



NORTH AMERICAN
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

MIDWESTERN AREA NEWSLETTER

April 2024



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

Latest and Greatest News!

Pastors and Congregations

New Congregation: Welcome First English Lutheran Church, Wapakoneta, OH – to the [NW OH Mission District](#). The NALC Executive Council approved this congregation on March 15, 2024 and their profile information is: 107 W Mechanic St (mailing) Wapakoneta, OH 45895-1907; 419-738-3911 wapakelc@bright.net

They are the NALC’s 501st congregation!

New Congregation: Welcome Shepherd of the Lakes Lutheran Church – to the [Wisconsin Upper Peninsula Mission District](#). Welcome Pastor William (Bill) Wendorf. PO Box 130, Sayner, WI 54560-0130; (O) 715-542-3701 secretary@sotlsayner.com shepherdofthelakeschurch.org

Condolence: Rev. Fidler’s passed away on November 27, 2023. He is survived by his wife, Mary Lee Fidler. Westlake, OH. We commend him into the Lord’s care and thank God for his service in ordained ministry.

Ordination of Michigan Seminarian. Pastor Terese Whitten was ordained on Feb. 18 at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Oregon, Illinois. She serves as pastor of St. Paul and St. John Lutheran Church in Creston, Illinois. Pastor Whitten was supported by St. Thomas, Trufant, and the [Michigan Mission District](#) in her journey to ordination.



Interterm 2024 For Pastors at NALS

June 10-14. Join us this summer in Ambridge for an engaging classroom experience as we meditate upon what it means for the NALC to be “mission driven” at such a time as this. Our professor for this course is the Rev. Canon Dr. Dan Alger, a seasoned pastor, an experienced church planter, and celebrated author of the recent book *Word and Sacrament: Ancient Traditions for Modern Church Planting*. The final day of course content and discussion groups throughout the week will be facilitated by pastors from the NALC with a passion for mission within our contemporary context. Auditors and pastors seeking continuing education opportunities are most welcome! Registration opens March 25.

www.thenals.org/interterm

Sola Publishing Needs New Roof

Sola’s roof at their building in Graham, NC needs replacing, and the leaks have been a long-term problem that have recently become more significant. They are estimating that it could cost about \$42K. Sola is an important part of the NALC, and many congregations are blessed by what Sola provides.

Deans, please consider bringing this important issue to your Mission District Councils for possible financial support.

See article on home page of their website
<https://www.solapublishing.com/>

Disaster Response

April 30, 9a-4p. Train the Trainer for NALC Disaster Response training.

May 2. - Pastor Amy Little will dedicate the new NALC Volunteer Training & Retreat Center in Caldwell Ohio, time to be determined.

NEW Volunteer Training and Retreat Center, Caldwell, Ohio. The center is on the property of the national disaster warehouse and is available for service projects, and retreats.

Contact Mary Bates for more information and how to get involved, 740-509-1132,
disasterresponse@thenalc.org

Ohio Mission Region Convocaton

May 3-4 at St. John, Grove City, Ohio. While the program is still in formation, Rev. Brad Hales will be the principal speaker and will focus on ministry to senior adults. Visitors are always welcome to take advantage of key note speakers and workshops. For registration information, contact Pr. Michael Koch mekoch46@gmail.com (330) 635-8008, Ohio Mission Region Board.

Mission District Pastors Meetings

These are provided in case you happen to live closer to another MD's meeting and would like to attend for pastoral fellowship and support. Or, if you can't travel, you might consider joining a video conference call.

Michigan MD pastors and lay leaders via zoom, generally the second Saturday of each month at 10a. Pericope devotion followed by sharing of faith journey and concerns for prayer. Contact Pr. Abbott at midwesternaab@thenalc.org for Zoom invitation.

NE-Ohio MD, **Every Monday** Pastor Pericope study, Zoom at 10am. Email Pr. Koch at mekoch46@gmail.com for Zoom invitation

Pastors Meeting in person, April 9 at Trinity, Jeromesville at 10 a.m. Host is Rev. Jerry Rhea.

SE-Ohio MD pastors Text study, Mondays 10a, with Pr. Thomas Jacobson, Ph.D. Hosted online via Microsoft Teams. First Mondays of each month are online AND in person at Grace, Thornville. Please contact Pr. Tom pastor@gracethornville.org if interested.

NC-Ohio MD, Pastors Fellowship 10am Apr 18th at St. Paul, Clyde, OH. Email Pr. Pennington for more information penningtonkm@gmail.com

Mission District Pastor Retreats

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.

Iowa MD, Jun 10-11, 2024. Best Western Holiday Lodge in Clear Lake, IA. Contact Dean, Pr. Christopher Staley for more information; cbstaley@netins.net

Marital / Premarital Counseling Tool

Zoe www.zoescore.com. Currently, the tool is used by approximately 10,000 pastors/therapists around the country and world.

Pastor Brian Salminen would gladly welcome the opportunity to train any NALC pastors / lay leaders on the use of the tool for free. If interested, contact Pr. Salminen at drsal_123@yahoo.com

Candidacy for Ordained Ministry Seminarians in the Midwestern Area

Khrystle Sullivan, North American Lutheran Seminary network (NALS), Iowa MD. **Approved for ordination**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kent Haley, Ordination Under Special Circumstances Program. New Life, Gallipolis OH, SE Ohio MD.

Pam Grandmaison, Trinity School for Ministry (NALS), Ambridge PA, Michigan 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 Jess with school, degree / certification being sought, and their Mission District.

Youth News and Opportunities

July 1-4, 2024 **NALC Continental Youth Gathering**, St. John's Lutheran Church, Boerne, TX (near San Antonio). **We Belong "I know my own and my own know me"**.

Registration now open. See updates and information at <https://thenalc.org/cyg/> This four-day gathering provides opportunities for NALC youth to grow in faith and relationship with others as the body of Christ. Youth will worship together, study God's Word, participate in large and small group sessions, reach out to the community through mission events, and engage in fellowship and fun!

July 21-27, 2024 **NEXUS Institute**, at Grand View University, Des Moines. The week is being sponsored by the NALC. For more information: <http://www.grandview.edu/NEXUS>

"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.

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

Pastor Jess Abbott posts services / sermons on YouTube. Go to YouTube and search "Abundant Grace Lutheran Church Westchester". Or contact Pastor Jess at midwesternaab@thenalc.org

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

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Remote Pastoral Care

If you are a congregation without a pastor, you ALWAYS have a pastor. Contact your Mission District Dean for pastoral advice. Or, your Area Assistant to the Bishop (Pr. Jess) is always available to provide pastoral counseling midwesternaab@thenalc.org

On Line New Member Prep

A four-session class (over 4 weeks) that introduces Lutheranism and prepares people to join the membership of a congregation. Classes can be scheduled for groups of 4 or more. Contact Pastor Jess at for more information at midwesternaab@thenalc.org

Lutheran Chapel Week

Fall: Oct. 21-25, 2024 Spring: Mar. 17-21, 2025
Trinity School for Ministry is a seminary in the Anglican tradition and, as such, uses the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) for all its liturgies in Trinity Chapel. However, once per semester, our Anglican brothers and sisters grant “we Lutherans” the opportunity to lead all the liturgies over the course of one week using the historic liturgies for Matins, Vespers, The Eucharist, and Compline; it becomes **Lutheran Chapel Week!** There is an open invitation for anyone to visit the residential campus any time, but you might consider Lutheran Chapel Week as a special opportunity. For more information on any visit to campus, contact Frontz, Rebecka rebecka.frontz@tsm.edu

Lutheran Adoption Conference April 10-12, 2024

Join a gathering of Lutheran leaders at the Hyatt Regency Houston Intercontinental Airport at the Lutheran Adoption Conference. Enjoy the testimony and talents of Dove Award-winning musician and adoptee Mark Schultz. Experience the fellowship and celebration (did somebody say, “Banquet!?”). Discover the expert information and exciting opportunities.

Join faith leaders, policy makers, adoption experts, life advocates, and more. Participants will explore possibilities for increasing distinctively Lutheran adoptions across the

United States. For developing information and updates, visit <http://lutheransadopt.org/>

State of the Midwestern Area

These numbers constantly change based on new information each month, or corrections to prior erroneous information. As time passes the number are expected to become increasingly accurate.

Congregations with Pastors.....	92
Pastors with Congregation calls.....	98
Congs w/o Pastors, IN Call process	26
Congs w/o Pastors NOT in Call process	20
Interim Pastors (in congs w/o Prs.).....	8
Pastors of Specialized ministries.....	10
Retired Pastors (not Interim now).....	37
Seminary Students.....	8
Home Churches (not congs yet).....	3

Total Congregations	138
Total non-retired Pastors	118

Congregation Vacancies

The NALC website has a great section to see congregations looking for a full-time or part-time pastor <https://thenalc.org/call-process/>

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).

Midwestern AAB Schedule Contact me if you'd like me to suggest some short presentations I can make at event. For convocations, I can provide a short update on NALC priorities and recent efforts.

The following events are on my radar to attend:
Apr 8-10, 2024 – NALC Seminarian Interns retreat, Mount Pleasant, PA.

May 3-4, 2024 – Ohio Mission Region (and all Ohio Mission Districts) Convocation. St. John, Grove City

Jun 10-11, 2024 – Iowa Mission District Pastors Retreat

Aug 9, 2024 – NALC online Convocation

Sep 21, 2024 – Iowa Mission District Convocation, St. John, Western Douglas

Oct 1 or 2 (tentative) – Wisconsin / UP Mission District Convocation, Wausau

Oct 12 – Michigan Mission District Convocation, Trufant

Midwestern Area Deans

Pr. Jess Abbott, Midwestern Assistant to the Bishop
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Pr. Bert Schultz, OH North West MD
715-418-1037, icgracepastor@outlook.com

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

Pr. Tom Jacobson, OH South East MD
740-242-2192, pastor@gracethornville.org

Pr. Michael Koch, OH North East Mission District
330-635-8008, mekoch46@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

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Bp. John Bradosky,
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