



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church



www.iowamissiondistrict.com

October 2024

A Word from the Dean

"The road to (you know where) is paved with good intentions."

This "aphorism" or "saying" is one of those that is often thrown about, and widely accepted. There are certainly times in my own life when I feel I'm a well-experienced traveler on this road. My mind often has fleeting thoughts like, "I should really give so-and-so a phone call," or "I wonder how so-and-so is doing?" The problem is that these thoughts occur at moments when actually acting on them isn't possible or at least would be a bad idea, like at 11:00 at night. And the fact that these thoughts are fleeting mean that as quickly and unexpectedly as they enter my head they vanish. And before I know it, I may have had a dozen such fleeting thoughts, and a couple weeks have passed with no follow-through on my part. As well-intentioned as my thoughts have been, no deed has happened. Am I truly on the road to hell for these?

Such a notion appeals to our human wisdom. We are naturally drawn to philosophies or religions where our actions or our inactions determine our rewards or punishments. If we've been "good" we think it reasonable that we should expect some sort of reward. On the other hand, if we've been "bad" we are less inclined to be surprised if we are visited by some sort of punishment or calamity, since we "had it coming." Such a philosophy or religion is well-captured by the figure of Santa Claus we encounter in the song: "He's making a list and checking it twice, gonna find out who's naughty and nice" As the story goes, the nice boys and girls are rewarded with gifts of toys, and the very nice would receive the toys they most highly desired. On the other hand, naughty children should expect only a lump of coal as punishment.

The idea isn't limited to children, however. Both Buddhism and Hinduism have as a teaching the notion of "karma," which contends that any rewards or punishments a person receives in life (or in the next life, with reincarnation) are natural consequences of past behavior. Again, this sort of teaching appeals to our sense of logic and fairness. But is the idea Christian?

While the Ten Commandments and Christianity promote a moral and ethical lifestyle, can it be said that our eternal destination (heaven or hell) is achieved on the basis of our lifestyle? Jesus tells a story (Matthew 22:1-14) that provides an answer. He says that the Kingdom of Heaven is like an earthly king who prepares a wedding banquet for his son. When the feast is ready, he sends his servants to gather those whom he had previously invited. When those invited refuse to come, he orders his servants to go out into the highways to gather all they can find, both the 'good' and the 'bad'. When the hall is full, the king comes in to admire the guests, but finds one fellow not wearing a wedding garment. The king has that guy tied up and thrown out into the outer darkness. In this story, is the banquet for only for good people? No. Is it bad behavior, or good intentions that got the one guy tossed into the outer darkness, or hell? No. In the story, all guests, 'good' and 'bad' alike, had been provided a wedding garment. It seems as though the guy tossed from the banquet had refused to put on the garment given to him as he thought himself quite good enough just as he was, decked out in his own finery.

So, is the road to Hell paved with good intentions? Well, if we expect to gain access to our eternal destination based upon our goodness, be they deeds or intentions, we will surely end up in the outer darkness. For anyone, entry into the kingdom of Heaven is granted only to those bedecked in the proper garment, the robe of Christ's righteousness, just as we sing in the beloved hymn:

*When he shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in him be found,
Clothed in his righteousness alone,
Redeemed to stand before the throne!*

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



The Gospel in Two Words

*Pastor Matthew Bahnfleth
Trinity Lutheran Church
Avoca, Iowa*

But God, *Eph. 2:4a* The Gospel in Two Words

Tina Turner is well known for singing the lines, “What’s love got to do with it? What’s love but a secondhand emotion?” Well, Tina, it has everything to do with it! Especially if we’re talking about the Love that comes only from one place. Tina’s problem . . . she’s singing about the human imitation of love. Perhaps that’s why in so many places, in and outside of the Church of Christ, fears, anxieties, angers, greed, etc. seem to have the upper hand in so many ways. When we misunderstand that Love and find ourselves self-sufficient; not needing to live within the Marks of Discipleship (*worship, prayer, study, giving, service and invitation*) we lose the understanding and meaning of that word, that is for us. It does become a secondhand emotion and emotions...well.

It’s here, then, we are “tossed about by every wind of doctrine,” *Eph 4:14* and are “taken captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition.” *Col 2:8* Love becomes a misused term that devolves to be only a “secondhand emotion;” it’s cheapened and can be twisted, just like any other fleeting emotion.

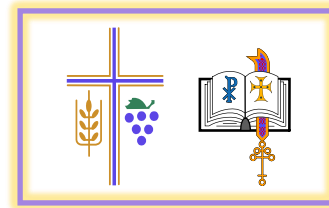
Truth is, when we come to grips with our real condition, as described throughout scripture, we come to see that we are dead, and in all of its various forms we exist and experience this fallen creation. We are dead. We live dead. We deal in death with others. We deal out death on each other. In short, sin abounds and we all know that the “wages of sin are death.” *Rom 6:23*

That is why the most beautiful words in scripture are BUT GOD. In these six letters we find the only hope and possibility for our dying condition. The good news in two words calls us to see what love really looks like, and it shows the true character and nature of God. All the dealing out and living in death is changed by the “But God” of Paul’s letter. I am dead, But God has made me alive in Jesus Christ. I live in death, But God gives me a new life, and though it must battle the old me that so longs to be in control, the promise of a sure and certain hope can and does exist. I deal in death, But God has brought me out of darkness to share in His works of glorious light. I am a sinner, But God has adopted me into His inheritance of eternity that gives an answer to my fear, anxiety, greed, anger and so much more.

How and why – Because God, “*being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*” *Eph 2: 4-7*

What’s Love got to do with it? Everything. “But God,” makes it real.

This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District



Pastor Khrystle Sullivan was ordained on September 7, 2024, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Marion, IA, by NALC Bishop Dan Selbo. Iowa Mission District Dean, Pastor Christopher Staley, also participated in the ordination rite, and several other pastors were present to help Pastor Sullivan celebrate this important milestone in her ministry. Since the laying-on of hands dates back to the earliest days of the Christian Church (Acts 13:3) part of the ordination ceremony includes other pastors of the church gathering around the person being ordained and laying their hands on head or shoulders. Pastor Sullivan has been called to serve Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Rochester, MN.



Pastor Mel Harris' Retirement

A retirement gathering event is being planned for Pastor Mel Harris, on Saturday, October 5, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. All are welcomed to attend at Faith Lutheran Church, NALC, 19999 Pleasant Ridge Road, Monona, IA.

Installation Service for Pastor Khrystle Sullivan

Please join us on Saturday, October 26, 2024, 4:00 p.m., as we celebrate and welcome Pastor Khrystle Sullivan! Pastor Christopher Staley, Iowa Mission District Dean, will preside over the service at Emmanuel Lutheran Church Land, 1965 Emmanuel Drive NW, Rochester, MN (at the corner of 75th St. NW & 18th Ave. NW). The reception to follow will be held at Oasis Church Fellowship Hall, 3819 18th Ave. NW, Rochester, MN. Please RSVP: by Saturday, October 19th, to Elise Patzke at EmmanuelRochester@gmail.com or by calling or texting Elise at 507-226-4426.

Iowa Mission District Officers and Council Members



*Pastor Solveig Zamzow
Mission District Secretary*



*Pastor Christopher Staley
Mission District Dean*



*Belinda Borchardt
Mission District Treasurer*



*Lyle Hollander
Lay Council Member*



*Cindy Gibbs
Lay Council Member*



*Pastor Ron Rasmussen
Clergy Council Member*



*Pastor Doug Hedman
Clergy Council Member*



*Pastor David Klappenbach
Clergy Council Member*

*Dean Armstrong
Lay Council Member
(Not shown)*

Iowa Mission District Convocation St. John's Western Douglas Plainfield, Iowa September 21, 2024



The annual Iowa Mission District convocation this year was held at St. John's Lutheran Church, Western Douglas. There were a total of 75 persons in attendance: Clergy & Lay Delegates and Visitors. The day began with the opening of the Convocation by Dean Staley, followed by a service of Holy Communion at 9:00 a.m. Mission District Secretary, Pastor Solveig Zamzow, presided; Mission District Dean, Pastor Christopher Staley, served as assisting minister; and Pastor David Keener, NALC Director of Renewal and Discipleship, preached.

Dean Staley called the business meeting to order at 10:15. Among those who brought greetings, gave presentations, presented reports, or led forums throughout the day were Pastor Keener (keynote speaker); Pastor Jess Abbott, Midwest Area Assistant to the Bishop; Ms. Maddie Benson, Director of Development for the NALC; Alana DeMoss, Mission District Youth Ministry Coordinator; Betty Burkhalter, Mission District Disaster Response Coordinator, and Mike Wind from Spiritual Orphans Network.

The day concluded with the installation of newly-elected members of the Iowa Mission District Council and the closing of the Convocation by Dean Staley.



Pondering the Parables: Long-Term Priorities

“There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead.’” (Luke 17:19-31)

We live in a world filled with inconsistencies. On the one hand, people often speak of “five-year plans” and “ten-year plans” while exhibiting a short-sighted approach to spending—too often indulging their spontaneous whims and making spur-of-the moment decisions that short-circuit their expressed desire for those long-term plans. The pattern is not limited to people’s approach to money or to their relationships with friends and family members.

When we consider the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, it’s evident that this rich man had probably been fairly good at making financial decisions. However, he had limited himself to selfish considerations without considering the needs of others, and it’s very obvious that his plans had never reached beyond the boundaries of this earthly life. As with the parable we pondered in August, this rich man was so focused on himself that it never occurred to him that he had no real control over his life. He had apparently not taken to heart the words of Isaiah: *“The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever.”* (Isaiah 40:7-8) He was so self-absorbed that he didn’t even see the poor, sick man who sat outside his gate every day. With so much wealth and power at his fingertips, he could easily have provided the medical care and nourishment this poor man so desperately needed. His own plans and desires so blinded him to the needs of others that they had become

invisible to him.

In time, as Isaiah says will happen to us all, the poor man, Lazarus, died. Having silently suffered so much in this life, Jesus says that Lazarus was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom to be comforted and loved. The rich man—unnamed by Jesus in the parable—also died. Yet even in death, he was totally self-absorbed, unrepentant, and sparing no thought for anyone but himself. Adding insult to injury, he calls out to Abraham—“Father Abraham, send Lazarus to help me!” The whole idea is ludicrous! And Abraham makes it clear that in death one reaps what one sows, and there is no connection between heaven and hell. Faced with bearing the eternal consequences of his shortsightedness during his earthly life the rich man finally thinks of his own brothers who are also living as he had. Asking that Lazarus be sent to his brothers to tell them, Abraham delivers the final blow: If those who have been given God’s word through the prophets have not listened, neither will they listen to someone who returns from the dead.

I suspect that when many of us read or hear this parable our first instinct is to go to the guilt. The question, in one form or another is, “What can I do to avoid meeting the fate of the rich man?” But I don’t think that’s really what the parable is about. And to ask the question—“What can I do?”—reveals our own self-absorption. I want to avoid the punishment, so I want to fix the problem by doing something. This is problematic on the first level because my first thought is for myself. It’s also bad theology. We know, as Luther points out in the Small Catechism, (explanation of the Third Article of the Creed) that I *“cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him,”* and that as the Apostle Paul makes clear: *“man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ ... because by works of the law shall no one be justified.”* (Galatians 2:16)

So, where is the parable pointing us? To Christ Jesus—crucified, risen, ascended. Like a properly aligned compass that points north, our priorities must also be properly aligned—our “faith compass” pointing always to Christ. Following His ascension, our Lord sent His Holy Spirit to be our advocate, comforter, and guide. *“The Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith.”* (explanation of the Third Article of the Creed) As followers of Christ, we will seek to emulate Him, to abide in Him, (John 15), to love as He loved (John 13:34), and to put our trust in Him day by day.

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

Announcements

Upcoming Events

July 27–August 3, 2025—Iowa Mission District Youth Trip—destination TBD
August 3-8, 2025—NALC Luther Week—Omni William Penn Hotel, Pittsburg, PA

Please Pray for:

Pastor James Puotyal who is awaiting a kidney donor.

When sending **correspondence and donations** to the NALC please use the following address:

North American Lutheran Church
2113 Harwood Road, Suite 309
PMB 409
Bedford, TX 76021-4703

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:

Mrs. Belinda Borchardt
Iowa Mission District Treasurer,
PO Box 105,
Grafton, IA 50440.

Correspondence should be sent to:

Pastor Solveig Zamzow
Iowa Mission District Secretary
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 Kristine Dohrmann—515-802-2539
Pastor Natacha Kemp—507-785-0412
Pastor Jack Miller—507-798-2408
Pastor Mike Wikstrom—480-203-1556
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

In October of 2022, the Mission District Council voted to recommend that congregations pay a visiting pastor \$200 for a worship service in addition to the current IRS mileage rate. At a subsequent meeting, we also decided to recommend that congregations do the same for a visiting pastor who performs a wedding or a funeral. Any honorarium that the family might want to give to the pastor would not be deducted from this, as the pastor is providing a service to the congregation. We also recommend that a congregation which has more than one worship service in a day, pay an additional \$50 to the pastor for each additional service. (The current IRS rate is \$0.67 per mile, but changes nearly every year.)



Congregations of the Iowa Mission District

Ackley: **Our Saviour's**, Dan Buhs, Lay Minister
Avoca: **Trinity**, Pastor Matthew Bahnfleth
Badger: **Badger Lutheran**, Pr. Scott Meier
Boyd: **St. John**, Pr. Jeremy Winter
Des Moines: **Unity Evangelical Lutheran**,
Pr. Donna Joseph; Pr. Diane Joseph
Dorchester: **Waterloo Ridge**, Pr. James Glesne
Eagle Grove: **Evangelical Lutheran**, Pr. Jason Cooper
Eagle Grove: **Samuel Lutheran**, Call Process
Ellsworth: **Trinity**, Pastor Jon Rollefson
Emmons, MN: **Emmons**, Call Process
Gilmore City: **First**, Tracy Nerem, Lay Minister
Grafton: **Emmanuel**, Call Process
Greene: **St. John, Vilmar**, Pr. Tamara Keen
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. Steven Broers
Manchester: **First**, Call Process
Monona, **Faith**: Call Process
Northwood: **Peace**, Pr. Barbara Wills
+ Osage: **First Grace Lutheran Church**
Palmer: **St. John's Lizard Township**,
Marlene Nimke, Lay Minister
Plainfield: **St. John, Western Douglas**, Call Process
Readlyn: **St. Matthew**, Pr. Jean Rabary
Readlyn: **Zion**, Pr. Jean Rabary
Robins: **Servants of Christ**, Pr. Ronald Voss
+Rochester, MN: **Emmanuel**—Pr. Khrystle Sullivan
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. John Jensen, Interim
Spencer: **Trinity**, Pr. Renae Behrends
Strawberry Pt.: **Mission in Christ**, Call Process
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
cbstaley@netins.net
Pastor Solveig Zamzow, Secretary
solveigzamzow@gmail.com
Belinda Borchardt, Treasurer
aayngl@wctatel.net

Mission District Council Members:

Pastor Ron Rasmussen
bigras73@fmctc.com
Pastor Doug Hedman
pdhedman@gmail.com
Pastor David Klappenbach
klappenbach98@rpt.coop
Lyle Hollander
lhollander@premieronline.net
Cindy Gibbs
mcgibbs@acegroup.cc
Dean Armstrong
idedarmy@gmail.com

Disaster Response Coordinator

Betty Burkhalter
bettyburkhalter@hotmail.com

Mission District Registrar

Kathy Scharnhorst
kscharnhorst51@gmail.com

Mission District Website Administrator

Pastor Gary Burkhalter
pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com

Mission District Youth Trip Coordinator

Alana DeMoss
fivekidscrazy@outlook.com

Mission District Communicator/Newsletter Editor

Pastor Barbara Wills
barbaramwills@gmail.com

*The Iowa Mission District
has 39 congregations.*

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