



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

March 2022

A Word from the Dean

"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you will return."

These are words that many of you will hear spoken to you as you come forward at Ash Wednesday worship. These words along with a cross-shaped smudge of ashes have been a part of practices in many churches.

For some, the tradition is still unknown, while for others it is still relatively new, and a bit strange. But as far back as Old Testament times, the placing of ashes on the head was a sign of a person in mourning or in repentance. And so, it makes sense that Ash Wednesday and the Lenten season which follows would be connected with repentance. The words go back to the beginning, or nearly so. In spite of the good creation God made, with man and woman perfectly paired in the perfect garden which could have provided for them indefinitely, sin broke in, and with it came death. God had told the pair that they could eat of all the trees in the garden except for the fruit of one particular tree in the middle of the garden, *"For in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die."* (Genesis 2:17) Having been seduced into believing that the fruit from the tree was to be desired instead of believing the sound word of God, they both ate of that single forbidden tree. And when God came to find them that evening, they hid, much like little children when they know they have been caught. This breaking of God's clear command meant they would have to leave the garden, and that they would die. And not just die, but return to the

ground from which they had been made, *"You are dust, and to dust you shall return."* (Genesis 3:19)

Lent is a somber season in which we might rather hide from God, even deny the truth about ourselves. But Lent is a necessary season, in which we must face the truth of our own sin, and not only the truth of our sin, but the enormity of our sin, and the cost of our sin, which we are unable to bear or pay.

If ever we might feel a moment of self-satisfaction, thinking that our sin is really quite small when compared to others we know (or we at least think we know), Ash Wednesday is that day when we are reminded of the payment due us for our sin: *"You are dust, and to dust you will return."* *"All sin and fall short of the glory of God."* (Romans 3:23) And we all well know what the wages of sin is, right? DEATH.

But Lent is more than just a penitential season. It is also a preparatory season. The truth, and the enormity, and the cost, and the wages of our sin must be borne by us for the Lenten season so that we can be prepared for what comes next: the day for which Ash Wednesday and our Lenten journey carries us. A day we dare call "Good."

From a fellow journeyer:

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

This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District

2022 Youth Mission Trip

Once again, our Iowa Mission District congregations are joining together to provide a youth mission trip for this summer. Mark your calendars for July 25th through August 1st for another exciting and blessed trip to SOUTHERN LOUISIANA for mission work as they continue to put lives back together from recent hurricane events.

The cost of the trip is \$400 dollars per participant. A non-refundable deposit of \$150 dollars is due by April 1st. Send the deposit to

St. Olaf Lutheran Church Luther League
PO Box 56
St. Olaf, Iowa 52072.

Pastor Marshall Hahn is our registrar for this event. The rest of the of the fee is due by July 1st.

We will be doing mission work to help rebuild homes for people who could not escape the path of recent hurricane events in the south. As we have done in the past, we will be doing flooring, drywalling, trim work, and general clean up work. A list of things needed to bring and not bring will be distributed closer to the time of the trip.

Exact details on lodging are still being ironed out. We are working with the NALC Disaster Response to help plan those details of the trip and house our large group.

What a blessing it is to be able to do mission work in the name of Jesus in other parts of the world. The impact of mission trips will lead our youth into lives of service toward others in the life. Please make mission trips a priority for your youth. Who knows? Maybe one of them will become a pastor one day because of your encouragement.

Pastor Tony D. Ede



NALC Disaster Response Update

Right after Christmas, Larry Vomhof took from the warehouse in Chatfield, MN, to Kentucky 301 health kits, 39 high school kits, 312 elementary school kits, 360 quilts, and 60 Bibles! Thank you to Larry for making the trip and to you for donations!

To be able to respond to a disaster, we are asked to have on hand 500 of each item.

Due to your generous gifts, at this time we still have 154 elementary kits, 2 high school kits, 127 health kits, 436 flood buckets, 271 Bibles (of which 4 are children's Bibles) and 13 teen Bibles. We still have 546 quilts as well as an assortment of baby items including diapers. These numbers include the 24 Bibles, 42 quilts and 15 health kits we recently took to the warehouse which were donated by Faith Lutheran (Monona) and Mission In Christ (Strawberry Point).

At this time we need a minimum of: 346 elementary school kits, 498 high school kits, 373 health kits, 64 flood buckets and 229 Bible's.

Please take a look at the NALC Disaster Response list (updated February 2021) and prayerfully consider how you and your congregation can help. Let me know if I can help you get your donations to the warehouse in Chatfield.

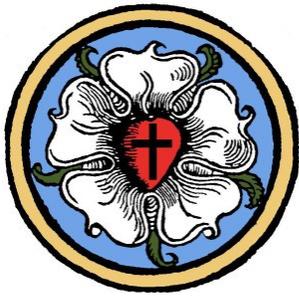
Betty Burkhalter
Disaster Response Coordinator



Click box below:

Disaster
Response
Kits





Christian Hope

Pr. Jean Rabary

*St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Readlyn, Iowa
Zion Lutheran Church, Readlyn, Iowa*

A few weeks ago, Barbara Wills asked me to consider writing a newsletter article for the Iowa Mission District focused on Hope. The aim of this article is to encourage you the reader as we journey together with Jesus in his Church. I did not come up with this intent on my own. It was inspired by what the synagogue officials of Pisidia said to Paul and his companions, "*Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it.*" (Acts 13:15)

This article is limited in scope and focuses on St. Paul's twofold use of hope. First, Paul writes about hope of the saints in connection to their suffering for the sake of following Christ. "*And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.*" (Romans 5:3-4, NRSV)

Here St. Paul goes beyond our daily saying, "no pain, no gain," which tends to focus on the individual ability to endure and sacrifice for a greater good. Those who are into competitive sports endure the pain of grueling training to succeed and be honored in their field. The Apostles had a different take. When the Sanhedrin flogged the apostles for preaching the resurrection of Jesus, "*they rejoiced because God had considered them worthy to suffer for the sake of Jesus.*" (Romans 5:41)

I am not sure if I am anywhere in the vicinity of the Apostles' perspective and experience on suffering for the sake of Christ. One thing is sure, Jesus uses

adversity as a workshop to mold the character of his followers. Oftentimes, Christians comment, "When I go through adversity, I feel closer to Christ." I even dare to say, "adversity is a blessing for those who follow Jesus."

Secondly, St. Paul uses hope in connection with Christian grieving. "*But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.*" (1

Thessalonians 4:13) Here Paul talks about our hope in Christ who conquered death through his resurrection and who will raise us up at the last day at his return.

Let me share a personal story here. When my sister, my dad, and my mom passed away, I could not go back home for their burial. We connected with the family over video phone and grieved as Christians believing that we shall meet at the day of the resurrection when Jesus comes back. In Christian grieving, the Holy Spirit really functions as the Comforter recalling the power of Christ's resurrection and its impact on our life here and now and the time to come.

Christian grieving deals with the pain of loss with the "*Lord who is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.*" (Psalm 34:18)

We also comfort one another as "*we weep with those who weep,*" (Romans 12:15b), yet we look beyond the grave. The last line of the Creed sums it up, "*We believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.*" Amen!



Here I Stand Confession and Conviction: Abiding in Christ

Most Lutherans are familiar with “Luther’s Small Catechism”, and we’ve had to memorize all, or part of it, at some point in our lives. Martin Luther wrote the Small Catechism as a “brief and simple ... statement of Christian teaching,” in response to the “deplorable conditions” he had encountered during a visit to the churches in Saxony during the fall of 1528. (pp 337-338, The Book of Concord, 1959; Tappert Edition) The people seemed to know little or nothing about the Christian faith, and Luther intended the Small Catechism to be a tool for parents to use as an aid in teaching their children. However, he not only considered it important to instruct people’s minds in the faith, but also their hearts. In a table talk between July 12 and August 12, 1532, Luther made the comment that “... I pray the catechism every day like my little Hans and ask God to keep me in his dear, holy Word, lest I grow weary of it.” (p. 163, Luther’s Works, Vol. 54)

With these considerations in mind, it seems good that we should learn to consider the Small Catechism as an important part of our daily prayer lives, just as we do the Holy Scriptures. The Catechism is based on teachings from the Bible, and Luther offered explanations to help us understand the deeper and fuller meaning of the Ten Commandments, Apostles’ Creed, and Lord’s Prayer. We tend to memorize these texts in a rote fashion without always thinking much about what they mean—or what they mean *for us* in our daily lives. And unfortunately, the “memorization” is not always of long duration. If my own experience with confirmation students is any indication, most seem to never look at the Catechism from one week’s session to the next and are busy trying to learn the assigned section of the text in the ten or fifteen minutes before class starts.

As we read Luther—his concern for the religious education of the parents as well as the children, and his emphasis on using the teachings of the Catechism in his own prayer life—it becomes evident that his concern is not just to give people a superficial awareness of the teachings of our faith in Christ, but to *implant* them into our hearts and minds. Learning by rote is not a bad thing, but it’s only the beginning, and it needs to be done daily, not weekly or superficially. Reading from the Catechism, as well as from our Bibles, on a daily basis, and learning how to incorporate the words—and Luther’s

explanations—of the Commandments, Creed and Lord’s Prayer into our prayers, makes them part of us at a deep level. Our Lord Jesus gave us the metaphor of the Vine and branches and admonished His disciples to abide in Him. He said, “*I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, 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 15:1-5) The Small Catechism is a useful tool in helping us abide in Christ—to draw nourishment from the Holy Scriptures and Luther’s insightful interpretations of the Commandments, Creed and Lord’s Prayer.

Praying the Bible and the Catechism may not be a familiar idea to modern Christians, but I suspect that many people do it without realizing that’s what they’re doing. Perhaps thinking of it in terms of reading the Bible “devotionally”, rather than studying the Bible as an academic exercise, is a more familiar way to think about it. But the idea is to read the texts as God’s word to us. What is the Holy Spirit saying to me in this passage of Scripture or in the words of this Commandment, article of faith in the Creed, or petition of the Lord’s Prayer? (Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would remind them of His teachings—John 14:26.) How does this text touch on something that’s going on in my life, and how might I use these words to invite the Lord into my particular situation? What truths of the faith do I need to hear—an admonition to repent, a promise of comfort, or a call to duty? These are questions that can help us start to think about what it might mean to “pray the Bible” or to “pray the Catechism. I have a small 1971 edition of Luther’s Small Catechism in Prayer Form. It takes each of Luther’s explanations to the various parts of the Catechism and restates them as a prayer addressed to the Lord. This is a helpful way to start thinking about this way of praying. Remembering that prayer is not just speaking to God, but also listening, can also help us see how the Bible is helpful in our lives of prayer. But the most important thing is to start reading and see where the Holy Spirit leads.

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

Announcements

Upcoming Events

April 23, 2022—9:00 a.m.—Iowa Mission District Council meeting—Cabin Coffee, Mason City, IA

June 6-7, 2022—Pastors/Lay Minister's Retreat, Fort Dodge, IA.

July 25—August 1, 2022—Youth Mission Trip to southern Louisiana for hurricane relief. Youth who have finished one year of confirmation through grade 12 are eligible to go. Cost is \$400 per youth with non-refundable deposit of \$150 to reserve a seat on the bus due by April 1. Every congregation sending youth must send an adult—one adult per five youth. More information is in the article on the second page of this newsletter. Trip organizer, Pastor Tony D. Ede—tonyede@gmail.com.

August 27, 2022—Iowa Mission District Convocation at Zion Lutheran, Ruthven, IA.

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 recovers from surgery and 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**, Call Process
+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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(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 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.

