



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

September 2025



A Word from the Dean

“School days, school days, dear old Golden Rule days”

It's that time of year again. When I was a kid, I used to think that summer vacation went way too fast. But now that I am in my 7th decade, I'm pretty sure that it goes even faster now. As I sit at my desk to write this in the latter parts of August, football, cross-country, and volleyball practices have begun for high-schoolers, teachers are already on the job gearing up for the new academic year, school supply lists have been available at local stores for several weeks now, and it will only be a matter of days before kids will be gathering outside awaiting the bus to take them to school.

Vacations are wrapping up, the county and state fairs have gone into the history books, and even the weather is pointing to a change in the seasons in a few short weeks to come. For those old enough to recognize the opening line of the song I quoted above, the next couple lines that follow are “Readin’ and ritin’ and ‘rithmetic, taught to the tune of a hick’ry stick.” I doubt that there is a “hick’ry stick” involved much anymore, and the focus on “readin’ and ritin’ and ‘rithmetic” seems to have shifted some as well.

But it is on the opening line of the song that my focus rests today, as most of our churches are also coming off a summer break from Sunday School. The crowd for children's sermons has been down quite a bit the past few months in many of our churches as families have taken a break from the normal routine to take in some extra outdoor activities during the weekend when the parents are off from work. But in a few weeks that will all change as Sunday School will crank back up again for many. And the subject matter that will be taught will likely be much the same it as it has for generations: God's Word as we have it in the Holy

Bible and in the Word made flesh: Jesus. It is much as St Paul described his own ministry of teaching in **1 Corinthians 15**: *"Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved . . . For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.... So we preach and so you believed."* Paul speaks of handing on to the Corinthians what he had first received. And this has been the mission of the church ever since.

This sort of teaching is one that is time-honored, even back to God's people, Israel: *"You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."* (**Deuteronomy 11:18–19**)

We see here that such teaching begins at home. And, by extension, this teaching continues in our churches, although, not only for the youngest among us, but for all of us, even if your church doesn't have a Sunday School anymore. It is God's Word that we gather to hear, as we pray: *"Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."*

*Pastor Christopher Staley
Dean, Iowa Mission District*



Running with Perseverance: “Looking to Jesus...” *A Reflection from The Pittsburgh Convocation* Pastor David Klappenbach Bethany Lutheran Church Laurens, IA

“Therefore, Since we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1-2)

This is one of my favorite passages in Scripture because of my participation in track and cross country as a schoolboy. So, it delighted me when it was adopted as a theme verse for our Iowa Mission District. Then I saw in The NALC pre-convocation lead up that this scripture would be central to our gathering in Pittsburgh. I suppose the planners of this convocation saw this Scripture as appropriate as we celebrated our fifteenth anniversary as The NALC. Also, our top Core Value as a Church body is that we are Christ-Centered, meaning, “*Looking to Jesus...*”

Christ Centered. If you think about, we could not have persevered these fifteen years without keeping our eyes or focus on Jesus. It is all about Jesus, His work, His promises, and His presence to the end of the age as we carry out our call to “*make disciples, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.*” (Matthew 28:18-20)

As the NALC we do not exist to build an organization and keep raising funds for institutional survival. But we exist as a Church for the world and our communities for which

Jesus went to the cross for our salvation. We exist to bring God’s saving hope to our communities and the world. So, keeping our eyes on Jesus leads us to be **Mission Driven**. Part of the time we spent was talking about what ministries we may be involved in to bring the presence and hope to our unique communities, which is why we are **Congregationally Focused**.

As a runner myself, I had to train myself to keep my head up focusing straight ahead or else I would begin to veer off course instead of keeping a straight path. When we take our eyes off Jesus, the same thing can happen. We lose the main thing and wander into all kinds of ideas which do not align with the mission of the church. That is why we gather each week in worship—to return our focus back to Jesus. We have confession, God’s Word, the Creeds, Prayer, and The Sacrament of the Altar drawing our attention back to Jesus. These equip us, encourage us, and strengthen us for the journey ahead. This points to us the reason why we are **Traditionally grounded**.

In closing, this thought came from my sermon this morning. Jesus said, “*Behold some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.*” (Luke 13:30) As a schoolboy I trained to place as high as I could. But with Jesus’ Word the victory does not go to the fastest, the most impressive, or the shiniest programs. The victory comes by God’s grace through faith in looking to Christ who has done it all for us. May our prayer be that we finish last looking to Jesus and trusting Him. In Jesus Name.

This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District

NALC Iowa Mission District Youth Mission Trip

Pastor Matt Bahnfleth, Trinity Lutheran Church, Avoca, IA, reported that during the week of July 20-26 over 50 youth and adults from around Iowa descended on Burnsville, North Carolina to assist victims of Hurricane Helene with recovery, rebuilding, and clean up efforts. Among those who participated in the trip were Pastor Bahnfleth and four youth from Trinity.

Workers provided conversation, prayer, and various forms of service during the time they were there. Depending on the needs of shop and home owners. Youth and adults did such chores as painting, building, clearing yards, and removing piles of rubbish. Residents expressed their appreciation in a variety of ways, but most importantly, they shared with these young people how moved they were that they had not been forgotten by people outside of Burnsville.



Right: *The four youth from Trinity were Emma Blotzer, Bryanna Wood, Alondra Vargas, and Cash Beatty.*

NALC Luther Week Pittsburg, PA

As you are aware, the annual convocation of the NALC was held “in person” this year in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Some of you have received the brief report via email from the NALC. This year we celebrated our fifteenth anniversary as a church body, and “reaffirmed the values that continue to shape us: our commitment to the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, the authority of Scripture, and discipleship as the heart of our identity. We also celebrated new leadership at the North American Lutheran Seminary and embraced a renewed focus on preparing future pastors, deacons, and church planters. Attendees connected with global mission workers and seminarians, discovering new ways to support ministry locally, domestically, and globally.”

Election Results:

Executive Council

The Rev. Theresa Jacobson (Thornville, OH)

The Rev. Mark Werner (Pittsgrove, NJ)

Kathaleen Lilley (Lebanon, PA)

Jerry Roehr (Winnipeg, MB)

Court of Adjudication

The Rev. Jeff Blain (Fond du Lac, WI)

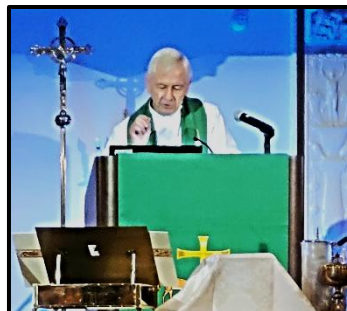
The Rev. Jeffray Greene (Brooks, GA)

The Rev. Rick Robers (Goose Creek, SC)

The Rev. Terese Whitten (Creston, IL)

Board of Regents—North American Lutheran Seminary

The Rev. Erik Osness (Edmonton, AB)



Bishop Selbo preaching during worship service.



Richard Drake, Mary Selbo, and Linda Drake at convocation. Richard and Linda are members of Servants of Christ Lutheran Church, Robins, IA.

NALC Disaster Relief Update

What has the NALC Disaster Response Team been up to lately? In short - a lot!!

The team, about 30 of us, met as a group the first Monday in August at the NALC National Convocation in Pittsburgh, PA. We discussed a variety of things, including the various mission trips recently taken, as well as made some policy decisions.

What's been happening in the Iowa Mission District?

I have been participating in zoom meetings with the Disaster Recovery team in Davenport and Moline. The Great Rivers Mission District warehouse manager made arrangements to get some flood/cleaning buckets to the area. It was closer for them to make a delivery for us—they are only 4 hours away and our two warehouses are over 6 hours away. At this point we are in a holding pattern for additional assistance.

While we have had some nasty weather, it's nothing like the other states have been getting! Milwaukee recently had flooding on the first of August. The closest warehouse to Milwaukee is the one managed by Larry Vomhof in Chatfield, Mn. Larry took 100 flood/cleaning buckets to the area on August 4. On August 15, Gary and I took more supplies to them: 46 health kits, 109 quilts, 100 additional flood/cleaning buckets and 86 school kits. Marcella Nelson is working with the Missouri Synod Churches to distribute these supplies as needed.

Doesn't taking all of the items to Milwaukee deplete the Iowa Mission District warehouse? Yes and no! There are 17 warehouses across the United States. Not every mission district has a warehouse. Remember the Iowa Mission District has two warehouses—in Chatfield and Boyden. We share and move supplies across the country as needed. The Boyden warehouse is pretty well stocked at this time. The Chatfield warehouse does need to be restocked! Therefore, we are asking you to bring your donations to the Iowa Mission District Convocation on September 21.

If your donations are too large for someone to bring to the convocation, let me know. We will come get them! We recently picked up 144 quilts and 38 school kits from St John's in Plainfield. The folks from Servants of Christ in Robins recently delivered to me 68 flood/cleaning buckets and \$250 in Menard's gift cards. We also made a trip to Grafton to pick up 16 flood/cleaning buckets from Emmanuel Lutheran Church. St Olaf Parish had their pastor, Marshall Hahn bring 4 kitchen kits and 2 health kits with him to Text Study!

We will be bringing the Iowa Mission District Tool Trailer with us to the Convocation at St. John's in LeMars, IA. This trailer will be used for future mission trips—once it's fully stocked. You will be given the opportunity to 'Adopt a Tool' to help finish stocking the trailer. Be on the lookout for the trailer and what is still available to be adopted!

Betty Burkhalter
Iowa Mission District
Disaster Response Coordinator



Biographical Information of Nominee - 2025

Name: _____ Date: _____

Position for which you are being nominated:

*Co-Dean - West ____ (3 year term)

Secretary ____ (3 year term, clergy or lay person)

Council Rep. - Clergy (3 year term) _____

Council Rep. – Lay (3 year term) _____

Congregational Member at: _____

City: _____

Occupation: _____

Tell us something about yourself (*family, hobbies, etc.*)

How do you understand your faith?

How have you been active in the church?

Please list one of your favorite Bible verses and tell why it has meaning for you.

Please sign below to indicate you are willing to serve if elected and mail this completed form to:

*Pr. Solveig Zamzow, Secretary
Iowa Mission District, NALC
619 Elm Avenue, #309
Story City, IA 50248*

Signature

*Any ordained NALC pastor residing/serving a congregation west of I-35 is eligible to be nominated for the position of Co-Dean – West.

Iowa Mission District Convocation Registration

Saturday, September 20, 2025

St. John's Lutheran Church

201 1st Ave. NW, LeMars, Iowa 51031

The 2025 annual Convocation of the Iowa Mission District will take place at St. John's Lutheran Church, LeMars, Iowa, on Saturday, September 20, 2025. Our theme is "Running with Perseverance" from Hebrews 12:1-2: *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.* We are pleased to have the Reverend Dan Selbo, Bishop of the North American Lutheran Church, as our keynote speaker. The Convocation is our opportunity to gather as brothers and sisters in Christ for the purpose of fellowship, worship, learning and sharing of ideas and to hear up-dates on the work and mission of the NALC. We will also have a business session to conduct the necessary business of the Mission District. **As you prepare for the convocation, please be thinking of nominations for Iowa Mission District Co-Dean (West), Mission District Secretary (this can be either a clergy or lay person), one Lay Representative and one Clergy Representative to the Mission District Council. Each is for a three-year term. A nomination form is included in this month's Iowa Mission District News. Please get permission from the nominees before submitting their names. The nominees will need to complete the nomination form and mail it to Mission District Secretary, Pastor Solveig Zamzow (619 Elm Avenue, #309, Story City, IA 50248).**

Please Note: According to Article 4.01 of the IA- MD Constitution: "*Delegates with voting privileges at a Convocation shall be the ordained ministers of the NALC within the territory of this Mission District and [two] lay delegates from the member congregations*". In addition, we strongly encourage congregational participation beyond the delegates—visitors are welcome! There is no cost for the event other than a free-will offering for lunch. A worship offering will also be taken and designated to the NALC Disaster Relief. The day will begin at 8:00 am with registration and a time for fellowship with coffee and refreshments. A service of Holy Communion will begin at 9:00, and the closing of the convocation will be around 4:00 pm. Break-out sessions will include conversation with Bishop Selbo, a session with Pastor Zamzow on dealing with pastoral vacancies, a report from Pastors Hahn and Saethre, and Debbie Saethre on their trip to Ethiopia, and Pastor Hedman will lead a session to help established congregations build stronger relationships with mission starts.

To help with planning, and so that we may have appropriate name tags for delegates and visitors, we ask that you fill out the registration form below and mail to Kathy Scharnhorst, Registrar, at 1594 Garden Avenue, Waverly, IA 50677. It is most helpful in keeping track of registrations if each person being registered is listed on a separate sheet. If you wish to submit your registrations via email, please fill out the form and send the information as an attachment to kscharnhorst51@gmail.com.

(Please fill out a separate form for each person.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone and/or email: _____ / _____

Congregation & Town: _____

Clergy _____ Lay Delegate _____ Visitor _____ Youth _____



Names for Jesus: Everlasting Father

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "... Everlasting Father..." (Isaiah 9:6)

In earlier meditations this year, we've looked at a couple of the names Isaiah gives for the promised child who would reign upon the throne of David and whose kingdom would last for eternity—Wonderful Counselor and Mighty God. The third name is Everlasting Father. Questions may arise if we scratch the surface of this one a bit: How can a son be the Everlasting Father? Those who are born have a beginning so it seems impossible that they can be *everlasting*, which implies no beginning as well as no end. And how can the son also be the *father*? As with many of the prophetic promises, this one seems to contradict what we know about life and death; time and the many limitations of life on Planet Earth.

As always when we read Scripture, we need to keep in mind that God is GOD. He does not live within time. He was not created—He always IS. And nothing is impossible for the Lord of all creation. One of the three things the prophet Micah tells us God wants from us is that we walk *humbly* with the Lord. (Micah 5:8) Walking humbly with God means that we accept our limitations—including the limitations of our reasoning abilities. From the beginning of creation, we humans have had the unfortunate—and usually deadly—habit of thinking we know more than our Creator. Please read your Bible! Time after time, in every epoch of history, ignoring the Lord's Word has always brought problems: death, war, family tensions, and suffering. Our hubris, arrogance, and misplaced self-confidence is dust and ashes. The Apostle Paul reminds us that human "wisdom" is foolishness, and what we think is God's "foolishness" is true wisdom. (1 Corinthians 1:20-25)

Once we accept the fact that God knows more than we do and is able to do things that seem impossible to us, we have taken the first step to accepting the fact that the Son who would reign forever can also be the Everlasting Father. Further help is offered to us in the Gospel of John. The writer of John's Gospel has a special gift for gathering up the wisdom and promises from the Old Testament and helping us see how our Lord Jesus embodies the promises. At the very beginning of the Gospel, John reminds us that from the very beginning of creation Christ Jesus was the eternal Word—the Word through whom all things were created; the Word made flesh Who dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. This Word is also the promised Child of whom Isaiah speaks. In the fourteenth chapter

of John's Gospel we read: "*Philip said to [Jesus], 'Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied.'* Jesus said to him, *'Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves.'*" (John 14:8-11)

So, the Son of God, who became flesh to dwell among us, is also everlasting. He became flesh in order to dwell among us and to bring us salvation by going to the cross. In His death and resurrection He destroyed the devil and overcame death. He is alive forever and death no longer has any power over Him. He further explains His relationship with the Father and His relationship with us in John 10, in terms of a Shepherd. After speaking of knowing His sheep, and His sheep knowing His voice, our Lord ends with these profound words: "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.*" (John 10:27-30) And again in chapter 17, when our Lord prays for His disciples—those at the table and for us who believe because of their words. He says, "*I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom thou hast given me, for they are thine; all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.*" (John 17:9-11)

In John 3:16, Jesus told Nicodemus that "*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*" This is the love of a father for his children. Even when children are rebellious, a good parent loves them. When they do things that are unwise and put themselves in danger, a loving father will still risk his life to protect and save them. How much more God loves us than we are ever able to love our children. Like a father, like a good shepherd, Christ Jesus came into the world to save and protect us. He is not only a Wonderful Counselor who listens to our struggles and complaints, the Mighty God who alone is strong and wise enough to make the right decisions about providing for our needs and doing what needs to be done on our behalf, He is also our dear Father who loves us beyond our deserving or understanding. May we ever give Him our thanks, praise, and devotion!

Announcements

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

North American Lutheran Church
2113 Harwood Road, Suite 309
PMB 409
Bedford, TX 76021-4703

Donations to NALS, Disaster Relief, Great Commission Society, etc. are to be made out to the NALC with the specific fund written on the memo line of your check.

Donations and Correspondence

Checks sent to the Mission District for support should be made out to the **Iowa Mission District, NALC**, and mailed to:

Mrs. Belinda Borchardt
Iowa Mission District Treasurer,
PO Box 105,
Grafton, IA 50440.

Correspondence should be sent to:

Pastor Solveig Zamzow
Iowa Mission District Secretary
619 Elm Avenue, #309
Story City, IA 50248

Items for the Mission District newsletter (pictures, news, etc.) are best sent via e-mail to

Pastor Barbara Wills at
barbaramwills@gmail.com.

Pastors available for pulpit supply:

Pastor Kristine Dohrmann—515-802-2539
Pastor Natacha Kemp—507-785-0412
Pastor Andrew Loomis—712-298-6587
Pastor Jack Miller—507-798-2408
Pastor Mike Wikstrom—480-203-1556



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

Mission District Pulpit-Supply Guidelines

In October of 2022, the Mission District Council voted to recommend that congregations pay a visiting pastor \$200 for a worship service in addition to the current IRS mileage rate. At a subsequent meeting, we also decided to recommend that congregations do the same for a visiting pastor who performs a wedding or a funeral. Any honorarium that the family might want to give to the pastor would not be deducted from this, as the pastor is providing a service to the congregation. We also recommend that a congregation which has more than one worship service in a day, pay an additional \$50 to the pastor for each additional service. (The 2025 IRS rate is \$0.70 per mile.)

Upcoming Events

September 20, 2025—Iowa Mission District Convocation—St. John's, Le Mars, IA





Congregations of the Iowa Mission District

Ackley: **Our Saviour's**, Dan Buhs, Lay Minister
Avoca: **Trinity**, Pr. Matthew Bahnfleth
Badger: **Badger Lutheran**, Pr. Scott Meier
Boyden: **St. John**, Pr. Jeremy Winter
Cedar Falls: **Nazareth Evangelical**, Self Study
Des Moines: **Unity Evangelical Lutheran**,
Pr. Donna Joseph; Pr. Diane Joseph
Dorchester: **Waterloo Ridge**, Pr. James Glesne
Eagle Grove: **Evangelical Lutheran**, Call Process
Eagle Grove: **Samuel Lutheran**, Call Process
Ellsworth: **Trinity**, Pr. Jon Rollefson
Emmons, MN: **Emmons**, Call Process
Gilmore City: **First**, Tracy Nerem, Lay Minister
Grafton: **Emmanuel**, Call Process
Greene: **St. John, Vilmar**, Pr. Tamara Keen
Gunder: **Marion**, Pr. Marshall Hahn
Harlan: **Bethlehem**, Call Process
+Huxley: **Shepherd of the Prairie**,
Scott Licht, Lay Minister
Irwin: **St. Paul**, Call Process
Kanawha: **Kanawha** – Call Process
Laurens: **Bethany**, Pr. David Klappenbach
LeMars: **St. John**, Pr. Steven Broers
Manchester: **First**, Pr. Jason Cooper
Monona: **Faith**: Call Process
Northwood: **Peace**, Pr. Barbara Wills
Ottumwa: **First**, Pr. Brad Miller, Interim
+ Osage: **First Grace**, Pr. Christopher Staley, Interim
Palmer: **St. John's Lizard Township**,
Marlene Nimke, Lay Minister
Plainfield: **St. John, Western Douglas**,
Bill Wendorf, Lay Minister
Readlyn: **St. Matthew**, Pr. Jean Rabary
Readlyn: **Zion**, Pr. Jean Rabary
Robins: **Servants of Christ**, Pr. Ronald Voss
+Rochester, MN: **Emmanuel**—Pr. Khrystle Sullivan
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. Christopher Martn
Spencer: **Trinity**, Pr. Renae Behrends
Strawberry Pt.: **Mission in Christ**, Call Process
Thor: **Ullensvang**, Call Process
Waterville: **Old East Paint Creek**, Call Process
Waukon: **Old West Paint Creek**, Call Process

+ indicates mission congregation

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Pastor Solveig Zamzow, Secretary
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Mission District Communicator/Newsletter Editor

Pastor Barbara Wills
barbaramwills@gmail.com

*The Iowa Mission District
has 42 congregations.*

***The Iowa Mission District website may be found
at: www.iowamissiondistrict.com.***