



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

June 2023

A Word from the Dean

"Why Should a Christian Pray?"

The simplest answer is that a Christian prays because God commands it. In the 2nd Commandment we hear: "You shall not use the Lord's name in vain." While the commandment prohibits a vain use of God's name, at the same time it suggests there is a right use of God's name. We read what such a proper use of God's name is in Luther's Small Catechism: "Call upon the Lord's name in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks." In other words, God commands us to pray to Him, and so we do.

An episode during Jesus' earthly life illustrates this. Jesus had given His disciples what we now call the Lord's Prayer, when they had asked Him to teach them how to pray (Luke 11). A few chapters later (Luke 18) He tells them a parable so that they would "always pray and not lose heart." A widow lived in a certain city where there was a cold-hearted judge. She kept going to him asking for justice against someone who had wronged her. Since he was cold-hearted, he ignored her pleas for a while. But when it became clear to him that she was going to keep bugging him day after day, he finally gave her what she wanted so that he could have some peace and quiet.

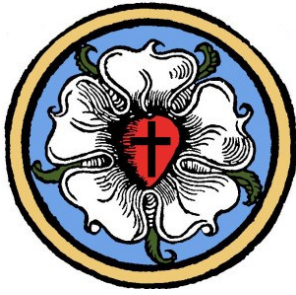
The widow knew she had only to be persistent enough and the judge would finally give in to her. Any of you who have ever been the parent of small children know how the judge felt. How many times I have witnessed such behavior from kids in a store, begging for some sort of treat or toy. In most cases, it is because the child has already learned that such tactics will work on their

parents. The point of the story is that the widow knew what would work with this judge.

But what Jesus tells us is that God is not like the judge in that story, giving in only when He is fed up with our pestering Him. Instead, Jesus shows us that God is to us the same as a loving Father, gladly giving to His dear children. Why else would Jesus have taught us to pray, "Our Father," except that we might be emboldened to approach God with our needs.

What's even more remarkable is that God doesn't even need us to tell Him what our needs are. He knows them even before we pray. But that brings us back to the original question. If God already knows our needs, why pray? The answer is the same: because He commands us to pray. And, further, He gives us the faith to trust that He will hear our prayers. And so, as we pray, we are expressing our trust in God: that He hears us, and that He will do what is best for us. As we are encouraged to do in the popular hymn, "*Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged—Take it to the Lord in prayer. Are we weak and heavy-laden, Cumbered with a load of care? Precious Savior, still our refuge—Take it to the Lord in prayer.*"

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



Christian Living in A Chaotic World

*Pastor Jean Rabary
St. Matthew Lutheran Church
Zion Lutheran Church
Readlyn, Iowa*

A few months back, I ran into the following quotation that grabbed my attention, “A post-Christian society moves from assuming Christian values to ignoring them, to resenting them, to repressing them, and eventually to persecuting them.” The unknown author illustrates his point by a few examples: God’s authority is replaced with the authority of the state; the Bible gives way to popular opinion; the boundaries of social standards of right and wrong are blurred if not ignored; the value of hard work and merit gives way to diversity and equity while personal moral responsibility takes second place to blame game and victim mentality.” Sounds familiar?

As we scan the American social, political, and religious landscape, it shockingly reflects a “post-Christian society” with all its perversity and lawlessness that challenge those who follow the crucified and risen Christ. Following Jesus is not easy. He makes a costly demand, “deny yourself and carry the cross.” Following Jesus is downright difficult and challenging; but considering the alternative, it is the only way that leads to a life pleasing to God, blessed with meaning and purpose leading up to life eternal. So, we loudly confess with St. Peter, “Lord, to whom shall we go, you have the Word of eternal life” (John 6:68).

Before Jesus ascended into heaven 2000 years ago, he prayed for his followers, *“I have given them your Word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth; teach them your Word, which is truth”* (See John 17:14-17).

Indeed, Jesus has given us God’s Word and the Holy Spirit has been teaching and reminding us of everything that Jesus has told us (See John

14:26). We follow in the footsteps of the Saints and commit ourselves to be influenced and guided by God’s Word. We do so by believing that *“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NLT).

Christians families are pulled in so many directions and under all kinds of pressure these days. Christians are pressured to “go along to belong” for fear of offending friends or coworkers though what they do contradict the Word of God. When you stand for what is morally right, don’t be surprised if they “hate you because you do not belong to the world.”

How can we find our Christian mooring and balance in such a pressure cooker world? Belonging to a “Christian Small Group” focused on studying God’s Word applied to various challenging issues. As it pertains to hot current topics such as parenting, abortion, homosexuality, transgenderism, to list a few, the following Christian websites can be helpful resources:

Focus on the Family at <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/>

The Ruth Institute at <https://www.ruthinstitute.org>

The Gospel Coalition at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org>

In closing, let’s encourage one another in the Spirit with the Word of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ, *“In the world you have tribulation and distress and suffering, but be courageous; I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33 AMP). Shalom!

This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District

What can you get for \$670? Enough supplies to assemble 50 Kitchen Kits for Disaster Response!

During the April Iowa Mission District Council meeting a decision was made to make available to me the budgeted \$670 for Disaster Response. With this money I was able to purchase the needed items for 50 Kitchen Kits for the Iowa Mission District Disaster Response Warehouse. Purchasing the items took a bit of time – where can I get the best deal and how soon can I get the items? Amazon (drawstring bags, towels, dish cloths, storage containers and hot pads) helped me out as did Dollar General, Dollar Store (measuring cups, measuring spoons, trash bags and spatulas), garage sales, and the Fayette County Food Bank (cook books).

On Saturday, May 13, the 7th and 8th grade confirmation students from Marion Lutheran (Gunder), Norway Lutheran (St Olaf), Faith Lutheran (Monona) and Mission in Christ (Strawberry Point) gathered together to assemble, box, and load the kits for their trip to the warehouse (hosted by Emmanuel Lutheran Church (Rochester MN) in Chatfield MN).

From the time we started to build the kits until the time we pulled out to go to Chatfield was 30 minutes! Many hands (11 students / 9 adults) made quick work!

In addition to taking the Kitchen Kits to the warehouse, we also took 94 health kits and 8 quilts/blankets. These were donations from Servants of Christ (Robins), Old West Paint Creek (Waukon), and First Lutheran (St Ansgar).

While we were at the warehouse we picked up 50 completed flood buckets and 15 empty flood buckets. The 50 flood buckets, plus 5 more which Servants of Christ (Robins) filled, were then dropped at the Clayton County Emergency Management warehouse in Elkader. These flood buckets will be provided to those in need due to the flooding of the Mississippi River.

The 15 empty flood buckets...who wants to fill them up? Just contact me and I can make arrangements to get them to you!

A full warehouse has 500 of each item/kit. To fill our warehouse, we still need high school and elementary school kits (400 of each), health kits (150), kitchen kits (450), shovels, rakes, and brooms. Our warehouse can also accept gift cards!

Our southern states have experienced multiple disasters in the past year. Their warehouses are close to being empty. Items from our warehouse may need to be trucked down there to help them out.

Please pray about how you can personally help support the NALC Disaster Response.

Betty Burkhalter
815.323.9999 (call or text)





Abiding in Christ: Loving God's Law

Last month I began my article with the question of motivation: “*Why do we do what we do?*” As I’ve been pondering the idea of loving God’s law, and what that means for us as Christians, my thoughts keep returning to motive. So, I will do a little more probing and meandering around in this most intriguing and critical aspect of our faith in Christ and our obedience to Him.

The psalmist who wrote Psalm 119 loved God’s commandments. In verse 97, he says, “*Oh, how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day.*” The entire psalm is filled with praise for God’s Law, and this psalmist apparently saw the Law as giving one life—and particularly, life with the Lord. But such a response to rules, laws, and commandments seems to be the exception. So, it might be helpful to think about how we understand laws in general and how we respond to being told what we’re supposed to do. Do we think of God’s laws as restrictions to our autonomy—unwelcome boundaries that limit our freedom of expression? Or do we consider laws as inconveniences to be ignored—or perhaps as challenges to be deliberately opposed? These views seem to regard any sort of rules as arbitrary decrees imposed by a higher authority, or as inconveniences to be “trodden underfoot”.

However, if we look at God’s laws from the perspective of “directions” given by the One who created everything and wants it all to operate smoothly, we might gain a greater appreciation for the commandments. There are “laws of nature” and “laws of mathematics” that are accepted as being the way things work in the world. Many of the people who appreciate these laws have problems accepting laws of behavior. But the Lord God who gave the Commandments is the same Creator who put the laws of nature and mathematics in place as well. God gave commands to Adam and Eve, and to Moses and the people of Israel, so that they would be able to live appropriately with the Lord and with one another. The basis of these Laws of God is love—God’s love for us, and the love He wants us to have for Him and for one another. When the question about the Commandments came up in Jesus’ ministry, He defined them as loving the Lord and others (Mark 12 and John 15). And in John 14:23-24, Jesus says very clearly, “*If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me*

does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.”

So, what went wrong? We know that Adam and Eve broke the first law right away, and as we read throughout the book of Exodus, the people Moses had rescued from slavery in Egypt very quickly became ungrateful for their freedom, and their trek through the wilderness was a constant string of complaints and disobedience. The Law didn’t work very well for them—and it doesn’t work well for us either. The problem isn’t with the Law, but with us. From the beginning of time, we have tried to *impose our will on God* instead of *submitting our wills to God*. Because we decided to ignore the “directions” and do things our own way, the Lord had to rescue us from ourselves. He did it by coming in the person of Christ Jesus who alone was able to perfectly fulfill the Law. The Law didn’t go away, but because Jesus was able to live out the Law in the way it was meant to be lived, He is able to bestow His righteousness on those who put their trust in Him. He said to His first disciples, “*Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*” (Matthew 5:17-19)

Although we can’t obey the Law well enough to be saved by it, when we put our trust in Christ we are made righteous by God’s grace. **Thus, our love for the Lord Jesus becomes our motive for living in ways that please Him.** The laws of God remain—an outward sign of God’s love at work in and through us. The Apostle Paul tells us, “*...my brethren, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God.... For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*” (Romans 7:4, 22-25a)

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.

August 7-11, 2023—NALC Luther Week (convocation) - Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

September 16, 2023 Iowa Mission District Convocation—Faith Lutheran Church, Monona, Iowa

September 30, 2023—Mission District Council Meeting. 9:00 a.m. at Cabin Coffee in Mason City.

Please Pray for:

Pastor James Puotyal 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.

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 barbaramwills@gmail.com.

Pastors available for pulpit supply:

Pastor Natacha Kemp—507-785-0412
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 pastortim.milford@gmail.com

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. 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**, 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

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Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer
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*The Iowa Mission District
has 38 congregations.*

*The Iowa Mission District website may be found
at: www.iowamissiondistrict.com.*

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 nominated: _____

Congregational Member at: _____

City: _____

Occupation: _____

Tell us something about yourself (*family, hobbies, etc.*)

How do you understand your faith?

How have you been active in the church?

Please list one of your favorite 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