



News

of the Iowa Mission District
of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

April 2021

A Word from the Dean

Early in the morning, the women went to the tomb. They envisioned their Lord as they had last seen him:

Agony was in his face as the pain from his wounds racked his body.

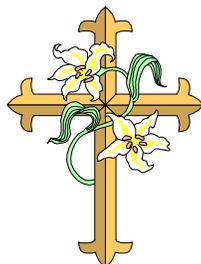
Scarlet was the blood that poured from His scalp, His hands, His side, and His feet.

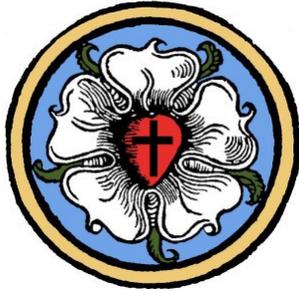
Terror and amazement seized them when they found not Jesus, but an angel inside the tomb.

Excitement took hold as they went to tell the disciples.

Risen! He has Risen! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

Have a blessed Easter,
Pastor Christopher Staley, Dean, Iowa Mission District, NALC





Solus Christus—Christ Alone

*Pr. Kim Thacker
St. John's Lutheran Church
Plainfield, Iowa*

He...

What do you write about when you're staring at a blank page and you can write about anything? Space doesn't allow me to explain how it was so, but that was Paul's situation when writing to the Colossians. What should we expect Paul to have written about when he could have written about anything? The obvious answer is...the most important things.

Let's consider then what Paul actually did write. He began with thanks, and then he told the Colossians that he prayed for them and what he prayed for them, such as that they might become mature Christians, and how they ought to be thankful that God "*has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son...*" Paul mentioned Jesus in that sentence, and that became the springboard for what was to follow. So Paul wasn't looking at a blank page anymore. He had written about being thankful for the Colossians and what he hoped for them, and then he turned to Jesus; you might even say that he exploded with words about Jesus. So Jesus was what Paul wrote about when he could write about anything. Jesus was what was most important, and so it was most important for the Colossians to know about Jesus.

And don't we need to be reminded of that? How many times have you thought about Jesus today? We sing about *What a Friend We have in Jesus*. But we are very adept at forgetting all about our Friend, so we have to do things to keep Jesus in mind: such as by having pictures of Jesus, or by listening to hymns, or by meditating on the words in Scripture. What Paul had to say about Jesus in Colossians is a classic. There is perhaps no other passage in the Bible which magnifies the glory of Christ in quite the way that these verses do. In the space of six verses Jesus is mentioned twelve times. As one old commentator pointed out, the words, **He** and **Him**, are kept ringing in the ears of the Colossians. Just as "*King of Kings, and Lord of Lords,*" and "*He shall reign forever and ever*" keep repeating in the *Hallelujah Chorus*, so do the words **He** and **Him** keep repeating in these verses in Colossians:

He is the image of the invisible God,
the first born of all creation,
for in **Him** all things were created,
in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible,
whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities
all things were created through **Him** and for **Him**.

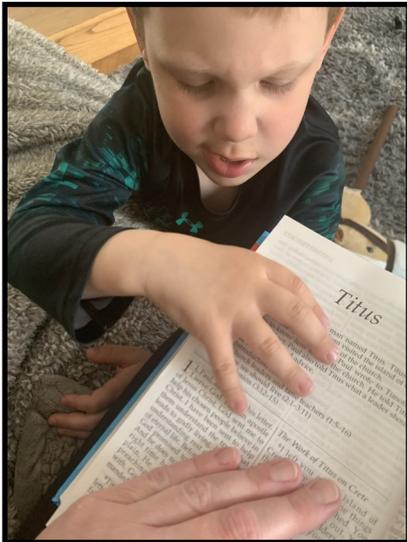
He is before all things,
and in **Him** all things hold together.

He is the head of the body, the church;
He is the beginning, the first born from the dead,
that **He** might be pre-eminent in everything.
For in **Him** all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
and through **Him** to reconcile to Himself all things,
whether on earth or in heaven,
making peace by the blood of **His** cross.

Paul's purpose was to make Christ pre-eminent in the hearts of the Colossians, just as Christ is pre-eminent in the universe. And as Paul made clear at the end of this passage, He who is pre-eminent in everything is He who died for us on a cross.

This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District

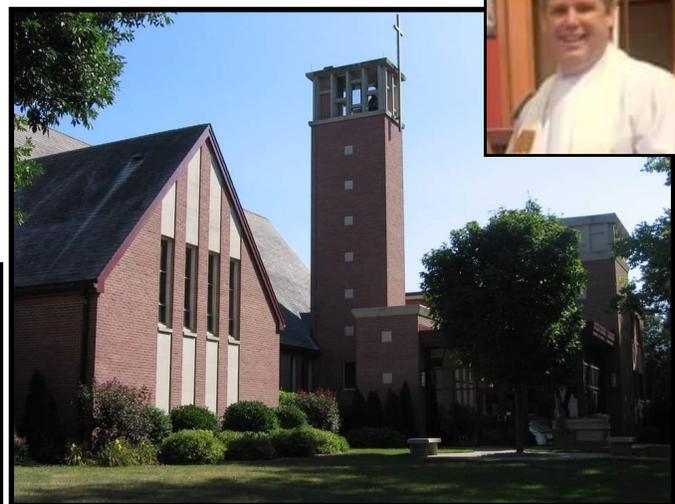
Easter Monday (April 5): In-Home Bible Reading!



Each year, on Easter Monday, Emmanuel Lutheran Church of Rochester, MN, publicly reads the entire N.T. (all 27 Books of the New Testament) in celebration of our Lord's Resurrection. Last year, via Facebook, was a virtual pass the baton, tag-team, reading of the N.T. due to COVID-19. We had 38 participants. This year will be our 6th year in a row of reading the N.T. on Easter Monday. Due to COVID-19, we are inviting participants to select a Book of the New Testament and to commit to reading it out loud (**in their home**) anytime on Easter Monday. The Jewish Day begins in the evening at 6pm. That means participants can read their chosen Book(s) of the N.T. anytime from 6pm on Easter night (April 4) through Midnight on April 5. Contact Pastor David Steffenson (landline: 507-206-3048; or email: pastordavesteffenson@gmail.com) indicating the N.T. Book you wish to read. Thanks for joining us in the public reading of Scripture. Thanks for abiding in God's WORD and celebrating with us the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Pastors and Congregations of the Iowa Mission District

Ullensvang Lutheran Church in Thor, Iowa, is served by Pastor Darryl Landsverk.



Pastor Jason Cooper serves at Evangelical Lutheran Church in Eagle Grove, Iowa.

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Announcements

Upcoming Events

April 24, 2021—9:00 a.m.—Mission District Council meeting

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.

Please Pray for:

Pastor James Glesne who is undergoing treatments for Multiple Myeloma

Amy Cooper (wife of Pastor Jason Cooper)

Pastor David Steffenson who is undergoing chemo for pancreatic cancer.

All who are still at risk for getting COVID-19, those who suffer from it, all who are caring for the sick, and those making decisions for the public good.

New Addresses for the NALC

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 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.

Announcements continued

Disaster Preparedness and Response: Information meeting on Sunday, April 25, from 1-3 pm at Holy Cross Lutheran Church 2703 9th Avenue NW, Rochester, MN.

“Mary Bates Coordinator of the NALC (North American Lutheran Church) Disaster Response Task Force will be speaking and answering questions on immediate disaster response, FEMA regulations, and long term care after a disaster has occurred. She has worked with all of the NALC Mission Districts in the United States in hopes of setting up a warehouse in each district to house supplies and have a team ready to respond when a disaster takes place. Our area would include the upper midwest or a two-three hundred mile radius. Emmanuel Lutheran Church of Rochester, a NALC congregation, has property and is willing to build a warehouse should we get support from other churches and individuals. While the local response task force will be under NALC, we want to encourage other churches, who share our theological beliefs, to share in this endeavor. Space for this information meeting is limited due to Covid-19 restrictions, so if you would like to attend this information meeting, please email dvomhof@gmail.com. If you would like more information, call Larry Vomhof at 507-251-1342 or KC Reed at 507-259-7003. We look forward to sharing this ministry opportunity with you.

A Servant of Emmanuel, Deb Vomhof



SEMAC: Southeast Minnesota Area Christians – Servant Work!

Larry Vomhof is a member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church of Rochester, and the coordinator of SEMAC, a group of local servants of Christ lending a helping hand with disaster relief projects. For more than 20 years, these area Christians, representing a dozen or more different churches in Southeast MN, have offered volunteer service to people in need, locally & throughout the U.S.

Each year, SEMAC participants serve in the name of Jesus, traveling to various locations in the U.S. and offering compassion, hope and recovery help to people in need of disaster relief. In February of 2021, SEMAC served in Pensacola, FL with Mary Bates and the NALC Disaster Response. About 40 families in the Pensacola area were in need of assistance from Hurricane Sally (September 2020). Work consisted of roofing, replacing sheetrock, taping, painting, & yard clean up.

Recently, Mary Bates contacted Larry Vomhof and SEMAC asking for help in Texas. Larry and his volunteers planned on driving down to Fort Worth, TX with plumbing supplies. Mary called Larry and said that the situation is really bad down there. An NALC Hispanic Church (San Miguel Lutheran) in Fort Worth had a foot of water in its building after pipes burst. Many of the members of San Miguel also had a lot of damage to their homes. Many were in need of help before the storm, and even more so now, having minimal resources and no insurance.

Larry is putting together a work trip for the last week of May; leaving May 22 and coming home on Memorial Day week-end. The work would be mainly plumbing sheet-rocking and taping. Please contact Larry Vomhof (SEMAC) if you wish to serve or want more information (dvomhof@gmail.com, or #507-251-1342).

A Few of My Favorite Psalms

Psalm 100

Psalm 100 is probably the first Psalm I memorized as a child. When I was young, memorizing Bible verses was required, and this Psalm was one I had to learn. That was long ago, but when I think about Psalm 100 what comes to mind is the emphasis on the importance of coming to the Lord's house for worship. No doubt that was the point the teacher was making when she chose this Psalm.

During the past year, as many of our congregations have observed certain COVID restrictions, most have had periods of time when we were not able to gather in the Lord's house for worship. Some of these periods of time extended for months. Most congregations who continued to meet together did so sporadically—able to gather for a time, then having to stop for a while when the number of COVID cases spiked. Even when people were gathered for worship, there were social distancing requirements, sometimes a ban on singing, and mandates or recommendations for wearing facemasks. All these strange and uncomfortable changes to our normal practice tended to dampen our “joyful noise” making, angered some people, and excluded the most vulnerable folks among us whose health situations made it unwise for them to mingle with others, even from a distance.

As we move away from the restrictions of the past year, this Psalm is a good one to help us express an appropriate sense of worship:

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the lands!

Serve the LORD with gladness!

Come into his presence with singing!

Singing together—even with masks—is one of the things I look forward to doing again. It's not only the joy of singing congregational hymns. Chanting the liturgy alternately with the congregation creates a bond that weaves the voices of the leader and members of the congregation together. Like flowing water, the rhythm of the single voice alternating with multiple voices, produces a link of praise to the Lord. This is something that can only happen when we're together at the same time and in the same space.

*Know that the LORD is God!
It is he that made us,
and not we ourselves;
we are his people,
and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him, bless his name!*

The God we gather to worship is the Lord of creation. He created us and all things. To Him belongs all glory and honor and praise. This Psalm reminds us of this fact. Left to ourselves, we can begin to feel alone—thinking too much about ourselves and our wants and needs. Gathered with others, we hear again that we are children of our heavenly Father—not only designed by His infinite mind and formed by His loving hands, but restored and transformed by His love and the sacrifice of our Good Shepherd, Christ Jesus. Indeed, we are His people, His sheep, His children; we give Him thanks and praise, and turn to Him for healing and guidance.

*For the LORD is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.*

We have often felt alone and lonely during this past year. It has been a struggle for many to remember that they—that we—are the Church, the people of God. Whether together or apart, we are still God's people, held in His arms of mercy, and protected by His never-failing love and faithfulness. But when we are together we have a stronger sense of our place in the Body of Christ. The blending of our voices in praise; confessing together that we have sinned and hearing God's words of grace and pardon; listening to the living Word of Christ read and preached; and gathering at the table of the Lord to receive His Body and Blood as the guarantee of His forgiveness—these embody our life together as the people of God. Let us enter His gates with thankful hearts and serve Him with joy and gladness!

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

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**, Lay Minister Eric Patten
St. Ansgar: **First**, Pr. Christopher Staley
+St. Charles, MN—**Trinity**, Pr. David Schafer
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
Craig Lease, Secretary—
pdlease@gmail.com
Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer—
pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com

Mission District Council Members:

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

Disaster Response Coordinator: Betty
Burkhalter
bettyburkhalter@hotmail.com

Mission District Communicator
(newsletter editor/web master):

Pastor Barbara Wills—
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 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

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.