



# News

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

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

November 2021

### *A Word from the Dean*

## What is truth?

This question is one that Pontius Pilate asked Jesus (John 18:38). The question had been prompted by something Jesus had just said: "For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37) Jesus didn't come right out and answer Pilate that day. But the question is just as pressing today as it was then.

What is truth?

When I was a young boy, many years ago, I don't recall anyone asking that question. My family had a set of encyclopedias that were about 20 years old, and the evening news told us what was going on in our little corner of the world. There seemed little doubt what was truth, then. But times, they are a changing, and one of the things that has gone out of fashion is truth. Well Truth, anyway, has gone out of fashion. And the capitalization change makes all the difference. Anymore, what is true to me, may or may not be true to you. There is no such thing as Truth anymore. The only thing that is agreed to be True is that there is no such thing as absolute Truth. Capital T Truth means something that is true for everyone. And such a thing isn't held to be True, nowadays.

Maybe you haven't heard anyone talk like that, but trust me, it's happening all the time. And all this talk of 'my truth' and 'your truth' is likely to lead to confusion in a search for Truth that the world is trying to tell you does not even exist.

For this particular Christian pastor, who is well on his way to having lived three score years, I'm not buying this 21st century notion that there is no such thing as Truth. How can I be so bold as to spit in the face of the collective wisdom of so many who are much more highly educated than I am? I take my lead from Jesus, Who, when asked by Pilate, "What is truth?" said, "Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."

Why don't I buy into all that the world would have me believe? Because I listen to Jesus, the same Jesus Who elsewhere said, "I AM the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). The call for the Christian is to be one who listens to the voice of the One Who is the Truth.

What is truth? **Jesus is Truth.**

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

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

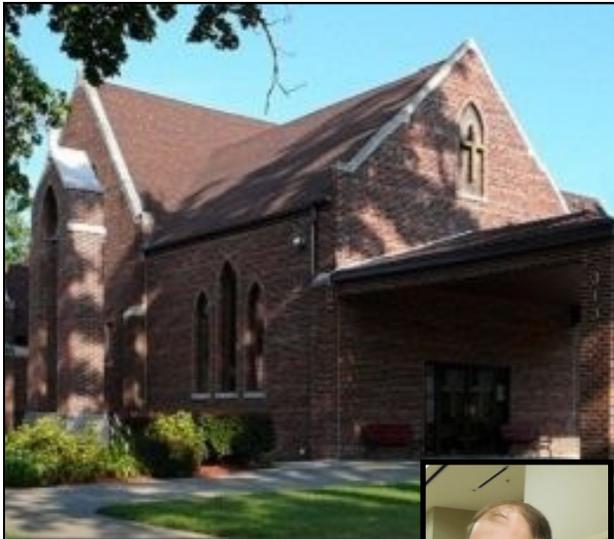


On September 12, 2021, Pastor Marshall Hahn, and the members of the St. Olaf Lutheran Parish, hosted a Tractorcade as a part of their Rally Sunday celebration to kick off the Sunday School year. The celebration began with an Opening Outdoor Worship at Marion Lutheran, followed by the 6-mile Tractorcade ride to Norway Lutheran. In addition to the nine Tractors, there were ten UTV's (Utility Terrain Vehicles) involved, one person on a bicycle, and two "people movers" pulled by the tractors on the ride. There was then a Closing Outdoor Worship at Norway Lutheran followed by a pork chop dinner and outdoor games which included a "bouncy house" for the children.



## **Iowa Mission District Congregations**

Below: *Pastor Tony D. Ede serves First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Manchester, Iowa.*  
Right: *Pastor Mel Harris pastors the congregation at Faith Lutheran Church, Monona, Iowa.*



## March for Life Trip January 19-22, 2021

How would you like to join 500,000 fellow life supporters at the 2022 March For Life in Washington, D.C.? There will be marching bands, signs, drumlines, singing, and banners. Supporters of the sanctity of human life from all over the world will join together on Friday, January 21, 2022 and you could be there also.



Pastor Marshall Hahn is working to put together a trip to this annual event. The itinerary will probably involve leaving on Wednesday, January 19, and traveling about halfway to DC before staying in a hotel overnight. The bus would complete the trip on Thursday. In past years, the pro-life Iowa federal legislators (Senators Joni Ernst, Chuck Grassley, etc.) have hosted visiting Iowans in a large conference room in one of the congressional office buildings on the morning of the March. We'll be sure to make that option available if it happens this year.

The March activities generally start around 11:00 a.m. near the Washington Monument with speakers from all walks of life: politicians, abortion survivors, women who have had abortions, clergy, doctors, and many more. The March itself normally starts around 1:00 p.m. and proceeds from the area of the Washington Monument, up Constitution Avenue, and ending at the Supreme Court Building.

After a good night's rest Friday, the bus will make the trip back to Iowa on Saturday. That trip will not be non-stop, but it will be completed in one day – you'll be back home Saturday night.

Cost? If we can fill a 54-passenger bus, transportation will be about \$200.00 per person. At the recent Iowa Mission District Convocation, the representatives voted to contribute \$3,000 toward the cost of the bus, hence the affordability. There will be 3 nights in hotels (one night en route and two nights in the Washington, D.C. area). Each night will probably be about \$150.00 per room. Sharing rooms would cut down the cost per person, but is your option.

If you have questions, please contact Pastor Marshall Hahn at 563-880-9714 or [stolafparish@neitel.net](mailto:stolafparish@neitel.net). Right now we're gauging interest and viability of the trip. Once we know who is interested and where they are located, pickup points, parking, and other details will be announced. Please let Pastor Hahn know by November 15 if you are interested in going so that plans may proceed.

The March For Life is truly an encouraging opportunity to gather with thousands of like-minded people to demonstrate your support for the God-given sanctity of life. Every year, there are more and more Lutherans singing good Lutheran hymns as we march. Please consider joining us.

*Scott Licht, Lutherans for Life*



## Christ Alone Jesus Christ: The Center and Focus Of Christian Faith

*Pr. Paul Breddin  
West Des Moines, Iowa*

Walk into many Christian churches, and your eyes are invariably drawn towards the chancel, especially to the altar, the cross or crucifix on or above it, and the sculpture or art behind it. After all, the aisle leads directly there.

Many older Lutheran churches have smaller copies of Bertel Thorvaldsen's sculpture of the Risen Christ with arms outstretched, or copies of art showing Christ praying in Gethsemane, or the Good Shepherd, etc. on the wall behind the altar or incorporated into the altar if it is located against the wall. Our eyes focus on these because they tell us something central to the Christian faith.

When I was a high school teacher in Australia, I worshiped at the large Lutheran church in the town where I was teaching. One entered the building under a large open Bible on the outside wall fronting the street. On one "page" were printed the words of John 3:16. On the other were the words of I John 4:11-12. These focused one's attention on the words of Holy Scripture. A life-sized crucifix was attached to the wall behind the altar. One's eyes were drawn to it and the Greek letters "Alpha" and "Omega" flanking it.

All these artistic forms show Jesus Christ and what He has done for the human race as the center or focus of Christianity. He died on the Cross to save us from the power of sin, death, and the devil. The words on the outer front wall spoke of God's love for humanity, why He sent His Son to die for us, and why as Christians we love others. Christ rose from death as empty crosses tell us, and because He lives, believers in Him shall rise also.

Many modern churches often do not have such clear statements about Jesus in art, and what they mean for us – a pity, since art can speak much more clearly than words!

Think of Thorvaldsen's sculpture, and the words of Christ in Matthew 11:28 are doubly meaningful: *"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."* What rest? The rest from carrying the burden of sin. Christ takes that away by forgiving our sins, because He paid the penalty for all our sins by dying on Calvary's Cross. By accepting that invitation, we receive eternal life and salvation from a loving God.

Remember the words of John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life."* God loves every person, irrespective of who they are. So, Christ stands with open arms of invitation and welcome for all. Eternal life and salvation! Welcome, because as Acts 4:12 tells us: *"There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved."*

Christ is the Center and Focus of Christian faith: Christ alone because only through faith in Him are we assured of forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation.



*Bertel Thorvaldsen's sculpture of the risen Lord Jesus. The inscription at the base of the statue says "Kommer til mig" (Danish for "Come to me"), referring to Jesus' words in Matthew 11:28. (The author, ibRasmussen, has released this work into the public domain, and grants anyone the right to use this work for any purpose, without any conditions....")*

# *A Few of My Favorite Psalms*

## *Psalm 11*

*“In the LORD I take refuge....”*

In times of danger, struggle, fear and uncertainty, we find comfort in knowing that the Lord God is our refuge and strength. There are many Psalms that speak of the Lord as our stronghold, our refuge, and our fortress in times of trouble. Sometimes the references suggest the care birds give to their young: *“In the shadow of thy wings I will take refuge,”* (Psalm 57) and *“Oh to be safe under the shelter of thy wings!”* (Psalm 61)

When I think of the Lord’s care and protection, Psalm 11 has never been the first one to come to my mind. But one of the exciting things about reading continuously through the Psalms is the way the Lord opens our hearts to hear words in new ways, particularly when we need to hear them. This recently happened to me with Psalm 11. In these days of unrest and ambiguity in our society—political polarization, continuing health concerns about COVID, increased anxiety and depression among many, and the economic uncertainties that have resulted in the aftermath of the long months of COVID isolation—the world seems to be increasingly alien and hostile. Many who faced life with the confidence that they were “masters of their fate” and in control of their lives, have come face to face with their own vulnerability. Even those who have known intellectually that we are not in control, have come to a new and deeper realization that many of the things we have taken for granted are not—and never have been—guaranteed, nor ours by divine decree. Each of us faces these sobering times with varying degrees of acceptance, confidence, and courage. It is a time when those without the Lord may be feeling particularly vulnerable, and even antagonistic.

The psalmist may have been experiencing such a time in his life. He asks the question—perhaps addressing his own fears or the advice of friends or counselors: *“How can you say to me, ‘Flee like a bird to the mountains; for lo, the wicked bend the bow, they have fitted their arrow to the string, to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart; if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do’?”* He asks this question, after having just affirmed that *“the Lord is my refuge.”*

Psychologists tell us that we all have a “fight or flight” instinct. When faced with danger, our need for survival kicks in with one or the other of these two responses. But there are times when fighting is futile, and there is no place to hide. Sometimes, as in our own times, it’s hard to identify the “enemy”, and there is no place to go to avoid the current difficulties. But like the psalmist, we know that we are not alone in our difficulties, and the One who watches over us is the Lord of all creation. *“The LORD is in his holy temple! I had always associated that phrase with a “call to worship” as people gathered in the Lord’s house on Sunday mornings. This sentence has taken on a new meaning. Like other Psalm verses that speak of the Lord watching over us and never slumbering or sleeping (Psalm 121), there is comfort in knowing that the Lord is in his holy temple, and that “the LORD’s throne is in heaven; his eyes behold, his eyelids test, the children of men,”* These words are not simply poetic hyperbole, but statements of the true state of affairs. We who put our trust in the Lord God, Who loves us so much that He sent His only Son to bear our sins on the cross and overcome all the powers of sin and evil through His death and resurrection, continues to love us and watch over us. He has never abandoned us in the past, and will not abandon us now in our current time of need.

On our own we are helpless, unable to protect ourselves from the dangers around us, or our own sinfulness within. But we are not left on our own—our trust is in the Lord Who is King of kings and Lord of lords. The Lord Jesus has overcome all wickedness and evil, and has clothed us with His own righteousness so that we are the “upright” who shall behold His face. As we walk through the dark valleys of this present life—whether they are forces from outside us or our own fears, anxieties and sins—we do not walk alone. Thanks be to God, Whose eyes behold us and Who is our refuge, our stronghold, and our deliverer!

*Pastor Barbara M. Wills*

# Announcements

## Upcoming Events

**January 19-22**—March for Life trip to Washington DC.

**April 23, 2022**—9:00 a.m.—Iowa Mission District Council meeting—Cabin Coffee, Mason City, IA

**June 6-7, 2022**—Pastors/Lay Minister's Retreat, Fort Dodge.

**July 2022**—Youth Mission Trip. Details will be forthcoming. Text Pastor Tony D. Ede for more information at 319-290-2401.

**August 27, 2022**—Iowa Mission District Convocation.

## Please Pray for:

**Pastor James Puotyual** who is awaiting a kidney transplant.

**Pastor David Schafer** who is awaiting hip surgery.

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

**Amy Cooper** and her family as she continues to deal with cancer.

**Pastor David Steffenson** who is undergoing treatments for pancreatic cancer.

**Pastor Jack Miller** who is recovering from a serious head injury following a fall. His recovery is going well, and he hopes to be available for pulpit supply within the next few weeks.

**Greg Olson** who continues to recover from neck surgery.

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](mailto:barbaramwills@gmail.com).

## Congregations of the Iowa Mission District



Ackley: **Our Saviour's**, Dan Buhs, Lay Minister  
Avoca: **Trinity**, Call Process  
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**,  
Pr. Bill Odermann; Pr. 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**, Call Process  
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—  
[pdllease@gmail.com](mailto:pdllease@gmail.com)  
Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer—  
[pqburkhalter52@hotmail.com](mailto:pqburkhalter52@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)  
Pastor David Klappenbach—  
[klappenbach98@rpt.coop](mailto:klappenbach98@rpt.coop)  
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Lyle Hollander  
[lhollander@frontiernet.net](mailto:lhollander@frontiernet.net)  
Dean Armstrong—  
[jdedarmy@laurens-ia.com](mailto:jdedarmy@laurens-ia.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 Eric Meissner—402-660-1121  
Pastor Jack Miller—507-798-2408  
Pastor Paul Weeg- -641-381-0675  
Pastor Mike Wikstrom—480-203-1556 (LCMC)  
Pastor Solveig Zamzow—641-903-9416



*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).*

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)