



News

of the Iowa Mission District
of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

July 2021

A Word from the Dean

“Things are never so bad that they can’t keep getting worse”

Although others might dispute the claim, my first exposure to the above quote came out of the mouth of Garrison Keillor, as relayed from what he heard out of the mouths of some of the Norwegian bachelor farmers who lived around Lake Wobegon.

The source of the quote isn’t the point, however, as much as the sentiment it expresses. Such a dour outlook on life could also be found in the character of Eeyore in “Winnie the Pooh”. But a similar outlook can lurk within any of us. Just a couple issues ago, I mentioned how perplexing the weather can be as it so significantly impacts the lives of so many in our Mission District. And there are still people living among us who can recall, with vivid recall, year after year of drought that would force families to pull up stakes and hope to find better conditions elsewhere. As I sit at my desk on this Wednesday, the promise of rain again fills the forecast, with as much as two inches in the next 48 hours tantalizingly suggested. But as recently as just a few days ago, a forecast of nearly an inch and a half ended up as little more than a third of an inch.

It’s enough to help me feel a bit sympathetic for the people Israel as they began their trek to the Promised Land. In the book of Exodus, we read of the great exultation they felt at seeing Pharaoh's army vanquished by God in the waters of the Red Sea. This was very

soon after, with plague after plague, God showed Egypt, Pharaoh, and even God's people, that God alone was God. But even with these fantastic events branded into their minds, it took only three days of wandering in the wilderness before those their songs of praise turned to grumbling. I could sympathize with their plight. I can understand what it feels like to begin to feel doubt creep back in.

Of course, God acted on behalf of His people, turning the bitter water of Marah into sweet. And, of course, God will act in our day, bringing showers and showers of water to replenish the parched land, even if we have to wait and worry a bit longer.

The old saw says it this way, *“Everybody complains about the weather, but nobody does anything about it.”* The fact is that the weather, like most everything else in our life, is outside of our control. And so, we are faced with a choice. We can worry and grumble, or we can trust and give thanks. The default mode for most of us is worry. But through these trying times, what God tries to teach us is trust. And so, may we give thanks, no matter the circumstance, for it is God in Whom we trust.

So, will things get worse before they get better? Maybe. Will things get much, much worse? Perhaps. Will things get better? Better even than we can imagine!

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

This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District

Iowa Mission District Annual Pastors' Retreat

The pastors and lay ministers of the Iowa Mission District gathered in Clear Lake, Iowa, at the Best Western Holiday Lodge on June 7-8 for their first in-person retreat since the COVID restrictions prevented large gatherings in early 2020. Over half the congregations in the Mission District were represented at the retreat by their pastors/lay ministers, and several retired pastors and spouses were present as well.

Right: *Our Mission District Dean, Pastor Christopher Staley, posed with Dr. Gracia Grindal, our Keynote speaker. Dr. Grindal is a retired profession from Luther Theological Seminary and a well-known hymn writer. During her presentation on Monday evening, she led us through several evening hymns from the LBW, giving us insights into Lutheran hymnody and inviting us to sing these comforting and uplifting songs of our faith. One highlight of the presentation was singing a new hymn written by Dr. Grindal, to which our Dean had composed the music.*



*This and That From Around
the Iowa Mission District
continued*

**St. Matthew's and Zion Lutheran Churches
Readlyn, Iowa**



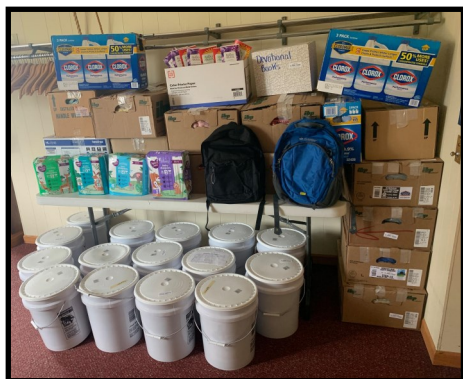
Pastor Jean Rabary serves St. Matthew's and Zion Lutheran Churches in Readlyn. Pastor Rabary recently celebrated his 25th anniversary of Ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. He was ordained on June 2, 1996. On Tuesday, June 1st, the Council Presidents from Pastor Rabary's congregations joined the pastors of the Iowa Mission District for a special luncheon following the pastors' text study. Because of COVID restrictions, the two congregations postponed their celebration of the event until Sunday, August 29th.



***This and That From Around
the Iowa Mission District
continued***

St. John's—Vilmar

St. John's – Vilmar recently honored, remembered, and prayed for all those who have been affected by cancer. Vilmar's sanctuary – the center aisle, altar railing, and windows – were decorated with approximately 150 Relay For Life luminaries. The names of each person were read by a member during the service. She also led a prayer of hope and peace for those who continue to battle cancer, their families, the medical teams, caregivers and for those who are now resting eternally with Christ.



Another recent ministry project at St. John's was the collection of items for the NALC Disaster Response mission project. They collected the following amounts: 300 devotional books, 63 quilts, 8 blankets, 15 flood buckets, 50 health kits, 4 school kits, and 4 packages of disposable diapers.

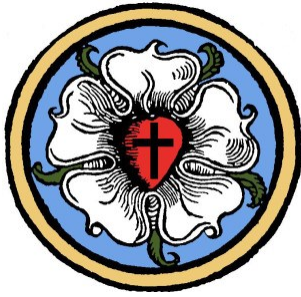
Faith Lutheran, Monona

Thanks to the generosity of members of Faith Lutheran NALC – Monona, IA, 40 Health Kits, 43 quilts, 15 Bibles, numerous Devotional Books, and gift cards totaling \$235.00 will be delivered to Manchester on June 21 where it will be picked up and taken to the NALC warehouse in Rantoul, IL. Also, to be delivered soon, 10 quilts to the Veterans Hospital and 47 quilts to the U of I Children's Hospital.

Emmanuel Lutheran, Grafton

On June 13th, at the morning worship service, the congregation of Emmanuel Lutheran honored Pastor Solveig Zamzow with special music and expressions of gratitude for her ministry among them. Following the service a farewell reception was held in the fellowship hall with guests from neighboring congregations and communities. Pastor Z has been active with the Ministerial Association of Worth County, the Share Shoppe, and Manna of Worth County and will be missed by all who were recipients of her faithful service to the community at large. Following her retirement at the end of June, she and her husband, Michael, will be living in Story City.





Solus Christus—Christ Alone

*Pr. James Glesne
Decorah, Iowa*

We are a blessed people!

The writer to the Ephesians 1:7 reminds us: “*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance to the riches of God’s grace.*”

“*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*” John 3:16-17 NIV

Paul reminds us also of something very important: “*What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.*” 2 Timothy 1:13 NIV

Yes, we indeed are a blessed people! It is in Christ alone that our hope is found. Again looking at the apostle Paul we see that he said so many different things about Christ, for example in 1 Corinthians 2:2 : “*I resolved to know nothing (while I was with you) except Jesus Christ and him crucified.*” Paul’s sole purpose was to make known the very simple fact that it was Christ alone who is the Savior that suffered and died for sinners. In essence what Paul is reminding us of is that Jesus Christ, the perfect son of God, offered His body as a perfect sacrifice for sinners. Upon the cross He took the sins upon Himself, and for once and for all paid the price with the penalty our sins deserved.

A commentary written by James Boice talks about Christ alone in these words: “The reformers taught that salvation is by and through the work of Jesus Christ only, which is what this slogan *solus Christus* refers to. It means that (through the cross and the empty tomb) Jesus has done it all so that now no merit on the part of man, no merit of the saints, no works of ours performed either here or in purgatory can add to his completed saving work.”

Yes, we are a blessed people, and we are called to praise Christ for His saving work on the cross, because we are then giving glory to our God. Since we are saved by Christ alone, and not by ourselves, all the honor and glory of our salvation returns to God and to Him alone.

I have found the following, relatively new, praise hymn or song personally meaningful to me. Written by Keith Getty and Stuart Townsend from the United Kingdom, the music and words convey where our true hope is found in this life and forever:

*“In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
Here in the love of Christ I stand....”*

Announcements

Upcoming Events

August 2-6, 2021—NALC Luther Week, Corpus Christi, TX

September 11, 2021—Iowa Mission District Convocation—Emmons Lutheran Church, Emmons, MN.

October 2, 2021—9:00 a.m.—Iowa Mission District Council meeting—Cabin Coffee, Mason City, IA

Please Pray for:

Pastor James Puotyual who is awaiting a kidney transplant.

Pastor David Schafer who is recovering from a broken ankle and scheduled for hip surgery.

Pastor James Glesne who is undergoing treatments for Multiple Myeloma

Amy Cooper (wife of Pastor Jason Cooper) who is undergoing chemo for cancer.

Pastor David Steffenson who is undergoing chemo 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

From the Treasurer:

Greetings in the name of Jesus!

First, a huge thank you to each and every congregation that has supported our mission district - may the Lord bless you real good!

Secondly, just a reminder that the financial or fiscal year in our district runs from September 1st through August 31st. This means we're entering the last quarter of the year. If your congregation intends

to have contributions reflected in the current year, please make sure they reach the Treasurer no later than Friday, August 27th, to ensure they are deposited in time.

Contributions are to be sent to:

Pr. Gary Burkhalter, Treasurer
Mission in Christ Lutheran Church
312 E. Mission St
Strawberry Point, IA 52076

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.

A Few of My Favorite Psalms

Psalm 27

We live in uncertain times. With a year of COVID restrictions behind us, we know we are still not “out of the woods”, since the vaccine has been in use for only a few months, and the length of time it will protect us—or whether it will protect from new varieties of COVID—is still unknown. Each day the news media report social and political unrest, with communities splintering over every issue imaginable, and seemingly endless criminal activity. In our own lives, we may be dealing with serious, even life-threatening, illness or depression. Perhaps there are financial stressors or tense personal relationships that weigh heavily on your mind and heart. Many would say, with good reason, that we are living in dark times.

Whenever possible, I avoid listening to—or reading about—the current unrest and news. I tell folks that instead of reading the newspaper I read the prophets—Old Testament prophets, that is. It’s amazing how many parallels there are in our current events and the happenings in the ancient world. Political systems have changed, and we have much more sophisticated technology, but the human heart is the same as it has always been. People still cheat, kill, oppress and try to justify their every whim and sin. The words of judgment proclaimed by Isaiah and Jeremiah; Ezekiel and Amos, apply as much to our world as it did to theirs.

What is also true, is that the words of lament, anxiety, and comfort in the Psalms also speak as clearly to us as they did to the ancient people of God. One of the Psalms that speaks clearly to me when the world feels dark, when my life feels like it’s spinning out of control, and when news about all the turmoil going on in the world around me becomes oppressive, is Psalm 27: “*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*” These opening words of the Psalm remind me to turn around and focus on the Giver and Redeemer of life—on Jesus, the Light of the world. Just like Peter trying to walk toward Jesus on the water, I too often look downward at the dark waves of life trying to pull me down into death. But looking up at Jesus, I can remember His

promises and words of encouragement to Peter and to the other disciples—“*O man of little faith, why did you doubt?*” (Matthew 14:31b) “*Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?*” (Mark 4:40) I have lived more than my three score and ten years, and the Lord has always loved and carried me through every illness, struggle and danger. His timing is perfect, His strength is more than sufficient, and His love is steadfast and firm.

The psalmist goes on to recount the many dangers and ills that threaten him but returns to words of faith in verses 4 and 5: “*One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent, he will set me high upon a rock.*” The Holy Scriptures never promise us a life of continual ease or comfort. But unlike those without faith, we have the promise of eternal life with the Lord, and the constant protection and comfort of the Lord as we walk through the darkest valleys of this life.

After more prayers of thanksgiving for the Lord’s help, and pleas for enlightenment and protection, the psalmist ends with these strong words of affirmation and trust: “*I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living! Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yea, wait for the Lord!*” Jesus’ words to the disciples in John 15, “*Abide in me...*” always come to mind when I am instructed to *wait for the Lord*. Abiding requires patience and steadfastness. This is what the psalmist is talking about. His words remind us that we are not alone in the dark. But we must hold fast to the Lord, keep our focus on Jesus, and wait for Him—wait for His perfect timing.

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

Iowa Mission District Convocation Registration

Saturday, September 11, 2021
Emmons Lutheran Church, Emmons, MN

The 2021 annual Convocation of the Iowa Mission District will take place at Emmons Lutheran Church, Emmons, on Saturday, September 11. Our theme is “Christ Alone” and we are pleased to have Bishop Dan Selbo 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 District. As you prepare for the convocation please be thinking of nominations for Treasurer of the Mission District and the following Council positions: Two lay members (one 3 year and one 2 year to finish an uncompleted term) and one clergy (3 year). A nomination form will be included in this month’s Iowa Mission District News. Please get permission from the nominees. They will need to complete the nomination form and mail it to Mission District Secretary, Craig Lease.

According to Article 4.01 of the IA- MD Constitution *all clergy persons within the territory of the District and two lay delegates of each congregation are eligible to vote at the Convocation.*

In addition, we strongly encourage congregational participation beyond the delegates and clergy—visitors are welcome! There is no cost to 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 3:30 pm.

New this year is that we are hoping that junior and high school youth will also come with other delegates to the convocation. They will participate in a portion of the convocation, and then spend some time as a group in various activities.

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 **Pastor Barbara Wills at PO Box 202, Northwood, IA 50459** or email as an attached file to barbaramwills@gmail.com. All information requested on the form needs to be included.

(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:

*Mr. Craig Lease, Secretary
Iowa Mission District, NALC
405 7th Street N.
Northwood, IA 50459*

Signature

Congregations of the Iowa Mission District

Ackley: **Our Saviour's**, Dan Buhs, Lay Minister
Avoca: **Trinity**, Pr. Eric Meissner
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**, Pr. Ron Voss
+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

Iowa Mission District Leadership

Pastor Christopher Staley Dean—
cbstaley@netins.net
Craig Lease, Secretary—
pdlease@gmail.com
Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer—
pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com

Mission District Council Members:

Pastor Ronald Rasmussen—
bigras73@fmctc.com
Pastor Tony D. Ede—
tonyede@gmail.com
Chris Schlee—
schleemasonry@hotmail.com
Kathy Scharnhorst—
gaf@butler-bremer.com
Lyle Hollander
lhollander@frontiernet.net

Disaster Response Coordinator:

Betty Burkhalter
bettyburkhalter@hotmail.com

Mission District Communicator (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

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 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