



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

September 2023

A Word from the Dean

"Do I have to 'dress up' to go to church?"

What to wear to church... For my wife, this can be an ordeal. As she's agonizing over the matter, I sometimes point to an outfit and say, "How about this one?" "I can't wear that," she'll tell me. And if I dare to ask why, she replies, "Because I wore it last week," or she'll give me one of a dozen other reasons. For me, it's easy. I wear the same thing to church every Sunday. It's one of the benefits of being a pastor.

But seriously, this really is an important issue for some people. For those whose memories begin somewhere in the first half of the 20th century, dressing up for church was something that wasn't questioned; it was expected. It's interesting to look at group shots of church gatherings shot in the age of black and white photos: the men (and boys) all wearing jackets and ties (and sometimes hats), and the ladies all wearing dresses (and sometimes hats and white gloves).

Over the past 40 years or so, such conventions have begun to shift. A few fellows wear jackets to church, but very few. And slacks or pantsuits, or jeans and even shorts are more readily found on ladies than dresses. For some, this shift is appalling. And for some of these, they are only too willing to let those dressed in more casual dress know about it. How many times I have heard from people who are no longer active in church describe how, when they last visited a church, they felt they didn't fit in because their wardrobe didn't

quite measure up to that of the 'members in good standing.'

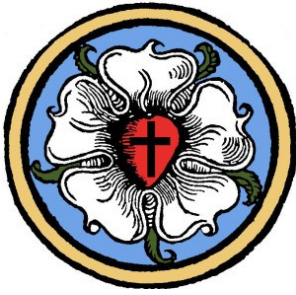
As I've encountered this issue over the years as a pastor, I've wavered this way and that, since I can see both sides of the argument. It could be summed up this way: "Shouldn't people wear their best clothes to come to church? Versus: "Isn't it more important that people should feel welcome to come to church, no matter how they're dressed?"

In the book of James (2:1-7), he describes a church in which two people entered: one wearing gold rings and fine clothes, while the other is shabbily dressed. The church warmly received Dapper Dan, but acted as though Dumpy Dudley wasn't even there. James goes on to say that such partiality is a scandal in the church, setting up a roadblock for many to regularly attend.

And more, I have grown in the opinion that if the church persists in its 'Sunday best' mentality, we are participating in a lie: that church is only for people who really have their lives together. Church isn't (or shouldn't be), after all, a club for well-heeled, dues-paying members only. The church is the one place where all people are welcomed to gather to receive the good gifts of God.

So, come one, come all. No excuses. And keep your criticisms to yourself.

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



Embodied Faith

Pastor Barbara Wills
Peace Lutheran Church, Northwood, Iowa

One of the most beloved verses in the Bible is Paul's statement in Ephesians 2:8—*"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God."* This understanding of the importance of faith became Martin Luther's salvation in more ways than one when he finally realized that our salvation does not depend on how rigorous we are in adhering to the letter of the law or engaging in penitential practices. Having nearly killed himself with fasting, self-flagellation, and continuous confession—and failing to find peace with the Lord through these practices—he finally encountered the writings of the Apostle Paul and recognized that the only true righteousness is that which we receive from the Lord Jesus when we put our faith in Him. "Saved by Faith" is at the heart of the Lutheran understanding of Christianity. And it was at the heart of many of Luther's writings.

The importance of faith was also at the heart of most of the letters the Apostle Paul wrote to the churches he helped to establish during his years of ministry. He was able to define faith with great accuracy and used various metaphors and examples to explain it. However, Paul's arguments and explanations can circle back on themselves, and some folks may get lost in his many words. In the end, reading long passages of descriptions about faith may leave a lot of folks scratching their heads and asking the question: "But what does this mean—for me?" Head knowledge and heart knowledge do not always lead us in the same direction. Our Lord Jesus knew this, and He not only *explained* what faith in God the Father, and in Himself as God's Son, meant, He also *described* with picture stories and *demonstrated* through His actions, what these things *look like*.

In the parable of the prodigal son, we get a picture of two sons who were separated from their father. One son was blatantly sinful, asking for his inheritance before his father even died, wasting it in sinful living, and then coming home only when that was the only alternative left to him. His

repentance was heartfelt, but mostly self-serving—"better a servant in my father's house than a pig herder". But his father loved him so much he ran to meet him, restored him to sonship, and celebrated his return with the finest food. The elder son, who stayed home and did all the right things, secretly hated every minute of it and resented both his brother's return and his father's joy in welcoming this wayward son home. His father loved *him* so much that he came outside to meet him, to beg for him to return, too, and join the celebration. This is where faith in the Lord Jesus leads us. It's about repenting, even if our repentance is flawed. It's about our Lord coming to meet us and embrace us. It's about the changes His love makes in us, rather than about anything we can do for Him.

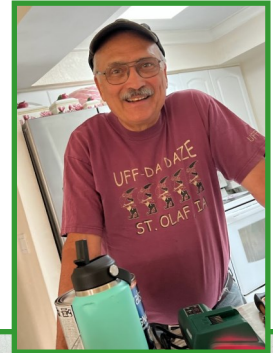
Peter's "walk on the wild side", as he sees Jesus walking over the waves toward the storm-tossed boat in the wee hours of the morning, gives us another picture of faith. Realizing, only after he jumps off the boat and starts to walk toward Jesus, that there's only water below him, and the wet waves are lapping up over his feet. Suddenly engulfed in fear, Peter turns his attention away from the Lord and starts to sink. Only then does he turn back to the Lord, crying out for help. Chiding Peter for his lack of faith, Jesus reaches out and pulls him from the water into the safety of the boat. "*O you of little faith, why did you doubt?*" (Matthew 14:28) Our salvation does not depend on our great faith, nor is it negated by our stumbles and lapses. When we cry for help and turn back to the Lord, He is there to catch us and pull us back to safety.

In 1 Corinthians 13:13, the Apostle Paul concludes his hymn on love in this way, "*So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*" Faith is the essential connection that brings us into life with the Lord, but it is God's undeserved love—His grace—that invites us: "*by grace you have been saved through faith.*" (Ephesians 2:8a)

Youth Mission Trip

July 24—August 1

The Iowa Mission District youth, accompanied by several pastors and a number of adult chaperons, flew to Port Charlotte, Florida, this summer to help residents recover from the devastating hurricane damage they suffered last fall. From the pictures it's obvious this was a worthwhile effort—lots of work, relationship-building, and a little down time made the week full and fulfilling for all concerned.





North American Lutheran Church 2023 Convocation Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

The NALC Convocation was a celebration of Mission, with three sessions throughout the days focusing on Domestic Mission, International Mission, and Congregational Mission. Participants were inspired and encouraged to bring back to their congregations the passion shared for this core principle of the NALC and its congregations. We were excited to learn that there has been a large increase in new admissions in our seminary, with 39 new enrollments in just this past year.

At our break-out session, we had 20 out of 38 congregations represented, and an ongoing concern was expressed by Bishop Selbo that many congregations throughout the NALC are not active within the Mission Districts and the NALC.

Unity Evangelical in Des Moines was recognized for their 100th anniversary. Several of our pastors were recognized for ordination anniversaries: Jim Glesne (55), Ron Voss (50), Bill Odermann (45), Ron Rasmussen (40), David Shafer (40), Tim Nappe (35), Diane Odermann (30), David Klappenbach (25), and Matt Bahnfleth (20).

In elections, Bishop Dan Selbo was elected to a second term as Bishop on the first ballot; Pastor Ryan Henkel, Emmons, Emmons, was elected to the Court of Adjudication; and we've learned since the convocation that Pastor Tony Ede, First, Manchester, has accepted a call to the NALC office as a Communications Specialist. In addition, Pastor David Wendel has announced that after twelve years of serving on the Executive Staff of the NALC, he will be resigning his call as of the end of September and is looking forward to returning to parish ministry.

The 2024 Convocation will be online on August 9, and the 2025 Convocation will be August 6-8, in Pittsburgh, PA.

*Pastor Christopher Staley
Dean, Iowa Mission District*



Pastor Jess Abbott,
Midwestern Area
Assistant to the Bishop



Left Right:
Pastor Ryan Henkel and
Pastor Tony D. Ede



Bishop Dan Selbo

***This and That From Around
the Iowa Mission District, continued***

Let's Stuff The Truck!

Just a quick reminder about the Stuff The Truck at the Mission District Convocation! We are currently low on school (high school and elementary) kits, health kits and kitchen kits. Please be certain to look at the Kit Packing List (*copy and paste the https address below*) for items included in the kits and the section on **"How To Pack Your Disaster Kits"**. I will have a table at the Convocation for Disaster Response. Stop by and let's chat about your questions!

Betty Burkhalter
Iowa Mission District Disaster Response Coordinator
bettyburkhalter@hotmail.com
(815)323-9999

https://thenalc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/NALC-DR-Kits_January2023.pdf



Pictures above are of members of Mission in Christ, Strawberry Point, assembling kits for Disaster Relief. To the left, Disaster Response Team members met together at the NALC Convocation in Oklahoma City.



Abiding in Christ: Knit Together by God

“You’re worth it!” “You deserve the best!”
“It’s all about you!”

Recognize any of these slogans? You won’t find them in the Bible, and if you dig into that Holy Book even a little, you will discover that these statements are all lies. These are the things the world tells us when it wants to point us in the wrong direction. These false ideas can lead us to believe that each of us is our own little god and that the world revolves around us. If you follow that line of thinking to its obvious conclusion, where it leads is straight to hell—not just for eternity but in all our relationships and interactions with others in this world. If each of us expects everyone else to cater to us, then everyone is pulling away from everyone else—no one is going to cater to anyone. The result is not harmony, compassion, good manners, or peace. And certainly not belief in God or faith in Christ. It leads only to chaos, sin, and disaster.

The Bible tells us something very different. Rather than being *full* of ourselves, we’re to *empty* ourselves. Instead of demanding service *from* everyone else, we are called to *be* servants *to* everyone else. Instead of thinking that we can make ourselves into whatever we want to be, we are told that we are created by God, in the image of God, and bought back from sin by the death and resurrection of the Son of God. From beginning to end, Holy Scripture teaches us these truths and holds us accountable to the Lord.

Psalms 139 is a beautiful reminder of whose we are:
*O LORD, thou hast searched me and known me!
Thou knowest when I sit down and when I rise up;
thou discernest my thoughts from afar.
Thou searchest out my path and my lying down,
and art acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.* (vs. 1-4)

*For thou didst form my inward parts,
thou didst knit me together in my mother’s
womb.* (v. 13)

*My frame was not hidden from thee,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately wrought in the depths of the earth.
Thy eyes beheld my unformed substance;
in thy book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them.* (vs. 15-16)

Not only do we belong to the Lord God as His creatures, but as those who have been redeemed. From the beginning of time, when we turned from our Creator to desire His creation and covet His power, He determined to buy us back at the cost of His only begotten Son. Doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves, the Holy One who created us was willing to humble Himself and to pay the ransom when we sold ourselves into sin. The Apostle Paul makes the point: “*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) In this text Paul was speaking of a particular sin, but every sin is an affront to the Lord. Whether it’s an unworthy thought in our minds, or an action against another person, the body created by the Lord, and knit together by His love, is misused when we sin.

Rather than clinging to the lies and misdeeds of this world, our Lord Jesus calls us to abide in Him. In faith, we are to turn to Him, and remain attached to Him in love, so that the fruit of the Holy Spirit may come forth to honor the Lord—to build up the Body of Christ and share the love of Christ in the world. This is the truth that leads to life—fullness of life now and infinite joy with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit forever.

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

Announcements

Upcoming Events

September 16, 2023 Iowa Mission District Convocation—Faith Lutheran Church, Monona, Iowa
September 30, 2023—Mission District Council Meeting. 9:00 a.m. at Cabin Coffee in Mason City.

Please Pray for:

Pastor James Puotyal who is awaiting a kidney transplant.

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 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 Pastor Gary Burkhalter at **312 E Mission St, Strawberry Point, IA 52076.**

Correspondence for Pastor Solveig Zamzow, Mission District Secretary, should be sent to **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 Natacha Kemp—507-785-0412
Pastor James Glesne—563-380-8110
Pastor Jack Miller—507-798-2408
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

Mission District Pulpit-Supply Guidelines

Suggested guidelines for supply pastors in the Iowa Mission District is \$200 plus IRS recommended mileage reimbursement.





Congregations of the Iowa Mission District

Ackley: **Our Saviour's**, Dan Buhs, Lay Minister
Avoca: **Trinity**, Pastor Matthew Bahnfleth
Badger: **Badger Lutheran**, Pr. Scott Meier
Boyden: **St. John**, Pr. Jeremy Winter
Des Moines: **Unity Evangelical Lutheran**,
Pr. Donna Joseph; Pr. Diane Joseph
Dorchester: **Waterloo Ridge**, Call Process
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
LeMars: **St. John**, Pr. Chris Meier
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**, Call Process
Readlyn: **St. Matthew**, Pr. Jean Rabary
Readlyn: **Zion**, Pr. Jean Rabary
Robins: **Servants of Christ**, Pr. Ronald Voss
+Rochester, MN: **Emmanuel**—Call Process
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**, Pr. Renae Behrends
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
Pastor Solveig Zamzow Secretary
solveigzamzow@gmail.com
Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer
pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com

Mission District Council Members:

Pastor Tony D. Ede
tonyede@gmail.com
Pastor David Klappenbach
klappenbach98@rpt.coop
Pastor Ryan Henkel
pastorhenkel@gmail.com
Lyle Hollander
lhollander@frontiernet.net
Dean Armstrong
idedarmy@gmail.com
Elise Patzke
ekbieri@gmail.com

Disaster Response Coordinator

Betty Burkhalter
bettyburkhalter@hotmail.com

Mission District Registrar

Kathy Scharnhorst
kscharnhorst51@gmail.com

Mission District Website Administrator

Pastor Gary Burkhalter
pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com

Mission District Communicator/Newsletter Editor

Pastor Barbara Wills
barbaramwills@gmail.com

*The Iowa Mission District
has 38 congregations.*

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

Iowa Mission District Convocation Registration

Saturday, September 16, 2023

Faith Lutheran Church, 19999 Pleasant Ridge Road, Monona, Iowa

The 2023 annual Convocation of the Iowa Mission District will take place at Faith Lutheran Church, Monona, Iowa, on Saturday, September 16, 2023. Our theme is “Faith”, and we are pleased to have the Reverend Dr. Amy Little, the North American Lutheran Church General Secretary, 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 also will 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 Dean (Clergy)*, *Lay representative and Clergy representative* to the Mission District Council. Each is for a three-year term. A nomination form will be 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 a worthy domestic or international cause. 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 at 3:45 pm.

Junior High and High School youth are also encouraged to attend the convocation. It is hoped that we can have youth attendees on a regular basis to promote their interest and involvement in the Church beyond their home congregations.

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 _____

Biographical Information of Nominee

Name: _____ Date: _____

Position for which you are being nominated: _____

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 502*

Signature