



NORTH AMERICAN
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

MIDWESTERN AREA NEWSLETTER

April 2023



I invite you to submit material for inclusion in future newsletters, but keep your information concise, to the point, and use “links” if you want to provide the reader with access to “long readings”. – Jess Abbott, Midwestern Area Assistant to the Bishop (AAB), 513-314-2028, midwesternaab@thenalc.org

Latest and Greatest News!

Ohio Mission Region Having and NALC Faith Formation Festival May 5-6

The OMR Convocation includes all five Ohio Mission Districts. This year the Heartland Mission District will join in also, especially since workshops and guest speakers will be added to convocation activities. See the brochure and registration page at the end of this newsletter for more information. All are welcome if you'd like to take advantage of this educational opportunity in our Midwestern Area of the NALC.

Celebrating Pastors

Welcome Pastor Miguel Acosta, to Stone Lutheran Church, Ashland, OH.

On February 26th, the NALC Executive Council approved Pastor Michael Pichardt, Ixonia, WI. Pastor Pichardt comes to us from the LC-MS and has accepted a call to Lord of Life, Oconomowoc, WI.

Welcome Interim Pastors in the Heartland MD. Pastor Rob Cooley serving St. John, Sunman, IN; Pastor David Keil serving House of Prayer, Elizabethtown, KY. God bless them as they provided experienced advice as well as Word and Sacrament to their congregations.

Iowa MD Developing Sermon Resource for Empty Pulpit Congregations

Pastor Gary Burkhalter is working on a sermon library for our website

(www.iowamissiondistrict.com). This is in response to the shortage of pastors and meant to assist small congregations that frequently hold lay-led services. He has sent out a request to our Mission District pastors, asking for message manuscripts that could be downloaded and used by congregations when they need to have lay-led services. If you are willing to share, he needs them submitted in PDF format with the season and lectionary year (A, B, or C) noted. It might also be helpful to include the Scripture text being used. If you have questions, please contact Pastor Burkhalter at pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com.

Online Confirmation Program!!

Some good folks in the NALC Southern Area have been working on launching an Online Confirmation program in January. This is in response to the need some congregations may have because they are currently without a pastor, have a small number of confirmation age youth, or both. If you or a congregation you know is interested, contact the Southern Area Assistant to the Bishop, Pastor Mark Braaten, 903-316-1594 mbraaten@oslctyler.org



Pastor David Wendel Offers Sermons for Lay Leaders to Deliver at Worship Services

David has been posting sermons online since the beginning of the pandemic. He posts them Wednesday or Thursday, so that congregations can capture the link and prepare for Sunday. A few congregations have been asking for Word text of his sermons, so they have a lay person present them (a preferred thing to do with them). In times of pastoral vacancy, this is one way to provide preaching on the texts, and help congregations to have a Service of the Word with laypersons leading worship. After he posts sermons on YouTube https://youtu.be/gCcD_lwCbA, he also posts

them on his Facebook page and the NALC Fellowship group.

Any congregation desiring the sermon text can send Pastor Wendel an email dwendel@thenalc.org and he will add them to the distribution list to receive the Word doc midweek.

* * *

When was the last time you were up-side-down? If you're about my age you definitely avoid such things. I thought I'd share an excerpt from my diary while training-up to go into Iraq in February 2011. *"The training last night was in a simulator that rolls a 'Mine Repellant Ambush Protected' (MRAP) vehicle. Everyone is strapped in their seat with full battle rattle (body armor, helmet, goggles, and weapons). My term for the simulator is 'the dryer'. Seven soldiers rolling like laundry with junk, to include all sand and rocks tracked into the machine, tumbling in confusion. Now comes the hard part. They stop the MRAP upside down with 40 lb. body armor beginning to slide with gravity toward the chin and beginning to choke the wearer. Then we have to release our seat belts. If a person is smart, he or she will put their strongest hand on the ceiling (now the floor), let their feet hang forward for the drop, and release the belt before the armor chokes them into unconsciousness. The whole experience is a bit like getting on a complicated rollercoaster with the knowledge you might not make it out without some injury or choking. We all did fine and afterward some soldiers would have liked to go again."*



Menagerie Thoughts of Jess...

As we have journeyed through Lent, we've been thinking together about "Kingdom Life" and how it looks up-side-down to "the other kingdoms" of this world. The other kingdoms tell us to accumulate (rather than give), accelerate (rather than meditate), and manipulate (rather than care). Often, we "kingdom of Jesus people" are told we are a little odd; a little up-side-down. But when you think about it, the great gift of Jesus' message is that it is really the "other kingdoms" that are out-of-whack and up-side-down. They are the ones choking the life out of people! I pray that your Lenten journey has been one of grasping the wonder of God's Kingdom Life; to be right-side-up. I don't know about you, but I'm glad the Lord has given us the wisdom and spirit to stay off the rollercoaster of those other kingdoms. —*Jess*

Seminarians in the Midwestern Area

Michelle Kouse, North American Lutheran Seminary network (NALS) / Fuller Seminary, M.Div program. SW Ohio MD.

Rochelle Lemieux, St. Paul Lutheran Seminary, working on Pastoral Care certification. Heartland MD

Terese Whitten, Institute of Lutheran Theology, Interning in North Carolina. Michigan MD

Pam Grandmason, Trinity School for Ministry (NALS), Ambridge PA, Ordination Under Special Circumstances program. Michigan MD

If you know of any seminarians in the Midwestern Area not listed here, please email them to Jess with school, degree / certification being sought, and their Mission District.

Youth Opportunities

May 5-6 Ohio Region NALC Convocation with workshops for youth leaders and adults. Grace Lutheran Church in Westerville, OH

June 11-14 Lutheran Disaster Response Camp for youth in eastern Kentucky. Info: MEKoch46@gmail.com

June 22-25 “**The Call**” is a retreat to be held at the North American Lutheran Seminary Center in Ambridge, PA. Learn more at <https://www.tsm.edu/thecall/>.

July 1-4 **NALC Continental Youth Gathering**, Boerne, TX (near San Antonio)

July 16-22 NEXUS Institute, a week-long event for high schoolers, will be held at Grand View University, Des Moines, Iowa from July 16-22, 2023. Learn more at <https://www.grandview.edu/about/community/camps-clinics/nexus>.

Renewal Resources for Pastors & Spouses

Broom Tree Ministries

www.broomtreeministries.org
262-646-7774, bminwisconsin@gmail.com
5-day Soul Care Retreats, food and lodging **free of charge**. The mission of Broom Tree is to provide a gracious environment, secluded and private, protected with prayer, to which Christian pastor leaders and their spouses can retreat in order to spend time with God so that He can refresh, refocus, restore, encourage, energize, and equip them for the task to which He has called them.

Shepherd’s Canyon Retreat Ministry

www.shepherdscanyonretreat.org
480-588-8837, Phoenix, Arizona
Each session of their week-long retreat features up to eight people with group, couple, and individual counseling led by professional Christian counselors (one male, one female) and a chaplain who provides spiritual guidance. Full accommodations are provided.

Luther Week 2023, Oklahoma City

August 7-11, 2023. Don’t know about you, but I’m looking forward to an “in person” week of fellowship, learning, and convocation after our stretch of Zoom meetings. See developing details and registration process on the NALC website.

Congregation Vacancies

The NALC website has a great section to see congregations looking for a full-time or part-time pastor <https://thenalc.org/call-process/>

Newsletter Distribution List

If you know someone who would like to receive this newsletter regularly, please provide name and email address. It will only be emailed, and they will be Blind copied (Bcc).

Midwestern AAB Schedule Contact me if you’d like me to suggest some short presentations I can make at event. For convocations, I can provide a short update on NALC priorities and recent efforts.

The following events are on my radar to attend:

6 May 2023 – Ohio Mission Region Convocation, Grace, Westerville, OH (includes convocations of all five Ohio Mission Districts and Heartland (IN and KY) Mission Districts
Aug 7-11, 2023 - Luther Week 2023, Oklahoma City
Sep 16, 2023 - Iowa Mission District Convocation—Faith, Monona, IA
Oct 14, 2023 – Michigan Mission District Convocation, St. Thomas, Trufant, MI
Oct 28, 2023 – *WI-UP Mission District Convocation TBD*
Oct 31-Nov2, 2023 – *Bishop & Deans meeting TBD*
Jan 16-18, 2024 – Pastors Conference, Drury Plaza, Disney Springs, Orlando, FL

Prospective Specialized Ministries & Military Chaplains

If a seminarian or pastor asks you about the possibility of serving as a military chaplain (Active Duty, Reserve or National Guard), Civil Air Patrol Chaplain, Hospital / Hospice chaplain, or fire, police, para-church minister; direct them for assistance to Jess Abbott at militaryendorser@thenalc.org Jess is the NALC’s official Military Endorsing Agent for all NALC clergy currently servicing or seeking to serve in the U.S. or Canadian Military. See the “Our Work” tab in the NALC website for more information; <https://thenalc.org/specialized-and-military-ministries/>

Midwestern Area Deans

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