



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

October 2021

A Word from the Dean

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” (John 10:11)

This well-known verse from scripture comes from the 10th Chapter of John, from which we read every year on the 4th Sunday of Easter, Good Shepherd Sunday. And on each of these Sundays we also read the 23rd Psalm. The messages contained within these passages of Scripture are among the most beloved in all the Bible. And the imagery of sheep and shepherd can be found throughout the Bible, appearing nearly 250 times.

We are well-acquainted, even if we have never had the pleasure of shepherding sheep, with the idea that sheep on their own fair much less well than if they are under the care of a shepherd. The shepherd protects, guides, leads, provides, and cares for his or her flock. The sheep depend on their shepherd to find sufficient food, safe water, protection from predators, leadership through difficult terrain, and particular care for the most vulnerable of the flock: the newly born and the sick, lame, and aged.

These characteristics are very much mirrored in the life of the called pastor and the congregation for which that pastor has responsibility. As I have had the opportunity to visit throughout our Mission District these past twelve months, I have come to appreciate this truth all the more, and have arrived at an even more profound understanding of the contrast that Jesus draws between a shepherd and a hired hand. Jesus goes on to say, *“He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep”* (10:12–13). It is for precisely this reason that such a big deal is made of the idea that congregations should not approach the call process, or understand the relationship they have with their called pastor, as someone who is “hired and fired”. The fact of the matter is that “Pastors come and Pastors go”. This is a good

thing: that ongoing ministry can happen even when a Pastor leaves for some reason. But it is also a good thing when a Pastor is able to be more than just one in a long line of those who have come and gone, when such a Pastor actually is able to become much more than a hired hand, but a shepherd for his or her flock.

Such a Pastor seeks to know better and better the members of the congregation (the flock), and with the passing of time, can become better and better known by his or her congregation. Speaking as someone who has had the opportunity to be “in place” for 13 years in my first call, there is a true joy in watching one I’ve baptized come forward years later for a children’s sermon, and then to receive a Bible, and then to have that same one sitting in Confirmation class, and even to affirm that faith in which that one was baptized. What I am describing here is the sort of relationship that Jesus was describing between Himself and us, *“I know My own, and My own know Me”* (10:14), and by extension, should be present between a Pastor and a congregation.

And as that relationship, that bond, grows ever stronger, the congregation should learn to be able to trust its shepherd, its Pastor, more and more, because there is a real sense in which the Pastor is willing to what he or she can for the flock. The motivation is not of the hired hand, which is simply to draw a paycheck, but to work toward the fullest health of the congregation, *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me”* (10:27). In this calling, a Pastor seeks to bring to his or her flock the means to help them all follow the Good Shepherd, the one Who truly *“laid down His life for His sheep”* (10:15). I pray that such relationships can be formed and fostered within each of our congregations, so that we might give witness to the world.

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

Iowa Mission District Convocation Emmons Lutheran Church September 11, 2021

The day began with check-in at the registration table. Those who came early enjoyed refreshments in the fellowship hall, and had a chance to catch up on news from friends, or meet new people. At the opening worship service, Bishop Dan Selbo presided for Holy Communion, assisted by hosting pastor, Pastor Ryan Henkel. Iowa Mission District Dean, Pastor Christophe Staley, was the preacher. Bishop Selbo also led one of the breakout sessions later in the day.



NALC Disaster Relief Coordinator, Mary Bates, and her husband, Ken Watson, attended our Iowa Mission District Convocation this year, and brought a truck to collect the relief supplies members of the Mission District congregations had been gathering. Attendees of all ages and sizes helped load "stuff the truck".

Stuffing the Truck

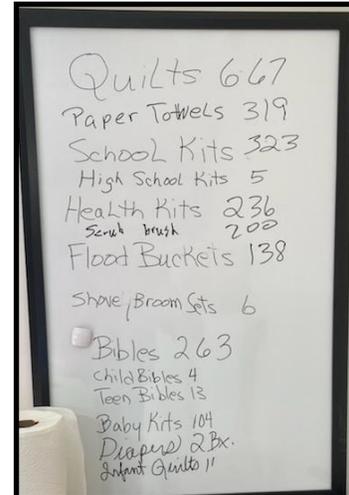


During the closing service re-elected and newly elected Council members were installed: Pastor David Klappenbach, Pastor Gary Burkhalter (Treasurer), Mr. Dean Armstrong, and Mr. Lyle Hollander.



This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District

At the Mission District convocation this year we learned that we now have a Disaster Relief warehouse located in St. Charles, MN. Our Mission District Disaster Relief Coordinator, Betty Burkhalter, and her husband, Pastor Gary Burkhalter, delivered some scrub brushes to the warehouse following the convocation, and have shared these pictures with us.

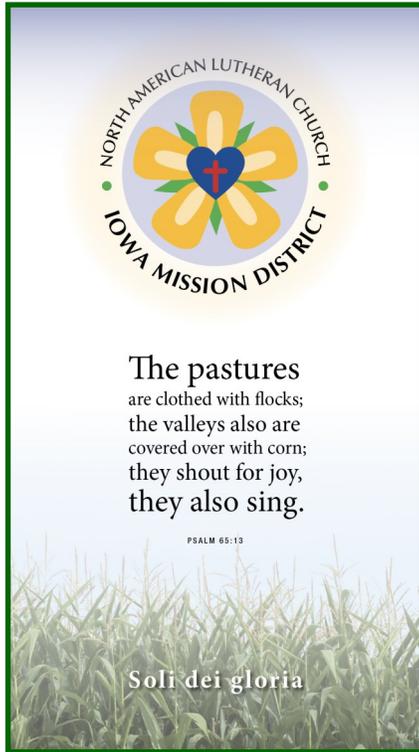


Thank you for your generous donations to the NALC's Disaster Response Stuff The Truck event! Here is a list of the items taken to the warehouse in Rochester Mn:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 34 quilts | 187 containers of comet |
| 20 health kits | 175 bottles of bleach |
| 121 school kits | 400 gloves |
| 35 Bibles | 78 brushes |
| 2 boxes of diapers | 662 garbage bags |
| 6 infant quilts and 5 infant blankets | 6 containers of wipes |
| 110 empty buckets | 7 brooms |
| 117 full buckets | 200 scrub brushes |
| 3 packages of masks | |
| 319 paper towels | |
| 119 bottled cleansers | |

*Betty Burkhalter, Coordinator
Iowa Mission District Disaster Relief*

Corn Rose: The Iowa Mission District Logo



It has been the desire of many within our mission district to strengthen the bonds between our congregations. It is no small task, as we are one of largest districts with 37 congregations stretching from as far north as Rochester, Minnesota, and south to Avoca, Iowa, a distance of over 300 miles!

For the most part, a common denominator across all of the congregations in our district are our connections to the rural and agricultural communities we serve. Since March of 2020, graphic designer Ruth Bosley of Cincinnati, Ohio, has been playing with slogans, phrases, concepts, and images that depict our district. This common rural thread led her to creatively integrate the image of a kernel of corn into the widely recognized Luther Rose resulting in what she humorously dubbed her “Corn Rose” (pun intended)!

The Iowa Mission District now owns this brand and every congregation is permitted to use it in any way it desires: caps, shirts, patches, stationary, the sky’s the limit! Available in full four-color, two-color, and single color formats, the logo is extremely versatile.

It is hoped that the more of our congregations that adopt and use the logo, the more *esprit de corps* will be built among us. Wouldn’t it be fun to descend on our next national NALC convocation in Oklahoma City with every pastor and delegate from the Iowa Mission District all sporting attire emblazoned with our very own logo?

Pastor Gary Burkhalter



To receive a digital copy of the logo at no cost, contact Iowa Mission District Treasurer, Pr. Gary Burkhalter at pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com.



Christ Alone

*Pr. Jack Miller
Millville, Minnesota*

Will You also leave?

This haunting question from Jesus hung in the air after his stunning teaching in the Capernaum synagogue. There he had declared that “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

What did he say? Eat my flesh. Drink my blood? For many who had been following him up to that point, this was over the top, and they began to leave him. It didn't help when Jesus explained that he was speaking in spiritual terms, not literal.

More leave... And this is when Jesus asks the twelve if they will leave too. We are relieved when Peter pronounces the holy words we sing on Sunday before the reading of the Gospel:

“Alleluia, Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.”

Yes. With Peter and all believers we hereby affirm: There is no one else to go to. There is only one Lord – Jesus. There is only one Savior – Jesus. There is only one who has the words of eternal life – Jesus. It is and always will be, Christ Alone.

Yes...but Jesus knows that many *will leave*. And in the following twice-thousand years, many have. More are leaving now. And more will. But more will keep coming to his call. He will keep building his church. Until he returns.

Many leave because they cannot accept the serious call of Jesus to the full commitment that is contained in Jesus' declaration that, “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood” you have no life in you. For us this injunction of

course encompasses Holy Communion. But it means finally that unless a person believes in Jesus Christ as Lord, that person is outside the salvation Jesus came to bring.

For the twelve, as Peter said, there was no one else to go to. And even though they would continue struggling to understand, they knew that there was no one else like him. Of course there were every kind of pagan gurus and would-be “christs” around. But none of them did the works that Jesus did – feeding thousands with a bit of bread and fish, giving sight to the blind, healing the deaf, making the lame walk, and raising the dead. And teaching as no one else ever had.

No. There was no one to whom they could go. It was Christ Alone.

And how is it with us? If we were to leave Christ, who else could we go to? To political movements or their leaders? When princes die, their plans die with them. To heroes of sport or entertainment? They disappear after their moment of fame. To the geniuses of philosophy or art? Their contributions are earthbound and ephemeral. To our military heroes? Their monuments are soon torn down.

Who remains? The Lord, who is the Word of God that endures forever: Jesus, the Living Word, with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He remains the One to whom we can turn. In joy and in sorrow. In every of doubt. In the face of death.

Lord, we will never leave you! You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia!

A Few of My Favorite Psalms

Psalm 16

We live in troubled times. For many of us, this time in history feels more uncertain—even more dangerous—than other times we've experienced. We may even be tempted to think that it's worse than anything people have ever had to suffer. Whether this is an accurate assessment of our current situation is highly questionable.

- ◆ When Israel and Judah were conquered by foreign armies, their leading citizens force-marched into exile, and the temple in Jerusalem desecrated and destroyed, that was the end of life as they had always known it. I suspect that for most of us personally, this time doesn't even begin to compare.
- ◆ When the Bubonic Plague swept through Europe in the Middle Ages (1347 around 1352), the medical community had no knowledge of its cause or how to protect people. Around fifty million people were believed to have died from this deadly disease. It wiped out whole villages and communities, old and young, poor and rich alike. The devastating effect of this dreaded killer wiped out lives, and for most of the survivors, their whole way of life. As inconvenient as our current situation is, it doesn't really begin to compare to that level of devastation.
- ◆ When bombs were dropped by both sides across the landscape in Europe and other parts of the world during World War II, homes and lives were demolished, a way of life was shattered, and nations had to be rebuilt. What we are experiencing now is not—at least not yet—on that level of destruction.

The point of this brief review of history is to help us regain our perspective, and to remind us that the world is a dangerous place. No matter how rich or powerful we may be by human standards, and no matter how healthy or physically strong we might be, we are helpless to control the forces of nature, and the forces of evil that surround us. Our technology cannot save us. Our knowledge—limited as it is—cannot protect us. Psalm 146:3 reminds us not to put our trust in people, for they cannot save us. And Psalm 127:1 affirms the truth that unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain; unless the Lord watches over the city, the alertness of the security guard is of no avail.

Throughout the Bible we find prophets, psalmists and others of God's faithful people reminding us to get our priorities straight: Put your trust in the Lord. He Who is all powerful, Who created all things—the laws of physics and the forces of nature—is the only one who can help us in the physical world. And He alone reigns and holds ultimate power in the spiritual realm. The Psalms that remind us of these truths offer us prayers with substance, and words of real hope in a world that is spinning out of control. The prayer of the psalmist in Psalm 16 begins with such words of comfort and help:

*Preserve me, O God,
for in thee I take refuge.
I say to the LORD, "Thou art my Lord;
I have no good apart from thee."*

The psalmist also acknowledges the Lord's supremacy in the spiritual realm:

*Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;
my body also dwells secure.
For thou dost not give me up to Sheol,
or let thy godly one see the Pit.
Thou dost show me the path of life;
in thy presence there is fulness of joy,
in thy right hand are pleasures
for evermore.*

The Lord watches over and cares for us, even to the point of sending His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus, to destroy all the forces of evil in His death and resurrection. Our Lord tells us that He is the Way, Truth, and Life through Whom we come to the Father, and that He Himself has prepared a home for us where He will bring us to dwell forever. (John 14) He echoes the message expressed by the psalmist in these further words of assurance to His disciples: *And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.* (Matthew 10:28-30)

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

Announcements

Upcoming Events

October 2, 2021—9:00 a.m.—Iowa Mission District Council meeting—Cabin Coffee, Mason City, IA

Please Pray for:

Pastor James Puotyual who is awaiting a kidney transplant.

Pastor David Schafer who is scheduled for 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.

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.



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

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Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer—
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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

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.

