



News

of the Iowa Mission District
of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

November 2019

A Word from the Dean

BREAD OF LIFE

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ...” ~Isaiah 55:10

One of the blessings of living in a rural community is being able to experience first hand the beauty and bounty of creation all around us. As we witness the harvest coming in from the fields we see before us a very visible, tangible reminder of just how richly God provides “seed to the sower and bread to the eater” to “satisfy the desire of every living thing.” Our Thanksgiving Day observances remain rooted in giving thanks for the harvest in a way that is not nearly so obvious to our city cousins. It is much easier in a rural and small town setting to see the connections between the bounty of those fields and the blessings of our Thanksgiving tables.

Yet, there is a greater connection God wishes us to see. The bounty of the fields around us is also a sign of the overflowing bounty of God’s love for us. There is another kind of hunger within us – a hunger for God’s Word of forgiveness and grace and blessing. For we do not live by bread alone, “but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.”

And just as God blesses us with every good thing needed for this life – our daily bread – even more does He bless us with the bread of life – His Word which gives life eternal. It is for this gift that we offer our greatest thanks and praise!

***“...so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty, but it shall
accomplish that which I purpose, and shall
succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”***
~Isaiah 55:11

Pastor Marshall Hahn, Dean, Iowa Mission District, NALC



Sola Gratia—Grace: That's It!

*Pr. Kim Thacker
St. John, Western Douglas
Plainfield, Iowa*

The subject of grace alone and the month of October go together, since October of 1517 was the month when the Reformation began, when Christians began to reclaim the truth that our salvation is God's doing and not ours. The month of June, 1530 illustrates another facet of grace alone. June, 1530 was the month when the Augsburg Confession was completed and publicly confessed. The leaders of the Lutherans were in Augsburg then, the rulers and the theologians, but Martin Luther had been left at a castle or fortress along the way, where he could be as close as possible but still safe.

The month of June must have been a trying time for Luther. By mail on June 5 he heard of his father's death. Martin was too far from home to go to the funeral. And Martin by then had been away from his young family already for two months. On June 19 he wrote a letter to his son, Hans or John, his oldest child. Hans was four.

The Augsburg Confession was read out loud to the Emperor on June 25, and that was a great day for Christians. Many faithful men, many powerful rulers, stood up for the truth on that day. But the Emperor was not swayed by the Confession. The world was against the Lutherans, just as the world is against Lutherans today.

On the twenty-sixth of June Philip Melanchthon, the author of the Augsburg Confession, sent a copy of the Confession in its final form to Luther along with a letter. 'Now,' wrote Melanchthon, 'we have to decide where we are going to be willing

to compromise with the Roman Catholics.' Melanchthon and the other theologians in Augsburg were worried about what was going to happen next, and where it would all end, and at that moment they didn't know where it would all end. Luther must have wondered then if even his friends would eventually desert him.

Luther wrote back that he was not happy to hear about their worries. He reminded them that they had a God, and they should let Him be God. "Christ has died for sin once for all," he wrote to them, "but for righteousness and truth He will not die, but will live and reign." Luther was sorry that they "should court sorrow as eagerly as the leech does blood". "As for me," he continued, "(whether it proceeds from God's Spirit or from stupidity, my Lord Jesus knows) I do not torment myself about such matters. God can raise the dead, and He can also maintain His cause, although it looks ready to fall; and He can even raise it up again if it has fallen." Luther was counting then on God's grace, on God's good favor, continuing, and he was counting on God's grace alone.

"In the world you shall have tribulation," said Jesus to His disciples. The defiers of God are swiftly growing in power in the world today, and who knows where that will end? But like Martin Luther we can count on God's grace continuing. "*In the world you shall have tribulation;*" said Jesus, "*but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*"

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

Our newest congregation in the Iowa Mission District is Unity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Des Moines, Iowa, served by twin sisters, Donna (Senior Pastor) and Diane (Associate Pastor) Joseph. (Pictured at right are Diane, Donna, and their brother, Curt.) Pastor Donna sent the article below that tells about exciting new ministry at Unity Lutheran.



Pastor Donna and Pastor Diane had been praying for a special Mission Ministry at their congregation. One day as Pr. Donna opened up an email she was excited to see that "Iowans For Life" and "Iowa Right to Life" were in desperate need of a place to do their Pro Life Ministry. The two organizations had called upon people, congregations, etc. to come up with ideas as the place that they were stationed at was being sold and thus could no longer donate their office space to them. The Holy Spirit had laid upon the hearts of the twin pastors to email and have these two pro life ministries check out their church space.

Maggie DeWitte (Director of Iowans For Life) and Caitlyn Dixon (Director of Iowa Right to Life), and Roger Rowland (President of Iowa Right to Life), came to check out the space. The three were thrilled as the space offered them would suit their needs perfectly. The other places that were offered to the two organizations were way too expensive. A Lutheran couple stepped forward to give a donation to the church to help defray the cost of utilities.

Another facet of this pro life ministry is "Restored by Grace" which is located off site. A Christian married couple counsel those women who have known the pain of abortion and need healing through Christ. Pastor Diane has contacted Deaconess Chrissie Gillet PsyD. as she is Director of "Word of Hope" ministry. Deaconess Chrissie is a LCMS consecrated Deaconess who also ministers to those who have known the pain of abortion and through the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Word which brings forgiveness, healing, and hope. Materials and referrals by Deaconess Chrissie and "Lutherans for Life" of Nevada, Iowa, are also provided at Unity Evangelical Lutheran Church. The church has become the "Hub" of pro life activity in the state of Iowa. Praise the Lord for Life!



On Saturday, October 19, 15 women gathered at Faith Lutheran in Monona for a one-day retreat entitled "Oh, Give Thanks!" We began and ended the day with the Responsive Prayer service in the LBW. In between we sang, explored Scripture passages about giving thanks and perused the Psalms for verses that particularly spoke to us. We also spent time recalling special people who have affected our lives in various ways and were challenged to thank them by sending them a letter, card or some kind of artistic expression. Sharing memories and stories helped us to connect to one another. As we took time for a lovely lunch provided by our Women's Board, we enjoyed visiting, something we rarely have the time or opportunity to do. It was a wonderful day of thanksgiving for all the blessings we have received.

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

St. John's Lutheran (Vilmar)

Right: Pastor Christopher Martin, St. John's (Vilmar) is standing with Denise Junker of Allison Little Lambs Daycare. St. John's Mission & Outreach Committee partnered with Little Lambs to provide three infrared thermometers and a new crib that the daycare needed. Little Lambs is a Christian daycare and preschool that serves families in and around Allison, Iowa. They were one of St. John's local mission partners this year.



Bethany Lutheran

On Saturday, October 26th, the women of Bethany Lutheran Church, Laurens, hosted an area gathering of the Women of the NALC and guests. There were 39 women in attendance from the NALC churches in Ruthven (Zion), Gilmore City (First Lutheran), Eagle Grove (Samuel Evangelical) and Laurens (Bethany). In addition there were guests from the Methodist churches of Laurens and Marathon, the First Christian Church of Laurens, and guests from outside the area.

A 90-minute program consisted of three phases. The first was a welcome and prayer by Becky Braesch followed by a report from Liz Klappenbach and Dr. Linda Bieri of Bethany on the national meeting of the Women of the NALC in Indianapolis. The second was the singing of 5 hymns accompanied by Ruth Steinkoenig, along with the history of each hymn (Becky Braesch) before it was sung. The third was each attendee introduced themselves and gave a brief talk about their church and their Faith-life journey.

An extensive salad luncheon was provided by Shirley Kruse and her kitchen crew from the women of Bethany (you will never leave an NALC church hungry). Those in attendance had a wonderful time and recommend that this type of area gathering be facilitated throughout the Iowa Mission District.



Announcements

2019 Upcoming Events

April 20-21, 2020—Pastors'/Lay Ministers' Retreat, Riverside Bible Camp, Story City

July 20-27, 2020—Youth Mission Trip to Nebraska

August 3-7, 2020—NALC Luther Week, Pittsburg, PA

September 19, 2020—Iowa Mission District Convocation, St. John's (Vilmar), rural Greene.

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.



As many of you know, Pastor James Puotyual was in the hospital in Rochester for several weeks with some rather complicated—and very serious—health issues. He was finally released a few weeks ago, and is living in Des Moines with his wife, Nyandit, as he continues the long recovery needed before he can return to his ministry. They have expressed their appreciation for our prayers and support during these difficult months. Please continue to hold them and their family in prayer. We have been in contact with Pastor Buba

concerning those who would like to continue to provide financial assistance, and this is how it is best done: "We ask you not to send any direct support to Pastor Puotyual, but to use the system that is already in place. For additional information, please visit: <https://thenalc.org/partners/pastor-james-puotyual/> . These funds will be able to be used to assist with remaining medical bills, housing costs, transportation, and the day-to-day expenses of life. Please direct any questions to the NALC's Mission Office at missions@thenalc.org or to myself" (from Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, Assistant to the Bishop for Missions).

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.





Steadfast In God's Word

Whether I Live or Die: Baptized into Christ's Death

"None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." (Romans 14:7-9)

Death comes to us all. As I write this, my husband and I have just received news that a family friend died this morning. It was expected; we knew he was in hospice care. And all of us will die. From the moment of birth, we know that death comes to every living creature born on earth. But knowing with our minds never fully prepares us for the sad news of the death of a family member or friend. As grief sets in we realize we can no longer pick up the phone and call them; we won't be able to sit down for coffee or a meal together; we will never again feel the touch of their hand or see their face light up with a smile.

Death was the judgment pronounced by the Lord God as the consequence of turning away from Him, the source of life. When God created human beings, He gave us one commandment, *"You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."* (Genesis 2:16-17) But the possibility of being "like God", knowing good and evil, having power, following our own desires, was too great a temptation for our first parents—and for us. Too often we trust first in ourselves—our own perceptions, whatever makes us feel good in the short term, or the easiest way. We say or do something that will bring heavy and difficult consequences that will have to be faced later. Whenever we trust ourselves instead of the Lord who created us and knows us best, we follow the path that leads away from the Source of life, and end up going down the path to death. Everyone is born in sin—everyone has to die.

End of story? Or just the beginning? The love that moved the Lord God to create us, also moved Him to save us—from ourselves; from "sin, death, and the devil." Already, at the moment of pronouncing judgment, the Lord promised redemption. Finding Adam and Eve hiding in the bushes after listening to the beguiling words of the serpent, the Lord pronounces judgment—first to the serpent: *"The LORD God said ... 'Because you have done this, cursed are you above*

all cattle, and above all wild animals; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.'" (Genesis 3:14-15) This judgment was the promise of a Savior who would take our place and die—but who would, in that "bruising", destroy the ancient serpent and destroy his power forever.

In the fullness of time, Jesus of Nazareth came to do just that. The promise was repeated to Abraham, when the Lord called him to leave his home to go to a new land, saying that through his descendants all the nations would be blessed. Jesus was the One—the "seed" of Eve, the descendent from the line of Abraham—who would take on death and bring life and blessing through His resurrection. As Jesus told the Pharisee, Nicodemus, *"God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that all who believe in Him will not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16)

When we are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we are baptized into the death of Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul says, *"We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."* (Romans 6:4) Because of this, Paul can assert that we are alive with our Lord, whether we live or die. And so, when we lose a loved one in this life, it's not the end—it's the beginning. Yes, we grieve—but we do not despair. Yes, we miss them—but it is only for a time, until we also leave this life to be with the Lord, face to face. In one of the prayers we offer to the Lord during the funeral service from the LBW is this petition, *"Give us your aid, so we may see in death the gate to eternal life, that we may continue our course on earth in confidence until, by your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before us..."* (page 207)

Day by day, we live to the Lord. And one day, we will leave this earth behind, and "die to the Lord"—die *in* the Lord—to live with Him forever.

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 Lund
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**, Pr. Rich Taylor
Ellsworth: **Trinity**, Pastor Jon Rollefson
Emmons, MN: **Emmons**, Pr. David Schafer, Interim
Gilmore City: **First**, Tracy Nerem, Lay Minister
Grafton: **Emmanuel**, Pr. Solveig Zamzow
Greene: **St. John (Vilmar)**, Pr. Christopher Martin
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**, Call process
+Sibley: **Faith**, Pr. Tim Nappe
Spencer: **Trinity**
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

The following pastors are available for pulpit supply:

Pastor Paul Breddin—515--528-2284
Pastor James Glesne—563-380-8110
Pastor Jack Miller—(507) 798-2408
Pastor David Steffenson—253-302-9845 (Sundays)
Pastor Paul Weeg- -641-381-0675



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*The Iowa Mission District
has 37 congregations.*



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