



# News

of the Iowa Mission District  
of the North American Lutheran Church  
<http://www.lutheransonline.com/iowamissiondistrict>

September 2014

## *This and That from around The Iowa Mission District*



### **Upcoming Convocation For Iowa Mission District**

The Iowa Mission District will be gathering in convocation on October 11, 2014, at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Grafton. Among items of business will be the election of a new Dean. Our dedicated and beloved Pastor Ken Kimball has faithfully guided us through these first years of our Mission District and has announced that it is time to let another take on the role of Dean. If you have not yet made plans to attend the convocation, please mark your calendar. Lay delegates and pastors need to be present to help elect our new Dean, and visitors are also welcome—and encouraged—to attend this important gathering.



### **Please Take Note**

Pastor Christopher Staley, our Iowa Mission District treasurer, has asked me to remind everyone that our fiscal year ends on September 30, 2014. Please send any donations you wish to make to the Mission District to Pastor Christopher Staley, PO Box 32, Ellsworth, IA 50075-0032. Remember, there can be a “lag-time” of several days, so send it early if you wish to have it recorded for this fiscal year.



Members of Peace Lutheran Church, Northwood, hosted a 25th anniversary of ordination open house for Pastor Barbara Wills on August 17. Pastors and friends from around the Mission District and State of Iowa joined in the celebration.



## Thoughts on Mission-A Look Back at the Regional Mission Conference

*Pastor Christopher Martin*

*Emmons Lutheran Church, Emmons, Minnesota*

On August 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Pastors and laypeople from several congregations in Iowa, Minnesota, and Illinois gathered at First Lutheran Church in Manchester, Iowa for a conference having to do with one of our four core values in our North American Lutheran Church: that we are a Mission Driven church. To help us understand the church's call to mission, we were blessed to have The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, Assistant to the Bishop for Missions in the NALC, as our presenter. Unfortunately, weather delays prevented him from joining us in Iowa until Saturday morning. In his absence on Friday evening, Rev. Ken Kimball, Dean of our Mission District, led us in watching a video of Dr. Buba's teaching from a sermon he preached earlier this year at Hosanna Lutheran Church in Lakeview, Minnesota, with participants breaking up into groups to discuss some important questions, among them being: what are things that we need to confess, both individually, and as a congregation, that prevent us from focusing on Jesus Christ? How can we focus on listening to God's voice? For those who were not present at the Missions conference and wanted to watch, you can access this and other teaching from Dr. Buba at his website, [www.gemechisbuba.wordpress.com](http://www.gemechisbuba.wordpress.com).

Dr. Buba joined us in person on Saturday morning. The morning's session dealt with taking an honest assessment of our congregation's present strengths and weaknesses, looking at the context in which we are called to serve our Lord, and then asking what is God calling us to do? What kind of a vision is He giving us as we pursue Scripture and look at the place where we are currently doing ministry? What kind of a cost is there going to be to fulfill it and is it one we are willing to pay? Do we have commitment from individuals and the entire congregation to do this?

In the afternoon, our focus was turned to the Parable of the Wedding Banquet in Matthew 22:1-14. In this parable, Dr. Buba showed us how the idea of what he called "Mission Hospitality" works. In the parable, the King wants to throw a wedding banquet for his son, so he makes all the preparations for the banquet and then invites his guests, but the guests do not come. Next, he sends servants to bring the guests to the banquet hall, and again, extends the invitation to the guests, getting creative in describing what will take place and what the banquet will be like, but again, it ends in rejection. Finally, the king goes outside of his original target, and extends the invitation to the banquet to all. Anyone who will come is welcome to the table, and the banquet hall is filled. Using this line of thought, Dr. Buba shared that when it comes to Mission, the Church is to do three things: 1) Always be in the inviting business, 2) Be prepared to explain your invitation, what will they see and hear about Jesus and the forgiveness, life, and salvation He has to offer through His Word, and 3) Keep expanding your reach, look for more opportunities to invite others to the banquet feast of heaven through your ministry of Word and Sacrament. Thus, when it comes to Mission Hospitality in the local congregation, the church is constantly in a cycle of inviting, hosting, and sending.

As a wonderful reminder to us of Mission both at home and overseas, we were blessed to have with us James Puotyual, an African Immigrant Minister who is leading the Nile Sudanese Lutheran Mission in St. Cloud, Minnesota, as well as a familiar friend to many of us in our Mission District, Pastor Herb Haefferman, who spoke to us about the ongoing needs of the Lutheran Junior Seminary in Tanzania and his plans to return there in November. Members of two of the mission congregations of our Iowa Mission District also joined us, Faith Lutheran Church in Monona, and Mission in Christ Lutheran Church in Strawberry Point. We as a conference had the opportunity to lift them up in prayer in their ongoing call process for a new pastor to serve their congregations.

Anytime Dr. Buba has been able to join us for any length of time in our Iowa Mission District, we are reminded of how much of a gift he is to our North American Lutheran Church, and to Christianity throughout the world. We wish to thank him for traveling to Iowa to share these and many more insights from the Word of God with us to take back to our congregations.

On a personal note, as I reflect on my time at the Missions Conference, from a Pastor's perspective, I believe that Dr. Buba left a lot of good things for the congregations of our Iowa Mission District to consider. In having the chance to visit with many people from many different congregations of our Mission District whom I had not met before this conference, I came to understand that each one of our congregations is asked to do ministry in a unique context. Our traditions, our history, and our outreach may end up taking on different forms. But we do have one thing in common: a common focus and commitment to being disciples of Jesus Christ. We share a common desire to see more people in our communities and the world join us at the great banquet table in our Lord's kingdom. It is my prayer that for all of us in our Iowa Mission District that we are able to glean the wisdom shared with us from this conference as we live out the core values of being a Christ Centered, Mission Driven people in our ministries.



## The Lutheran Confessions

The eighth—and final—document in the Book of Concord is the “Formula of Concord”. It bears this lengthy sub-title: “***A Thorough, Pure, Correct, and Final Restatement and Explanation of a Number of Articles of the Augsburg Confession on Which for Some Time There Has Been Disagreement among Some of the Theologians Adhering to this Confession, Resolved and Reconciled under the Guidance of the Word of God and the Comprehensive Summary of our Christian Teaching***”.

As you might have guessed from the length of this sub-title and the careful wording, it wasn't an easy task for the reformers to come to agreement on all points of doctrine in dispute during the early years of the Reformation. It took fifty years after the first reading of the Augsburg Confession, numerous conferences, and the input of over 8,000 theologians, ministers and teachers in the participating territories before all items in dispute had been resolved. On June 25, 1580, the final version of the Book of Concord was at last complete and available for purchase.

As we consider the history of the Book of Concord, and the difficulty people had in coming to this concord (agreement) on the understanding of all the items covered in the Augsburg Confession, we might wonder why it had to be so complicated. Even in our own time we sometimes get caught up in words and ideas and understandings that drag on and seem to interfere with what we're to be about in proclaiming our faith in Christ Jesus and making disciples. However, words are important. As we consider the history of our Lutheran traditions, and the present in which we are again trying to find appropriate ways to articulate our faith, I would suggest we consider some reasons why it is important enough to spend some time figuring out what to say about our beliefs and which words to use.

1. The same words don't always have the same meaning for all people. When we say the word God, we mean the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe that Jesus was both fully divine and fully human, and that He died on the cross for our sins and rose

in the resurrection to save us. We mean all this and more when we hear or say the word, “God”. But for some people the word God means something entirely different. If we are not careful about how we speak of God, we cannot be sure those hearing us will really understand Who it is we are proclaiming when we speak of our Lord.

2. Just as we must be careful in the way we define our understanding of God, we must be specific about the Bible. For some folks, the Bible is a book of ancient literature and nothing more. For us, it is God's authoritative word, and as alive today as the events described in it were when they happened. Our Lord continues to speak to us through the words of Holy Scripture, and we must be specific in the way we explain our understanding of this Holy Book.
3. It's also important to take the time to learn and understand the things of faith before making decisions. Have we spent time in prayer? Do we know the teachings of the Bible? Are we recognizing the difference between God's word to us and the world's political agendas? We are part of our society and it's hard sometimes to tell the difference between God's word and the world's values. An interesting sign a few miles from where I live proclaims in bold letters, “The wages of sin is death.” Anyone not knowing the source of that half-sentence will get a very negative and hopeless understanding. The rest of the sentence from Paul's letter to the Romans in chapter 6, verse 23 tells us: “...but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

As Lutheran Christians we are blessed to be part of a Christian tradition that takes seriously the things of God, with forerunners who patiently spent time in prayer and study to discern God's word to His people—for their own time in history and for those of us who have come after them.

*(Information and excerpts from The Book of Concord, as translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert.)*

### Upcoming Events

October 11, 2014—Iowa Mission District Convocation at Emmanuel Lutheran, Grafton (northeast of Mason City).  
August 13-14, 2015—NALC Convocation in Dallas,

## Congregations of the Iowa Mission District

Ackley: **Our Saviour's**, Pr. Kris Snyder  
+Atlantic: Holy Trinity—Pr. Paul Breddin, Interim  
Avoca: **Trinity**, Pr. Eric Meissner  
Badger: **Badger Lutheran**, Pr. Darryl Landsverk  
Bode: **St. Olaf Lutheran**, Pr. Steve Bliss  
Boyden: **St. John**, Pr. Dan Hart  
Clarksville: **New Life**, Call process  
Dorchester: **Waterloo Ridge**, Pr. Allen Hermeier  
Eagle Grove: **Evangelical Lutheran**, Pr. Jason Cooper  
Eagle Grove: **Samuel Lutheran**, Pr. Rich Taylor  
Ellsworth: **Trinity**, Pr. Christopher Staley  
Emmons, MN: **Emmons**, Pr. Christopher Martin  
Gilmore City: **First**, Dan Buhs, Pastoral Associate  
Grafton: **Emmanuel**, Pr. Solveig Zamzow  
Gunder: **Marion**, Pr. Marshall Hahn  
+Huxley: **Shepherd of the Prairie**, Scott Licht, Pr. Assoc.  
Laurens: **Bethany**, Pr. Jerry Wittmus  
Manchester: **First**, Pr. Tony Ede  
+Monona, **Faith**: Call process  
+Northwood: **Peace**, Pr. Barbara Wills  
Palmer: **St. John's**,  
Plainfield: **St. John**, Pr. Kim Thacker  
Readlyn: **St. Matthew**, Pr. Mark Lund  
Readlyn: **Zion**, Pr. Mark Lund  
Ruthven: **Zion**, Pr. Thomas Summerfield  
St. Ansgar: **First**, Pr. Paul Weeg  
St. Olaf: **Norway**, Pr. Marshall Hahn  
Sheldon: **St. Paul**, Pr. Craig Nissen  
+Sibley: **Faith**, Pr. Tim Nappe  
Spencer: **Trinity**  
+Strawberry Pt.: **Mission in Christ**, Call process  
Thor: **Ullensvang**, Pr. Darryl Landsverk  
Waterville. **Old East Paint Creek**, Pr. Ken Kimball  
Waukon: **Old West Paint Creek**, Pr. Ken Kimball

+ indicates mission congregation

## Mission District News

The Mission District newsletter is an important way for the congregations of the Iowa Mission District to stay connected.

We hope you will make use of this publication to share news from your congregation. **Please e-mail pictures and information** you would like to share to Pastor Barbara Wills at [barbarawills@mchsi.com](mailto:barbarawills@mchsi.com).

The newsletter may be printed by each congregation and distributed to members, copied directly into your congregational newsletter, and/or forwarded to those who have e-mail addresses. We hope the newsletter will be helpful in providing mutual support and exchange of information among the congregations in our mission district.

## Mission District Support

Checks sent to the Mission District for support should be made out to the **Iowa Mission District, NALC**, and mailed to Pastor Christopher Staley, PO Box 32, Ellsworth, IA 50075-0032. Correspondence for Pastor Marshall Hahn, Mission District Secretary, should be sent to **PO Box 56**, St. Olaf, IA 52072-0057.

## Congregations Relating to the Iowa Mission District

+Rochester, MN: **Emmanuel**, Pr. David Steffenson



## Iowa Mission District Leadership

Pastor Ken Kimball, Dean—[pastrken@acegroup.cc](mailto:pastrken@acegroup.cc)  
Pastor Marshall Hahn, Secretary—[stolafparish@netel.net](mailto:stolafparish@netel.net)  
Pastor Christopher Staley, Treasurer—[cbstaley@netins.net](mailto:cbstaley@netins.net)

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*The Iowa Mission District  
now has 34 congregations!*

