



MIDWESTERN AREA NEWSLETTER October 2025



Latest and Greatest News!

Pastors and Congregations

Welcome New Pastors. Pastor Joshua Ruter has been received as a pastor in the NALC. He's dual rostered with ACNA and is serving at Greenford Lutheran Church (NE-Ohio MD).

Welcome New Congregations. Faith, Kent has been received from the Missouri Synod into the NALC (NE-Ohio MD). Welcome! They are looking for help as they try to restart their campus ministry at Kent State.

Installations. Pastor William Wendorf at St. John Lutheran, Plainfield, Iowa. (contract Call)

Condolence. Pastor Jerry Rhea's wife, Melanie, passed into the peace of Christ September 30th. Funeral will be this coming Monday morning, October 6, at Jeromesville, Ohio. Pastor Jerry just retired after 16.5 years as "interim" pastor servicing at Trinity, Jeromesville, Ohio (NE-Ohio MD). Please keep him and his family in your prayers.

Internship. NW-Ohio MD. Michelle Kouse will be starting her internship at First English Lutheran Church in Wapakoneta in October.

New "Co-Dean" Iowa Mission District

We thank the Lord that Pastor Matt Bahnfleth has been selected to be the Co-Dean, pastoring the congregations of West Iowa. At the Iowa MD convocation on September 20, the convocation decided to amend their bylaws to allow the election of two Deans; one for the East and one for the West of Iowa (highway 35 being a relative dividing line). The Iowa MD will continue to have one annual convocation, but this change will facilitate the greatest possible pastoral support for all congregations in the MD.

Annual Deans and AABs Meeting with the Bishop

November 11, 8a to November 12, 12p., Dallas Fort Worth, TX. All **new Deans** are invited to arrive a day early for the New Dean Orientation, November 10, 1-5p

Quarterly Midwestern Area Deans Zoom

Sundays 3:00pm, Next zoom December 14
Future zooms: 8Mar26, 14Jun26, 13Sep26
Pr. Jess will send zoom link to everyone's email 15 minutes prior to the meeting.

Quarterly NALC Military & Clinical Chaplain Zoom

Sundays 4:30pm, Next zoom December 14
Future zooms: 8Mar26, 14Jun26, 13Sep26
Pr. Jess will send zoom link to everyone's email 15 minutes prior to the meeting

Retreats, Studies, Meetings

These are provided in case your MD doesn't have a retreat, or if you'd just like to get away from your area and enjoy the environs of other wonderful places.

October 14, SE-Ohio MD Pastors Fellowship
9 AM at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Westerville, OH. Contact: Pr. Kurt Luebke
padrekurterik@gmail.com

October 7, NW-Ohio MD Pastors Fellowship
10 AM at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Bolivar, OH. Contact: Pr. Cathy Ammlung
cammlung@gmail.com

November 5, NW-Ohio MD Pastors Fellowship
10 AM at St. John's Lutheran Church in Montpelier, OH. Contact: Pr. Bert Schultz
jcgracepastor@outlook.com

June 1-2, 2026 Iowa MD Pastors retreat,
Waterloo, Iowa. Contact: Pr. Christopher Staley
cbstaley@netins.net

Convocations

If your MD convocation is not listed, please provide dates to Pr. Jess

Wisconsin-UP MD October 11, 2025 at Caroline, WI. Contact: Pr. Mark Knappe
solideogloria1@icloud.com

Heartland MD October 18, 2025 at St. John's, Ft. Wayne, IN. Guest speaker Jim Halstead of "Go & Tell Ministries". Contact: Pr. Doug Gast
dgast1950@gmail.com

Global Workers Supported by the Midwestern Area

Aleksandr Gross in **Ukraine**
Sending Agency: Spiritual Orphans Network

Gemechis Buba in **Ethiopia**
Sending Agency: Spiritual Orphans Network

Tunsubilege Mwasongwe and Ndumieshi Nkya in **Tanzania**. Sending Agency: One Plus God

Stephen Katterhenrich in **Tanzania**
Sending Agency: Wycliffe

Please keep our Global Workers in your personal and congregational prayers. Information about these global workers can be found on our NALC website and on the websites of their sending agencies:

Candidacy for Ordained Ministry Seminarians in the Midwestern Area

Sandy Thompson, Diaconate program. Grace LC, Springfield, SW Ohio MD.

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

Monica Nufer, Fuller Seminary, M.Div program. NC Ohio MD.

Scott Stine - Fuller Seminary, M.Div program. SE Ohio MD.

Molly King, St. Paul Lutheran Seminary, M.Div program. SE Ohio MD

Keith Deak, NALS Center at Trinity School for Ministry, M.Div program. NE Ohio MD.

Ethan Zimmerman, NALS Center at Trinity School for Ministry, M.Div program. NE Ohio MD.

Joanne Gallagher, Joanne, St. Paul Lutheran Seminary, Vicar at Hope, Hubbard Lake, Michigan MD

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

Wade Weaver, Ordination Under Special Circumstances Program, Living Faith, Wabash IN, Heartland MD.

Seminarians working on Certifications in the Midwestern Area

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

Heidi Yahl, Institute of Lutheran Theology, Pastoral Ministry certification, NW Ohio MD

Christian White, Institute of Lutheran Theology, Pastoral Ministry certification, NW Ohio MD

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

Youth News and Opportunities

The 2026 NALC Continental Youth Gathering will be July 7-10, 2026, at St. John Lutheran Church in Roanoke, Virginia. Save the date and plan to attend. The gathering is for youth ages 12-18.

"Solid" Lutheran Bible Camps

Ingham Okoboji in Milford, Iowa, which is near Minnesota, South Dakota, and Nebraska.

Riverside in Story City, Iowa nearer the middle of the state.

Lake Luther, Angola, IN.

<https://lomik.org/>

Camp Frederick, Rogers OH

<https://www.campfrederickohio.com/>

Resources for Congregations Without Pastors

Online Confirmation Program - contact the Southern Area Assistant to the Bishop, Pastor Mark Braaten, 903-316-1594

southernaab@thenalc.org or Pastor Teresa Peters at tpeters@thenalc.org The current plan is to start new groups next September.

Confirmation / Catechism Web Courses

[Free] – Luther House of Study,
<https://lutherhouseofstudy.org/courses/>

On Line Sermons

The NALC Trusted Sermon Network—a free, searchable database of sermon manuscripts and videos by vetted NALC pastors. Every sermon in the network is grounded in Holy Scripture and faithful to the Lutheran Confessions, ensuring congregations receive trustworthy proclamation of the Gospel.
<https://thenalc.org/en-us/our-work/equipping-disciples/trusted-sermon-network/>

Pastor Jess Abbott posts services / sermons on YouTube. Go to YouTube and search “Abundant Grace Lutheran Church West Chester OH”. Or contact Pastor Jess at midwesternaab@thenalc.org

Pastor Aaron Frey, St. Thomas, Trufant, MI posts sermons on YouTube. Go to <https://www.youtube.com/@stlctrufant763>

Pastor David Wendel posts sermons on YouTube https://youtu.be/gCcD_lvwCbA, he also posts them on his Facebook page and the NALC Fellowship group; or contact Pastor Wendel at dwendel@thenalc.org

On Line New Member Class

A four-session class (over 4 weeks) that introduces Lutheranism and prepares people to join the membership of a congregation. It is also a “Lutheranism 101” class for any who want to attend a to refresh their knowledge (and fellowship with people just joining a Lutheran church). Future classes can be scheduled for groups of 4 or more. Contact Pastor Jess if you'd like to schedule a class; or for more information at midwesternaab@thenalc.org

Disaster Response

To schedule a mission trip, please contact Mary Bates, NALC Disaster Response

coordinator, at 740-509-1132 or disasterresponse@thenalc.org
Flood buckets, disaster response kits and supplies should go to your area disaster warehouse or sent to: NALC Disaster Response; 16500 Noble Ave.; Caldwell, Ohio 43724. Monetary donations may be made online at thenalc.org/giving or mailed to: North American Lutheran Church, 2113 Harwood Road, Suite 309; PMB 409; Bedford, TX 76021-4703

Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries Inc. (NALC partner, Ft. Wayne, IN) www.lmvfm.org

If you are a veteran, contractor or family member of the Armed Services who is feeling overwhelmed by life experiences, please give LMVFM a call at: 260-755-2239.

If you'd like to support LMVFM donating your Thrivent Choice Dollars is easy Call 1-800-847-4836 and when prompted say “Thrivent Choice” which will connect you to a friendly Customer Care Agent and tell them that you would like to donate your Thrivent Choice Dollars to: Lutheran Military Veterans & Families Ministries.

Series Devotional on 52 Hymns

Pr. Tom Jacobson decided to write a year-long series of devotional articles on his fifty-two favorite hymns, one for each week of the year. You can find these articles on his blog.
www.theelectronicconventicle.weebly.com

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).

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

Midwestern Area Deans

Pr. Jess Abbott, Midwestern Assistant to the Bishop
513-314-2028, midwesternaab@thenalc.org

Pr. Bert Schultz, OH North West MD
715-418-1037, jcgracepastor@outlook.com

Pr. Mark Daniels, OH Mission Region & SW Ohio MD
740-603-5287, markluth91@gmail.com

Pr. Kurt Luebke, OH South East MD, Dean
503-522-0216, padrekurterik@gmail.com
Pr. Matt Cox, OH South East MD, Asst. Dean
614-327-4328, mcox54@hotmail.com
Pr. Cathy Ammlung, OH North East Mission District
443-472-0480, cammlung@gmail.com
Pr. Kathy Pennington, OH North Central Mission District
715-554-4658, penningtonkm@gmail.com
Pr. Christopher Staley, IOWA Mission District
515-357-9052, cbstaley@netins.net
www.iowamissiondistrict.com
Pr. Jess Abbott, MI (lower peninsula) Mission District
513-314-2028, midwesternaab@thenalc.org
Pr. Doug Gast, Heartland (IN-KY) Mission District
317-727-0612, dgast1950@gmail.com
Pr. Mark Knappe, WI & MI Upper Peninsula MD (co-dean)
262-844-2234, solideogloria1@icloud.com
Pr. Tom Reiff, WI & MI Upper Peninsula MD (co-dean)
715-892-9914, treiff@outlook.com

Director of Area Support & Development

Bp. John Bradosky,
614-684-8484, jbradosky@thenalc.org

Area Assistants to the Bishop

Pr. Jess Abbott, Midwestern Assistant to the Bishop
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MI, OH, IN, KY, WI, IA
Pr. Bill White, Eastern Assistant to the Bishop
901-569-1428, easternaab@thenalc.org
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903-316-1594, southernaab@thenalc.org
Pr. Marv Combs, Western Assistant to the Bishop
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Pr. Kevin Ree, Northern Assistant to the Bishop
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