



News

of the Iowa Mission District
of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

June 2019

A Word from the Dean

TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?

*“From that time on, many of His disciples
withdrew and no longer went about with Him.
So Jesus asked the Twelve, ‘Do you also want to leave me?’”
- John 6:66-67*

We are often presented with a picture of Jesus as a kind, friendly person, who is so soft and gentle that He would not harm a flea. But the Gospels portray Jesus as one who provoked intense reactions from those He encountered. People either left everything to follow Him or they tried their best to get rid of Him. There was no middle ground. When the sick and troubled were brought to Him, He not only healed them but He also pronounced to them the forgiveness of their sins. When He fed those who were hungry, He also proclaimed Himself to be the “bread of life from heaven.” When He taught the people, not only did He call upon them to follow the law of Moses, He presented to them a new law – greater than Moses – the law of love.

In all that He said and did, He lay before the people a stark choice – either you accept His Word as true, and fall before Him as Lord and God – or you reject His Word and revile Him as a blasphemer and a liar.

And then He did what was totally unexpected. When He was rejected and reviled by the people, when even His own followers became frightened and ran away, He simply endured the abuse and scorn heaped upon Him and pronounced forgiveness upon us all. Not only did He pronounce forgiveness for our sins, but He took all of our sins upon Himself on the cross. Not only *said* forgiveness, but *did* forgiveness.

It was so unexpected that even now it is difficult to explain and comprehend what He has done. Even now He is rejected by the world which cannot understand such sacrifice and love – a world which continues to preach a different gospel, a gospel of success and pleasure and self-promotion. Even now, we are tempted to turn aside from following Him. But – to what? All of these other paths lead to a dead end, and empty path. In the end, what can we do but proclaim with Peter:

*“Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.”*

Pastor Marshall Hahn, Dean, Iowa Mission District, NALC

Important Reminder!

All checks sent to the Mission District are to be made out to the *Iowa Mission District, NALC*, and sent to **Pastor Gary Burkhalter at 312 E Mission St, Strawberry Point, IA 52076.**



Sola Gratia—That thing called Grace

Pr. James Glesne
Decorah, Iowa

I don't recall the first time it happened, but since that time I have been very aware of certain circumstances and occurrences that have profoundly affected me. As a young child I recall, knowing that I had done something wrong, coming before my parents fully expecting to be disciplined, chastised and to experience their anger. How surprised I was when even though there was disappointment in their voices, we talked about what had happened and they granted to me, with love in their eyes, arms wrapped around a small boy's body, the words and gestures of love and acceptance. I didn't know it then, but that was "grace". I believe I am talking about a common experience that many of us have had. It is when we know that we have done something terribly wrong and the person or persons whom we have wronged grant to us that tremendous gift that we call forgiveness and acceptance. As Christians, we have a term for that and is called "Grace."

Grace is what Jesus spoke on the cross when he said, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." It is Grace that confronted Peter who must've felt very guilty for his denial of Jesus, and yet Jesus who granted Peter acceptance and forgiveness. Or take Paul, or Saul, the persecutor of the followers of Jesus, who experienced an encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, and learned the meaning of Grace in his life.

It is "*Grace that taught my heart to fear and Grace my fears relieved.*" Of course that phrase was written long ago by a person who had wronged many people, and who came to realize the love, forgiveness and acceptance in Jesus Christ. That man of course was John Newton who wrote the words that we know so well, in the song "Amazing Grace."

Grace is what changes people's lives. It is a

free gift from our loving God, won for us through the sacrificial gift of His son upon the cross. If you think about it, Jesus Christ came to this earth for one reason and that was to give His life as a ransom for you and for me. The sacrificial gift is a second chance for us. It is in believing that we can accept what Christ is done for us. We are called to accept the blessings and love of our God. It is an expensive gift, it cost the life of our Savior,

We oftentimes use this term in such a variety of ways that I wonder if it sometimes loses a little bit of its "punch." Yes, grace is free and it is given to us through God's love. That indeed is a profound blessing, but the meaning of Grace for us, as followers of Jesus Christ, goes much deeper.

I am reminded of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's quotation, though: "*Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Christ.*"

Yes, we have experienced, and do experience grace upon grace. Each and every time we come to our Lord in prayer, confessing our sins, asking for forgiveness, God extends to us the hand of love, acceptance and forgiveness. When we recall the fact that we are marked with the cross of Christ forever through our baptism, that is Grace. As we receive the tremendous gift of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in, with, and under the forms of the bread and wine, we experience Grace. May our God be praised for the gift of His Son Jesus the Christ and for what Christ has obtained for us. Thank you God for Your Grace.

This and That from around the Iowa Mission District



Candid Shots of the Pastors at their annual Iowa Mission District Retreat: This year the retreat was at the EWALU Stone Center in rural Strawberry Point. It's a time for worship, learning, fellowship and renewal.

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Several Pastors and other friends of Peace Lutheran Church in Northwood were present May 12th to help members celebrated the dedication of their newly purchased historic building. Sold to PLC y Northwood Baptist Church, the building has been in continuous use for over 100 years. It is the oldest church building in Northwood. Built by Presbyterians, it has been home to assorted Lutherans and Baptists, and will continue to be shared by Peace Lutheran and Northwood Baptist Church. Thank you, Pastor Hahn (Iowa Mission District Dean), Pastor Stephen Wolfe (Pastor of the Northwood Baptist Church), and all who celebrated this special day with us!



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Announcements

2019 Upcoming Events

June 2 – 3:30 p.m. Installation of Pastor David Klappenbach at Bethany Lutheran Church, Laurens, IA . All are invited. Pastors attending are invited to participate in the opening procession. Color for the day is white.

June 9 – 3:00 p.m. – Dedication of Faith Lutheran Church, 19999 Pleasant Ridge Rd., Monona. All are welcome, and pastors are invited to vest and process (the color of the day is red). Pastor Mark Chavez, NALC General Secretary, will preach.

July 22-29 – Youth Mission Trip. Contact Pastor Jason Cooper (cooper_jd@yahoo.com) or Pastor Tony D. Ede (tonyede@gmail.com) for more information. Personal cost per person—\$250.

August 5-9 – Luther Week in Indianapolis, IN. Theme: *Walking by the Spirit with the Fruit of the Spirit* (Note: **Election of NALC Bishop!**)

September 14 – Iowa Mission District Convocation, First Lutheran, Manchester, IA

April 20-21, 2020—Pastors'/Lay Ministers' Retreat, Riverside Bible Camp, Story City

Donations and Correspondence

Checks sent to the Mission District for support should be made out to the *Iowa Mission District, NALC*, and mailed to Pastor Gary Burkhalter at **312 E Mission St, Strawberry Point, IA 52076**.

Correspondence for Mr. Craig Lease, Mission District Secretary, should be sent to **405 7th St. N., Northwood, IA 50459**

Items for the Mission District newsletter (pictures, news, etc.) are best sent via e-mail to Pastor Barbara Wills at barbaramwills@gmail.com.

The Iowa Mission District website may be found at: www.iowamissiondistrict.com. If your congregation has a web site, and you would like to have the web address linked to your church name on the Mission District web site, please send the web address to me, Pastor Barbara Wills, at barbaramwills@gmail.com.





Steadfast In God's Word ***Faith—Day by Day***

In the last two articles about being steadfast in God's Word, we've touched on some of the highs and lows of our faith walk—worship and struggle. There are days when our “highs” reach to the heavens. Faith in our Lord is exciting, and we feel overwhelmed with joy and the need to express our love and praise to Him. Other days are full of struggle—we turn to our Shepherd for relief. It's harder to feel joy, but we cling to His promises and seek His comfort and guidance. But most of life is lived in the “in-between” times. Our daily routine can absorb our time and energy. We may not have anything in particular that we feel we need to bring to the Lord. Our faith discipline may slip a bit—perhaps a trip throws us off, or special events disrupt our usual habits. We may even drift away from our weekly worship and find ourselves praying less and less—or even going for long periods without thinking about the Lord or His will.

Such is life in the world. It's not unique to the modern era. In the Old Testament we find a pattern in the faith habits of God's people. Some great disaster would befall them, and they would cry out to the Lord. He would intervene in some way, and in gratitude they would give thanks and return to faithful living—for awhile. Then they would gradually drift again. It was during these times of “drifting” that people failed to discern the direction they were headed. A tiny course change in our habits may not seem significant at first, but over time, we grow farther away from the Lord. It takes intentional perseverance to guard against the gradual tedium and weariness with life that can draw us away from our prayer life—and our Lord.

In Psalm 19, David praises the Law of the Lord. In each section of the Psalm, there is praise for God's statutes and decrees, an appreciation for this gift of guidance that the Lord has given. In verses 10-12, David says of God's ordinances: *“More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. But who can discern his errors? Clear thou me from hidden faults.”* David recognized that if we fail to regularly seek God and His will, even when we don't feel a particular need to do so, we will lose the most important thing in life—

our Lord. Even though we now depend on faith in Christ rather than obedience to the Law to save us, we are fed by Holy Scripture—the “cradle that holds the Christ child.” Just as a friendship will falter over time without conversation between the two friends, so our love for Christ will dim over time if we fail to take time to dwell on His word each day.

Saint Paul also warns us about lapsing in our faith disciplines. In Ephesians 6 he admonishes the people of God: *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance...”* (verses 10-18a)

It is in our daily prayers, immersed in the Holy Scriptures, that our Lord clothes us with this armor of God. In reading and praying the Scripture texts for the day, we are fed with the words of life that have sustained the people of God through all the ages and remind us of our Lord's will for us. As we prayerfully listen to the Holy Spirit opening our hearts to hear Him, we are guided and encouraged to walk in His ways. If we are tempted to turn aside from the path of faith, even in the smallest degree, the Lord calls us back, day by day, through His Word. As we walk the path of faithfulness to Christ, may we find His teachings and love for us to be our daily joy and sustenance—a treasure more to be desired than gold!

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

Congregations of the Iowa Mission District

Ackley: **Our Saviour's**, Dan Buhs, Lay Minister
Avoca: **Trinity**, Pr. Eric Meissner
Badger: **Badger Lutheran**, Pr. Scott Meier
Boyden: **St. John**, Pr. Mark Lund
Dorchester: **Waterloo Ridge**, Call Process
Eagle Grove: **Evangelical Lutheran**, Pr. Jason Cooper
Eagle Grove: **Samuel Lutheran**, Pr. Rich Taylor
Ellsworth: **Trinity**, Pastor Jon Rollefson
Emmons, MN: **Emmons**, Pr. David Schafer, Interim
Gilmore City: **First**, Tracy Nerem, Lay Minister
Grafton: **Emmanuel**, Pr. Solveig Zamzow
Greene: **St. John (Vilmar)**, Pr. Christopher Martin
Gunder: **Marion**, Pr. Marshall Hahn
Harlan: **Bethlehem**, Pr. Ronald Rasmussen
+Huxley: **Shepherd of the Prairie**,
Scott Licht, Lay Minister
Irwin: **St. Paul**, Pr. Ronald Rasmussen
Laurens: **Bethany**, Pr. David Klappenbach
Manchester: **First**, Pr. Tony D. Ede
+Monona, **Faith**: Pr. Mel Harris
Northwood: **Peace**, Pr. Barbara Wills
Palmer: **St. John's**
Plainfield: **St. John**, Pr. Kim Thacker
Readlyn: **St. Matthew**, Pr. Jean Rabary
Readlyn: **Zion**, Pr. Jean Rabary
+Robins: **Servants of Christ**, Pr. Ron Voss
+Rochester, MN: **Emmanuel**, Pr. David Steffenson
Ruthven: **Zion**, Pr. Thomas Summerfield
St. Ansgar: **First**, Pr. Christopher Staley
St. Olaf: **Norway**, Pr. Marshall Hahn
Sheldon: **St. Paul**, Pr. Craig Nissen
+Sibley: **Faith**, Pr. Tim Nappe
Spencer: **Trinity**
Strawberry Pt.: **Mission in Christ**, Pr. Gary Burkhalter
Thor: **Ullensvang**, Pr. Darryl Landsverk
Waterville: **Old East Paint Creek**, Pr. Ken Kimball
Waukon: **Old West Paint Creek**, Pr. Ken Kimball

+ indicates mission congregation

The following pastors are available for pulpit supply:

Pastor Paul Breddin—515--528-2284
Pastor James Glesne—563-380-8110
Pastor Jack Miller—(507) 798-2408
Pastor David Steffenson—253-302-9845 (Sundays)
Pastor Paul Weeg- -641-381-0675

Iowa Mission District Leadership

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*The Iowa Mission District
has 36 congregations.*



Pastor Tim Nappe is also available for pulpit supply. His primary focus is his ministry with “Reaching the Unreached”, and he will share information about this mission work whenever he does pulpit supply for a congregation. Contact information: 712-331-4245. Or email at pastortim.milford@gmail.com