



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

April 2023

A Word from the Dean

*I come to the garden alone while the dew is still
on the roses,
and the voice I hear falling on my ear the Son of
God discloses.*

More than a century ago, a pharmacist-turned-hymn writer, opened his Bible to the Gospel of John, the 20th chapter. In reading the story we know so well of Mary Magdalene's finding the stone rolled away from the tomb where Jesus had been buried, he was inspired to imagine what Mary's encounter had meant.

On the previous fateful Friday afternoon, Mary Magdalene was among those who stood near the cross as Jesus died. After His death, Joseph of Arimathea asked that he be given Jesus' body for a proper burial. The tomb was in a garden, and Mary no doubt was part of the group who saw where Jesus had been lain. For the next many hours, she and all Jesus' disciples were in mourning.

According to John's gospel, it was Mary Magdalene who first returned to the tomb, while it was still dark that first day of the week, perhaps while the dew was still heavy on the ground, and perhaps even on the roses. Although we aren't told why she came to the tomb, she is surely drawn there. But when she arrives, she quickly realizes that something is wrong. The stone that had sealed the tomb has been removed. Startled by this, she goes to find Simon Peter. He and another of the disciples, most likely John, run to the tomb. Each enters the tomb to find the grave cloths but not Jesus. And then they return to their homes.

And so Mary Magdalene is left there alone, or so she thinks. Finally, she peers into the tomb. She sees two angels who question her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She explains that her tears are

the result of her desperate desire to find Jesus, having believed that someone must have stolen His body. It is at this moment that Jesus finally appears, asking Mary the same question the angels had just asked. It's unclear why Mary doesn't recognize Jesus right away and why she thinks that He must be the gardener. All she is concerned about is Jesus' body. At this, Jesus simply says her name: "Mary." The voice she hears falling on her ears the Son of God discloses. Suddenly, she sees Jesus.

And for the next few moments or maybe minutes, Mary is treated to something that hadn't happened since Adam and Eve were still living in the garden. In the cool of the day, God came there, and He walked with them and talked with them, and the joy they shared as they tarried there, none other had ever known.

Were it up to Mary, she would have stayed there in the garden with Jesus, much the same way that Peter would have had Jesus and Moses and Elijah stay atop the Mount of Transfiguration. But Jesus had more to do, and now He has a job for Mary: Go, tell. Perhaps there are moments in your life when you have an intimate moment with God, whether it be in the beauty of a garden, or in your church's sanctuary, or during an evening devotional. And, like Mary, you may wish that you could cling to that moment forever. But He bids you go, and through a voice of woe His voice to you is calling.

Even so, as you go to attend to that voice of woe, you can know that He goes with you, all the while telling you that you are His own.

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



Easter Hope

*Pastor David Klappenbach
Bethany Lutheran Church
Laurens, Iowa*

But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. (Luke 24:21)

The two disciples walking to Emmaus that first Easter afternoon present a picture of lost hope. I can almost hear it as they relate to the stranger who joined them on the road to Emmaus. “We had hoped.” Dashed hope. Broken dreams. Expectations not met. “We had hoped.” We had hoped Jesus would restore the glory of Israel. All we saw an arrest. A trial. A crucifixion. A burial. They had seen what had happened and compared it to what they had hoped for, and the only conclusion is: It is over! The cross ruined it all! Two disciples grieve as those with no hope.

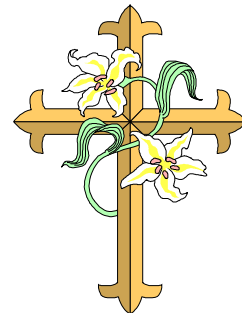
Maybe you have walked that same road just like the two disappointed disciples. You may be on that road today. Questions without answers. Changes and chances of Life got you down. A full plate of family issues to work through. Then, too, grief brings on doubt. A hope that burned bright as the sun has now been snuffed out. Even the witness of the women’s testimony that Jesus had risen was too hard to believe.

Jesus comes to these two disciples, as He comes to us. He keeps these two disciples from seeing Him as He is, the crucified and risen Jesus, who is victorious over sin, death, and devil. They are kept from recognizing Him. Jesus has work to do. He needs to teach them. He needs to light the fire of hope that once burned within them. That His cross was the good and gracious plan, the work of God from the very beginning. Jesus relates to them the hope that the Scriptures point to in the fulfillment of God’s good and gracious plan. I cannot imagine Jesus sharing the accounts

without pointing out the promises made and promises fulfilled all through the Scriptures. God’s track record in promise-keeping is perfect! All these promises pointing to—and bringing to fulfillment in—the Lord Jesus Christ.

They listened. Their hearts burned. Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham and Isaac, the Exodus, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and more, enough to cover a seven mile walk. In the middle of struggle, you might hear, but believing is hard. Yet their hearts were burning. Burning hot enough to invite Jesus to stay with them in Emmaus. Jesus accepted and Jesus the guest becomes the host. When they were at table Jesus took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. As they recognized Jesus He vanished.

We all struggle with disappointments. We are not alone. Our Lord is with us. Even if we can’t see Him with our eyes, He comes right along with us on our side in his word. He is with us for our good. He is with us to raise our lives from the death of doubts, fears, sorrows, and disappointments. He is with us so that we can have the new life full of hope and have the assurance that when we die here on earth life continues with God in heaven forever. This is the Easter hope all grounded in God’s promises fulfilled in Jesus, His beloved Son.



This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District

Disaster Response

The NALC Disaster Response ministry has been very busy the last few months assisting with flooding. The ministry responded to the train derailment in Ohio providing 1200+ flood buckets for residents to use to clean the soot from the inside of their homes.

The warehouse in Gothenberg NE is still in the building process. The Iowa Mission District will be called upon to help fill that warehouse!

The Iowa Mission District warehouse has a good supply of flood buckets and quilts/blankets. We are in need of health kits, school kits and kitchen kits.

If you have any kits ready to go, let me know. I am more than happy to work with you to get them to the warehouse.

Betty Burkhalter

Iowa Mission District Disaster Response Coordinator

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



Some of the flash flood damage in Eastern Kentucky near Hazard.

NALC Youth Mission Trip for 2023 Port Charlotte, Florida July 24th – August 1st.



This year's Youth Mission Trip will again be in conjunction with our NALC Iowa Mission District. This will allow for two specific goals to be accomplished:

1. Networking opportunities for our youth with others church youth in our area
2. Transportation cost savings (cost underwritten by our Mission District)

Mission work will be coordinated with NALC Disaster Relief!

We will travel via chartered bus and vans OR fly with other NALC in Iowa congregations.

We will travel the first night and sleep at a Lutheran church in the Nashville area if we drive.

We will base ourselves out of Port Charlotte, FL or nearby.

Primary focus this year will be **Hurricane recovery work.**

As in years past we are planning some special fun for this trip. Some possibilities this year are a minor league baseball game, spend some time at a Gulf Coast beach, and try some Florida Cuisine.

It will cost \$350/participant. \$150 Non-refundable Deposit is due before May 1st and the remaining \$200 by July 1st. Send checks to St. Olaf Lutheran Church Luther League, PO Box 56, St. Olaf Iowa 52072
(transportation & housing is limited – the sooner you register the sooner you are guaranteed a spot)

Adult Leaders– 5:1 ration per church. All skill levels are needed. We are encouraged to bring an adult with construction skills (carpentry, plumbing, electrical, etc.)

Plan money for 10 meals. Only you know how much your children eats. Some a \$5 will work...others each \$20.

If you want a souvenir, then please bring money for that. Each person is responsible for their own money. **Please include a tip for the motor coach driver which will be given at the end of the trip...\$10-\$20- your choice.**

Mary's March Report for NALC Disaster Response – 2023

Active Response:

Kentucky flooding July 30, 2022 – Over 25,000 homes were destroyed and 37 people died. NALC Disaster Response delivered 5 truckloads of emergency relief supplies and is currently scheduling 5 and more volunteer teams for long term recovery rebuilding, targeting Perry and Breathitt Counties.

Mosquito Wildfire September 7, 2022 – This wildfire came within one mile of our congregation, New Hope Lutheran Church, in Foresthill CA. NALC Disaster Response delivered 1 truckload of emergency relief supplies and is now scheduling volunteer teams to help rebuild homes in Georgetown and Volcanoville, just south of Foresthill.

Hurricane Ian September 28, 2022 – a Category 4 hurricane struck the Fort Myers FL area, destroying thousands of homes and over 125 people died. NALC Disaster Response delivered 6 truckloads of emergency relief supplies and is currently established at Tri-City Baptist Church Port Charlotte and First Baptist Church Pine Island to house volunteer teams.

Ohio Train Derailment Feb. 3, 2023 – a Norfolk Southern train carrying hazardous cargo derailed in East Palestine OH, a town of 4,047 families. 31 pallets of cleaning supplies/flood buckets have been delivered through our NALC congregation, Good Hope Lutheran Boardman OH.

NALC Disaster Response continues to:

*conduct disaster preparedness trainings: Jan. at Faith Lutheran Wilmington NC (16 new volunteers), Feb. at St. John Fort Wayne IN (22 new volunteers), and March at Grace Lutheran Thornville OH (38 new volunteers). Another training will be held in June in North Carolina.

*3 NALC Disaster Response Sundays have been held at this time.

*No attendance at Mission District Convocations this quarter.

*coordinate servant event mission trips – 2 teams have served in FL (Riverside Ministries MD scheduled 23 volunteers in January) and (Emmanuel Lutheran Church scheduled 29 volunteers in Feb.) and another 12 congregations or mission districts are scheduled for FL, KY, and CA in 2023

*hold “Stuff the Truck” events – 1 held in Cincinnati Ohio and 1 held in Kings Mountain NC in addition to numerous deliveries to our warehouses.

For more information on how to volunteer and support NALC Disaster Response, please contact Mary Bates at 740-509-1132 or disasterresponse@thenalc.org

Thank you and God bless you for all your prayers!



Abiding in Christ: O Worship the Lord

*O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand. (Psalm 95:6-7)*

As most of my friends and family know, I am not a sports fan. I have nothing against participating in sports, but I'm not a spectator, and watching people run around on an athletic field is about as interesting to me as watching grass grow. However, having said that, I think there are many good things that can come from playing sports—cooperation in working together for a common goal, learning how to lose with grace, developing physical stamina, and learning to trust others. I also like to point out to those who enjoy sports that when they get excited about a game going into overtime, they should feel the same way about a worship service that runs longer than the generally expected “one hour”.

When we consider our relationship with the Lord God, one of the most obvious things people think about is “going to church”. On one extreme, there are Christians who act as if they believe that being in worship—whether once a week or only occasionally—fulfills their obligation to the Lord. For these folks, reading the Bible, participating in Bible study or ministry projects, daily prayer, and other faith disciplines are “extras” and unnecessary. Their decisions are often made based on their own desires and comfort level rather than on whether it might be the Lord's will for their lives. And they expect their Sunday morning experience to be “short and sweet”—their tolerance level for hearing the “Gospel” is high, but please don't add any mention of the “Law”. On the other extreme are those who love being in the worship service, singing the hymns, hearing God's will for them read and preached, and praying together with others in the body of Christ. They are likely to read the Bible and devotional materials on a daily basis, and pray not only before meals and at bedtime, but first thing in the morning and at various time throughout the day. Most of their major decisions are brought to the Lord first, they're too interested in listening to the sermon to time it, and **please** don't leave out the confession and absolution, or the Psalm for the day, as a way to shorten the service!

Our Lord Jesus told His first disciples that His followers are to “abide” in Him, and that apart from Him we can do nothing. (John 15) He told them that where two or three are gathered in His name, He is there in their midst. (Matthew 18) Following His resurrection and

ascension, Christ and our Heavenly Father sent the Holy Spirit upon those who were gathered together in prayer. (Acts 2) And way back before Jesus was born, during time of the prophets, the Lord sent His judgment on those who gave only “lip service” to their faith and whose “worship” was simply a matter of “going through the motions” without devotion to the Lord or commitment to following His will. (Isaiah 1:10-17; Amos 5:21-24) When we consider the matter of gathering to worship the Lord, it's more than simply “going to church” and sitting for an hour anticipating the benediction when we can leave and do things that are more interesting and exciting than listening to the preacher. It's more than going through the motions of getting our weekly “dose of religion”. And it's far more eternally significant than watching our favorite sports team run up and down an athletic field. Gathering in the name of Christ is part of our daily walk with the One who loved us so much that He came to suffer for our sins and to call us into a relationship of love and devotion with the Holy One who created, redeems, and guides us day by day. Participating in worship with other Christians is an important part of abiding in Christ our Lord.

Those who criticize the church as being full of hypocrites are most likely using that as an excuse to justify their own desire to avoid a commitment to the Lord. Yes, the church is full of sinful human beings—those who know they need a Savior. Yes, there are times when we do not agree with each other about some things—a “growing edge” in learning to cooperate with each other and pray for the Lord to guide our decisions. Yes, we sometimes struggle with fears and anxieties and our own sinful nature—just as the first disciples did. This, too, offers us the opportunity to grow stronger in our faith as we bring these sins and uncertainties to the Lord who loves us and calls us to “abide” in Him and put our trust in Him. It is together as the worshiping Body of Christ that we grow in our faith and trust, where we are challenged to practice forgiveness and love for one another (1 Corinthians 13), and where we are offered the opportunity to use the gifts the Holy Spirit graciously bestows on us to build up the Body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12) It is also the place where our Lord is found in His fullness as we learn together to “love the Lord God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind” and to “love one another as Christ loves us.” (John 15:12-13)

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

Announcements

Upcoming Events

April 22, 2023—Mission District Council Meeting. 9:00 a.m. at Cabin Coffee in Mason City.

June 12-13, 2023—Pastors'/Lay Ministers' Retreat - Best Western, Waterloo, Iowa

July 16-22, 2023—NEXUS Institute - Grand View University, Des Moines, Iowa (high school aged)

July 24—August 1—Iowa Mission District Youth Mission Trip. Destination, Port Charlotte, Florida, to help with hurricane recovery. Cost is \$350: \$150 non-refundable deposit with registration (before May 1) and remaining \$200 due by July 1. More details on page 3 of newsletter.

August 7-11, 2023—NALC Luther Week (convocation) - Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

September 16, 2023 Iowa Mission District Convocation—Faith Lutheran Church, Monona, Iowa

Please Pray for:

Pastor James Puotyal who is awaiting a kidney transplant.

Pastor James Glesne who is undergoing treatments for Multiple Myeloma.

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

Pastor Andrew Loomis who has been diagnosed with an autoimmune system illness. Please pray that he will be healed from his chronic pain.

Pastor Ron Rasmussen who is recovering from serious health issues.

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) 358-7741
Pastor James Glesne—563-380-8110
Pastor Andrew Loomis—712-298-6587
Pastor Jack Miller—507-798-2408
Pastor Paul Weeg- -641-381-0675
Pastor Mike Wikstrom—480-203-1556 (LCMC)
Pastor Solveig Zamzow—641-903-9416

Pastor Tim Nappe is also available for pulpit supply. His primary focus is his ministry with “Reaching the Unreached”, and he will share information about this mission work whenever he does pulpit supply for a congregation. Contact information: 712-331-4245. Or email at pastortim.milford@gmail.com

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**, Pastor David Craig
Avoca: **Trinity**, Pastor Matthew Bahnfleth
Badger: **Badger Lutheran**, Pr. Scott Meier
Boyden: **St. John**, Call Process
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

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Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer—
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Pastor Barbara Wills—
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*The Iowa Mission District
has 38 congregations.*

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.