More than a verse-a-day, Drops from the Well focuses on sending out one key point or Gospel kernel with the hopes that you read and reflect on that drop each day of that week. Sign up: Via SMS: Text "DropsFromTheWell" to 24251 or Via email: go to callingpost.site/DropsFromTheWell and complete the form, "Sign Up Now" at the bottom of the page. (Note: If you wish to only receive an email, do not enter your phone number in the form.)

Drops in Focus: Utilizing the same technology as Drops from the Well, but instead of sending the verse in a "text," it is delivered to your phone in a picture image each week. The goal is to save this image to your phone and set it as your lock screen image. Sign up: Via SMS: Text "DropsInFocus" to 24251 or Via email: go to callingpost.site/DropsInFocus and complete the form, "Sign Up Now" at the bottom of the page. (Note: If you wish to only receive an email, do not enter your phone number in the form.)

**RENEWING THE LOCAL CHURCH-
A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE**



BRAD HALES

RENEWING THE LOCAL CHURCH – A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Session 1: Introduction to Renewing the Local Church

When something is “renewed” it is: made better, changed, strengthened, prepared for a further task. When a conscious decision is made not to renew, this can be a sign of refusal, apathy, or advocating a position of literal downward decline.

As Lutherans, we are a part of a reforming tradition. Through centering alone on the Word of God, Martin Luther set off to renew the Church for God’s mission to be done in the world. Renewal is a vital part of our DNA, although it doesn’t come easy. Sometimes congregations hold onto traditions and strongholds just because “they’ve always done it that way.” But can we truly expect our churches to be revived for discipleship growth if they continually hold onto the past, not relying on God’s transforming power?

Let’s not kid ourselves. Every congregation needs to be constantly renewed for ministry. Being large or small doesn’t make a local church good or bad. Wanting to be renewed is not an indication of being weak or less than. Shouldn’t parishes want to be revived for greater effectiveness in reaching out to our communities with the Good News of Jesus Christ?

There are many examples in Holy Scripture about renewal. **Please read and discuss the following:**

Exodus 18:13-27 – Moses is overwhelmed by his duties of leading God’s chosen people. His father-in-law, Jethro, provides Moses with some sound advice. How did this renew the situation?

II Kings 22:3-13, 23:1-20 — During the reign of King Josiah in Jerusalem, God's temple was going through a building renovation. And during this project the Book of the Law was found behind some walls. When Josiah read it, he realized that Israel had turned its back on the Lord and was chasing and worshiping false gods. What actions did Josiah take to renew the religious practices of the people, and regain a relationship with the Almighty God?

Jonah 3:1-10 — When the reluctant prophet Jonah was called by God to go to the heinous Assyrians to share the Lord's message of repentance, things happened. How do you see renewal in this encounter?

Nehemiah 8:1-12 — Nehemiah and the priest Ezra were allowed by King Cyrus of Persia to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city from exile. One of the most important things they did was gather the people together and read from God's Word, the Law. How do you think this brought renewal to the community?

John 16:12-15 — Jesus promised the disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit to guide the Church to the Truth. How does the Holy Spirit aid in the renewal of the Body of Christ today?

I Corinthians 3:1:11 — The Corinthian Church was marred with division, sexual immorality and a lack of biblical authority. The Apostle Paul makes it clear that the church is centered on the foundation of Christ. What characteristics of church renewal do you see in this Scripture?

Concluding Thoughts and Reflections

While there will always be naysayers to the renewal of the church, they are wrong. Christ wants His Church to be continually renewed so the Word can be shared, and disciples made. The Word shows us that the Spirit can and continues to revive the Body of Christ. Are you open to the possibilities?

Session 2: Dealing with the Negativity

Why doesn't our church grow?

Why are we unable to do outreach in the community?

Why do people neglect to worship or want to study God's Word?

There are many reasons for congregational apathy and decline. Culture, individualism, busyness, lack of belief, isolationism, or hurt caused by the church are just a few. But there are other factors such as: anger, blame, control, unforgiveness and pessimism which can easily cause division and negativity in Christ's Church. Obviously, Satan does not want the Body of Christ to grow – making Jesus known to the world. When conflict and acrimony spread over the local congregation, it will be difficult for mission and ministry to be center-stage and fruitful.

Conflict has been a part of the church since its inception. In the Gospels, the disciples were fighting with one another because some wanted to be greatest in the kingdom of God. In Acts, there was anger because the widows were not being properly taken care of. In 1 Corinthians, there was division in the church, as people were following human leaders instead of Christ. And in the letters of John, the false teaching of docetism (the belief that Jesus was only resurrected from the dead as a spirit or ghost and not in His physical form) brought conflict to the local congregation.

Conflict and discord are real.

Please read James 4:1-10. What is the source of quarreling and divisiveness?

In the church, we sometimes have a tendency of avoiding conflict or conflict resolution. It's easy to avoid issues, believing that they will miraculously go away. But that is not the case. If not dealt with in a healthy manner, the issues will continue to seethe and disrupt. Satan likes nothing more than creating havoc and frustration in the church. Clearly, for renewal to take place, the darkness must be exposed and brought into the light.

Please read and discuss the following texts:

Matthew 18:15-17

Galatians 6:1-5

II Timothy 2:24-26

Biblically, we are being called to approach other believers about their behavior if it is detrimental to themselves and the life of the church. We should always work toward confession, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Please read and discuss the following texts:

I John 1:8-10

II Corinthians 5:17-21

Matthew 5:23-26

Matthew 6:14-15

Matthew 18:21-25

Trying to deal with disruption in the Body of Christ is not an easy task. There is inevitable hurt. But left unfettered, disruption will bring unhealthiness within the church. If believers choose not to follow the biblical mandate of reconciliation and church discipline, then it is a sad testament to people's understanding of Christian unity. If they choose to walk away because of their inability to control things any longer, will this adversely affect the congregation or help it?

Session 3: Discipleship is Everything

Renewal in the local church can only occur when it is centered in the discipleship of Christ alone. When we grow in Jesus through the Word, prayer, worship, witness and service, Jesus will come alive for us as we strive to make other disciples for the Lord. Simply put, a disciple is a pupil, a learner, someone who imitates the Master.

In Matthew 28:19-20 it is written, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold I am with you always, to the end of the age” (ESV).

When a congregation is rooted in making disciples, its work and perspective changes. Making disciples becomes the main mission of the church rather than focusing on “business as usual.” What does “discipleship making” look like?

Growing in the Word

In Luke 21:33 it is written, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away” (ESV). God’s Word is everything! It confronts, convicts, converts, cares and calls us to commitment. Christ is the Word made flesh. As we read, study and memorize the Holy Scriptures, they will draw us closer to Jesus, as the Lord will be made more real to us.

Please read and discuss the following texts about the importance of God’s Word:

- Deuteronomy 6:4-9
- Isaiah 55:10-11
- John 8:31-34
- II Timothy 3:16-17
- Hebrews 4:12

How do you think that your congregation can provide opportunities to better teach the Word of God to others?

Growing in Prayer

In Philippians 4:6 it says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your regrets be made known to God” (ESV). Whether we do it through words or listening, praying in Jesus’ name connects us with the living God. It is in prayer that we experience the Lord’s presence, strength, healing and deliverance.

Please read and discuss the following texts about prayer:

Romans 8:26-27

I Timothy 2:1-4

James 5:13-18

Luke 11:1-13

I John 5:14-15

How can we teach and model prayer in our own congregations?

Session 4: Discipleship Is Everything Part 2

As we shared in the previous session, renewal in the local congregation can only occur when it is centered in the discipleship of Christ alone. Focusing on the Word and prayer in session three, we now turn to worship, witness and service.

Growing in Worship

In Hebrews 10:24-25 it is written, “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (ESV). Worship is the cornerstone of our spiritual lives. As we worship, there is surrender to the Almighty, a sacrificial offering, and an outward expression of our love for Jesus. Unfortunately, worship attendance has been declining in many churches.

Whether it's lack of interest, weekend sports, disagreement with worship styles/times, or irrelevancy, individuals are finding ways not to attend corporate worship. How do you think this can be changed? How can you increase worship participation in your own congregation?

Please read and discuss the following texts about worship:

Romans 12:1-2

Colossians 3:14-17

Psalms 93: 1-6

John 4:23-24

Growing in Witness

In Acts 1:8, right before Jesus ascends into heaven, these are the words that the Lord leaves to His disciples and the Church; “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (ESV). We are being compelled to make Jesus known to our friends, relatives, associates and neighbors. This includes being led to build relationships, and freely sharing our faith stories of how Christ has transformed our own lives.

Please read and discuss the following texts:

Matthew 5:15-16

Luke 10:1-12

John 4:31-38

I Peter 3:15

How is your church presently “reaching out” into the community? What has been the effectiveness of your efforts? Do people know you?

How can we train others to share their faith in Jesus?

Growing in Service

In Mark 10:45 it says, “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (ESV). As Christ gave His life so we could have life, we are being called to serve in Jesus’ name both within and outside of the Body of Christ.

Please read and discuss the following texts about serving:

Matthew 25:31-46

John 13:1-20, 31-35

Philippians 2:1-11

I Peter 4:10-11

What are some ways that people in your congregation are already serving?

What are some real needs in your local community? How can the Church help to meet those needs with ministry?

How is the Church being “permission giving?” How are we encouraging fellow brothers and sisters to serve in Jesus name?

Session 5: Empowering and Equipping

“If we only had, then we could be.”

That is the attitude of some churches. They fervently believe that if the local parish had certain things like staff, money and other resources, that they would be a thriving congregation. For example, if we hire a youth director children, teens and young families will automatically flock into our community. While this may make sense to a few, it's not always the right direction to travel.

Rather than the church lamenting on what they don't possess, maybe we can start to focus on what we already have, what God has blessed us with to do ministry in His name. Honestly, the congregation can't be all things to all people and that's okay. If a church is going to renew, then it needs to focus on the assets and gifts that are already present to share Jesus and make disciples.

What are the assets/gifts which the Spirit has provided your congregation (i.e. aging, children, building, monetary, etc.)? How can they be used?

One of the greatest assets that God provides missions are the people. If members of the Body can be equipped and empowered to do ministry in Jesus' name, just imagine how a church can be changed and transformed. A congregation cannot be centered on the charisma or personality of the pastor alone. It will only grow so far. But when all of God's people, in the midst of their vocations (careers, relationships, associations, etc.) can be equipped and empowered to use their gifts to live out their faith in everyday life, then the church will truly grow in spirit and discipleship.

In **Ephesians 4:11-12** we're told that it's the responsibility of church leadership to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the Body of Christ.

Please read and discuss the following Scriptures about equipping and empowering:

John 15:1-5

Ephesians 2:8-10

Hebrews 13: 20-21

I Peter 2:9-10

As a congregation grows deeper in the Word, prayer, witness and service, their confidence will increase to reach out and disciple others. Yes, we are sinful, broken and consumed by the flesh. But the Holy Spirit can still use each one of us to make Jesus known. Isn't that why we've been placed on this earth?

Session 6: It Takes Time

Renewing a church takes time. It's not just quickly flicking a switch, assuming something will happen. We must begin by building the foundation, and other things will be added to ensure spiritual, generational change within the congregation. It's like putting together a puzzle. In a puzzle each small piece has significance because when connected, they allow the picture to be formed.

In the renewal process, each element is like a puzzle piece. Focusing on the Word, prayer, witness, serving and equipping will help form the picture of a discipling church. Obviously, this will not be a quick task. But we need to start somewhere.

When we embark on church renewal and turn around, it will feel like we are taking one step forward and three steps backward. Don't give up! Please do not lose heart or become discouraged. When this endeavor is focused upon Jesus things will start moving. Clearly, we have a God who wants to make all things new. In **Acts 5:33-39**, we're told about a man named Gamaliel. He was a Pharisee who convinced the group not to kill Peter and John who were witnessing Jesus at the temple. These were his words in verses 38-39, "So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God" (ESV). When we move forward to renew the Church in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, this is of God!

Please read and discuss the following passages:

Ezekiel 37:1-10

Matthew 6:33

II Corinthians 5:17

Ephesians 4:22-24

Colossians 3:9-10

Conclusion

Looking back over your notes and discussions from this series, as you embark on this journey of renewal, what are the first steps that you will take – individually and as a congregation?

What roadblocks do you perceive, and who can hold you accountable to take the first steps?

What plans are in place for the longer journey? Or who can you connect with (for example the church council or leadership team) to learn more and partner with?

For additional resources on this topic, please visit: thenalc.org/missionresources or connect with the author of this study, the Rev. Brad Hales (bhales@thenalc.org).



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*Rev. Rul. 63-156, 1963-2 C.B. 79, **IRC Section 107, 403b9 Denominational Church Plans, ***www.irs.gov.

Psalm 139:13-14

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

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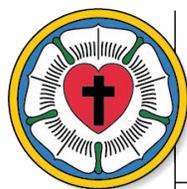
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DiscipleLife

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And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

-Acts 2:42

The Anglican Church in North America and the North American Lutheran Church would both describe themselves as “Great Commission” churches—committed to the Lord’s charge to “Go, make disciples...baptize...teach...” (Matthew 28:19-20). Other Christian bodies in North America share the same focus, but lack the commitment to the key role of Word and Sacrament in forming Christians who will be disciples and followers of Jesus, intentionally, authentically and with accountability. Essential to such forming of disciples is community, and developing congregational cultures which foster and support disciple-making. As simple as it sounds, disciple-making and creating congregations with disciple-making cultures are not familiar or comfortable to most Lutherans and Anglicans in the 21st Century!

Join us for this opportunity for biblically-grounded Anglicans and Lutherans to meet together, get to know one another and network for greater mission and ministry in local contexts; and to acknowledge and embrace “small steps” toward disciple-making at the local level—fostering an “awakening toward action,” regardless of the size of the congregation, or the experience of clergy and laity; and to return home encouraged and empowered to get involved, to get motivated and to get moving with regard to being disciples and making disciples!



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