



News

of the Iowa Mission District
of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

February 2020

A Word from the Dean

DANCING DISCIPLESHIP

“Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the Kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”
- Matthew 13:52

In the musical, “Fiddler on the Roof”, the title refers to a man shown playing his fiddle while dancing around on the rooftops of the tiny village of Anatevka. Tevye compares the people of the village to this fiddler and asks the question, “How do we keep our balance? I can tell you in one word – Tradition!”

How do we keep our balance in life? For we are often reminded of the need to have a “balanced” life. We need to balance our checkbook to keep our finances in order. We need a well-balanced diet to maintain our good health. It is important to keep a healthy balance between our work and family time. Parents discover how important it is to keep a balance of discipline and encouragement with their children. All of these “balancing acts” are important to maintain a strong, healthy and productive life.

In our Christian life, there is need for a kind of balance, too. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus speaks of the importance of putting new wine into new wineskins. He also reminds His disciples that He has come not to abolish the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them. This tension in seeking to maintain a balance between upholding God’s Word with faithfulness and integrity, while finding new ways to express it in the present time, is one that has always been with us and always will. How do we live out our faith in our day? How do we bear witness to God’s Word in a way that addresses the needs and concerns of the world around us? On the one hand one can follow God’s Word in a wooden, literalistic way that ignores the realities of the world around us. Or, on the other hand, one can follow the popular culture of our day in a way that treats God’s Word as irrelevant. Yet, neither approach is faithful to Jesus’ calling to us to be light and salt in the world. Rather, we are to seek a balance that honors and is faithful to the eternal Word of God—the Tradition that has been handed down to us—while being open to the Spirit’s guidance in how we might follow and share that Tradition—that Word—in our day.

We can do this by maintaining a balance in our own lives of faith – a balance between worship and service. In order to remain faithful to God’s Word we need to be fed by that Word in worship, study and prayer. And in order to live out this Word in our lives we need to be involved in serving our neighbor and bearing witness to our faith in word and deed. In this way, we can have a well-balanced diet of discipleship, using all the treasures, old and new, that we have been given.

It can be a kind of dance—holding onto the Word while at the same time reaching out to share this Word with grace and beauty to the world. A dance of discipleship.

Pastor Marshall Hahn, Dean, Iowa Mission District, NALC



Sola Fide—Faith Alone

*Pr. Andrew Loomis
Immanuel Lutheran Church
Sumter, South Carolina
(past Intern at Eagle Grove Lutheran Church)*

Faith Alone, *Sola Fide*, this is such an important phrase to us as Lutheran Christians. But as we cling to these words, let us keep in mind the proper object of our faith. Because its object tells us the relationship of our faith to our salvation. In other words, we can ask, “In what is it that we have faith alone?”

We commonly hear the phrase that we are saved “by faith alone.” St. Paul does write that we are “justified by faith apart from works.” But in doing so, he is pointing back to what he had just written about our justification. He wrote that we “are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward by a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.” (Rom 3:24-25) In Ephesians 2, he puts it more succinctly, “For by grace you have been saved through faith.” In both of these passages, we find St. Paul saying that our justification, or salvation, is God’s gift to us by his grace, but it is received through faith.

In his Gospel, St. John records Jesus’ own words on the subject. Jesus said that God acted on his love for the world by sending his Son to save it. And that whoever believes in, or has faith in, the Son will have eternal life. Jesus’ mission was to save the world which stood condemned already, but the only way to receive that salvation was through faith in the only Son of God. Those who do not believe in him remain in their condemnation.

We find, then, that the only acceptable object of our faith is the grace of God. We must put our faith in the free gift of salvation in Christ Jesus. There are many ways the Bible describes our salvation. It calls it eternal life, justification, the forgiveness of sins, and reconciliation to God. All of these things Jesus accomplished for us and God offers to us freely. This gift of God’s grace is the only way that we can be saved. There is nothing we can do to earn it; it is entirely a gift.

And this gift can only be received through faith. Because it is a gift and cannot be earned by works, there is no other way to receive it than by believing that it is ours. By his Holy Spirit, it is God who gives us the faith to receive this gift, and he offers it freely in the Means of Grace, his Word and Sacraments. When we hear the Word read and preached upon, and believe in the only Son of God as our savior we receive God’s grace. When we hear the words, “given for you,” and “shed for the forgiveness of your sins” during Holy Communion and trust that Jesus truly did give his body and shed his blood so that we might be reconciled to God we receive the forgiveness which he offers.

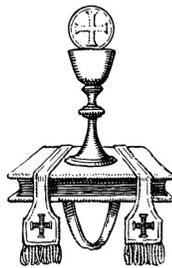
Faith alone is the only way by which we can receive the salvation which Jesus bought for us. Stand fast in that faith. Put all your hope in what Jesus has done for you. And rely solely on him. That is how we stand by Faith Alone.

This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District



The Reverend Andrew Loomis was ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament on January 19, 2020, at Zion Lutheran Church, Ruthven, Iowa, by NALC Bishop, the Reverend Dan Selbo. He has accepted a call to Immanuel Lutheran Church in Sumter, South Carolina.

Among those who were able to get to Ruthven that day to help Andrew celebrate (the winter storm having made travel difficult) were his wife, Heather, and sons, Nathanael and Joseph. Also present were hosting pastor, the Reverend Tom Summerfield, and Andrew's internship supervisor, the Reverend Jason Cooper. The Reverend David Klappenbach, Pastor at Bethany, Laurens, was also present, as well as other friends and family members.



St. John's Lutheran Church-Vilmar of rural Greene held a special day of Thanksgiving and Recognition in honor of Florence Vieker on Sunday, December 15th. Florence concluded nearly 53 years of service to the congregation as the Pastor's/Church Secretary in November of 2019. A special Rite of Recognition and Thanksgiving was held during the worship service, and a potluck dinner and short program were held in her honor after the service. Letters from the current and former pastors were shared, and the congregation presented her with a custom made quilt to thank her for her many years of service. Florence continues to serve the congregation as one of our three organists.

~Pastor Chris Martin



Announcements

Upcoming Events

April 20-21, 2020—Pastors’/Lay Ministers’ Retreat, Riverside Bible Camp, Story City

July 20-27, 2020—Youth Mission Trip to Nebraska

August 3-7, 2020—NALC Luther Week, Pittsburg, PA

September 19, 2020—Iowa Mission District Convocation, St. John’s (Vilmar), rural Greene.

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.

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.

Pastor Hahn sent the following two items of information to the Mission District pastors and requested that they be shared in the newsletter as well.

Dear friends,

Pastor Mark Lund has recently submitted his resignation to St. John Lutheran Church of Boyden, Iowa. He has accepted a call to Trinity Lutheran Church, a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregation in Algona, Iowa, after having completed the colloquy process of the LCMS. He has thereby requested he be removed from the roster of the NALC. His final service at St. John Lutheran will be this Sunday, February 2. While I am sad to see Pastor Lund leave our fellowship, this has not been a snap decision on his part, but has been reached after an extended time of discernment. Please join me in praying for God’s blessings on Pastor Lund’s ministry in this new setting, and praying for God’s blessings upon St. John Lutheran as they enter the call process anew. Below is a copy of a portion of Pastor Lund’s letter to Bishop Selbo informing him of his decision to join the LCMS and accept a call to Trinity Lutheran:

“It has been an honor and a privilege to serve in the NALC. Please know that you will be in my prayers as you continue to shepherd the NALC. I will always have a deep respect for the NALC and hope that the relationship between the NALC and the LCMS continues to be edifying for both Church bodies.”

I am grateful for Pastor Lund’s faithful service in the NALC, including his service on the Iowa Mission District Council, and I share the hope he expresses above.

Yours in Christ,

Marshall Hahn
Dean, Iowa Mission District, NALC



Dear friends,

I have just received word of the death of Pastor David Klappenbach’s father, who died on January 26.... May God grant His comfort and peace to David and his family at this time.

Yours in Christ,

Marshall Hahn
Dean, Iowa Mission District, NALC



Sharing the Faith Grace-fully

The Witness of Worship

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands!

Serve the Lord with gladness!

Come into his presence with singing!

Know that the Lord is God!

It is he that made us, and we are his;

we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him, bless his name!

For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures for ever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

(Psalm 100)

As we read through the book of Psalms, we find many such expression of praise and thanksgiving offered to the Lord. These Psalms call us to worship the One Who created and redeems us. Adoration (love) and reverence (deep respect) are two words used to describe worship. Our Lord Jesus said that the first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord God above all else. This love is expressed in worship—not a mere outward show, but the expression of hearts that love and trust the Lord and seek His will above all else.

The prophet, Micah, told the people of his time who had turned from the Lord that what God expects of us in our relationship with Him is to love kindness and do justice (in regard to other people) and to walk humbly before the Lord. (Micah 6:8) Our treatment of others is a reflection of the love we have for the Lord, and although Micah doesn't say it explicitly, we really can't love others in ways that are pleasing to God unless we love Him above all else.

When the Lord God had finished creating the heavens and earth, He rested and set apart the seventh day—hallowed it and blessed it. (Genesis 2:3) And of the seventh day, the Lord commanded the people of Israel, through Moses, to “*remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy*”. (Exodus 20:8) The one, most obvious, mark that set the people of Israel apart from their neighbors, and identified them as people of God, was keeping the Sabbath holy. It was, perhaps, their greatest witness. They publicly worshiped the Lord, and this practice was noticed by those who did not do such things. So important was the act of worship on the Sabbath, that our Lord Jesus—even though He Himself was divine—made it His practice to attend worship services at the synagogue every week. (Luke 4:16) He even told His disciples that where two or three were gathered in His name, He would be in their midst. (Matthew 18:20)

Gathering in the name of Christ for worship is crucial to our daily walk with God. In a conversation with a friend the other day—on a different topic—she mentioned the instructions we're always given by flight attendants regarding emergencies on airplanes. When the oxygen mask drops down, put your own on first before trying to help others, even your children. If you pass out from lack of oxygen, you won't be able to help anyone else. The same principle applies to our life of faith and the witness we wish to carry to others: If we do not receive the spiritual nourishment we receive through gathering in the Lord's name, hearing the Word of God read and preached, receiving the life-giving Sacrament of our Lord's body and blood, then we will not be equipped to share our faith with anyone else. On the one hand, our faith will be weak. It is within the body of Christ, as well as in our personal devotional and prayer life, that we receive encouragement, strength, and guidance from the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God. On the other hand, if we are not practicing the faith we want to convey to others, then we are trying to tell them about something we are not fully engaged in ourselves, and are setting a poor example of what it means to be a Christian.

There is also another aspect of the importance of worship for the follower of Christ. Just as the ancient Hebrews were set apart and their faith was evident to others in their faithful practice of keeping the Sabbath, so it is with us. Worship itself is a strong witness to the importance of our faith in Christ. Friends and coworkers see by the way you make worship a priority that you love the Lord above all things. People who recognize your vehicle parked in front of the church building on Sunday morning will realize that you are a person for whom worship is more important than getting a little extra sleep. The regular, faithful practice of your faith in matters of worship speaks volumes to those for whom worship is an occasional practice or nonexistent. It can make unbelievers—or “semi-believers”—ask the question, “What is it about God that compels these people to make the sacrifice to be in church every week?” The question might open the door for you to invite another person to join you in gathering with others to “Make a joyful noise” to the Lord!

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

Congregations of the Iowa Mission District

Ackley: **Our Saviour's**, Call Process
Avoca: **Trinity**, Pr. Eric Meissner
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**, 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**, Call process
+Sibley: **Faith**, Pr. Tim Nappe
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

The following pastors are available for pulpit supply:

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

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Craig Lease, Secretary—
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Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer—
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Pastor Ronald Rasmussen—
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Kathy Scharnhorst—
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Mission District Communicator
(newsletter editor/web master):

Pastor Barbara Wills—
barbaramwills@gmail.com

*The Iowa Mission District
has 37 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