

News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

May 2023

A Word from the Dean

Oh, to be in Iowa now that Spring is here....

According to my calendar, Spring turned a month old a few days ago. I just wish that someone would notify the weather. Remember that week when we were basking (even suffering) with 90-degree heat. Golf courses were opening and many were digging out their short-sleeved shirts. And then just a day or so later, we were back to our longjohns when the wind chills dipped down to the single digits and along came some fresh snow. Oh, to be in Iowa now that Spring is here.

It is the other days: the brisk mornings that are accompanied by crystal blue skies, serenaded by all the birds that are busy nesting and feeding, the sight of the budding and flowering of the trees (with my apologies to those whose allergies are triggered by such things), and the anticipation of spears of asparagus emerging from the ground and lilacs emitting their intoxicating fragrance, that make this time of year the favorite of so many. And while there are days when I wonder what it would be like to live in parts of the world that don't experience the vagaries in the weather that are part of daily life here, I'm pretty sure I'll stay put and make such places ones I will only visit.

But no matter the season or the climate in which we live, we live in the promise of the certainty of God's faithfulness to His promises. As we love to sing, "Summer and Winter and springtime and harvest, sun, moon, and stars in their courses above join with all nature in manifold witness to Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love."

The lengthening of daylight, the greening of the vegetation, and the fruitfulness of the earth all serve to assure us of God's faithfulness. In some ways, all these things make it quite a bit easier to trust in God when such signs are abounding. For those of us in this half of the globe, it is very appropriate that we celebrate the new life purchased for us by Jesus on the cross and shown to us in His resurrection at the same time that new life is springing forth.

But there are also times when such an abundance of signs of life fail to penetrate the darkness that surrounds and blinds us because of the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Death, grief, pain, sorrow, despair, disease, depression, decay, worry, trials, and more can rob us of participation in such joy. At such times, it is only God's Word that can offer the sure and certain hope of our life in Christ. As we sing in a different hymn, "When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain, Your touch can call us back to life again, fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been; Love is come again like wheat arising green."

Pastor Christopher Staley, Dean, Iowa Mission District, NALC



Pastor Matt Bahnfleth Trinity Lutheran Church Avoca, Iowa

Finally, it is turning to Spring and those home and yard projects can begin. The ritual of "Spring Cleaning," sprucing up what has been let go in Winter, takes on many forms. From opening the windows for fresh air or pulling everything out and deep cleaning the nooks and crannies, to clearing the leftover lawn waste and planting new flowers. Farmers are chomping at the bit to dig and turn ground, as the sweet smell of fresh broken earth fills the air in anticipation of a harvest. People are getting ready to start a new construction project or working to add some room; Spring cleaning and projects certainly are a part of each life.

It should be of no surprise to us that God is in His Spring-cleaning mode as well as always. The Springtime of the Church's year begins in Lent as we, in dark and cold, look again at our condition, summing up the clutter and noticing the leaks and needed repairs. Just as flowers break through the ground to show its radiance, Easter too bursts forth and begins to bloom, and with that bloom comes the fragrant beauty of Pentecost that is carried on the breeze and makes us stop and breathe deep the beauty of God's work for us, and a desire to share it daily.

When it comes to those building projects planning is essential. The opening line of Psalm 127, one of the Songs of Ascent comes to mind, "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain." We easily forget that God is in a never-ending construction time with us as He constantly seeks to call us closer and to build us, together and individually, into His temple for service in the world. Though we would all quickly agree with the statement of the psalmist, that building our selves just won't work unless God is the builder, in honesty we by our very nature fight God's reconstruction projects. God's Easter bloom that has broken out of the ground is none other than His own Son, crucified and risen, having paid all cost and taken on all consequence for our sin; and it is He who sends that Holy Spirit to work to build us into His dwelling more and more with each passing year. We like to think we are done in faith and growth, and perhaps we allow God some tweaking of our lives, but that Faith that we are focusing on this year is not just holding on to God, but trusting what He is doing in us because He never stops the construction project in me.

C.S. Lewis, in his work *Mere Christianity*, talks of this very thing as he writes, "Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is *He up to? The explanation is that He is building* quite a different house from the one you thought of throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself."

This Easter faith bids us to trust in the Lord with all of ourself (Deuteronomy 6:5) allowing God to work in us, and giving grace and assisting others with forgiveness and compassion as God tirelessly works to make us His palace and to send us to help others to come and see. After the projects are done, we sit back and like the Lord's seventh day – rest in the work around us saying, "Yep, that's what we were dreaming." But God's work will continue until we all come to rest in Him, and His Kingdom, forever.

This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District

St. John Lutheran Church Boyden, Iowa

Lyle Hollander, a member of the Iowa Mission District Council, shares with us information about India Transformed, a mission that is sponsored by St. John's Boyden. Led by a Lutheran pastor, John Peter, this mission is the American arm of a Christian organization in India which feeds, educates, and gives vocational training to improve life for the Dalit people who are the lowest of the caste system in Hindu India. (They are also known as "the untouchables".) The organization is called India Transformed, because persecution of Christians is severe in India, which has a pro-Hindu government, and evangelizing is illegal. Being in the lowest caste of this system, these people are limited to the lowest paying jobs, lack educational opportunities available to those in higher castes, and are stuck in a cycle of poverty and oppression. One example of the situation is that most young girls (typically 14-15 year-olds) lack education or skills, and end up married to older men.

The mission is multi-faceted and addresses the following concerns:

1. **IT** offers nutrition, education, and Christian training in 12 schools with approximately 500 students. Plans are in place to build a college within the next two years and they're seeking financial help to make this a reality.

2. IT helps women bring extra income to their families by teaching them to become certified seamstresses in the garment industry which is a big part of the Indian economy. If they are able to buy a pedal-powered sewing machine, they have the option to work from home. IT trains approximately 200 women per year.

3. **IT** also trains Community Transformation workers who help break the cycle of poverty through faith and education, in a 2-year course which includes mission-based field work and vocational training that can be shared with others. They preach the Good News by kindness and service and establishing community prayer cells. Because proselytizing is against the law, this can be a dangerous vocation. Two of these teachers recently became martyrs for their faith.

One way that members of St. John's have supported this mission is by supporting the children's program. More than six children are currently supported by members of St. John. It has been a very rewarding experience for the sponsors.

To give more people a chance to learn of their mission, India Transformed has organized a Virtual Vision Trip, which lasts approximately 75 minutes, and is narrated live from India. On Sunday March 26th, twenty-three members of St. John enjoyed the trip. As part of the event, a meal was served that included a sample of Indian fare, cookies, tea, and dessert.

India Transformed is endorsed by the NALC. For more information you may contact Pastor Dan Hart (theharts@me.com) who was in India several years ago working with this mission. You may also contact Ruth Brodeen, Executive Director of India Transformed!. Her phone number is 970-310-3932. Additional information can be found on their website: www.indiatransformed.org



Emmanuel Lutheran Church Rochester, Minnesota

In March of 2016, the late Pastor David Steffenson from Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Rochester, MN, wrote this in our March church newsletter:

Public Reading of the New Testament

"Have you ever read the entire Bible? Martin Luther read the Bible from cover to cover at least two times every year. In the 1500's, he translated the Bible into the common language of the people. He sang all 150 psalms each month during the hours of prayer. Luther had most of the Bible committed to memory.

Two years ago, during the Fifty Days of Easter, Emmanuel members collectively read the entire New Testament. In celebration of the Resurrection and God's great gift of Scripture, Emmanuel Lutheran will host a public reading of the New Testament this year. It is estimated that reading the entire Bible takes about 72 hours (56 hours for the Old Testament and 16 hours for the New Testament).

One day, 16 hours. An amazing way to celebrate Easter and hear the Good News out loud. Join us for a portion of the day, or the entire day!" – Rev. David Steffenson

This year, on March 10, 2023, Emmanuel Lutheran Church hosted our 8th Annual Public Reading of the entire New Testament. We started a little before 6 am and ended close to 10:30 pm. About twenty people came and went throughout the day and evening. We took turns with continuous reading of the New Testament, sitting in the sanctuary listening or having a cup of coffee and treats in the narthex. When we got to the last chapter in Revelation, we decided to replicate something we did in 2016. The reader stopped right before the last 2 verses of Revelation. We all joined in a circle with our Bibles at the front of the church and we read the last two verses of Revelation in unison. I think we all felt that it was a "holy moment."

Emmanuel is already planning to do it again next year! We would love to have other congregations join us in a public reading of the entire New Testament in 2024!



This and That ... continued

The Iowa Mission District Disaster Relief Coordinator, Betty Burkhalter, gave a report at the Mission District Council meeting on April 22nd. She and her husband, Pastor Gary Burkhalter, took needed supplies from the Mission District warehouse in Chatfield/Rochester, MN, to the Iowa City area following the recent tornadoes there. The goal is to keep the warehouse stocked so there are supplies whenever a need arises. To do this it's most helpful to have 500 each of the various kits: Flood buckets, High School kits, Elementary School kits, Health kits and Kitchen kits. Baby and adult diapers are also much-requested items following a disaster. Right now all the kit supplies have been depleted, and the following numbers of kits would bring the supplies back up to optimal levels: 25 flood buckets, 380 high school kits, 405 elementary kits, 260 health kits, 495 kitchen kits. Betty also mentioned that they have a number of empty buckets on hand that need supplies to fill them. If your congregation is small and can't supply completed kits, but would like to help in some way, please contact Betty at bettyburkhalter@hotmail.com, and she can give you ideas on how you can help. If you have completed kits you can also contact her to find out the best way to get them to the warehouse. Below is a list of the various kits and how to pack/package them:

Flood Buckets: 1 five-gallon bucket with lid, 1 jug bleach (1/2 gal. or smaller), 2 large trash bags (Contractor 3 mil), 1 roll paper towels, 2 rags, Comet or scouring cleanser, Pine Sol or liquid cleaner, scrub brush, gloves, 1 pair each, size L preferred • rubber (reusable, i.e. Platex, dishwashing type) • leather • cotton.

Health Care Kit (Pack in 2-gallon plastic storage bag or tote bag): 1 bath towel, 1 wash cloth (optional), 1 shampoo (2 if travel size), 1 bar of soap (2 if travel size), 1 toothbrush, 1 pack of floss (optional), 1 toothpaste (2 if travel size), 1 comb, 1 deodorant, 1 nail clippers (optional).

School Kit – Elementary: 1 backpack or duffle bag, 4 notebooks, 4 pocket folders, 1 blunt scissors, 1 ruler, 1 pencil sharpener, 4 pencils, 2 pens, 1 eraser, 1 box of crayons, colored pencils, or markers.

School Kit – High School: 1 backpack or duffle bag, 4 notebooks, 4 pocket folders, 4 pencils, 1 pencil sharpener & 1 eraser -or- 4 mechanical pencils, 4 pens.

Kitchen Kits (Pack kits in a 2-gallon plastic storage bag or drawstring backpack): cookbook, dish cloths, dish towel, hot pad, spatula (for cooking), measuring cups, measuring spoons, another helpful kitchen item of your choice (i.e., mini cutting board, peeler, tongs, etc.), storage container, garbage bags (a few, mixed sizes).





Disaster Response buckets and kits sent last year by St. John's Vilmar.



Abiding in Christ: Christ-Centered Service

Why do we do the things we do? Motivation is a powerful force, and something we may not think about very often. But it is possibly as important to know why we are doing something as it is to do it. Are we helping someone in order to gain a favor from them, to make us feel good about ourselves, to gain a bargaining "chip" to use in manipulating someone, to gain popularity, to earn points with the Lord, or because we love the Lord and seek to share His love with others? Martin Luther struggled with motivation in his life as a monk and nearly killed himself with fasting and self-punishment for years in his efforts to earn salvation. Far from loving the Lord with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30), his fear of God, and the mistaken belief that the Lord took delight in punishing sinners, led him to finally admit that during that time of his life he actually hated God. Although on the outside Luther looked like the model monk, and did "all the right things", he did them for "all the wrong reasons."

Our Lord Jesus taught that the work that is pleasing to God is to believe in Him-Jesus-Who was sent into the world by God the Father. (John 6:29) And He taught His disciples that the only way we can do what is pleasing to the Lord—producing the "fruits" or works of faith—is by abiding in Him: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can vou, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:4-5) When we love the Lord God with our whole being, as Mark describes this love, we are "grounded" in Christ, and our love for Him is the motivating force behind all our actions our stewardship of time, talents, and possessions; our service to others. More than that, our actions, like fruit, grow and flow out of this relationship without our calculating or analyzing the situation to figure out how we can gain an advantage for ourselves by taking these actions.

On the last night of His life our Lord Jesus spent a long time with His disciples in the upper room. He told them He was going away. He told them not to

be afraid and that He was going to prepare a place for them. He told them He was "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:1-6). He instituted the Lord's Supper assuring them that in the eating of the bread and drinking of the wine they were receiving His body and blood-a New Covenant in His blood for the forgiveness of sins. (Matthew 26:26-28) He told them that He had not come to be served but to serve, and that in washing their feet-the most menial job done by the lowest servant—He was setting an example for them (and for all of us who claim Christ) to follow. (John 13:1-17) And He gave them a new commandment. Not only were they to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love their neighbor as themselves (Mark 12:30-31), but now they were to "love one another as I have loved vou. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you." (John 15:12-14) As we ponder the events John's Gospel reveals about this last night Jesus spent with His disciples, it becomes clear that He was not telling them what to do to be saved. Rather, Jesus was telling them what it meant to abide in Him and how to live as His followers. It's all about love-overwhelming, dedicated, unremitting, humble, forgiving, forever-no-matterwhat Love-the kind of love that Jesus has for us and all sinners of all times and places. Whatever we do for another person we do for Christ. (Matthew 25:40, 45) And we can only do it by the power of unconditional, sacrificial love.

As we put our trust in Christ and faithfully follow His way of love, we abide in Him. As we love Him with our whole being, we die to ourselves and seek His will above our own. And thus, we become conduits of His grace and mercy in our relationships with others. The Apostle Paul sums it up in this way: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:3-4)

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

Announcements

Upcoming Events

June 12-13, 2023—Pastors'/Lay Ministers' Retreat - Best Western, Waterloo, Iowa
July 16-22, 2023—NEXUS Institute - Grand View University, Des Moines, Iowa (high school aged)
July 24—August 1—Iowa Mission District Youth Mission Trip. Destination, Port Charlotte, Florida, to help with hurricane recovery. Cost is \$350: \$150 non-refundable deposit with registration (before May 1) and remaining \$200 due by July 1. More details on page 3 of newsletter.
August 7-11, 2023—NALC Luther Week (convocation) - Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
September 16, 2023 Iowa Mission District Council Meeting. 9:00 a.m. at Cabin Coffee in Mason City.

Please Pray for:

Pastor James Puotyual who is awaiting a kidney transplant.
Pastor James Glesne who is undergoing treatments for Multiple Myeloma.
Amy Cooper and her family as she continues to deal with cancer.
Pastor Andrew Loomis who has been diagnosed with an autoimmune system illness. Please pray that he will be healed from his chronic pain.

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 to NALS, Disaster Relief, Great Commission Society, etc. are to be made out to the NALC with the specific fund written on the memo line of your check.

Pastors available for pulpit supply:

Pastor Natacha Kemp—507-358-7741 Pastor James Glesne—563-380-8110 Pastor Andrew Loomis—712-298-6587 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 <u>pastortim.milford@gmail.com</u>

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 Pastor Solveig Zamzow, Mission District Secretary, should be sent to **619 Elm Avenue, #309, Story City, IA 50248**

Items for the Mission District newsletter (pictures, news, etc.) are best sent via e-mail to Pastor Barbara Wills at <u>barbaramwills@gmail.com</u>.

Mission District Pulpit-Supply Guidelines

Suggested guidelines for supply pastors in the Iowa Mission District is \$200 plus IRS recommended mileage reimbursement.





Congregations of the Iowa Mission District

Ackley: Our Saviour's, Pastor David Craig Avoca: **Trinity**, Pastor Matthew Bahnfleth Badger: Badger Lutheran, Pr. Scott Meier Boyden: St. John, Call Process Des Moines: Unity Evangelical Lutheran, Pr. Donna Joseph; Pr. Diane Joseph Dorchester: Waterloo Ridge, Call Process 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 LeMars: St. John, Pr. Chris Meier Manchester: First. Pr. Tonv 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, Call Process Readlyn: St. Matthew, Pr. Jean Rabary Readlyn: **Zion**, Pr. Jean Rabary Robins: Servants of Christ, Pr. Ronald Voss +Rochester, MN: Emmanuel—Call Process 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, Pr. Renae Behrends 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— <u>cbstaley@netins.net</u> Pastor Solveig Zamzow Secretary— <u>solveigzamzow@gmail.com</u> Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer— <u>pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com</u>

Mission District Council Members:

Pastor Tony D. Ede-<u>tonyede@gmail.com</u> Pastor David Klappenbach-<u>klappenbach98@rpt.coop</u> Pastor Ryan Henkel-<u>pastorhenkel@gmail.com</u> Lyle Hollander <u>lhollander@frontiernet.net</u> Dean Armstrong-<u>jdedarmy@gmail.com</u> Elise Patzke-<u>ekbieri@gmail.com</u>

Disaster Response Coordinator: Betty Burkhalter <u>bettyburkhalter@hotmail.com</u>

Mission District Registrar Kathy Scharnhorst kscharnhorst51@gmail.com

Mission District Communicator (newsletter editor/web master): Pastor Barbara Wills barbaramwills@gmail.com

The Iowa Mission District has 38 congregations.

The Iowa Mission District website may be found at: <u>www.iowamissiondistrict.com</u>. 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 <u>barbaramwills@gmail.com</u>.

Iowa Mission District Convocation Registration

Saturday, September 16, 2023 Faith Lutheran Church, 19999 Pleasant Ridge Road, Monona, Iowa

The 2023 annual Convocation of the Iowa Mission District will take place at Faith Lutheran Church, Monona, Iowa, on Saturday, September 16, 2023. Our theme is "Faith", and we are pleased to have the Reverend Dr. Amy Little, the North American Lutheran Church General Secretary, as our keynote speaker. The Convocation is our opportunity to gather as brothers and sisters in Christ for the purpose of fellowship, worship, learning and sharing of ideas and to hear up-dates on the work and mission of the NALC. We also will have a business session to conduct the necessary business of the Mission District. As you prepare for the convocation, please be thinking of nominations for *Iowa Mission District Dean (Clergy), Lay representative and Clergy representative* to the Mission District Council. Each is for a three-year term. A nomination form will be included in this month's Iowa Mission District News. Please get permission from the nominees before submitting their names. The nominees will need to complete the nomination form and mail it to Mission District Secretary, Pastor Solveig Zamzow (**619 Elm Avenue, #309, Story City, IA 50248)**.

Please Note:

According to Article 4.01 of the IA- MD Constitution: "Delegates with voting privileges at a Convocation shall be the ordained ministers of the NALC within the territory of this Mission District and [two] lay delegates from the member congregations". In addition, we strongly encourage congregational participation beyond the delegates—visitors are welcome! There is no cost for the event other than a free-will offering for lunch. A worship offering will also be taken and designated to a worthy domestic or international cause. The day will begin at 8:00 am with registration and a time for fellowship with coffee and refreshments. A service of Holy Communion will begin at 9:00, and the closing of the convocation will be at 3:45 pm.

Junior High and High School youth are also encouraged to attend the convocation. It is hoped that we can have youth attendees on a regular basis to promote their interest and involvement in the Church beyond their home congregations.

To help with planning, and so that we may have appropriate name tags for **delegates and visitors**, we ask that you fill out the registration form below and mail to **Kathy Scharnhorst**, **Registrar**, at 1594 Garden Avenue, **Waverly**, **IA 50677.** It is most helpful in keeping track of registrations if each person being registered is listed on a separate sheet. If you wish to submit your registrations via email, please fill out the form and send the information as an attachment to **kscharnhorst51@gmail.com**.

(Please fill out a separate form for each person.)

Name:				
Address:				
Phone and/or email:		/		
Congregation &	Town:			
Clergy	Lay Delegate	Visitor_	Youth	

Biographical Information of Nominee

Name:	Date:
Position for which you are being	g nominated:
Congregational Member at:	
City:	
Occupation:	
Tell us something about yoursel	f (family, hobbies, etc.)
How do you understand your fai	
How have you been active in the	e church?
Please list one of your favorite B	Bible verses and tell why it has meaning for you.

Please sign below to indicate you are willing to serve if elected and mail this completed form to:

Pr. Solveig Zamzow, Secretary Iowa Mission District, NALC 619 Elm Avenue, #309 Story City, IA 502

Signature