



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

May 2021

A Word from the Dean

“Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Matthew 6:34 (NIV)

I have a confession to make. Although Jesus is quite clear about what He wants for us, there are times when I worry.

When I see dust flying behind planters or other field implements, knowing full well that the soil is becoming parched for lack of rain, I worry. When I hear the latest addition to our list of weekly prayers owing to another disheartening diagnosis, I worry. When I hear whispers of another marriage in our midst that may be in trouble, I worry. When I see that our nation appears to be on the brink of yet further strife from within, I worry.

If I spent more time thinking about all these things, I could probably fill the page with things about which I sometimes worry. And I'm guessing that most of you are like me. There are times when you worry too, maybe for these same reasons, or maybe for reasons that are entirely your own. Whatever the case, it feels as though there little we can do to rid ourselves completely of the tendency of worrying.

But there is one particular worry that I want you particularly to consider. For more than a year now, our lives have been disrupted by varying degrees by a virus that emerged on the scene. Considering how awful the earliest predictions were of the number of lives that would be lost, at least in our own back yard we have been mostly 'lightly' brushed by its effects. On the other hand, I can't help but think that though the death toll has been limited, the collateral damage has been quite extensive. By this, I'm talking about the way in which we have had our overall sense of dis-ease and even panic heightened. Before this pandemic took over the headlines, most of us engaged in

any number of behaviors that carried with them a level of risk, perhaps even a significant level of risk, without giving it much thought.

But having lived under a heightened sense of foreboding for all these months, I fear that many are never going to feel safe again. And, you see, as I am just a simple parish pastor, part of my concern is that our attempts to help people stay connected to our weekly worship services through these past many months may actually become 'enough' for some people so that they won't feel a need to join us as we worship in our beautiful church. That isn't to say that we gather in our churches owing to their inherent beauty. They may well be beautiful structures built for the worship of God that generation after generation has been privileged to enter. But the true beauty of the place can only be fully experienced by those who enter through those doors with all the others who enter through those doors on a Sunday morning. For when those pews creak under the weight of their fullness, and the air is abuzz with the chatter of all those who are glorying in the opportunity to be together in that place for the chance to "taste and see that the Lord is good", that is when the true beauty of the place comes to life. Perhaps that is what is meant, at least in part, in that phrase of the hymn: the "mystic, sweet communion" of God's people coming together to be the whole body of Christ for the sake of each other, and for the sake of witnessing His love to the whole world.

And so, to all, I say. You all come back now, ya hear?

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

From the Treasurer:

Greetings in the name of Jesus!

First, a huge thank you to each and every congregation that has supported our mission district - may the Lord bless you real good!

Secondly, just a reminder that the financial or fiscal year in our district runs from September 1st through August 31st. This means we're entering the last quarter of the year. If your congregation intends

to have contributions reflected in the current year, please make sure they reach the Treasurer no later than Friday, August 27th, to ensure they are deposited in time.

Contributions are to be sent to:

Pr. Gary Burkhalter, Treasurer
Mission in Christ Lutheran Church
312 E. Mission St
Strawberry Point, IA 52076

Iowa Mission District Council Highlights

The Iowa Mission District Council met Saturday, April 24th, at First Lutheran, St. Ansgar. Reports from the Secretary, Communicator, Treasurer, and Dean were approved. Dean Staley provided information regarding the upcoming Mission District Pastors' Retreat which will be held on June 7th & 8th at the Best Western, Holiday Lodge, in Clear Lake. Professor Gracia Grindal, of Luther Seminary, will be attending as a keynote speaker. The cost of the retreat will be covered by a portion of the money that had been designated for the NALC, as it was decided that it will benefit both our Iowa Mission District, and the broader NALC.

Dean Staley has traveled throughout much of the Mission District since his election to meet with pastors of the Mission District, in addition to working with St. John, Vilmar, in their call process. Two additional congregations within the Mission District are in the Call Process: Trinity, Spencer; and Salem, Eagle Grove. Trinity, St. Charles, MN, a new congregation in the NALC has called a pastor, Douglas Hedman. Pastor Staley installed him there on April 18th. Another transition noted is that Faith, Sibley, voted to close as a congregation. Pastor Solveig Zamzow, Emmanuel, Grafton, will be retiring in June.

Dean Staley reported that all the constitutional amendments that were passed at the August NALC Convocation received enough votes by NALC congregations to be ratified. As a result, the next NALC Convocation after the one being held in Corpus Christi in August, will be in 2013. We plan to continue meeting annually for our Iowa Mission District Convocation.

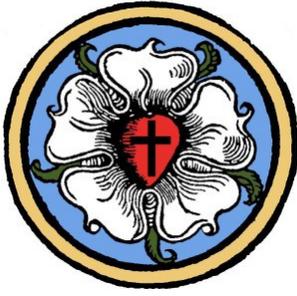
Plans are underway for our IMD Convocation, to be held at Emmons Lutheran, Emmons, MN, on Saturday, September 11th. Bishop Dan Selbo will be our Keynote Speaker. It was decided to add a youth component to the day, with their participating in a portion of the convocation, and then spending time as a group in their own activities. Pastor Ryan Henkel of Emmons will be coordinating this. Further details about this convocation will be provided in future newsletters.

The next meeting of the IMD Council will be on Saturday, October 2nd, at the Cabin Coffee in Mason City.

Pastor Christopher Staley, Dean

Resources

There are numerous resources and information for pastors, congregations and families on the NALC website: thenalc.org. Global Workers profiles may be found there as well. SOLA Publishing also has some resources of interest to families and congregations.



Solus Christus—Christ Alone

*Pr. Gary Burkhalter
Mission in Christ Lutheran Church
Strawberry Point, Iowa*

When the “Sola’s” are mentioned or discussed, there are always the “Big Three” that are front and center: Word/Scripture Alone (*Sola Scriptura*), Faith Alone (*Sola Fide*), and Grace Alone (*Sola Gratia*). It can be confusing to have phrases like “Christ Alone” (*Solus Christus*) and “To the Glory of God Alone” (*Soli Deo Gloria*) added to the mix.

Some have sought to weave all five together in a coherent proclamation:

“We are saved by Grace alone through Faith alone in Christ Alone according to Scripture Alone for God’s Glory Alone.” Another way of saying it might be: “We are called to focus on Scripture, accept salvation by grace through faith, magnify Christ, and live for God’s glory.”

Some have suggested that the expression “Christ Alone” is merely a summary of the first three. While that may be true, it requires too many caveats, too much fleshing out to make sense out of it. Instead, if we take this fourth “sola” by itself (alone!), there is a wonderful insight into orthodox Lutheran doctrine being presented.

Christ Alone refers to the idea that the salvation of humankind is the direct result of Christ’s redemptive work through his death, resurrection, ascension, and... And nothing! That’s it! Period! As soon as we begin introducing other “necessities”, we embark on a slippery slope that never ends well! This is true regardless of how “spiritual” or “rational” or “theological” we think our addition sounds. We are saved by Christ Alone. Alone means just that: by itself, plus nothing!

Scripture emphasizes this in Acts 4:12 – “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”, 1 Timothy 2:5 – “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”, and Ephesians 2:8-9 – “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast”.

Of course, the first thing we want to add to that sola-tary act of Christ Jesus is something of our own doing! We want to add something like our choosing, our deciding, our believing, our _____ (fill in the blank)! Adding our own action to that of Christ Jesus seems logical! As argued by the young pastor in Bo Giertz’ novel, *The Hammer of God*: “If you do not give your heart to Jesus, you cannot be saved!” This introduced some action on our part that had to be added on to what Christ has done. But application of the doctrine of Christ Alone is summed up by the young man’s mentor: “You are right, my boy. And it is just as true that, if you think you are saved because you give Jesus your heart, you will not be saved.” (Emphasis added).

Of course, we want to make one more stab at giving our selves some modicum of merit: “But we have to believe, don’t we? Isn’t that us doing something?” Perhaps, but the problem comes in when we want to take the credit for our believing! Luther pulls that rug out from under us in the explanation to the 3rd Article of the Creed: *I believe that by my own power or understanding I cannot believe in my Lord Jesus or come to him!* Where do we think our ability to believe it comes from in the first place? It doesn’t come from reaching deep within some place in ourselves but from the Holy Spirit of Christ Jesus *who calls us, enlightens us, makes us holy, and keeps us in the true faith! This is most certainly true!*

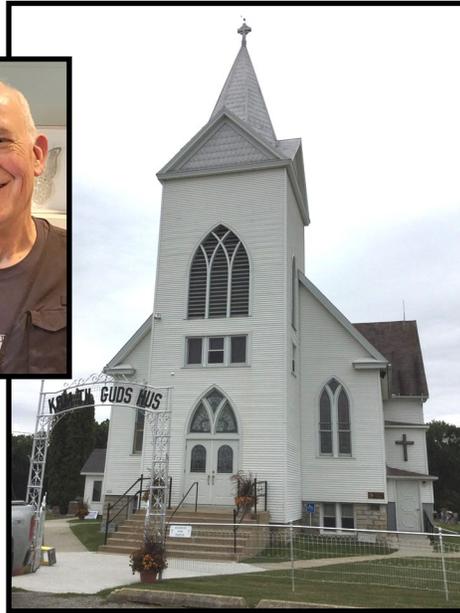
Either Christ Alone has done it all for us, or he has not – there is no middle ground

This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District

Pastors and Congregations of the Iowa Mission District

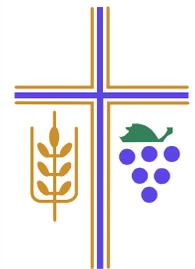


Pastors Diane and Bill Odermann serve Waterloo Ridge Lutheran Church .



Students at St. John's Lutheran, Vilmar, acted out the Sunday School lesson on Palm Sunday with palm branches. They also waved their palms during the worship service later that morning.

We welcome Pastor Douglas Hedman and his wife, Faith, to our Mission District. Pastor Hedman was installed as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Charles, MN, on April 18, 2021, at the morning worship service. Iowa Mission District Dean, Pastor Christopher Staley, presided at the installation, and Pastor David Steffenson was also able to attend the service.



2021 Iowa Mission District Convocation

The Iowa Mission District Council met April 24th, and finalized some of the plans for the 2021 Mission District Convocation which will be held September 11th at Emmons Lutheran Church, Emmons, MN. Our theme for this year is "Christ Alone". Bishop Dan Selbo will be our keynote speaker. Registration forms and nomination forms will be included in next month's newsletter. In the meantime, please mark the date. There is no registration fee, but the registrations help us with meal planning, preparation of name tags, and having enough packets for delegates and visitors.

Announcements

Upcoming Events

June 7-8, 2021—Iowa Mission District Pastors' Retreat—Best Western Holiday Lodge, Clear Lake, Iowa. Cost is covered by the mission district, but those wanting a private room will be asked for a \$60 donation to offset the added expense.

August 2-6, 2021—NALC Luther Week, Corpus Christi, TX

September 11, 2021—Iowa Mission District Convocation—Emmons Lutheran Church, Emmons, MN.

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

Please Pray for:

Pastor David Schafer who is recovering from a broken ankle and scheduled for hip surgery.

Pastor James Glesne who is undergoing treatments for Multiple Myeloma

Amy Cooper (wife of Pastor Jason Cooper) who will be having more treatments for cancer.

Pastor David Steffenson who is undergoing chemo for pancreatic cancer.

New Addresses for the NALC

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.

A Few of My Favorite Psalms

Psalm 103

Settled in a comfortable chair with a cup of Earl Grey tea, I was just beginning my morning devotions when the phone rang. It was my doctor's office. Her nurse told me there was a problem with one of my medical tests and I was being referred to a specialist. This was not the way I had planned to start my day. The call had unsettled me and left me with more questions than answers. I picked up my Bible to read the next Psalm in my continuous readings. It was Psalm 103, and the first five verses seemed to fly off the page and into my heart:

*Bless the LORD, O my soul;
and all that is within me, bless his holy
name!*

*Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits,
who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the Pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and
mercy,
who satisfies you with good as long as
you live
so that your youth is renewed like the
eagle's.*

I read these words several times, remembering how the Lord has been with me through all the years of my life. Whether I faced health crises that required months or years of treatment, or "false alarms" that turned out to be less serious than anticipated, He has always walked through the dark valleys of my life and helped me find good even in the most trying times. I thought of how our Lord Jesus suffered humiliation, pain, and death to assure that we who put our trust in Him will overcome even death to live with Him in everlasting blessedness. As I pondered and prayed these verses, I was comforted and given the strength to move through the

weeks ahead, knowing that whatever lay ahead, the Lord was in control of the process and would bring the outcome that would best His purposes and His will for my life.

These were the words of the Psalm that spoke to me that morning, but there are other lessons in the verses that follow—words of compassion and assurance, reminders of our proper relationship with the Lord, invitations to offer appropriate praise and gratitude to the Lord who created and redeemed us, and who will never forsake us:

*The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast
love.*

*He will not always chide,
nor will he keep his anger for ever.*

*He does not deal with us according to
our sins,
nor requite us according to our iniquities.
For as the heavens are high above the
earth,*

*so great is his steadfast love toward those
who fear him;*

*as far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our transgressions
from us.*

*As a father pities his children,
so the LORD pities those who fear him.*

*For he knows our frame;
he remembers that we are dust....*

*Bless the LORD, all his works,
in all places of his dominion.*

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

Whatever trials we face in this life, the Lord watches over us with His unfailing love and mercy.

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 Jamison
Des Moines: **Unity Evangelical Lutheran**,
Pr. Donna Joseph; Pr. Diane Joseph
Dorchester: **Waterloo Ridge**,
Prs. Bill and 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**, Pr. Solveig Zamzow
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
Craig Lease, Secretary—
pdlease@gmail.com
Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer—
pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com

Mission District Council Members:

Pastor Ronald Rasmussen—
bigras73@fmctc.com
Pastor Tony D. Ede—
tonyede@gmail.com
Chris Schlee—
schleemasonry@hotmail.com
Kathy Scharnhorst—
gaf@butler-bremer.com

Disaster Response Coordinator: Betty
Burkhalter
bettyburkhalter@hotmail.com

Mission District Communicator
(newsletter editor/web master):

Pastor Barbara Wills—
barbaramwills@gmail.com

*The Iowa Mission District
has 37 congregations.*



Pastors available for pulpit supply:

Pastor James Glesne—563-380-8110
Pastor Jack Miller—(507) 798-2408
Pastor Paul Weeg- -641-381-0675



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.