



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

January 2022

A Word from the Dean

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. (Isaiah 9:2)

I know, I know. If you are like many people, you have had your fill of Christmas by now. Stores have had Christmas items on their shelves as far back as August, and radio stations have been playing Christmas music for lo these many weeks, and the Hallmark Channel has been playing Christmas movies since, well, do they ever not show Christmas movies? But even if you’ve already hauled your tree out to the curb and have run out of ideas for how to prepare leftovers that your family will actually eat from the abundance of the Christmas feast, Christmas is not yet done—well at least not in the Church, anyway. For Christians, Christmas didn’t even begin until December 24th. There are even some churches who won’t allow a Christmas tree to be placed in the sanctuary until after the last Sunday of Advent. Now don’t let the culture fool you, Advent was not a countdown to Christmas. Nor did the Twelve Days of Christmas begin on December 14th. Instead, Christmas goes until January 6th, Epiphany Day, the day when the Church has observed the arrival of the Magi to Bethlehem to see that baby Jesus. So, in other words, I’m not confused about what day it is as I quote a passage we read on Christmas Eve.

Isaiah was writing to the people of Israel who had suffered punishment for their many sins against God, sins that had been going on for generations. God gave them over to the Assyrian king and his armies, and those who survived the attack were taken captive back to Assyria. This was a hugely dark chapter for God’s people. Some failed to understand that this new, dark reality was of their own doing, thinking instead that God had been defeated by the gods of the Assyrians. This was their understanding of their darkness. But those who rightly understood that this punishment was from God experienced the darkness of wondering if God’s anger could ever be

quenched. Into these darkneses Isaiah describes God’s revelation, echoing the blessing that God gave for Aaron to speak to His people: *“The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”*

These very words are those that we are given to us to hear at the end of our worship service—the Benediction—which means quite literally, “good speak”, or one might say, “Good News”, spoken. Which brings me back to Christmas.

Although we live in a time far different from the people to whom Isaiah spoke, we also often live in darkness. Perhaps, like Israel, we don’t understand why things are the way they are. But not to worry, this is no glaring error on our part. It is simply a truism (think *“My ways are not your ways, says the Lord”*). Or perhaps, like Israel, we wonder if God’s anger can ever be quenched. It is for this purpose, that we might know the answer to that wonder, that God sent His Son, into the world, that we who walk in darkness can see the great Light. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”* (John 1:1–5).

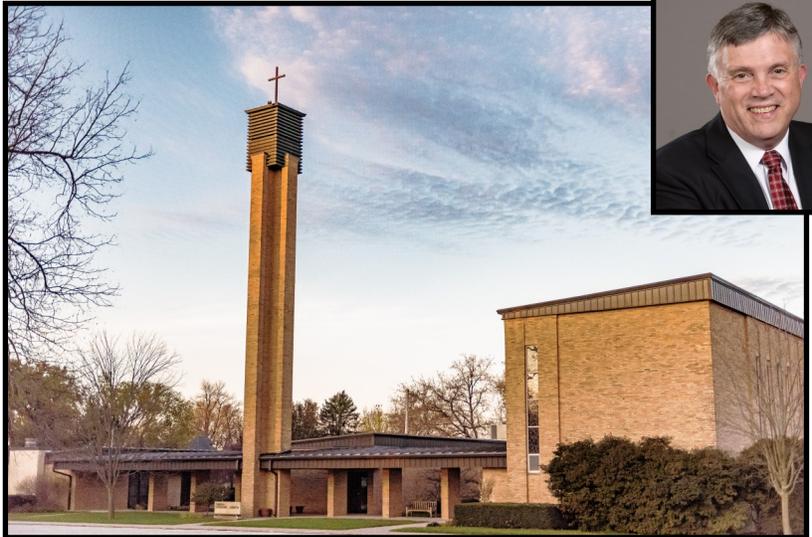
It is in the truth of this, that God’s Light has shown, that we can live assured that God’s face shines upon us, and that we live in the peace that came to us, heralded by the angels, *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”* (Luke 2:14 KJV).

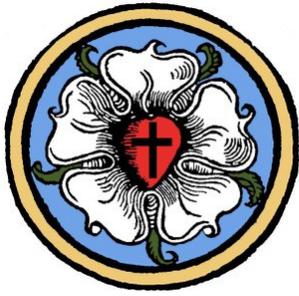
*Pastor Christopher Staley, Dean,
Iowa Mission District, NALC*

This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District



Left: Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Grafton, Iowa, is currently in the call process. Pastor Paul Weeg has been providing most of their pastoral coverage during this time of transition. Below: Trinity Lutheran Church, Ellsworth, Iowa, is served by Pastor Jon Rollefson. Lower left: Pastor Barbara Wills is the pastor of Peace Lutheran Church, Northwood, Iowa. Bottom right: St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church—Vilmar, in rural Greene, Iowa, is also currently in the call process.





Hope

Pr. Ken Kimball

*Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church, Waterville, Iowa
Old West Paint Creek Lutheran Church, Waukon, Iowa*

In our usual ordinary speech, “hope” is more of a wistful wish, e.g. “I hope the Vikings will win a Super Bowl someday” or “I hope those dark clouds don’t mean it’s going to rain on our picnic” or “I hope this is the winning lottery ticket.” That wistful wishing shows up even in religious language: “I hope I’ll go to heaven....I hope I’m good enough for God....I hope God will give me a nice life and the things I want.”

By contrast, Biblical hope is not wistful wishes for good luck. It is a strong expectation based on God’s Word and trustworthiness, on what God has done and promises to do in Christ Jesus. It is not a feeling or psychological or emotional state that we work up inside ourselves. Like faith, hope is a gift, something we discover we have been given from, and through, our Lord Jesus. We have been brought into contact with a reality far beyond what our frail and sinful hearts and minds could have conceived. The veil of lies and fears drawn over us by sin, death, and the devil have been pierced by the truth of the Word of God—that God Himself has come into His fallen creation. The only-begotten Son of the Father has been sent by the Father and has taken human nature into Himself, becoming 100% human being while remaining 100% God.

And He has done this so that He could suffer and die upon the cross; the sinless One took our sins upon and into Himself, enduring His own condemnation of sin and evil, and even enduring Hell, for our sake. He, Who through Whom all things were made and Who is Life itself, laid down His

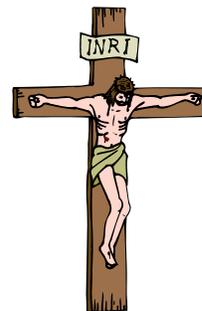
life, and took it up again. And by the power of the Holy Spirit, working through the Word and Sacraments which the Lord Jesus gave His Church, He has taken hold of us in His nail-pierced hands. And when Jesus takes hold, nothing in all creation can make Him let go. That’s what our hope is. Not wistful wishes for good luck, but knowing we are in the hands of Him Who loves us first and last, best and always.

Consider these great words of Paul from Romans 5:1-5:

“Therefore since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.”

“And God shows His love by this: that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

We have hope because Christ has taken hold of us and keeps hold of us even in our sufferings and the tumult of our lives in this world.



NALC DISASTER RESPONSE

First, I want to thank you again for the excellent “Stuff The Truck” event held at the Iowa Mission District Convocation in September. Your generous contributions directly aid those affected by disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding and wildfires.

As you look back at 2021, you will recall the United States had, and continues to have, these natural disasters. Mary Bates, our NALC Disaster Response Coordinator, was very busy in 2021 and continues to respond to these disasters into 2022.

The NALC currently has nine warehouses where relief items are stored. The goal is to have a warehouse no more than four hours away from every NALC congregation. At this time we would like to have at least six more set up. The items we collected in September are being stored in the warehouse in Chatfield Minnesota. Deb and Larry Vomhof manage the warehouse in Chatfield. The week after Christmas, Larry took a large number of the items stored in the warehouse to Mary Bates for distribution to the areas hit by the tornado in Mayfield KY. All of the blankets/quilts, health kits and school kits were taken (no flood buckets were needed).

We now need to restock the warehouse! We need to restock the warehouse with blankets/quilts, health kits and school bags as soon as possible.

If you have blankets/quilts, health kits and school kits ready to go to the warehouse, give me a call and we will make arrangements to get your donations to the warehouse. If you have other items ready to go at this time, we can certainly take those as well. Refer to the NALC website for a listing of items.

Monetary donations are always welcome. Those can be sent directly to North American Lutheran Church, PO Box 860565, Minneapolis MN 55486-0565. In the memo line write ‘Disaster Response Fund’

Let me know what questions you have.

Betty Burkhalter
Iowa Mission District Disaster Response Coordinator

815-323-9999
bettyburkhalter@hotmail.com

Editor’s Note:
*You can find the
disaster relief kits
information is on the
next page.*





Disaster Response

KIT PACKING LIST

UPDATED FEBRUARY 2021

Bibles

- new or used (highlighted & underlined text is acceptable)
- children's, teens
- Spanish
- large print
- prayer books

We encourage you to write messages of hope in the front pages of donated Bibles

Flood Bucket

- 1 five-gallon bucket with lid
- 1 jug bleach
- 2 large trash bags
- 1 roll paper towels
- Comet or scouring cleanser
- Pine Sol or liquid cleaner
- scrub brush
- gloves, 1 pair each, size L preferred
 - rubber (reusable, i.e. Platex, dishwashing type)
 - leather
 - cotton

Health Care Kit

(Pack in 2-gallon Ziplock bag or tote bag)

- 1 bath towel
- 1 wash cloth
- 1 shampoo (regular size or 2 travel size)
- 1 bar of soap (regular size or 2 travel size)
- 1 toothbrush
- 1 pack of floss
- 1 toothpaste (2 if travel size)
- 1 comb
- 1 deodorant
- 1 nail clippers

Quilts and Blankets

- any size
- any fabric including religious, patriotic/military theme, seasonal

School Kit – Elementary

- 1 backpack or duffel bag
- 4 notebooks
- 4 pocket folders
- 1 blunt scissors
- 1 ruler
- 1 pencil sharpener
- 4 pencils
- 2 pens
- 1 eraser
- 1 box of crayons

School Kit – High School

- 1 backpack or duffel bag
- 4 notebooks
- 4 pocket folders
- 4 pencils, 1 pencil sharpener & 1 eraser -or-
- 4 mechanical pencils
- 4 pens
- 1 high school calculator

Miscellaneous (pack like items together)

- masks (bundle/pack each type separately)
 - painting
 - sanding
 - N95
- baby diapers (disposable, assorted sizes)
- high school calculators
- any school supply can be donated in bulk quantities.
- mops, brooms & dustpans
- rakes, shovels, etc.

Gift Cards

- Home Depot
- Lowes
- Walmart



HOW TO PACK YOUR DISASTER KITS:

- Pack completed kits, in sturdy boxes (not overly large).
- Label contents and quantity in LARGE, BLOCK LETTERS and place labels on at least one end and one side of the box so the contents will be visible regardless of how box is stacked.
- Include the name and address of your group or congregation on each box with a label that says: *A GIFT FROM [church/group name and address]*

FINANCIAL DONATIONS

Your monetary donations are always appreciated. Please note that, effective 12/14/2020, the address to which all monetary donations should be sent has changed to:

North American Lutheran Church
PO BOX 860565
Minneapolis, MN 55486-0565

For more information, please email Mary Bates, disasterresponse@thenalc.org or visit thenalc.org/nalc-disaster-response/

“Serve one another humbly in love”

GALATIANS 5:13b



Here I Stand ***Confession and Conviction: Head or Heart?***

One of the impressions I have when considering the diversity of Christian traditions, is that Lutherans have customarily been viewed as emotionless dogmatians who take a cold, analytical approach to the Christian faith. As a “convert” who grew up in the Southern Baptist tradition—leavened with the “ecumenical” environment of “general Protestant” worship in military chapels—I find this Lutheran reputation something of a mystery. I first encountered Luther, ironically, when I wrote a paper about him in my senior year of high school. The two things that attracted me to Luther were his angst during his early years regarding his salvation (something I experienced as a Baptist), and his discernment and explanation of God’s love for us in Christ. Like Luther, I had heard more about sin and my unworthiness than I had about God’s love and forgiveness, and I felt very alone in my anxieties. Luther was a kindred spirit who had experienced the terror, but had discovered the love of Christ and His will to enfold us in that love.

Luther was not an emotionless intellectual, but a man of both towering intellect and a deep, passionate love for his Lord. Just when and where the “great divide” between a correct theological understanding of our faith in Christ, and a heartfelt love and trust in Him, occurred I will leave up to Christian historians to sort out. But what seems clear is that we can’t have one without the other. Just as we can’t separate faith and works, we can’t live an authentic Christian life if we separate our heads and hearts. The Pharisees who came under attack from Jesus were not criticized for their theology. Jesus told His followers to “*do what they say, but not what they do....*” (Matthew 23:1-3) The Old Testament prophets called for people to “*rend their hearts*” (Joel 2:13) and said that the Lord would remove their hearts of stone and give them “*hearts of flesh*” (Ezekiel 6:36). Jesus also criticized those who put their own traditions and understandings of the Law ahead of their compassion and care for others (Matthew 15:1-9; Luke 6:6-11, 14:1-6, et al).

In the coming months my hope is to delve into this “great divide”, using Luther’s teachings to illuminate the path before us, giving us a way to bridge the gap between our theological discernment and our “heart knowledge” of the Lord. My hope is to investigate ways in which Lutheran theology undergirds our daily walk of faith without becoming rigid and unfeeling. One of the dangers in our journey is that we too often turn each new discovery into a “rule” and our focus can shift away from Christ and onto our newest breakthrough. The following passage from the Gospel of John reminds us of what—Who—is at the heart of our faith. These are words that our Lord Jesus said to the disciples before His passion to give them hope and courage in the stressful days that lay ahead.

“Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him.” (John 14:1-7)

Our hope rests in Christ alone. To be faithful followers, we need to know the truth about who He is (good theology) so that our hearts are set on *Him*, not on our own desires or wishful thinking about who we want Him to be. Only then can we faithfully love Him and rightly follow where He leads.

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

Announcements

Upcoming Events

January 19-22—March for Life trip to Washington DC.

April 23, 2022—9:00 a.m.—Iowa Mission District Council meeting—Cabin Coffee, Mason City, IA

June 6-7, 2022—Pastors/Lay Minister's Retreat, Fort Dodge.

July 25—August 1, 2022—Youth Mission Trip to southern Louisiana for hurricane relief. Youth who have finished one year of confirmation through grade 12 are eligible to go. Cost is \$300 per youth with non-refundable deposit to reserve a seat on the bus due by April 1. Every congregation sending youth must send an adult—one adult per five youth. For more information, contact trip organizer, Pastor Tony D. Ede, at 319-290-2401 or tonyede@gmail.com.

August 27, 2022—Iowa Mission District Convocation.

Please Pray for:

Pastor James Puotyuual who is awaiting a kidney transplant.

Pastor David Schafer recovering from hip surgery.

Pastor James Glesne who is undergoing treatments for Multiple Myeloma.

Amy Cooper and her family as she continues to deal with cancer.

Pastor David Steffenson who is undergoing treatments for pancreatic cancer.

When sending **correspondence** to the NALC please use the following address:

NALC Office
2655 Innsbruck Drive, Suite A
New Brighton, MN 55112-9304

Please send **donations** to this address:

North American Lutheran Church
PO Box 860565
Minneapolis, MN 55486-0565

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.

Congregations of the Iowa Mission District



Ackley: **Our Saviour's**, Dan Buhs, Lay Minister
Avoca: **Trinity**, Call Process
Badger: **Badger Lutheran**, Pr. Scott Meier
Boyden: **St. John**, Pr. Mark Jamison
Des Moines: **Unity Evangelical Lutheran**,
Pr. Donna Joseph; Pr. Diane Joseph
Dorchester: **Waterloo Ridge**,
Pr. Bill Odermann; Pr. Diane Odermann
Eagle Grove: **Evangelical Lutheran**, Pr. Jason Cooper
Eagle Grove: **Samuel Lutheran**, Call Process
Ellsworth: **Trinity**, Pastor Jon Rollefson
Emmons, MN: **Emmons**, Pastor Ryan Henkel
Gilmore City: **First**, Tracy Nerem, Lay Minister
Grafton: **Emmanuel**, Call Process
Greene: **St. John (Vilmar)**, Call Process
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 Lizard Township**,
Marlene Nimke, Lay Minister
Plainfield: **St. John**, Pr. Kim Thacker
Readlyn: **St. Matthew**, Pr. Jean Rabary
Readlyn: **Zion**, Pr. Jean Rabary
Robins: **Servants of Christ**, Call Process
+Rochester, MN: **Emmanuel**, Pr. David Steffenson
Ruthven: **Zion**, Eric Patten, Lay Minister
St. Ansgar: **First**, Pr. Christopher Staley
+St. Charles, MN: **Trinity**, Pr. Douglas Hedman
St. Olaf: **Norway**, Pr. Marshall Hahn
Sheldon: **St. Paul**, Pr. Dan Baker
Spencer: **Trinity**, Call Process
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

Iowa Mission District Leadership

Pastor Christopher Staley Dean—
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Craig Lease, Secretary—
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Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer—
pqburkhalter52@hotmail.com

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gaf@butler-bremer.com

Mission District Communicator

(newsletter editor/web master):
Pastor Barbara Wills—
barbaramwills@gmail.com

*The Iowa Mission District
has 37 congregations.*

Pastors available for pulpit supply:

Pastor James Glesne—563-380-8110
Pastor Jack Miller—507-798-2408
Pastor Paul Weeg- -641-381-0675
Pastor Mike Wikstrom—480-203-1556 (LCMC)
Pastor Solveig Zamzow—641-903-9416

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

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.

