



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

December 2022

A Word from the Dean

"Keep watch, therefore"

Are we ready? Many are the times I've asked this question. My mother, who had four other children besides myself, became well practiced in the art of readiness. Whenever we were about to go on a trip, she would begin a list of all the things we needed to do before we could go, and all the things we needed to take with us on the trip. But, in spite of her years of experience and her constant vigilance, when the moment for departure arrived, we were almost never as ready as we were supposed to have been. Many were the times when having driven a few or a few hundred miles down the road, another thing would be remembered. But the answer was always the same: we're not turning back now, it's too late. Thankfully it was never something that would have burned our house to the ground.

On recent Sundays and as we enter into the new church year with the season of Advent, we read in the Gospel lessons where Jesus describes times of cataclysm that lie ahead. In the midst of these disturbing images He cries out for us to be ready or stay awake or keep watch.

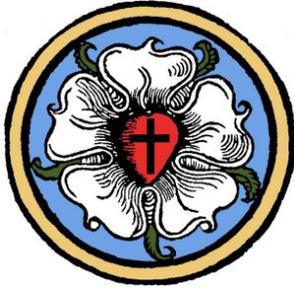
But now, as December is fast approaching, we live in the midst of a culture where the Christmas season has taken center stage for many weeks now. Christmas movies have been playing on different channels since well before Thanksgiving. And tantalizing advertisements of "Black Friday" specials

come earlier and earlier each year. Children surely will begin preparing for this season, if they haven't done so already, by compiling a Christmas list of all the latest and greatest toys. And the rest of us will become occupied with preparing for family gatherings, decorating homes and offices, and wondering how we will have time and money for it all.

With all the hubbub, it is easy to forget about the preparations Jesus speaks to us about. But please don't see this as yet just another thing for which we must become ready. Instead, steal for yourself some time in the coming weeks to look at the promises contained in God's Word for what those end times portend. Salvation is drawing near. And in those moments when you can make some quiet, go to God in prayer. As the old song tells it, when we are weak and heavy laden, and under a load of care, we need to take it to the Lord in prayer. Ask God to speak through the noise of our busy world, to fill you with peace and to prepare you for Immanuel, God with us. A blessed Advent to you all, the season in the church year when we anticipate when Christ shall come with shouts of acclamation. *Come, Lord Jesus.*

In Christ,

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



Hope

*Pr. Andrew Loomis
Graettinger, Iowa*

As we enter the Advent season, we enter a time of hope. It is a time when we are waiting for God to act. We remember the centuries which God's people waited for him to fulfill his promises to send his chosen one, the Messiah, to save his people. And we wait in hope for him to fulfill his promise to come again and take us to be with him forever in the new heaven and the new earth.

As we consider the hope we have, it is good to have a biblical definition of hope. St. Paul uses the word hope quite often, and he gives us a good explanation of biblical hope in his letter to the Romans. "*For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*" Hope is our expectation that God will fulfill his promises, even though we cannot see them being fulfilled at this time.

As we see, St. Paul tells us that it is in hope we are saved. Hope is an expression of the faith which the Holy Spirit gives us, through which we receive the saving grace of God. And just like our faith, it is not the hope itself, but rather the object of our hope that is important. There are a lot of things in which we can place our hope, but it is only in the grace and promises of God that we can be sure of the things hoped for.

Where I am placing my hope is something which I have had to remind myself recently as I struggle with the pain and discomfort of fibromyalgia. All the plans I had for how I expected my ministry to go, and the things I wanted to do are now set aside as I have days where it is a

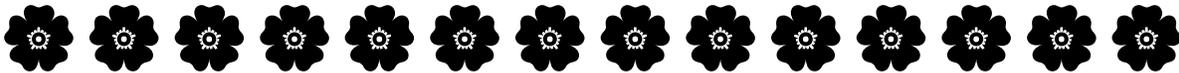
struggle to get out of bed, let alone spend time in study and writing. In those times when my entire body hurts and there is no relief in sight, it can be hard to have much hope for the future.

It has been in these times that I have considered where I was actually placing my hope. Was I actually placing my hope in God alone, or was I placing my hope in the gifts he has given me? Health, wisdom, understanding, investments and retirement are all things which God has given to me to use for his glory. He wants us to use the gifts he gives us, but sometimes when we are using and enjoying the gifts, we don't think about the giver as much. These gifts are useful in this life, but what do they offer for eternity?

When faced with failing health, with a condition that is not curable and managed pain is about the best I can hope for, a lot of the gifts I had placed my hopes in don't seem that important. What good are they if they can't cure me and I am in no condition to use and enjoy them? Without Christ, there would be no hope, but when I remember that the one who gave me the gifts has promised even greater gifts to come, and healing from all my pain and sorrows, I can still find joy and hope in the worst of pain. It does not take away the pain, for if the hope was seen it would not be hope, but because it is based in the promises of God, the hope is sure and I can bear all things as I wait for God to act, and still sing out, "Hallelujah, blessed be the name of the Lord!"

This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District

St. John Lutheran Church, Le Mars, Iowa, voted to join the NALC and LCMC this fall. On Reformation Sunday, October 30th, the congregation had a service of celebration to commemorate this important change in the life of their congregation. In the picture to the right, Iowa Mission District Dean, Pastor Christopher Staley, joined St. John's pastor, Pastor Christian Meier (green stole) and the congregation to help celebrate this important event. Also participating in the celebration were Pastor Sarah Stenson, CEO of the Luther House of Study, Sioux Falls, SD, and Dr. Chris Croghan, Chief Academic Officer of the Luther House of Study.



Pastor Tony D. Ede poses with Reformation Day servers at First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Manchester, Iowa. The servers are Chloe Glew, and Katelyn Bielby to Pastor Ede's right, and Savannah Hamm and Carver Ede to his left.

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



Dr. Linda Bieri, a member of Bethany Lutheran Church in Laurens, sent the two pictures of Pr. David Klappenbach wearing chasubles that were given to the church from the estate of her brother, Pr. Jerry Olson, who passed away last March. Pr. Klappenbach wore the red chasuble on Reformation Sunday, and the white one on All Saints' Sunday. Until now, no one remembers a pastor ever having worn a chasuble during a holy festival celebration at Bethany.

Some of Pastor Olson's other vestments have been sent to the North American Lutheran Seminary, where Dr. Reisen will make them available to seminary graduates.



Pastor Marshall Hahn sent the following information and to the right:: The St. Olaf Parish/ Faith Lutheran Luther League held a Lock-in with youth from First Lutheran, Manchester at Norway Lutheran on November 4-5. There were 19 youth and 8 adult sponsors there to play games, eat some snacks, worship together, eat some pizza, watch some movies, eat some breakfast, and have some fun. It was an opportunity to get together with some of the friends - youth and adult - who had gone on the trip to Louisiana last summer. Everyone had a great time! Pastor Tony even made it all the way to the end of the line with a cup of popcorn on his head without spilling a kernel!





Here I Stand Confession and Conviction: *Pondering in Our Hearts*

One of the most beautiful events recorded in the Bible is the account of the Angel Gabriel's visit to the Virgin Mary—the Annunciation—when he told her she was blessed and had found favor with God. Mary was the virgin mentioned in Isaiah's prophecy to Ahaz several hundred years earlier: *"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. 'Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel'."* (Isaiah 7:14) In what must have been a frightening, overwhelming, and even shocking encounter with the HOLY, Mary accepts Gabriel's words and submits to the will of God: *"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."* (Luke 1:38) No doubt, in the weeks and months that followed—as Mary traveled from her home in Galilee to visit her elderly kinswoman, Elizabeth, in the hill country of Judea; as she faced the misunderstanding of her fiancé, Joseph, and her parents and other relatives; as she remembered Gabriel's words to her on that fateful day—she did a lot of meditating, pondering and praying. *"Blessed among women!" "Name Him Jesus." "Son of the Most High." "Reign over the house of Jacob forever." "Of His kingdom there will be no end."* What could it all mean? How would these things happen? Who am I that the Lord of the universe would choose me? Can it really be true?

With the first Sunday of Advent, we are beginning a new church year. These first few weeks of the new year, we'll be hearing about the prophecies and promises of the Lord God that point to the fulfillment of God's plan to send the offspring of Eve Who would crush the head of the ancient serpent, Satan. (Genesis 3:15) This promise was renewed in the Lord's call to Abram and Sarai, who were to be the parents of a son, despite their advanced ages, from whose descendants all the nations would be blessed. (Genesis 12:2) And to King David, the Lord gave this promise—that his throne would be established forever. (2 Samuel 7:16;) Throughout the following generations this promise was repeated through the prophets and passed down from generation to generation—no doubt pondered and prayed about as people waited and watched, and hoped for the fulfillment of these ancient pledges.

And then, one day, in a village in Galilee, far from the center of government and power, the angel Gabriel visited Mary and spoke these words to her: *"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and*

bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:31-33) In the months that followed, Gabriel's words were fulfilled. At the birth of this special Son, shepherds came to the humble stable where Mary was nursing her new-born child, and shared a wondrous story of angelic hosts appearing in the night sky—announcing Jesus' birth and singing glorious praises to the Lord. And Mary pondered.... (Luke 2:19) A few weeks later, Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple for the purification ceremony required by Mosaic Law. Elderly Simeon came up to them and prophesied about this Child, amazing Mary and Joseph. And causing them to wonder.... (Luke 2:33) Twelve years later, on the family's annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem for Passover, Jesus disappeared. Three days later, his parents found Him in the Temple, debating with the most learned men of Israel! And Mary kept all these things in her heart.... (Luke 2:51) The story was unfolding, moment by moment; year by year. The ancient prophecies and the words of Gabriel were coming true, enacting the gradual and faithful fulfillment of God's ancient plan and promises, and revealing the solid, steadfast love of the Lord.

As we listen to these ancient words of promise and fulfillment, we are not mere spectators or disinterested listeners. We are part of the story, just as Mary was. We are those, like Eve and Adam, who have trusted our own faulty judgment and wills and have been trapped in sin. We are among those in the nations for whom Abraham and Sarai's descendant, Jesus of Nazareth, came to bring the blessing of redemption and restoration. The beautiful baby boy, born to Mary, came to be the Savior of every person in every generation. By entering into the realm of death through His own death, Jesus destroyed the powers of sin, death and the devil in His resurrection. We, too, are called—as Abraham and Sarah, Mary and Joseph, and all the faithful people of God who have been called through all the ages—to be embraced by His love, saved by His grace, and to participate in His Life as we faithfully follow, witness, serve and love. Take time to listen—to ponder—and respond.

Pastor Barbara M. Willis

Announcements

Upcoming Events

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

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

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 Puotyual 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.

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 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

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@laurens-ia.com
Elise Patzke—
ekbieri@gmail.com

Disaster Response Coordinator:

Betty Burkhalter
bettyburkhalter@hotmail.com

Mission District Registrar

Kathy Scharnhorst
kscharnhorst51@gmail.com

Mission District Communicator

(newsletter editor/web master):
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. 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.