



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

September 2021

A Word from the Dean

"God helps those who _____"

Go on, you know how it finishes. It may be one of your most often quoted verses from the Bible. The only problem is, that the quote doesn't actually come from the Bible. Instead, its roots can be traced to Greek fables from more than 2,000 years ago, in which the quote was slightly different: "The gods help them that help themselves." The saying as we know it today was popularized by a more recent author, Benjamin Franklin, writing in Poor Richard's Almanac back in the 18th century.

As most fables did, this one speaks words of wisdom, that is to say, common sense. And the appeal of this particular saying is understandable. One can find verses of the Bible that resonate with its sentiments. In Paul's letter to the Thessalonians we read: "*If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies*" (1 Thessalonians 10-11). While the church has always worked to be charitable to those in the greatest need, any who simply preferred to rely upon the generosity of others instead of 'pulling one's own weight' were admonished to stop such behavior.

But when it comes down to it, there is only so much we can do, and if we always only rely upon our own efforts to pull ourselves up by the bootstraps, there will come a point when we simply cannot. And the Bible has something to say about that, "*Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord. Blessed is the man who*

trusts in the Lord" (Jeremiah 17:5, 7). And "*He who trusts in his own heart is a fool*" (Proverbs 28:26).

And even more certainly there are some things we cannot do. Namely, we cannot take sin away from ourselves. We can try, with every fiber of our being to not sin, and we may even win victory over particular vices. But to remove sins, to do that which we need to do to win eternal life, we cannot do. Jesus' own disciples asked Him, "*Who, Lord, can be saved?*" His response, "*With man, it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.*" (Mark 10:26-27)

But doesn't that take something from me? Don't I have to reach out to God, say some sort of special prayer, and accept Jesus as my personal savior? Doesn't that fulfill the saying, God helps those who help themselves? The best Biblical illustration I can think of is Lazarus, dead in the grave, and not just dead, but stinking dead. What could he do to help himself? Not a thing. He was, after all, dead. Jesus commanded Lazarus to emerge from the grave, and Lazarus did. What was impossible for dead Lazarus, was possible for God.

So how might we, more Biblically, end that saying with which I began? How about, "God helps those who can't help themselves." And that's us.

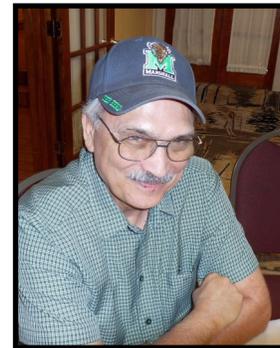
*Pastor Christopher Staley, Dean,
Iowa Mission District, NALC*

This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District

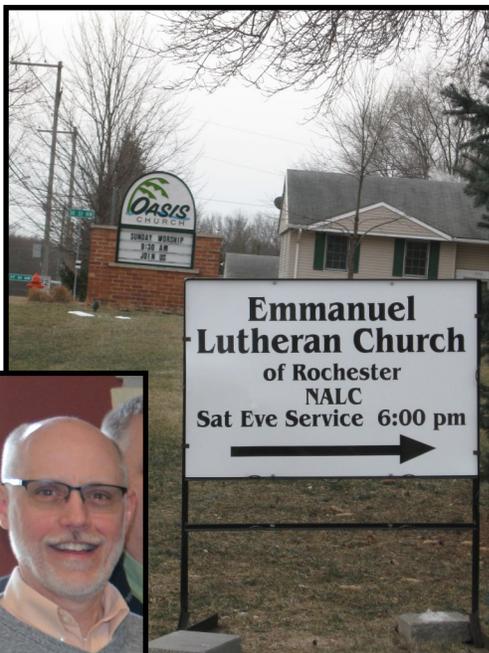
Marion Lutheran Church, Gunder, Iowa, celebrated their 150th anniversary on Sunday, August first, with a festive service of Holy Communion. The Rev. Christopher Staley, Dean of the Iowa Mission District, was the guest preacher, and the Rev. Marshall Hahn, Pastor at Marion, officiated at the service. A catered meal was served after the worship service, followed by an anniversary program, fellowship, and refreshments



Marion Lutheran Church
Gunder, Iowa



Pastor Hahn serves Marion Lutheran Church, Gunder, and Norway Lutheran Church, St. Olaf.



Norway Lutheran Church
St. Olaf, Iowa

Left: Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Rochester, MN, is served by Pastor David Steffenson. The congregation currently worships at Oasis Baptist Church, but has land and is in the planning process for constructing their own building.

North American Lutheran Church 2021 Convocation Corpus Christi, Texas

The 2021 Convocation of the North American Lutheran Church was held in Corpus Christi, Texas, during the first week of August. More than 400 delegates and visitors attended. The theme for this year was “God the Father Creates”. During the week the new General Secretary of the NALC, The Rev. Dr. Amy Little, was installed as the chief operating office of our church. Elected to the Executive Council were the Rev. Mark Werner of Pittsgrove, New Jersey, and Joel Williams of Erwin, South Dakota. Two new members were elected to the Court of Adjudication—the Rev. Dr. Jeffray Greene of Brooks, Georgia, and Matthew Lind of Bainbridge Island, Washington. Two resolutions passed during the convocation were 1) a resolution inviting pastors and congregations of the NALC to unite in intentional and intensive prayer for Ethiopia as their country is going through a time of significant political turmoil, and 2) the resolution to approve the 2022 NALC operating budget. More information about Luther Week,, including photos and videos, is available at lutheranweek.com.



Left: At every convocation time is allotted for each Mission District to meet together for discussion of a mission topic and the sharing of information pertinent to the Mission District. Pastor Staley, (seated at the far right of the picture) leads the Iowa Mission District delegates and visitors during the Iowa Mission District gathering..



NALC Bishop Dan Selbo stops to chat with Iowa Mission District Dean, Pastor Christopher Staley. Bishop Selbo will be the keynote speaker at the Iowa Mission District convocation, September 11th, at Emmons Lutheran Church.

Below: Displays from our mission partners, the NALS, several Lutheran publishing houses, and other organizations that relate to the NALC, always draw visitors during the convocation. Various booths offer information about the missions we support, supply handouts concerning continuing educational opportunities, and have books and other items available to support congregational ministries and promote personal growth in one’s faith in Christ. Sometimes they also give out free gifts, such as candy or ballpoint pens. 😊





Christ Alone: Eyes Front!

*Pr. Barbara Wills
Peace Lutheran Church
Northwood, Iowa*

Those who have served in the military are familiar with the term, “Eyes front!” It’s a command drill instructors use to focus the eyes of their troops straight ahead. It’s a term that also speaks to Jesus’ followers as we seek to keep our eyes and hearts focused on Christ alone. In this chaotic and sinful world there are many things that draw our attention away from our Lord—temptations, dangers, pain, fear, and threats of every kind.

One of the most vivid reminders of where we, as Christian people, are to direct our focus, our attention, and our trust is the story of Peter walking on water in Matthew 14:22-33. Jesus has fed the five thousand, sent the disciples back across the lake in a boat, dismissed the crowds of people, and then walked up the nearby mount to pray. In the wee hours of the morning He himself sets out to cross the lake—on foot. When the disciples, struggling against the wind that is against them, see Jesus emerge as a shadowy shape coming toward them on the sea, they’re terrified. When Jesus becomes aware of their fear, He calls out to identify Himself and calm them down. At that point, Peter—always rash and often speaking without thinking things through first—calls out to the Lord and says, “If it’s You, command me to come to You across the water.” Jesus does—and Peter jumps out of the boat and starts walking toward his Lord. It’s what happens next that is instructive to us in our own faith journeys. As Peter walks toward Jesus, his attention is diverted. He looks down at the waves splashing over his feet, he becomes aware of the wind whipping around him, and he likely begins to realize that he’s actually not sinking. At this point, that’s exactly what he does. He starts to sink. As long as he kept his eyes on Jesus, he did fine. As soon as he turned away and began to consider the dangerous circumstances around him, and *his own amazing feat* (please note the irony), Peter goes down.

One of the most difficult things for people to do is to let go and fall trustingly into

the arms of our Savior. When Jesus tells Nicodemus (John 3:16) that whoever believes in Him will not perish, He’s talking about letting the whole weight of our being rest in Him.

Trust is the key. We are willing to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, but we are not always willing to give Him ultimate access to our lives and hearts. Often, we don’t call upon Him until we’ve tried every “fix” we’ve been able to think of first. Then, sinking into the depths of our troubles, we cry out. We’re willing to go and do things for the Lord, but too frequently we want to go in a direction we’ve chosen and do things according to our own wills. Rather than abiding and resting in Christ, and listening for His words of guidance and direction, we’re focused on doing things our own way. Too often we neglect daily, prayerful “listening” to the Holy Spirit’s guidance through daily reading of Scriptures because we’re so anxious to get out and get going—sometimes in the wrong direction. In John 15 Jesus speaks of abiding in Him; that apart from Him we can do nothing. Keeping our focus on Christ and trusting in Him is a matter of taking time to sit in His presence and hear His words, as Mary did in Luke 10:38-42. Most of us are much more comfortable with Martha. But it was Mary who took the time to listen and rest fully in the love of her Lord, trusting His guidance rather than her own need to perform.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Roman that there is nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus—and offered a comprehensive list of situations we all fear and the trials of life we experience. (Romans 8:31-39). It is Christ alone who calls us into His love and into His Life. As we keep our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus, He will embrace us, feed us with His Word, open our hearts to discern His will, give us direction and guidance in following where He wants us to go, and lead us safely through the trials of this life into the fullness of life everlasting.

A Few of My Favorite Psalms

Psalm 30

*I will extol thee, O LORD, for thou hast drawn me up,
and hast not let my foes rejoice over me.*

*O LORD my God, I cried to thee for help,
and thou hast healed me.*

*O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from Sheol, restored
me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.*

These opening verses of Psalm 30 reflect the psalmist's gratitude to the Lord for rescue and healing. The first verse suggests that the saving act of the Lord was in response to a physical threat of some kind from human enemies. But the second verse implies a recovery from illness or injury. It may be that the writer of this Psalm had been seriously injured by foes and then recovered from near death. But this ambiguity broadens the scope of the prayer for us, so that we can make it our own, regardless of whether our foe is a disease, state of mind, temptation, sin, another person—or any situation that has threatened our life, faith, or sense of well-being.

We have all had experiences in life that seemed so overwhelming that we couldn't see any glimmer of hope beyond the present darkness. When we survive such times of trial, our joy is so great that we need to find words to thank and praise the Lord for His mercy and strength, and for bringing us into this state of joy and wellbeing. This is how the psalmist felt when he extolled the Lord—lifting up the Lord's name and offering expressions of praise and thanksgiving. This Psalm gives us words and mental images to express these feelings of gratitude and joy:

*Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints
and give thanks to his holy name.
For his anger is but for a moment
and his favor is for a lifetime.
Weeping may tarry for the night,
but joy comes with the morning.*

One of the interesting things about our human sinfulness and short-sightedness is that when things are going well, we so often drift away from the Lord. Instead of continually remembering those times when the Lord saved us from our fears and the dangers of life, we tend to take things for granted when the path before us is smooth and things are going well. We may even begin to think that we are somehow responsible for our wellbeing, as if our comfortable situation was the result of our great planning and "wise" decisions. This is a human failing—all through

the book of Exodus we find the people going from crisis to crisis as they turn away from trusting the Lord who continually rescues them. The psalmist also refers to this tendency in his own life:

*As for me, I said in my prosperity,
"I shall never be moved."*

*By thy favor, O LORD,
thou hadst established me as a strong mountain;
thou didst hide thy face, I was dismayed.*

Perhaps it was this over confidence in his own strength that laid the groundwork for the difficulties the psalmist later experienced. His experience of the Lord "hiding His face"—the sense that *God had abandoned him* when *he* began to drift away from the Lord—led him to turn back and cry out for help. The psalmist's understanding of death did not include resurrection. In his prayer he expresses the belief that if he dies he can no longer give praise to God, and he uses this argument in his cry to the Lord: "*Will the dust praise thee?*" Even though we know that we will live forever with God through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus, we can still resonate with this plea. We want our lives to be lived in service to God. We want more time to do those things that are pleasing to Him and that will help others come to know and love Him, too. With these thoughts in mind, we may also use these words when we cry to the Lord for help and a restoration to health and wellbeing.

*Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing;
thou hast loosed my sackcloth
and girded me with gladness,
that my soul may praise thee and not be silent.
O LORD my God, I will give thanks to thee forever.*

As the Lord heard the prayer of the psalmist, so He hears our prayers. Whatever trials we face here in this life, however often we walk through a vale of tears, our heavenly Father has looked with compassion on us and given us His Son to bear the burden of our sins and sorrows. Jesus, our good Shepherd, has gone to prepare a place for us in His eternal Kingdom, and we will indeed give thanks to Him forever and sing eternal praises around His throne of grace!

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

Announcements

Upcoming Events

September 11, 2021—Iowa Mission District Convocation—Emmons Lutheran Church, Emmons, MN.

October 2, 2021—9:00 a.m.—Iowa Mission District Council meeting—Cabin Coffee, Mason City, IA

Please Pray for:

Pastor James Puotyual who is awaiting a kidney transplant.

Pastor David Schafer who is scheduled for 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

From the Treasurer:

Greetings in the name of Jesus!

First, a huge thank you to each and every congregation that has supported our mission district - may the Lord bless you real good!

Secondly, just a reminder that the financial or fiscal year in our district runs from September 1st through August 31st.

Contributions are to be sent to:

Pr. Gary Burkhalter, Treasurer
Mission in Christ Lutheran Church
312 E. Mission St
Strawberry Point, IA 52076

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.

Flood Bucket Challenge

An exciting opportunity awaits us!!! We will be gathering for our annual Mission District Convocation on Saturday, September 11th at Emmons Lutheran in Emmons, MN. We are pleased that NALC Bishop Dan Selbo will be joining us that day. But the excitement to which I'm referring is the opportunity we have to "STUFF THE TRUCK" for our NALC Disaster Response warehouse in the Rochester area.

As Dean, I have set an OUTRAGEOUS goal of our filling 100 Flood Buckets that will be taken to our warehouse to stand ready for disasters that may occur in our area. Part of what makes this OUTRAGEOUS is that the Convocation is a mere 8 weeks away. So, in order to possibly accomplish this, we need your help, NOW!

Given that we are also inviting Youth attend this year's Convocation, part of their day will be involved assembling the buckets with the needed items. If you or your congregation has already filled some flood buckets, great! If not, instead of individuals or congregations bringing completed buckets, I am asking that individuals or congregations 'sign up' to bring some aspect of the whole project. The contents of a Flood Bucket are shown at the bottom of this message.

If you can bring 10 jugs of bleach, you can sign up to do just that. It may also be that you have 'connections' with someone or some company who may be willing to donate some of the items. - Maybe your company goes through many five-gallon buckets that could be re-purposed - Maybe your employer would spring for a couple dozen bottles of Pine Sol, or pairs of gloves.

Whatever is the case, I ask you to send me an email (cbstaley@netins.net), identifying which congregation you represent and what you can bring. I will keep a running tally of what is still needed. This updated list can be found on our Mission District's NEW Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/Iowa-Mission-District-NALC-100168162357099>

The true excitement will come at our closing worship where we will have a blessing of the Flood Buckets and send them on their way. There's much more to share about Disaster Response that will be made available in upcoming Newsletters and at the Convocation.

Please JOIN this challenge. Spread the word to ALL in your congregation. If we ALL do something, we can do GREAT things altogether!!!

Each flood bucket consists of:

- 1 five-gallon bucket WITH lid (can be previously used, but need to be cleaned out)
- 1 jug bleach
- 2 large trash bags
- 1 roll paper towels
- 1 container Comet or scouring cleanser
- 1 bottle Pine Sol or liquid cleaner
- 1 scrub brush
- 1 pair rubber gloves (Playtex dishwashing type)
- 1 pair leather gloves (large)
- 1 pair cotton gloves (large)



*Pastor Christopher Staley
Dean, Iowa Mission District*

Iowa Mission District Convocation Registration

Saturday, September 11, 2021
Emmons Lutheran Church, Emmons, MN

The 2021 annual Convocation of the Iowa Mission District will take place at Emmons Lutheran Church, Emmons, on Saturday, September 11. Our theme is “Christ Alone” and we are pleased to have Bishop Dan Selbo 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 District. As you prepare for the convocation please be thinking of nominations for Treasurer of the Mission District and the following Council positions: Two lay members (one 3 year and one 2 year to finish an uncompleted term) and one clergy (3 year). A nomination form will be included in this month’s Iowa Mission District News. Please get permission from the nominees. They will need to complete the nomination form and mail it to Mission District Secretary, Craig Lease.

According to Article 4.01 of the IA- MD Constitution *all clergy persons within the territory of the District and two lay delegates of each congregation are eligible to vote at the Convocation.*

In addition, we strongly encourage congregational participation beyond the delegates and clergy—visitors are welcome! There is no cost to 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 3:30 pm.

New this year is that we are hoping that junior and high school youth will also come with other delegates to the convocation. They will participate in a portion of the convocation, and then spend some time as a group in various activities.

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 **Pastor Barbara Wills at PO Box 202, Northwood, IA 50459** or email as an attached file to barbaramwills@gmail.com. **All information requested on the form needs to be included.**

(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:

*Mr. Craig Lease, Secretary
Iowa Mission District, NALC
405 7th Street N.
Northwood, IA 50459*

Signature

Congregations of the Iowa Mission District

Ackley: **Our Saviour's**, Dan Buhs, Lay Minister
Avoca: **Trinity**, Pr. Eric Meissner
Badger: **Badger Lutheran**, Pr. Scott Meier
Boyden: **St. John**, Pr. Mark 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**, Pr. Ron Voss
+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—
cbstaley@netins.net
Craig Lease, Secretary—
pdlease@gmail.com
Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer—
pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com

Mission District Council Members:

Pastor Ronald Rasmussen—
bigras73@fmctc.com
Pastor Tony D. Ede—
tonyede@gmail.com
Chris Schlee—
schleemasonry@hotmail.com
Kathy Scharnhorst—
gaf@butler-bremer.com
Lyle Hollander
lhollander@frontiernet.net

Disaster Response Coordinator:

Betty Burkhalter
bettyburkhalter@hotmail.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

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.



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