



# News

## of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

[www.iowamissiondistrict.com](http://www.iowamissiondistrict.com)

June 2021

### *A Word from the Dean*

## “What’s Going on with the NALC?”

I’m not saying that I’m hearing this question a whole lot, but I’ve heard it, or others like it enough that it seems I should try to clear up some things. Once upon a time, the decision to form a new denomination was made out of an abundance of concern from many pastors and congregations with what was happening in the national church body. Efforts were made at the time to imagine how that new denomination could best be organized, given that no one knew quite what the coming years would bring. As such, a basic idea of that organization was suggested, knowing full well that it might need to be tweaked to adjust to any future growth. In those days, it was thought that the NALC might grow to as large as 100 or maybe even 200 congregations. Instead, we have grown to more than 450 congregations, and growing as ever more congregations reconsider their current affiliations, plus new mission starts come on board.

Given this growth, there has been quite a bit of consideration as to how we can best function as a church body that has far outgrown its initial organization. One way in which these changes have already happened is within some of our Mission Districts, which have grown to such a large number of congregations, that they have decided that they would better function if they broke into smaller geographic areas. Each of these smaller areas is now called a “Mission District” while the former, larger area is being called a “Mission Region”. While the entire “Mission Region” continues to have yearly events, the now smaller “Mission Districts” find that they can have more frequent get-togethers and other activities that are easier to pull off in areas that are much closer together.

It is the formation of these new “Mission Regions” that has resulted in the proposed amendment that has been proposed for adoption at the NALC Convocation in Corpus Christ in August.

The language being suggested simply reflects what is already in place, but also makes clear that each “Mission District” is free to organize as it wishes. Our own Mission District continues to function as it has since its inception. While I am still in my first year as Dean, I am beginning to understand that serving full-time in a parish (First in St. Ansgar) along with adding varying levels of responsibilities for 37 other congregations and their pastors, is quite a large undertaking. As the Mission District Council has discussed several times over the years, some way of sharing these responsibilities with others within the Mission District would be better for both the Dean and for the Mission District. These conversations are ongoing, and a ‘best’ solution has not yet been identified.

The other piece that has also garnered attention is a proposal that will be coming to the Convocation in Corpus Christi. The proposal includes a “Continental Restructuring” and a “Centralized Office”. This proposal includes subdividing the NALC into four areas. For each of these areas the Bishop would appoint a quarter-time assistant to be the chief liaison between the Bishop and the Deans. These assistants would be able to lessen the burden on the Bishop, and also alleviate some of the duties that now fall upon the Deans.

The “Centralized Office” is being proposed to better enable the national staff to accomplish their daily work and to reduce some of the duplication that now exists. One clear message is, however, that office space will be rented: no building will be built, and the rental space will be anything but lavish. The goal of having the leanest structure possible remains the goal.

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

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

The Iowa Mission District News was first sent out in 2012. Here are some memories from the past ten years.



Members of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Rochester, MN, gather for their first worship service on February 25, 2012, in the sanctuary of Oasis (Baptist) Church.



2013: "Standing Strong" - Vacation Bible School students at St. John's Lutheran, Boyden, IA, praise the Lord.



2014 Sunday School Rally Day at Emmanuel in Grafton centered around their outreach ministry in Kenya.



Dean Marshall Hahn installed Pastor Gary Burkhalter as Pastor of Mission in Christ Lutheran Church, Strawberry Point, on Saturday evening, March 21, 2015.



In 2016 Bethany Lutheran in Laurens celebrated their 125th anniversary.

AMERICAN LUTHERAN PUBLICITY BUREAU  
500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LUTHERAN REFORMATION IN 2017 MEDALS



PRESENTATION TO WATERLOO RIDGE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ORGANIZED IN 1867 - CELEBRATING ITS 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY IN 2017

APRIL 30, 2017 - 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER  
PRESENTER: JOHN A. HERMEIER, ON BEHALF OF HIS FATHER  
RECIPIENT: ARDEN AUNA, ON BEHALF OF THE CONGREGATION

These medals, together with the display board(s), were purchased in the year of issue by Rev. Allen E. Hermeier, who faithfully served the Congregation at Waterloo Ridge Lutheran Church from his installation on March 6, 2006 until his final Sermon on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent, April 2, 2017.

Pastor Hermeier delegated responsibility for mounting and framing to Carolyn J. Storle, CRM, whom he had named Sesquicentennial Historian of the Congregation in 2013. John Blaschke of Village Custom Framing, La Crosse, WI, completed the Lutheran Reformation Medallions Project for today's presentation.

These medals were published by the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau in the years leading up to the 2017 observance. They were designed by the Rev. Scott Blazek and engraved by Kevin Douglas. All the medals were struck at the New Orleans Mint in New Orleans, LA. Number of medals issued in each series metal type: in bronze - 150 medals; silver 100; and aluminum 7,000. All metal types 1 1/2 inches.



2018—Pastor Chris Martin presents a retirement gift from Emmons Lutheran Church to Carol Olson, their head organist since 2004



Friends of Peace Lutheran Church in Northwood were present May 12, 2019, to help members celebrate the dedication of their historic building, purchased from Northwood Baptist Church.



## Solus Christus—Christ Alone

*Pr. Ron Rasmussen  
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Irwin, Iowa  
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Jacksonville, Iowa*

**“STAY SAFE AND KEEP HOPE.”** This has been my slogan during the pandemic. I close every worship service and my daily devotions with these words, **“STAY SAFE AND KEEP HOPE.”**

During the pandemic it has been vitally important to do everything in our power to “stay safe”. So we lived by a “new norm”, with masks and social distancing. We also strove for safety in our churches and our worship, with video services, “no touch” elements in Holy Communion, and spreading out in the pews. We took these precautions in our attempt to “stay safe”. Thankfully, we are gradually returning to the “old norm” in both our churches and our communities.

So we tried to “stay safe” and live with the “new norms”. But we cannot live in fear. Part of the evil of this pandemic is the temptation to despair; as we were isolated from our neighbors and friends. We are tempted to fear the sickness and shut down our life styles and businesses. The pandemic threatened us, and the temptation was to live in fear and lose hope. Thus, this pandemic was a true test of our faith.

That’s when we need to “keep hope”. One of the ways I kept hope during this pandemic was to recite the words of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm every day. My hope was in the Lord, who was my shepherd, providing for me and protecting me. I did not live in fear, because the Lord was with me. My hope was in the Good Shepherd, who guides me in the paths of righteousness, and feeds me even in the presence of my enemies.

**“STAY SAFE AND KEEP HOPE.”** Ultimately, our hope is in Christ alone. The final verse of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm tells us, “surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” This verse gives us hope in our days here on earth, and hope for eternal life in the Lord’s heavenly house. That hope comes from Christ alone. Christ blesses us with the gift of forgiveness from the Cross, giving us the “goodness and mercy” that follows us in our days here on earth. And Christ blesses us with the promise of paradise and eternal life in heaven. On the Cross, Jesus promised a criminal, “Today you will be with me in paradise”. He makes that same promise to us, the promise that when we die, we shall rise and dwell with Him in His house forever. Forgiveness and salvation; that is our hope, the hope that comes from Christ alone. **“STAY SAFE AND KEEP HOPE.”**

# Announcements

## Upcoming Events

**June 7-8, 2021**—Iowa Mission District Pastors' Retreat—Best Western Holiday Lodge, Clear Lake, Iowa. Cost is covered by the mission district, but those wanting a private room will be asked for a \$60 donation to offset the added expense.

**August 2-6, 2021**—NALC Luther Week, Corpus Christi, TX

**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 David Schafer** who is recovering from a broken ankle and scheduled for hip surgery.

**Pastor James Glesne** who is undergoing treatments for Multiple Myeloma

**Amy Cooper** (wife of Pastor Jason Cooper) undergoing treatments for cancer.

**Pastor David Steffenson** who is undergoing chemo 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. This means we're entering the last quarter of the year. If your congregation intends

to have contributions reflected in the current year, please make sure they reach the Treasurer no later than Friday, August 27th, to ensure they are deposited in time.

**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](mailto:barbaramwills@gmail.com).

# ***A Few of My Favorite Psalms***

## ***Psalm 4***

*Answer me when I call, O God of my right!*

*Thou hast given me room when I was in distress.*

*Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer.*

In a world filled with busy-ness, immediacy, and constant noise, I often feel hemmed in with things that must be done—sooner rather than later, and too often according to someone else’s expectations. We are slaves to our smart phones and other communications devices and imprisoned by the demands and opinions of others. A phrase from many decades ago often rings in my mind: *“Stop the world, I want to get off!”*

The opening verses of Psalm 4 act as a balm to my soul when I feel overwhelmed by the urgency of my perceived expectations from others—and my own inner driven-ness. Whatever the source of our distress, the psalmist’s prayer reminds us that the Lord who transcends all time and human activity, is timeless, and invites us into the calm space of His love and life. The Lord’s directive, *“be still and know that I am God”*, from Psalm 46:10, and Isaiah’s reminder in chapter 40, verse 31, *“they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,”* invite us to “stop the world” for a time-out to sit still for a while and wait for the Lord—to regroup and re-orient ourselves according to God’s timelessness.

As we read through this Psalm, we may not resonate with all the imagery—thinking about our honor suffering shame or offering sacrifices may not be terms or practices that we’re used to considering. But vain words and lies pour out upon us from every direction, and we often don’t know whose words are true or whom we can trust.

Anger also spews out around us—from social media, news broadcasts, family members, and even our own hearts. The invitation to *“Be angry, but sin not; commune with your own hearts on your beds, and be silent... and put your trust in the LORD”* gives us the remedy offered by the Lord God who calls us to walk humbly and get our priorities straight. As our Lord Jesus taught, *“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things (the necessities of daily life) shall be yours as well.”* (Matthew 6:33)

True joy and peace come only from the Lord—the One who created us and all things; the One who loves us so much that He was willing to sacrifice His own Son to redeem us and bring us into a righteous and loving relationship with Himself. Psalm 4 is a reminder that this relationship with our Lord is at the heart of life. Christ Jesus is our foundation—the One in whom we can put our trust, and the “starting point” of life itself. *“In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for thou alone, O LORD, makest me dwell in safety.”* When we make room for the Lord every day—and throughout the day—He will make room for us. He will give us the “space” we need when we’re distressed about the many anxieties of daily life; He will make us dwell in the safe keeping of His mercy and grace. And in the end, He will bring us to the place our Lord Jesus has prepared for us in His eternal life and peace. (John 14:2-3)

***Pastor Barbara M. Wills***

# 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](mailto: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.*)

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How do you understand your faith?

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How have you been active in the church?

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Please list one of your favorite Bible verses and tell why it has meaning for you.

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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 7<sup>th</sup> 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**,  
Prs. Bill and 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**, Pr. Solveig Zamzow  
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](mailto:cbstaley@netins.net)  
Craig Lease, Secretary—  
[pdlease@gmail.com](mailto:pdlease@gmail.com)  
Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer—  
[pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com](mailto:pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com)

### **Mission District Council Members:**

Pastor Ronald Rasmussen—  
[bigras73@fmctc.com](mailto:bigras73@fmctc.com)  
Pastor Tony D. Ede—  
[tonyede@gmail.com](mailto:tonyede@gmail.com)  
Chris Schlee—  
[schleemasonry@hotmail.com](mailto:schleemasonry@hotmail.com)  
Kathy Scharnhorst—  
[gaf@butler-bremer.com](mailto:gaf@butler-bremer.com)

Disaster Response Coordinator: Betty  
Burkhalter  
[bettyburkhalter@hotmail.com](mailto:bettyburkhalter@hotmail.com)

Mission District Communicator  
(newsletter editor/web master):

Pastor Barbara Wills—  
[barbaramwills@gmail.com](mailto: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 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](mailto:pastortim.milford@gmail.com)

***The Iowa Mission District website may be found at: [www.iowamissiondistrict.com](http://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](mailto:barbaramwills@gmail.com).***