



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

November 2020

A Word from the Dean

Grace to you and peace:

In just a few days' time, our congregations will be honoring All Saint's Sunday, especially with November 1st day falling on a Sunday this year. I grew up in small town in Iowa that didn't have a Catholic church, and the one in the neighboring town was quite small, and so I didn't have much exposure to the Catholic faith life. This changed a bit when I became friends with a new kid in 7th grade, but all I really learned was that he wasn't supposed to eat meat on Fridays, and that he had catechism class each Wednesday, and that he had to give up something he liked for Lent (in his case, Pepsi). The other thing that distinguished him was that he always wore a St. Christopher medal around his neck. This interested me a little because I shared the name, but he simply told me that the medal was to bring good luck.

When I spent a few years in Dubuque in seminary my eyes were opened up a bit. Each week a 'shopper' would show up in our mailbox and it was this shopper that taught me much more about Saints. I hadn't know, for example, that if one lost something like keys or glasses that there was a Saint to ask for help, and people would take out personal ads to ask that Saint to help find that lost item, or to thank that Saint if a lost item had been found. It turns out that there was also a Saint that could help a person trying to sell a house, a Saint to help with persistent headaches, a Saint for infertility. It seemed as though there was Saint for everything.

Even with this new knowledge, my understanding was woefully incomplete. There are certainly those upon whom the Church has, over the centuries, granted the honor of calling Saints. The earliest of these can be found among the writers of the four gospels, and some of the earliest of the church fathers and bishops. But when we gather in our congregations for All Saints Sunday it is not typically to consider these 'giants' of the faith. Instead, we take time during that worship service to honor those who have been taken from our earthly life in the previous year. We dare to call them Saints because that is who God made them to be in their baptism.

We would do well, however, to consider that those who have died in the previous twelve months are not the only saints. All those claimed by Christ in the waters of baptism can be counted for that matter. And it is worth noting that Martin Luther, in a sermon he delivered on All Saints Day broadened the meaning even more when he admonished us to "*honor the living saints; your neighbors, the naked, the hungry, the thirsty, poor people; those who have wives and children, who suffer shame, who lie in sins. Turn to them and help them. That is where you are to apply your works. There use your tongue that you defend, draw near, advise, cover them with your coat and help them in order to uphold their honor.*"

Pastor Christopher Staley, Dean, Iowa Mission District, NALC



Sola Fide—Joyful Faith

*Pr. Paul Breddin
West Des Moines, Iowa*

How often have you seen little children jump into a swimming pool and into the arms of their parent? They know they'll be safe. They trust the adult to catch them. They trust in the adult. When our sons were 2-3 years old, they reveled being tossed into the air and being caught. They'd giggle and say, "More! More!" What joy! What trust! Faith is about trust. Faith is not just knowledge. It is real. It believes wholeheartedly.

The children mentioned above had faith in their parent. The object or focus of their faith was their parent. They believed wholeheartedly that they would be caught. The object of saving faith is Jesus Christ. Faith trusts in the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ to save us from our sins. So saving faith looks to Jesus, and to what He has done for us, and to nothing else.

That raises a question. How can one trust or believe in Jesus Christ? Romans 10:14-15a, 17 tell us, "*How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ.*" *The Word of Christ is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

The Gospel is the Good News of Jesus Christ. It is about the forgiveness of sins and salvation. It is about what God has done for us through Jesus. Romans 1:16 tells us, "*For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.*" God offers salvation to all believers. Faith joyfully receives that offered forgiveness and salvation. It really is knowledge of Jesus Christ, and what Christ has won for us through

His suffering, death and resurrection. One could say that this knowledge of Jesus is not "head knowledge" but "heart knowledge".

John 8:36 tells us "*For if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.*" *Free from what? Free from sin! Faith in Jesus Christ freely receives the forgiveness of sins. It is the true knowledge of Jesus Christ. It grasps the benefits that Christ offers, namely the forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. Saving faith believes the promise that for Christ's sake, God in mercy freely offers forgiveness of sins, justification, and all that that entails. Our Lord Jesus Christ was given for our sins and our salvation. Faith receives the promised mercy of God that frees from eternal death.*

Romans 4:16a says: *That is why it "depends on faith that the promise may rest on grace". Faith believes God's promise of forgiveness through Christ's name.*

Acts 10:43 says "*To Him (Christ) the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.*"

Therefore, saving faith is focused on Jesus Christ, and on His benefits of forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. God in complete grace and mercy offers that to us, when we believe what is preached and proclaimed to us in God's Holy Word. As St. Paul writes in Romans 10:9 "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." That is heartfelt joy. That is joyful faith.

This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District

Faith Lutheran Church Monona, Iowa



Five students at Faith were presented Faith Alive Student Bibles September 27, 2020 worship service.



Pastor Mel Harris poses with two young people who were confirmed on October 11, 2020.



Sunday School Rally Day, September 13, 2020, was kicked off by painting "faith" on a stenciled wood sign. A local merchant designed and prepared the wooden signs. The project was partially funded by a Thrivent Action Grant.



Pastoral Installations

Former Iowa Mission District Dean, Pastor Marshall Hahn, presided at the installations of two new Iowa Mission District pastors on October 4th. At the morning worship service in rural Boyden, Iowa, he installed Pastor Mark Jamison as Pastor of St. John's Lutheran, and that afternoon in Emmons, Minnesota, he installed Pastor Ryan Henkel as Pastor of Emmons Lutheran. At left are pictures of Pastor Henkel's installation and Pastor Henkel with his wife, Natalie, and son, Jonah.

Installation of New Mission District Dean

Because the COVID pandemic prevented the members of our Mission District from being able to gather for our annual convocation this year, Pastor Christopher Staley was not able to be installed as Dean until the Mission District Council meeting on October 17th. At right, our "masked Dean" is installed by Council Secretary, Mr. Craig Lease. Pastor Staley is the Pastor of First Lutheran Church in St. Ansgar, Iowa. We are always grateful to the pastors of our Mission District who are willing to serve as our deans, and to their congregations for the sacrificial commitment to share their pastor with the Mission District during their term in office!



**St. John Lutheran Church, Vilmar
Greene, Iowa**



On Reformation Sunday, St. John's bid farewell to their Pastor, Rev. Christopher Martin. The service included the Baptism of the infant daughter of Jordan and Alanna Eberline, and at the end of the service, the Rite of Farewell and Godspeed. In the pictures to the right, Pastor Martin is returning the symbols of the Office of the Ministry of Word and Sacrament to members of the congregations. Pastor Martin has also served on the Iowa Mission District Council for the past two years. He has accepted a call in Wisconsin. Farewell and Godspeed Pastor Martin!

Stuff the Truck

Since the COVID pandemic prevented our Mission District from gathering for our convocation this year, the NALC Disaster Relief truck detoured to Mission in Christ Lutheran Church where disaster relief supplies from the congregations of our mission district were collected and loaded onto the truck. Many thanks to all for making this relief effort possible, especially to Betty Burkhalter, our Disaster Response Coordinator and her husband, Pastor Gary Burkhalter, for receiving the supplies and loading the truck!



Notes from the Mission District Council

In an effort to keep everyone better informed about ‘goings on’ in the Mission District, we will be printing a summary of actions when the Iowa Mission District Council meets.

The Iowa Mission District Council held its regular meeting on Saturday, October 17th, at First Lutheran in St. Ansgar. Here are the highlights of the meeting.

- Secretary Craig Lease conducted the Installation of Pastor Staley as Dean.
 - Reports from the Dean, the Secretary, and the Treasurer were reviewed and approved.
 - Dean Hahn performed installations of Pastors William and Diane Odermann at Waterloo Ridge (Dorchester); Pastor Dan Baker at St. Paul (Sheldon); Pastor Mark Jamison at St. John (Boyden); and Pastor Ryan Henkel at Emmons (Emmons, MN).
 - The most recent ‘e-mail’ convocation was reviewed. There were 39 delegates who voted (16 Pastors and 23 Lay). The proposed budget was passed, and the ballots for Dean and Clergy Council Position were filled.
 - The annual Pastor’s retreat was discussed. The dates and site will be finalized in coming weeks.
 - A youth mission trip will be looked into for this coming summer.
 - Dean Staley expressed a desire to make visits to pastors and congregations throughout the Mission District in coming months to strengthen relationships between the IMD and its congregations and to help congregations work toward finding ways to work together.
 - Dean Staley will reach out to find someone to fill the Lay Position on the Council.
 - Dean Staley will secure a site and speaker for the 2021 Iowa Mission District, tentatively set for September 11th.
 - A reminder goes out to all congregations to hold a vote whether to ratify the two Constitutional Amendments passed at the national convocation. Reports of these votes must be sent to the NALC office by February 8, 2021. Information can be found at: <https://thenalc.org/projects/ratification-process-materials/>
- ◇ The next meeting of the Council will be Saturday, April 24th, at 9:00am at First, St. Ansgar

Pastor Christopher Staley
Dean, Iowa Mission District



Treasurer’s Newsletter Report – 1st Quarter, FY 20-21

Greetings in the name of Christ Jesus!

First, just a quick reminder that our mission district does not use the regular calendar year (January to December) for our finances. Because our annual convocation at which we approve a budget meets in September, our fiscal year runs from September 1st through August 31st. For this reason, this report which covers the months of September and October is a snapshot look at most, but not all, of our first quarter for the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year.

During this time period, the District took in \$3,281 in the form of regular contributions from among our 37 members, and \$536 in special offerings. During the same time period, we expended \$788 on routine expenses of our dean, and paid out \$500 of the specially designated offerings to the Iowa Derecho Storm Resource Center.

God’s Peace,
Pr. Gary Burkhalter, Treasurer

Announcements

Upcoming Events

November 4-6, 2022—7 pm online Great Commission conference. For more information or to register, contact: missions@thenalc.org.

April 24, 2021—9:00 a.m.—Mission District Council meeting

September 11, 2021—Iowa Mission District Convocation—time and place to be determined.

August 2-6, 2021—NALC Luther Week, Corpus Christi, TX

Please Pray for:

Barbara Spring and family as they grieve for Bishop Emeritus Paull Spring who died October 17th.

Pastor David Schaefer who will having back surgery soon.

Pastor Mel Harris who is undergoing cancer treatments.

Amy Cooper (wife of Pastor Jason Cooper) who has completed her cancer treatments.

Pastor David Steffenson who is undergoing treatments for pancreatic cancer.

Kelly Staley (wife of Pastor Christopher Staley) who is continuing her recovery from surgery.

All who have suffered from hurricanes and other natural disasters in recent months as they grieve the loss of lives and property and seek to rebuild their lives.

All who are at risk for getting COVID-19, those who suffer from it, all who are caring for the sick, researching treatments and preventive measures and trying to make wise decisions for the public good.

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**. (Note: The Iowa Mission District depends on contributions from congregations and individuals for its funding. There is no required offering, of course, but the suggested annual amount per congregation to help meet the budget is \$650. We have no salaried staff.)

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. Please send pictures in JPEG format, and text in Word or in the body of email messages.



Sharing the Faith Grace-fully

Actions Speak Louder than Words: Tabitha

A few years ago—maybe decades ago?—there was a popular saying, “Walk the talk.” I don’t know if it’s still used much anymore; I haven’t heard it recently. However, it says a lot in a few words. If we “talk a good line” but we don’t “practice what we preach”, no one will take us seriously, and such labels as fraud and hypocrite might become attached to us. Our Lord observed this tendency in some of those of His time who considered themselves righteous: “*Then said Jesus to the crowds and to his disciples, ‘The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice.’*” (Matthew 3:1-3)

As we seek to share the Good News of Christ in this broken and fallen world, it’s important that the things we do reflect the words we speak. In fact, what we do may be more effective than anything we can say. With all the media “output” and advertising people in our culture are exposed to, many of us tune it all out, or become disgusted with people trying to sell us things we don’t want, whether it’s a product, a philosophy or unsolicited advice. When I see folks coming toward me with pamphlets in their hands I turn around and go in the opposite direction. I don’t answer phone numbers I don’t recognize, and I don’t have television anymore because (to put it mildly) I hate advertising. While most people probably don’t react as strongly against advertising as I do, it’s important to realize that if we take an advertising approach to sharing our faith, it may turn more people off to the Lord than it attracts.

One of the questions we might ask ourselves as we consider our Lord’s command to love our neighbor as ourselves, and His statement to the disciples before His ascension that they [we] **would be** (not told to be) His witnesses, is this: “*In the context of our culture what is it people lack and need?*” We don’t need more voices trying to convince us to buy their product—whether that “product” is a new diet, medication, a garment or new philosophy. What we need is kindness, generosity, good manners, and the love that forgives offenses, prays for enemies and offers a helping hand even to those who despise us. Providing such evidence of love and mercy is much more difficult than handing out brochures, talking a “good line”, or knocking on people’s doors. It takes

time, patience and lots of prayerful listening to the Lord.

As we consider the biblical witnesses to Christ, the first ones who come to mind are the great preachers like Peter and Paul. But the early church didn’t grow only because of their preaching, as essential as it is to hear the Word preached. The Word of God also has to be **lived**—day in and day out—in homes and places of employment; at children’s ball games and in long lines at the grocery store; while we’re driving our cars and choosing our forms of entertainment. One of the witnesses of the Bible who most intrigues me and elicits my admiration is a woman named Tabitha (Dorcas in Greek) who lived in Joppa. She is mentioned in Acts 9, and never says a word. In fact, when we’re introduced to her, she’s dead. We’re told that “*she was full of good works and acts of charity*” (verse 36). Peter just happened to be in nearby Lydda when Tabitha died, and those who were grieving for her sent word to Peter to come. He had a reputation for being one through whom the Holy Spirit worked. When Peter arrived, Tabitha was “laid out” on the bed in her room, and the grieving widows showed him the beautiful sewing that she had done—tunics and other garments that she no doubt made for those who were in need. Even in death this kind and humble woman was a testimony to her faith in Christ. But the Lord wasn’t quite finished with her yet—Peter knelt beside her bed and prayed, then said, “*Tabitha, arise.*” And she did! This is all the Bible records about her, but we can be sure that her kindness, generosity, patience, and love for others continued for the rest of her earthly life. Many women’s circles have taken the name of Dorcas out of respect for this silent woman, no doubt in the hope that their own works of quilt making and other sewing projects would also reflect the love of Christ.

Ecclesiastes 3:7 tells us that there is a time to speak and a time to keep silence. Sometimes the most important messages we have to share are conveyed through respectful and compassionate acts, performed in silence, as we wait for the Holy Spirit to give us the words *He* wants us to speak.

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

Congregations of the Iowa Mission District

Ackley: **Our Saviour's**, Call Process
Avoca: **Trinity**, Pr. Eric Meissner
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**,
Prs. Bill and 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**, Pr. Solveig Zamzow
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**
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. Dan Baker
+Sibley: **Faith**, Pr. Tim Nappe
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—
cbstaley@netins.net
Craig Lease, Secretary—
pdlease@gmail.com
Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer—
pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com

Mission District Council Members:

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Chris Schlee—
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Disaster Response Coordinator: Betty
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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 Paul Breddin—515--528-2284
Pastor James Glesne—563-380-8110
Pastor Jack Miller—507-798-2408
Pastor Paul Weeg- -641-381-0675
Pastor Mike Wikstrom (LCMC) - 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



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.