



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

August 2025



A Word from the Dean

Do you realize that gambling has been legal in Iowa for more than 35 years? It was in 1989 that the Iowa Legislature passed the Excursion Gambling Boat Act, which ushered in riverboat casinos. And now there are more than twenty casinos scattered throughout the state. Truth be told, however, legalized gambling existed in Iowa long before any such act of the legislature. We just called it something else: we called it farming.

In the past couple years, farming has become an ever-bigger gamble. After a few years of relative prosperity, the odds have shifted. The recent relative prosperity has driven up the prices of purchasing or renting farmland. Other input costs have gone up as well, so that the chances of suffering a loss have grown quite large.

There is so much outside the control of a farmer. Weather plays a huge part, bringing beneficial rains to one field, and skirting other dry patches within just a mile, and totally submerging others. A microburst of wind or a swath of hail can devastate crops, not to mention weeds, or disease, or pests. Livestock farmers fare no better with wild swings of temperature, or diseases that resist most efforts to combat them.

As much as a farmer might try to mitigate against all these problems, the bottom line is that since there are so many variables that can make or break a farm economy, it shouldn't surprise us when a few of those variables turn against us.

And even if a farmer is lucky enough in any given year to produce a decent crop, it can still be a situation of losing even when you win. since the crop could be worth less than what it cost to plant the seed, care for the crop, and bring the crop to market—maybe even a lot less.

You might be wondering why this is a topic for such a column. The truth is that, in our life, faith bears on every problem we have. In **Psalm 4:6a (LBW)** we read, “*Many are saying, ‘Oh, that we might see better times!’*” This might well be the sort of sentiment that many are grappling with after dealing with one blow after another to the hopes that had existed earlier in the growing season.

Or you might be wondering what any of this has to do with you if you aren't a farmer. The fact is that all of us face the sorts of challenges faced every year by our farmers. In spite of all a person's best efforts, there are simply times when it feels as though the forces working against you are stronger than the forces working for you. All this can lead a person to echo the words of the Psalm, “*Oh, that we might see better times!*” What most of us want in that situation is a reversal of fortunes. And that's what God wants for us, but the way He reverses our fortunes is often in a way that requires us to receive it in faith. Reading on in that same Psalm, David writes **(4:6b-7)**, “*Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O Lord. You have put gladness in my heart, more than when grain and wine and oil increase.*” The true goodness that comes from God, isn't found in the goods, the stuff, the things, the wealth, the prosperity. The real goodness is God.

May the Holy Spirit lead us to a true understanding of this that we might find peace and rest in Him. Or, once again to quote from the Psalm, “*I lie down in peace; at once I fall asleep; for only you, Lord, make me dwell in safety.*” **(4:8)**

*Pastor Christopher Staley
Dean, Iowa Mission District*



Running with Perseverance: *Confession*

Pastor James Glesne
Decorah, IA

He came to me one day many years ago and said, "Pastor we've got to talk! Don't you have something in one of your books about confession?" We met sitting in our chairs in a small room exchanging small talk but then our conversation suddenly turned. He began to pour out in speech things that he had done and that he was carrying a load of guilt about. I listened and did not say much for this was not about me. It was all about a burden that he had been carrying for some time. As all the words and the emotions that those words carried came to an end I had the privilege of saying these words: "God is merciful and blesses you. By the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I, a called and ordained servant of the word, forgive you your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen"

I think that we all can agree when we say that our conscience tells us when we have sinned. That sin, whatever it may be, can act as a barrier to our Lord and possibly even to our loved ones. Being human, we know deep down that we are not all we could be or want to be. Perhaps there are even times when we cannot even recognize and call by name the sins that we do know exist. I remember coming across this sentence which I think packs a powerful message to us. It goes like this: "The longer we look inwards to ourselves the less we can see." Perhaps this could be a reminder of the fact that we need to look outward to see Jesus.

In so many places of Scripture the reminder is very apparent to us of who it is that offers to us the gift of forgiveness. Even in the book of Daniel 9:9 we read "*To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him.*" Or the reminder in Psalm 130:4 - "*But with you there is forgiveness that you may be feared.*" Our Lord speaks to the issue and the importance of confession and of forgiveness

when he says as the Lord's supper is instituted, "*For this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*" The apostle Peter on the important day of Pentecost reminds the crowd, "*Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you'll receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*"

We could go on and on with the various quotations and inferences in Scripture regarding confession and the importance of hearing the words of forgiveness.

On a more personal note, even though those in the liturgical movement remind us that confession at the beginning of the service is not necessary at times. I think it is very important. As we begin the Brief order of Confession and Forgiveness we invoke the name of the Triune God and basically recognize our need for confession and forgiveness in these words:

"Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

And then those very important and powerful words that we need to hear: "*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*"

The writer of Ephesians reminds us that: "*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.*" (Ephesians 1:7)

To God be all the glory as we give him praise and thanks for what he has done for us through Jesus Christ our Lord and our Savior.

NALC Disaster Relief Update

We were hoping for a more quiet 2025 compared to 2024 for disasters, but that hasn't been the case. The Disaster Response team has been busy gathering and delivering supplies to a variety of locations across the United States. Your donations of supplies and gift cards are very much appreciated.

If you don't already, consider following NALC Disaster Response on Facebook. Here you will see updates on where we are helping and the mission trips.

If you are interested in going on a mission trip by yourself or with a group from your church contact Mary Bates to see where you can help out.

If your congregation is interested in education about disaster response, church safety, home safety, etc. let me know. I would be more than happy to schedule something with you!

What are the current disaster response needs? Flood/cleaning buckets, health kits and gift cards.

I will bring empty buckets to convocation. If you need some before convocation let me know and I can get some to you.

we will also be bringing the Iowa Mission District Tool Trailer to the convocation so you can see our progress on it. Financial donations are still needed so we can purchase the remaining items needed

As always, let me know what questions you have about Disaster Response!

Betty Burkhalter

Iowa Mission District Disaster Response Coordinator



Iowa Mission District—15 Years Ago

SEARCH:

St. John's Lutheran Church - Vilmar, Greene, IA, is desiring to hire a Worship Technician to record our worship services and to air them on our Facebook page and local television channel. If you have experience in this area or know of someone who does, please contact Pr. Keen at 316-655-3306 or send an email to KeenTJJKK@gmail.com for more information.

Thank you.
Pastor Keen



Biographical Information of Nominee - 2025

Name: _____ Date: _____

Position for which you are being nominated:

*Co-Dean - West ____ (3 year term) Secretary ____ (3 year term, clergy or lay person)
Council Rep. - Clergy (3 year term) _____ Council Rep. – Lay (3 year term) _____

Congregational Member at: _____

City: _____

Occupation: _____

Tell us something about yourself (*family, hobbies, etc.*)

How do you understand your faith?

How have you been active in the church?

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

Please sign below to indicate you are willing to serve if elected and mail this completed form to:

*Pr. Solveig Zamzow, Secretary
Iowa Mission District, NALC
619 Elm Avenue, #309
Story City, IA 50248*

Signature

*Any ordained NALC pastor residing/serving a congregation west of I-35 is eligible to be nominated for the position of Co-Dean – West.

Iowa Mission District Convocation Registration

Saturday, September 20, 2025

St. John's Lutheran Church

201 1st Ave. NW, LeMars, Iowa 51031

The 2025 annual Convocation of the Iowa Mission District will take place at St. John's Lutheran Church, LeMars, Iowa, on Saturday, September 20, 2025. Our theme is "Running with Perseverance" from Hebrews 12:1-2: *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.* We are pleased to have the Reverend Dan Selbo, Bishop of the North American Lutheran Church, 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 will also have a business session to conduct the necessary business of the Mission District. **As you prepare for the convocation, please be thinking of nominations for Iowa Mission District Co-Dean (West), Mission District Secretary (this can be either a clergy or lay person), one Lay Representative and one Clergy Representative to the Mission District Council. Each is for a three-year term. A nomination form is included in this month's Iowa Mission District News. Please get permission from the nominees before submitting their names. The nominees will need to complete the nomination form and mail it to Mission District Secretary, Pastor Solveig Zamzow (619 Elm Avenue, #309, Story City, IA 50248).**

Please Note: According to Article 4.01 of the IA- MD Constitution: "*Delegates with voting privileges at a Convocation shall be the ordained ministers of the NALC within the territory of this Mission District and [two] lay delegates from the member congregations*". In addition, we strongly encourage congregational participation beyond the delegates—visitors are welcome! There is no cost for the event other than a free-will offering for lunch. A worship offering will also be taken and designated to the NALC Disaster Relief. 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 around 4:00 pm. Break-out sessions will include conversation with Bishop Selbo, a session with Pastor Zamzow on dealing with pastoral vacancies, a report from Pastors Hahn and Saethre, and Debbie Saethre on their trip to Ethiopia, and Pastor Hedman will lead a session to help established congregations build stronger relationships with mission starts.

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 Kathy Scharnhorst, Registrar, at 1594 Garden Avenue, Waverly, IA 50677. It is most helpful in keeping track of registrations if each person being registered is listed on a separate sheet. If you wish to submit your registrations via email, please fill out the form and send the information as an attachment to kscharnhorst51@gmail.com.

(Please fill out a separate form for each person.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone and/or email: _____ / _____

Congregation & Town: _____

Clergy _____ Lay Delegate _____ Visitor _____ Youth _____



Names for Jesus: **Mighty God**

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "... Mighty God...." (Isaiah 9:6)

In the ninth chapter of Isaiah there are several names given for the child who would come to rule God's people. A couple of months ago we pondered the name *Wonderful Counselor*—a name that elicits a sense of comfort and support. But that name is immediately followed by the name *Mighty God*. This name may have elicited far different feelings in those who heard it for the first time. There may have been a sense of *confusion*—none of their previous kings had been called God, and as we can see when Jesus came, the folks at that time certainly saw our Lord as merely human, with the potential of being the earthly king many were hoping for. Another emotion that may have arisen for those hearing Isaiah's words was *fear*. Throughout their history the Israelites experienced fear, and even terror, when confronted by the Lord's power and presence. What would it mean for them if God Himself came down to dwell among them in all His power and holiness? A counselor is one thing—a person can take his advice or ignore him. But the omnipotent (all-powerful) God? Such a prospect may have seemed more threatening than comforting.

As those who live centuries after the fulfillment of this prophecy, how do we hear this name for our Lord Jesus? Are we comforted when we think of Him as the Lord God who created us and has ultimate power and authority over us and all things? Or does thinking about Jesus' omnipotence instill fear? Martin Luther saw the Lord as an angry judge who sought revenge, and he was terrified of God in the early years of his life. When Luther read of God's righteousness in Romans 1, he struggled to understand what Paul meant: *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'"* (verses 6-7) Luther wrote of this struggle, *"...the expression 'righteousness of God' barred my way. This phrase was customarily explained to mean the righteousness of God is a virtue by which He is Himself righteous and condemns sinners."* (p. 835, [What Luther Says, A Practical In-Home Anthology for the Active Christian](#), Concordia Publishing House, 1959) Luther goes on to say, *"This misunderstanding continued until, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, I finally examined more carefully the word of Habakkuk: 'The just shall live by his faith' (2:4). From*

this passage I concluded that life must be derived from faith.... Then the entire Holy Scripture became clear to me, and heaven itself was opened to me."

We live in a time when many Christians seem to have the opposite problem from those faced by the young Luther. Too often I hear people refer to our Lord as Brother (which may be deduced from our being adopted as sons and daughters of the Father in Holy Baptism, but which too often sounds a bit more "chummy" than respectful), or they speak of God's love as something that we can take advantage of without any response from us—as in, "I can do whatever I want because God loves me anyway." The question we all must face as we consider both the love and the almighty power of God—of our Lord Jesus—is, "Do we see God as the one in control or as someone we can ignore or manipulate?" Sin still has consequences. Jesus is still righteous: *Mighty God, King of kings, Lord of lords*. He loved us so much that He came to take our sins upon Himself, so that we might be holy as He is holy—so that we might walk in His ways and be in a loving relationship with Him for eternity. The Apostle Paul faced this same difficulty in the early church. In Romans 6:1-4 Paul admonishes those who misunderstood grace and forgiveness: *"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."*

Lutheran Pastors are taught that we are to preach both Law and Gospel. Without the Law, which condemns us and shows us God's holy will without the intervention of our Savior, there is no Gospel—the Good News that Christ, the *Mighty God*, destroyed the power of sin, death and the devil through His death and resurrection. This is a call to repentance—a call to walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8), and to love Him above all others and above all else. In this relationship with Christ, He is our refuge. He clothes us in His righteousness and gives us the Holy Spirit to be our advocate, comforter and guide through the dangers of this life.

When our Lord Jesus calls us into faith, He says, *"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."* (Matthew 11:28-29) We are called to a life of discipleship—of learning and following. And our *Mighty God* Savior, Christ Jesus, will lead us safely through the perils of this life into eternal life with Himself.

Announcements

When sending **correspondence and donations** to the NALC please use the following address:

North American Lutheran Church
2113 Harwood Road, Suite 309
PMB 409
Bedford, TX 76021-4703

Donations to NALS, Disaster Relief, Great Commission Society, etc. are to be made out to the NALC with the specific fund written on the memo line of your check.

Pastors available for pulpit supply:

Pastor Jason Cooper – 515-293-0342
Pastor Kristine Dohrmann—515-802-2539
Pastor Natacha Kemp—507-785-0412
Pastor Andrew Loomis—712-298-6587
Pastor Jack Miller—507-798-2408
Pastor Mike Wikstrom—480-203-1556



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

Upcoming Events

August 3-8, 2025—NALC Luther Week—Omni William Penn Hotel, Pittsburg, PA

September 20, 2025—Iowa Mission District Convocation—St. John’s, Le Mars, IA

NOTE: Nominations are needed for several positions in the Mission District. The biographical form is on the 4th page of this newsletter. Please prayerfully consider nominating people to serve our Mission District. To nominate them, get their permission, contact Pastor Zamzow to let her know you’re nominating the person, and then get a copy of the biographical form to them so they can fill it out and send it to Pastor Zamzow. Her address is on the form.

Donations and Correspondence

Checks sent to the Mission District for support should be made out to the *Iowa Mission District, NALC*, and mailed to:

Mrs. Belinda Borchardt
Iowa Mission District Treasurer,
PO Box 105,
Grafton, IA 50440.

Correspondence should be sent to:

Pastor Solveig Zamzow
Iowa Mission District Secretary
619 Elm Avenue, #309
Story City, IA 50248

Items for the Mission District newsletter (pictures, news, etc.) are best sent via e-mail to

Pastor Barbara Wills at
barbaramwills@gmail.com.

Mission District Pulpit-Supply Guidelines

In October of 2022, the Mission District Council voted to recommend that congregations pay a visiting pastor \$200 for a worship service in addition to the current IRS mileage rate. At a subsequent meeting, we also decided to recommend that congregations do the same for a visiting pastor who performs a wedding or a funeral. Any honorarium that the family might want to give to the pastor would not be deducted from this, as the pastor is providing a service to the congregation. We also recommend that a congregation which has more than one worship service in a day, pay an additional \$50 to the pastor for each additional service. (The 2025 IRS rate is \$0.70 per mile.)





Congregations of the Iowa Mission District

Ackley: **Our Saviour's**, Dan Buhs, Lay Minister
Avoca: **Trinity**, Pastor Matthew Bahnfleth
Badger: **Badger Lutheran**, Pr. Scott Meier
Boyden: **St. John**, Pr. Jeremy Winter
Cedar Falls **Nazareth Evangelical**, Self Study
Des Moines: **Unity Evangelical Lutheran**,
Pr. Donna Joseph; Pr. Diane Joseph
Dorchester: **Waterloo Ridge**, Pr. James Glesne
Eagle Grove: **Evangelical Lutheran**, Call Process
Eagle Grove: **Samuel Lutheran**, Call Process
Ellsworth: **Trinity**, Pr. Jon Rollefson
Emmons, MN: **Emmons**, Call Process
Gilmore City: **First**, Tracy Nerem, Lay Minister
Grafton: **Emmanuel**, Call Process
Greene: **St. John, Vilmar**, Pr. Tamara Keen
Gunder: **Marion**, Pr. Marshall Hahn
Harlan: **Bethlehem**, Call Process
+Huxley: **Shepherd of the Prairie**,
Scott Licht, Lay Minister
Irwin: **St. Paul**, Call Process
Kanawha: **Kanawha** – Call Process
Laurens: **Bethany**, Pr. David Klappenbach
LeMars: **St. John**, Pr. Steven Broers
Manchester: **First**, Call Process
Monona, **Faith**: Call Process
Northwood: **Peace**, Pr. Barbara Wills
Ottumwa: **First**, Pr. Brad Miller, Interim
+ Osage: **First Grace**, Pr. Christopher Staley, Interim
Palmer: **St. John's Lizard Township**,
Marlene Nimke, Lay Minister
Plainfield: **St. John, Western Douglas**,
Bill Wendorf, Lay Minister
Readlyn: **St. Matthew**, Pr. Jean Rabary
Readlyn: **Zion**, Pr. Jean Rabary
Robins: **Servants of Christ**, Pr. Ronald Voss
+Rochester, MN: **Emmanuel**—Pr. Khrystle Sullivan
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. Christopher Martn
Spencer: **Trinity**, Pr. Renae Behrends
Strawberry Pt.: **Mission in Christ**, Call Process
Thor: **Ullensvang**, Call Process
Waterville. **Old East Paint Creek**, Call Process
Waukon: **Old West Paint Creek**, Call Process

+ indicates mission congregation

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fivekidscrazy@outlook.com

Mission District Communicator/Newsletter Editor

Pastor Barbara Wills
barbaramwills@gmail.com

*The Iowa Mission District
has 42 congregations.*

*The Iowa Mission District website may be found
at: www.iowamissiondistrict.com.*