



# News

of the Iowa Mission District  
of the North American Lutheran Church

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

May 2019

## *A Word from the Dean*

### **KINGDOM WITNESSES**

*“It is not for you to know times or seasons  
that the Father has fixed by His own authority.”  
~ Acts 1:7*

There is an old story about three monks who were hoeing in the garden. As they worked the conversation turned to the topic of Jesus’ second coming. And the question was raised, “What would you do if you knew that tomorrow was the day Jesus would come again in all His glory?”

The first monk said, “I would go to the chapel and spend the time in prayer – all through the night, to prepare myself to meet my Lord.”

The second monk said, “I would go to each of my brothers and ask their forgiveness for any wrong I may have done to them that we may be reconciled to one another.”

When they asked the third monk what he would do to prepare for the Lord’s Coming, he said, “I would finish hoeing this row.”

When the disciples met the risen Lord Jesus their first thought was, “This must be the time when God will bring His heavenly Kingdom to earth!” They were ready to sit back and watch it come. But God had other plans. Jesus tells them this is no time to sit back and relax, this is the time to get back to work – to spread the news, to be His witnesses, make disciples of all nations.

There have been people ever since the disciples’ time who have had the same ideas. People who have been convinced that Jesus’ second coming is just around the corner. Most often, these groups end up separating themselves from the rest of the world to “prepare” to meet the Lord. But, like the 3<sup>rd</sup> monk in the story, the best way to “prepare” for Jesus’ coming is to do the work we are given to do “while it is day before the night comes when no one can work” (John 9:4).

And what is that work? To live in faith – to serve our neighbor – spread the good news of Christ’s forgiveness, life, and salvation – to “hoe the row” in front of us!

*“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon  
you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria  
and to the ends of the earth.” ~ Acts 1:8*



## Sola Gratia—Covered by God’s Merciful Grace

*Pr. Jean Rabary  
Zion Lutheran  
Readlyn, Iowa*

The story is told of a minister who officiated at one of his members’ funeral. The family requested Holy Communion during the service, so the pastor obliged. Everything went fine when he chanted the Great Thanksgiving until the third line. Instead of chanting his line: “Let us give thanks to the Lord our God,” he chanted the congregation’ response: “It is right to give him thanks and praise.” The organist just froze not knowing what to do. He took a deep breath for a split second and chanted his line. The service flowed as planned from that point on.

Before heading to the cemetery for burial, one fellow Christian approached the pastor and said, “You know preacher, despite our preparation and best effort, thing like that happens. Be at peace, when you worship Jesus, you are covered by God’s grace.” The pastor thanked the man with a bear hug.

Later that night, when he reflected on what happened, it dawned on him that there is more to God’s grace or undeserved favor. For Lutherans, whenever we hear grace, we connect it with “God’s gift of salvation by grace through faith” (Ephesians 2:8). Through that Great Thanksgiving chanting blunder, Jesus used a fellow Christian to make that pastor aware that God’s grace is experienced through

his mercy. This is where the Holy Spirit reminds us to believe that in Christ, God forgives and accepts us in spite of our sin and weaknesses. The saying is sure and certain that “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

The pastor also learned through that experience about the redemptive function of God’s grace. It humbled him to the point of acknowledging that leading worship itself is an undeserved favor from a holy and gracious God. More than that, grace is an encounter with the God who loves us, calls us in Christ to shepherd his flock in his church, accepts and renews us with the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. In his book titled *A graceful Life*, Bradley Hanson coined the term “God’s merciful grace” to theologically articulate what I am sharing here.

In closing, God’s grace is not an abstract notion or concept; it is a gift we receive by faith and experience in Christ, a gift activated by the Spirit to keep transforming us in Christ’s likeness. You are not going to believe that that Lutheran minister experienced God’s merciful grace at the funeral of a faithful departed whose name is Grace N. Is our Jesus a grace-giving Lord or what? Shalom!



## *This and That from around the Iowa Mission District*

It is with deep sadness that we bid a final farewell to Pastor Bernard Daiker (right in picture with his son, Pastor Joseph Daiker). Pastor Bernie died on Monday, April 15, 2019, after a battle with Alzheimer's disease and kidney failure. We commend him to the love of his Savior and Shepherd, our Lord Jesus, and pray that our Lord will comfort his wife, Barbara, and their family. He will be greatly missed.



Right: Pastor Christopher Martin teaches children about Jesus crucifixion during the Good Friday Daycamp held at St. John's Lutheran Church -Vilmar this year. They had a great day learning about Holy Week and Easter with Bible lessons, music, crafts, and games. Participants also made a "hand-print" tree in the Education Unit entrance (left) to remind everyone of Jesus' words from John 15 "*I am the vine, you are the branches.*"



Faith Lutheran Church in Monona has begun worshipping in their newly built sanctuary. The dedication of their church will be on the Day of Pentecost, June 9, 2019.



Above: One of the most important marks of the church, according to Luther, is that the Word of God is preached in its truth and purity. To that end, many pastors gather to study the lectionary texts—weekly or as often as possible. The group of Lutheran pastors pictured above meet at various churches on a monthly rotation. If you would like to join the text study group, please contact Pastor Hahn [stolafparish@neitel.net](mailto:stolafparish@neitel.net) for more information about time and place.

# Announcements

## 2019 Upcoming Events

**May 12, 2019** – 3:00 p.m. – Dedication of building for Peace Lutheran Church, 902 2nd Ave. N., Northwood. All are welcome—pastors are invited to vest and process (color for the day is red). Pastor Marshall Hahn, Iowa Mission District Dean, will preach.

**June 9** – Sunday afternoon at 3:00 p.m. – Dedication of Faith Lutheran Church, 19999 Pleasant Ridge Rd., Monona. All are welcome, and pastors are invited to vest and process (the color of the day is red). Pastor Mark Chavez, NALC General Secretary, will preach.

**July 22-29** – Youth Mission Trip. Contact Pastor Jason Cooper ([cooper\\_jd@yahoo.com](mailto:cooper_jd@yahoo.com)) or Pastor Tony D. Ede ([tonyede@gmail.com](mailto:tonyede@gmail.com)) for more information. Personal cost per person—\$250.

**August 5-9** – Luther Week in Indianapolis, IN. (Note: **Election of NALC Bishop!**)

**September 14** – Iowa Mission District Convocation, First Lutheran, Manchester, IA

## 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).

*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).*





## ***Steadfast In God's Word*** ***How Long, O Lord?***

*How long, O Lord? Wilt thou forget me forever?  
How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?  
How long must I bear pain in my soul,  
and have sorrow in my heart all the day?*  
(Psalm 13:1-2a)

There are many situations in life that make people feel abandoned. In our personal lives we may feel this way when we're in pain—caged in, alone, with no way for others to feel what we feel or touch the pain in any healing way. Damaged or broken relationships may bring us to the brink of despair—to the edge of an abyss that threatens to pull us into an eternity of dark hopelessness. Grief can engulf our hearts and minds with an emptiness that is as overwhelming as the vastness of space—leaving us bereft of all comfort, buried under a weight of unending depression. In such times the future seems bleak. We walk in a darkness so deep that we can see no glimmer of hope or joy.

The people of ancient times also suffered such emotional pain and emptiness. In Psalm 13, David expresses his pain and suffering with the question that is in all our hearts at such times—"How long, O Lord?" He cries out to God with stark honesty, "How long will you hide your face from me?" When we feel abandoned and afraid, we sometimes fear our honest feelings of anger. But the people of ancient times expressed their anger and fear to the Lord. Even Job, who is admired for his patience in the midst of terrible suffering, questioned the Lord and defended himself before God (chapters 26-31). Even though God has an eternal perspective and calls us to faithfulness, He will "give us room" when we're in distress. (Psalm 4:1) The Scriptures help us define and give voice to our suffering before the Lord, and they also remind us that the Lord hears His children when they cry out to Him in their distress. Psalm 30:5b reminds us that "*weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.*"

After Job questions the Lord, he must come to terms with God's sovereignty and finally realizes that God is greater than we can ever imagine (Job 42:1-6).

He also comes to understand that the Lord is merciful, even in the times we feel alone and abandoned. We find this same dichotomy in Jesus' teachings. On the one hand He calls us to "*come to me all who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*" (Matthew 11:28), yet warns us that the way of faithfulness is not an easy path: "*If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.*" (Luke 9:23) The Apostle Paul also struggled with the reality that even though we are loved beyond measure, our journey is not without thorns. In 2 Corinthians 12, he speaks of a "thorn in the flesh". "*Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'*" (verses 8-9a)

When we feel out of control, we cry out to the Lord in our misery. We want to know why we suffer. But the Lord is not answerable to us. In Isaiah 45 we are reminded of this. "*Woe to him who strives with his Maker, an earthen vessel with the potter! Does the clay say to him who fashions it, 'What are you making?' or 'Your work has no handles?'*" While the Lord gives us room for our lamenting, and offers us the words of Scripture to help us frame our questions and anxieties, in time He will remind us that He is our Sovereign Lord, and His ways are not our ways. While we may not always understand the *why*, we do know the *Who*. God so loved the world that He gave us His only begotten Son, Christ Jesus, to suffer for all the sins, pain and anguish of the world in order that we might not perish, but live with Him in eternal bliss. Our time here on earth is brief. The Lord uses this time to bring us to faith through the work of His Holy Spirit, and to help our faith grow and strengthen through the trials of this life. His promise is sure—He assures us that nothing in all creation can separate us from His love (Romans 8:38-39), and that when we are gathered into His eternal kingdom He will "*wipe away every tear ... and death shall be no more....*" (Revelation 21:4)

***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 Lund  
Dorchester: **Waterloo Ridge**, Call Process  
Eagle Grove: **Evangelical Lutheran**, Pr. Jason Cooper  
Eagle Grove: **Samuel Lutheran**, Pr. Rich Taylor  
Ellsworth: **Trinity**, Pastor Jon Rollefson  
Emmons, MN: **Emmons**, Pr. David Schafer, Interim  
Gilmore City: **First**, Tracy Nerem, Lay Minister  
Grafton: **Emmanuel**, Pr. Solveig Zamzow  
Greene: **St. John (Vilmar)**, Pr. Christopher Martin  
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**  
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**, Pr. Thomas Summerfield  
St. Ansgar: **First**, Pr. Christopher Staley  
St. Olaf: **Norway**, Pr. Marshall Hahn  
Sheldon: **St. Paul**, Pr. Craig Nissen  
+Sibley: **Faith**, Pr. Tim Nappe  
Spencer: **Trinity**  
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

### **The following pastors are available for pulpit supply:**

Pastor Paul Breddin—515--528-2284  
Pastor James Glesne—563-380-8110  
Pastor Jack Miller—(507) 798-2408  
Pastor David Steffenson—253-302-9845 (Sundays)  
Pastor Paul Weeg- -641-381-0675

### **Iowa Mission District Leadership**

Pastor Marshall Hahn, Dean—  
[stolafparish@neitel.net](mailto:stolafparish@neitel.net)  
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Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer—  
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### **Mission District Council Members:**

Pastor Jason Cooper—  
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Mission District Communicator  
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Pastor Barbara Wills—  
[barbaramwills@gmail.com](mailto:barbaramwills@gmail.com)

*The Iowa Mission District  
has 36 congregations.*



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)