



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

January 2025



A Word from the Dean

Someone once said, "Progress is fine, but it's gone on long enough." That sentiment could sum up the feelings of many I have talked to recently. It seems that change is going on all too often, and much of what is changing is not moving in a positive direction. Reminders are all around us. Sale bills are posted signifying that yet another farmer is calling it quits in the face of insurmountable strains. Our own bodies change and age, and the tasks we could easily do we can achieve only with much more effort, if at all. Ever more disturbing television shows debut. I remember watching "All in the Family" when it first came on more than 50 years ago, one of the first shows which dared air the word, "damn." And today, well it is truly shocking what is making it on the airwaves.

Change is a constant in our lives. We might want to hold on to the way things always were. We might even want to go back to a time when life seemed simpler. But the world keeps changing around us, and time has a funny way of continuing its march forward no matter how much we try to hold it back.

One could look at the situation and decide that we cannot fight change, that we perhaps should stop trying to work against the changes that seem to be tearing apart so much that we hold dear. But there is another alternative. We need not simply accept change as it comes.

We in the church can be agents of change. And we do this often. When members of our community are stricken, we gather together to help out. When something needs to be done for our church, helpers and funds come in, sometimes amazingly.

But there remain times when the rush of change sweeps us away, and seemingly away from God. In these times I find encouragement in Psalm 139: "*It was you who knit me together in my mother's womb.... Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.*" (verses 13 and 16)

When life seems out of control, when the pace of change leaves us spinning and despairing, we look to the God Who created the heavens and the earth. He's got the whole world in his hands. He's got your life in his hands. And better yet, He's got the whole mess figured out. "*How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! I try to count them--they are more than the sand; I come to the end--I am still with you.*" (verses 17 and 18) Thank God for that.

In Christ, have a blessed new year, secure in God's hands,

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



Run with Perseverance (Into the Arms of Jesus)

Pastor Ken Kimball
Old East Paint Creek, Waterville, Iowa
Old West Paint Creek, Waukon, Iowa

Hebrews 12:1-2: *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

I'm an intense introvert. I prefer solitude to group activities. I dislike the collective in all its forms—social, political, whatever. The least useful argument to ever use on me is “everybody else is doing it.”

I don't enjoy running just to run. Never have. It's monotonous. I don't like the burning feeling in my lungs, the pain in my legs, the ache of my knees and feet. All I can think about when I'm running is how much I don't like it and wanting to stop.

I prefer following my own course rather than following someone else. I don't like others trying to assert authority over me and what I think and what I do, even if, and maybe even especially if, they claim to be doing so for my own good.

So this passage from Hebrews 12:1-2 starts out by pushing all my negative buttons: “Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses...” I start to feel a bit claustrophobic... and then “Let us run with perseverance...” What's wrong with walking at a steady pace? “Looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith...” What are you telling me to see in Jesus and what He has done? I am not Jesus. I cannot do what He has done. If He has not saved me by His grace through His suffering, death and resurrection, there is no way I can save myself by following His example.

Of course, the message at the heart of Hebrews is Who Jesus is and what He has done for us—He is God the Son, Who made purification for our sins, the true and perfect and sinless high priest Who sacrificed Himself for us once for all to present us pure and holy before God the Father, all of which we have by faith that trusts in Him, finds assurance and conviction in Him. Hebrews 12:1-2 does not stand on its own but on all that was written in the 11 chapters that precede it.

Jesus came into the darkness, to the farthest darkest corner where I was lost and damned, and laid hold of me and carried me out in His nail-pierced hands, despite my kicking and screaming. No better than those who scorned and mocked Him at Golgotha, I had looked upon Him hanging from the cross, saying with my thoughts and words and deeds and choices, “All this You have done for me and I don't give a damn.” But His gaze held me there, and though my actions and rebellion said those words over and over, He endured the cross for me, breaking the hardness and hopelessness of my heart and bringing tears of grief and sorrow for my sin streaming down my cheeks, and He turned my sorrow into joy and my unbelief into faith by which He bound me to Himself.

He calls me—and you—not into a political or social collective of “group-think” but into His people, redeemed sinners whom He claims and makes His own not by the power of a tyrant but through the love of a Savior Who is our God, that we may stand together across time and space as witnesses to His love and grace. And when He Who made the paralyzed to walk and the lame to dance, calls you and me to run to Him into His mighty arms and nail-pierced hands, we run.

This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District



Christmas Celebrations

Far Left: *The Sunday School children at Faith Lutheran, Monona, IA, led the Christmas Eve worship service with the retelling of Luke's narrative of the birth of our Lord Jesus.*

Left: *Pastor Doug Hedman and granddaughter, Gen, sing "Silent Night" with the congregation at Trinity Lutheran, St. Charles, MN, during their Christmas Even worship service.*



Pastor Doug and Faith Hedman during a trip to Greece last year— "Following in the footsteps of Paul". Pastor Doug and Faith have a trip to Scandinavia planned for October 13-24, 2025. Anyone interested in joining them can contact him via email at: pdhedman@gmail.com.



Above Left: *In Rochester, MN, Pastor Khrystle Sullivan offers the first children's sermon in Emmanuel Lutheran Church's new building (which is not yet complete) during the Christmas Eve worship service.*



Left: *The Christmas Eve Sunday School program/worship service at First Grace Lutheran in Osage, IA, was held in the local movie theater for the second year in a row to accommodate the 275 people in attendance.*



Names for Jesus: *The Name of Jesus*

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. ... And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. (Luke 2:4-7; 21)

We have begun a new year on the secular calendar. This new year always begins on January first—the eighth day of Christmas—the eighth day of our Lord Jesus' earthly life, and the day on which He was circumcised and named. His name was revealed to his mother, Mary, by the angel Gabriel when he visited her nine months earlier to announce that she had been chosen by the Lord God to bear the long-awaited Messiah. Joseph had also been told this was to be the name of the child his betrothed wife, Mary, was to bear. While Joseph had been trying to decide what to do after learning of Mary's pregnancy, "*an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'*" All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "*Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel' (which means, God with us).*" (Matthew 1:20b-21)

Through the ages the Lord had promised one who was to come. Following Adam and Eve's initial disobedience to the Lord's command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the bond of love and trust between the Lord and His children (who had been created in His image) was broken. Death had entered the world and there was no way for the breach to be repaired except through the power and intervention of the Lord Himself. In Genesis 3:15 the first promise of restoration was made as God pronounced judgment on the serpent who had enticed Eve: "*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*" Through the ages this promise was repeated to a variety of

God's faithful people in various ways: A blessing that would come to all people through the descendants of aged Abraham and his barren wife, Sarah (Genesis 12:2; 18:9-11); the Lord would raise up a "righteous branch" for King David (Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15); and the Lord God Himself would come to shepherd His people (Isaiah 40: 10-11; Ezekiel 34:15).

Even as the promise was repeated to God's people, their faithfulness waxed and waned. Sometimes the promise came as a warning. The one who was coming would bring judgment and punishment upon the rebellious ones who turned from His commandments to follow their own greed and idolatry. But it sometimes came as a word of comfort and hope—the assurance of a Shepherd who would bring healing and hope, restore justice and peace. The promises continued to come to the people through the years of slavery in Egypt; rebellion in the wilderness following their rescue by Moses; their early days in the land of Canaan when people "*did what was right in their own eyes*" (Judges 21:25), ignoring the Lord's will; the centuries of Judean and Israelite kings who oppressed the people and led them astray; and the years of exile and the restoration that followed. Through all the ages God's faithful ones waited with hope. Sometimes they cried out, "*How long, O Lord?*" (Psalm 13:1; 35:17; 79:5; 94:3, et al) But whether the people waited with hope or turned away from God's promise, the Lord was at work, preparing the way for the promised Savior—the One above all others with the purity and power to repair the fractured relationship between God and His people.

And then one day, the Lord sent the angel Gabriel to a virgin named Mary. Mary had been chosen to bear the promised Messiah, and she was to name Him *Jesus*. Why this name? The name Jesus means "*Yahweh saves*". In a sermon based on the text for the day on which we celebrate our Lord's circumcision and naming, The Reverend William Graumann said, [other names for Jesus] "*are meaningful only because of this name Jesus. Every other name by which Jesus is called is precious only because He will save His people from their sins.... The power of it lies in the Person who bears it, Jesus, the mighty God, Emmanuel, God with us.*" (p. 174-175, For All the Saints – Volume III)

Pastor Barbara Wills

Announcements

Upcoming Events

April 26, 2025—9 am—Mission District Council—Cabin Coffee, Mason City, IA
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
September 20, 2025—Iowa Mission District Convocation—St. John's, Le Mars, IA

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 Andrew Loomis—712-298-6587
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
Boyden: **St. John**, Pr. Jeremy Winter
Cedar Falls: **Nazareth Evangelical**, Self Study
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

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*The Iowa Mission District
has 40 congregations.*

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