



News

of the Iowa Mission District
of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

July 2019

A Word from the Dean

THE FULLNESS OF GOD'S LOVE

"We know that in everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose."

- Romans 8:28

The pessimist says, "It's half empty."

The optimist says, "It's half full."

The pessimist says, "There's a 30% chance of rain."

The optimist says, "There's a 70% chance of sunshine."

The pessimist says, "It's never been done."

The optimist says, "There's always a first time."

The world is full of pessimists – those who can only see the limitations of life, who are quick to give up, quick to throw in the towel and say, "It's no use." The world is full of people who think that nothing can ever change – that what has been is what will be, and there is no sense in hoping for anything more. The writer of Ecclesiastes said it best for such pessimists – "There is nothing new under the sun."

But Easter morning changed all of that. On Good Friday, it seemed that everything had come to a dead end. The disciples had given up. The women coming to the tomb expected to find what people had always found at the graveside of a friend – sorrow, disappointment, the finality of death. But it was not to be. Instead they found life, hope, and the promise of a new day that would not be like the past. What they found was a cup that was not just "half full", but filled to overflowing with the promise of God's love.

The optimism of the Christian message is not just some Pollyanna-ish unrealistic dreaming. It is a solid and sure confidence in our God who can bring good out of the worst situations. It is the assurance that even the most troubling and painful experiences we might have can be redeemed by His grace. It is the sure and certain hope that nothing in all the world – "neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor anything else in all creation is able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." With such confidence, we can say, with Paul, that everything works together for good – in Christ Jesus. In faith, we can see the whole world as a glass filled to overflowing with the love of God.

Pastor Marshall Hahn, Dean, Iowa Mission District, NALC



Sola Gratia—All Is Grace

*Pr. Tom Summerfield
Zion Lutheran
Ruthven, Iowa*

“All is grace” is a well-known quote from Brennan Manning, author of the Ragamuffin Gospel. I’m not that familiar with Mr. Manning or his books, but I love the quote. All is grace. Grace, as it is used in the Old and New Testaments, denotes God extending favor to a person or group of people. God is giving by nature. Martin Luther famously recovered the biblical understanding of a gracious and giving God.

What usually comes to mind when we think of Luther and the Reformation is the topic of salvation. The church in Europe, at the time, had been promoting salvation by works – something that you could earn or even buy. Luther recovered the biblical understanding that salvation is by God’s grace *alone*. Most all protestants readily confess that they are saved by grace, but Lutherans are quick to emphasize that it is grace *alone*. We don’t do anything to earn or merit even part of our salvation—it is all God’s doing. This difference is key. Salvation is a gift that we thankfully receive, enjoy and share. Whereas, for those who think they somehow earn their salvation or contribute to it, life can be filled with anxious striving and uncertainty—forever seeking to be “real” Christians, “serious” Christians, even “radical” Christians. Please don’t misunderstand, I think we should take God and our faith seriously. However, I don’t think we should take ourselves too seriously. Our Christian life is not some self-saving, self-improvement project. It is “God saving us” and then it is “God working in us, among us and through us”. When our faith is based on God’s graciousness, we can live from a sense of God’s abundance—trusting that God will shower us with all we need and more.

When faith is based on our works and striving, it often focuses on a limited sense of goods/resources—there never seems to be enough.

“All is grace.” When you stop to think about God’s gracious disposition towards us, you might say that all the things we hold dear as Lutheran Christians (God’s Word, faith, and Christ) are all grace—extensions of God’s favor to us. God’s Word is an amazing life-giving gift to us. Faith is a wonderful gift to us created by God’s Word. And, of course, the ultimate expression of God’s grace is the person and work of Christ—God pouring out Himself on the cross and then rising for you and me. Word, faith, Christ are certainly major gifts but there are many more. Take a minute and think of all the gifts God has favored you with. Creation is a wonderful gift to us. My wife Laurie just loves to look at all the amazing different cloud formations—especially when a storm is brewing. I remember laying on my back as a kid and gazing with wonder at the clouds during long summer days. These days I’m too preoccupied to appreciate the gift of clouds—unless Laurie reminds me to stop and look. The list of God’s gracious gifts goes on and on—a loving spouse, children, neighbors, friends, congregation and grandchildren. Grandchildren are truly one of God’s great gifts. I just love hugging, holding, wrestling around, laughing and reading with our three grandsons. All is grace—and grace alone.





June 20, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Rev. James Puotyual is a pastor of the North American Lutheran Church serving as a Global Worker under the supervision of the Lutheran Church of South Sudan (LCSS). His primary role was serving in Gambela, Ethiopia in partnership with LCSS and the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY)

While serving in Gambela, Pastor Puotyual has experienced some health challenges and will be returning to the United States where he will be able to receive the needed care. At this time, we ask you to withhold sending any direct support to Pastor Puotyual. Please direct any questions to the NALC's Mission Office at missions@thenalc.org or to myself.

We would ask that you please continue to pray for Pastor Puotyual, his family, and for the Christian community in Gambela.

In Christ,

Bishop John F. Bradosky
North American Lutheran Church



Do you know a Christian couple or family interested in adoption?

Lutheran Family Service is looking for additional families to be a part of our adoption program as we are serving a higher number of birth mothers looking to place for adoption.

Newborn Infant Adoption Program Details:

- Couples must reside in Iowa or North/Central Illinois
- Couples must be male/female married for at least 3 years
- Couples must be active in a Christian congregation
- Program is fee-based

Lutheran Family Service:

- Creating family through adoption for over 117 years
- Fully licensed child-placing agency
- Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of the LCMS Church following all LCMS biblical principles
- Free pregnancy counseling program



Lutheran Family Service LutheranFamilyService.org

Some of the congregations in the Iowa Mission District support Lutheran Family Services as one of their missions. This is a ministry of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. If you have questions about their adoption program you may go to their website or contact Mollie A. Clark at mclark@lutheranfamilyservice.org. If you would like a copy-ready bulletin insert please contact Pastor Barbara Wills (barbarawills@gmail.com), and I will e-mail the PDF file to you.

Announcements

Important Reminder!

All checks sent to the Mission District are to be made out to the *Iowa Mission District, NALC*, and sent to **Pastor Gary Burkhalter at 312 E Mission St, Strawberry Point, IA 52076.**

2019 Upcoming Events

July 22-29 – Youth Mission Trip. Contact Pastor Jason Cooper (cooper_id@yahoo.com) or Pastor Tony D. Ede (tonyede@gmail.com) for more information. Personal cost per person—\$250.

August 5-9 – Luther Week in Indianapolis, IN. Theme: *Walking by the Spirit with the Fruit of the Spirit* (Note: **Election of NALC Bishop!**)

September 14 – Iowa Mission District Convocation, First Lutheran, Manchester, IA

September 28—**Stewards of God's Influence** workshop, Bethany, Laurens, IA

October 5—**Stewards of God's Influence** workshop, First, Manchester, IA

These workshops are presented by the NALC's Living and Giving Stewardship Team. Both are from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Presenters are Pastors Tony D. Ede and Ron Voss. For more information or to register, please contact Pastor Voss at 312-513-3567 or servantofchristnalc@gmail.com.

April 20-21, 2020—Pastors'/Lay Ministers' Retreat, Riverside Bible Camp, Story City

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.

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.





Steadfast In God's Word ***Thy Will Be Done—Discerning God's Will through Scripture***

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, one of the first petitions was in regard to living in obedience to the will of the Father—*“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”* This necessary aspect of our relationship with the Lord is also found succinctly stated in the writings of the prophet, Micah: [The Lord] *“has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”* (Micah 6:8) As Adam and Eve discovered in the Garden of Eden, following our own will and ignoring the Lord's will, always leads to disaster. The Lord's will for all people is that we recognize God's love and sovereignty and live in obedience to His commandments, trusting in Christ for our salvation, and sharing this love with one another—neatly stated by our Lord Jesus in the two great commandments to love the Lord with all our heart, mind and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. But there is also an individual aspect to our following the Lord in which He calls us individually to particular service in the Kingdom of God. The discernment of the Lord's particular will for each of our lives is a concern for many people, and those who feel they haven't found this special “call” sometimes express disappointment, anxiety, or a sense of failure.

When we read or hear the wonderful “call” stories of many of God's heroes and heroines in the faith, we may wonder if we've missed the “knock on the door”, ignored the one opportunity to follow the right path, or if God really doesn't have anything in particular for us to do. Such folks as Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Virgin Mary, and the Apostle Paul had very specific, and even exciting, calls to service. But there was also Joseph who was sold into slavery by his brothers and perhaps only realized how the Lord intended to use that awful experience when his brothers showed up in Egypt many years later in need of food during a famine. Others, like Deborah (a judge in Israel), Mordechai (uncle to Queen Esther), and the little boy whose lunch Jesus used to feed 5,000 people, seem to have been

simply going about their daily responsibilities. When a need arose, they lived out their faith in the Lord by doing what was needed to meet that need.

When we are baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ, we are baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As Jesus promised His disciples in John 14, the Holy Spirit is with us day by day: *“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name ... will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”* (v. 26) Not only does the Holy Spirit teach us the things of faith, but also gives us the gifts we need to carry out our daily responsibilities in living faithfully and building up the body of Christ, as the Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 12. *“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”* (verses 4-7) Paul speaks at length about these gifts of the Spirit, but the point is that we are to use these God-given abilities in service to the Lord and one another. No one gift is more valuable than another—all are needed to carry out God's will in the world. If we are walking humbly with the Lord, in compassion toward one another, and faithfully using our abilities for the common good, then we can leave the matter of our “purpose” to the Lord. If He has something more for us to do, He will reveal it to us when the time is right.

In the meantime, we continue to discern God's will day by day through our daily immersion into Scripture through Bible reading and prayer, regular attendance in worship, and Bible study. In these ways we maintain our relationship with the Lord, and listen for His prodding, encouragement, and reminders of the great love He has for us through the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus, Who came that we might have life in all its fullness.

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 Lund
Dorchester: **Waterloo Ridge**, Call Process
Eagle Grove: **Evangelical Lutheran**, Pr. Jason Cooper
Eagle Grove: **Samuel Lutheran**, Pr. Rich Taylor
Ellsworth: **Trinity**, Pastor Jon Rollefson
Emmons, MN: **Emmons**, Pr. David Schafer, Interim
Gilmore City: **First**, Tracy Nerem, Lay Minister
Grafton: **Emmanuel**, Pr. Solveig Zamzow
Greene: **St. John (Vilmar)**, Pr. Christopher Martin
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**
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**, Pr. Thomas Summerfield
St. Ansgar: **First**, Pr. Christopher Staley
St. Olaf: **Norway**, Pr. Marshall Hahn
Sheldon: **St. Paul**, Call process
+Sibley: **Faith**, Pr. Tim Nappe
Spencer: **Trinity**
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

The following pastors are available for pulpit supply:

Pastor Paul Breddin—515--528-2284
Pastor James Glesne—563-380-8110
Pastor Jack Miller—(507) 798-2408
Pastor David Steffenson—253-302-9845 (Sundays)
Pastor Paul Weeg- -641-381-0675

Iowa Mission District Leadership

Pastor Marshall Hahn, Dean—
stolafparish@neitel.net
Craig Lease, Secretary—
pdlease@gmail.com
Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer—
pqburkhalter52@hotmail.com

Mission District Council Members:

Pastor Jason Cooper—
cooper_id@yahoo.com
Pastor Mark Lund—
pastormarklund@gmail.com
Pastor Christopher Martin—
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Chris Schlee—
schleemasonry@hotmail.com
Kathy Scharnhorst—
gaf@butler-bremer.com

Mission District Communicator
(newsletter editor/web master):

Pastor Barbara Wills—
barbaramwills@gmail.com

*The Iowa Mission District
has 36 congregations.*



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