



# News

## of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church



[www.iowamissiondistrict.com](http://www.iowamissiondistrict.com)

March 2024

### *A Word from the Dean*

## "If another member of the church sins against you..."

Do you know how that verse ends? It can be found in **Matthew 18:15**. But before you grab for your Bible, think back over your life to see how you've responded to this reality (because it DOES happen). What we too often do is the easiest thing to do: we look for an opportunity to vent about it with someone else: "You won't believe what so-and-so just did/said to me." What's likely to happen next is that we will hear from this person of another sin which is probably even more grievous than the sin perpetrated against us. On the other hand, the other simple thing we might do is to file it away into our mental Rolodex, and when we have amassed enough bad marks against that person, just write that one person off as an enemy.

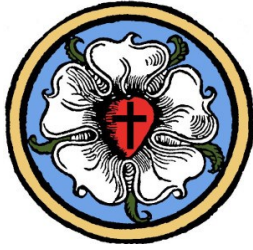
What Jesus says we should do, is not what we naturally do, or what's easy to do. "*If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one.*" There are four critical issues going on here. First of all, Jesus' counsel is to do something, not just let it slide, or bury it. One reason for doing something is that it keeps us from chewing on the issue ourselves, like so much gristle, getting ourselves worked up, or letting an issue that should be addressed go on until it begins to fester or blister, and even more damage is done.

Second, note that the first person you should seek out is the one who has wronged you, and no other. I would suggest that it is appropriate that you pray about such a matter before addressing it, but the first human ears that should hear about such an issue is the 'offender.' Why this step is particularly critical is important for many reasons. Not the least of which is that the 'sin' may have grown out of a misunderstanding on your or the other person's part that a conversation could easily clear up. Or, it could be that the 'offender' is not even aware that offense has been given.

Third, note that this first encounter should happen in private. Often this means that you will have to wait for, or create an opportunity when the two of you can speak privately. No one else needs to know at this point, and the possibility of reconciliation is greater if such a conversation happens away from prying ears and eyes.

And finally, is the why of the whole thing. Your encounter is not for the purpose of showing the 'offender' what a jerk he or she is. Instead, Jesus counsels us to go through such steps for the sake of repairing relationships: between each other, and between us and God. As St. Paul tells us in **2 Corinthians 5:18**: "*All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.*" Having been reconciled to God by Christ, may Christ lead us to reconcile with one another.

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



## God's Love for Us

*Pastor James Glesne  
Waterloo Ridge Lutheran Church  
Dorchester, Iowa*

Dear friends in Christ,

We have just come through a month in which love is a major theme. It just so happened that Ash Wednesday fell upon 14 February this year which I thought was rather interesting. Why do I say that? To me the ultimate love that is shown us is when God sent His Son, Jesus the Christ, to be the sacrifice for our sins. He did this out of love for us. Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, is a journey that we take to once again ponder, reflect and renew the story in our minds and hearts, the journey that Christ took to the cross for us those many years ago.

This topic of love is such a broad topic. If we do a word search in Scripture, it is very obvious that the word love is used sometimes in so many ways. But I would like to focus on just a couple of those ways in which we see Scripture use of love.

**First** of all is the simple fact that God loves us.

It is in 1 John 4:9 that we read; *"In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him."* It was Martin Luther who called John 3:16 "the gospel in the miniature!" *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."* It is this realization that is so important. God's love never wears out. God's love never ends. God's love never fails. God loves you on your good days, and God loves you on your bad days. He doesn't love you today more than He did yesterday, and He doesn't love you today less than He will love you tomorrow.

**Second** is the fact that we are called to love God.

In the words of Jesus, *"And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'" (Matthew 22:37)*

It is mentioned by Martin Luther in the catechism that *"we should fear and love God so that ....."*

Solomon, in his prayer of dedication of the temple, speaks of this love: *"Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven, and said, 'O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart..." (1 Kings 8:22-23)*

**Thirdly** is the call for us to live lives that are reflective of God's love for us in how we treat our neighbor and live our lives.

*"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome."* (1 John 5:3)

And again, the words of Jesus in John 15:10: *"If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love."*

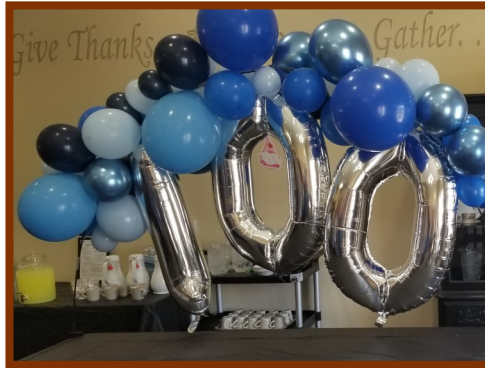
It was Joshua who spoke to the people of Israel words that are equally good for us to hear and observe; *"Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments and to cling to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul."* (Joshua 22:5)

Yes, we are called to live in response to God's love for us. Remember, you can't influence God's love. You can't do something so good it will make God love you more than He loves you right now. You can't do something so bad it will make God love you any less than He loves you right now. This season is a good time to remember that God doesn't just declare His love for us, He has demonstrated His love for us by giving His Son.

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

## 100th Birthday Celebration

*Elaine Orman, a member of Peace Lutheran Church, Northwood, celebrated 100 years of life in February. On February 24th, Elaine's family hosted a birthday party for her at the Northwood Pines. Among the other members of Peace Lutheran who came to help Elaine celebrate, were Connie and Paul Hogen.*



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## Iowa Mission District Pastors' /Lay Ministers' Annual Retreat



The Pastors'/Lay Ministers' annual retreat for 2024 is scheduled for June 10-11 at the Best Western Holiday Lodge in Clear Lake. Because our Mission District is spread out over a large geographical area, the retreat is held in different parts of the district each year. Last year it was in Waterloo. The retreat will begin at 1:00 pm on Monday, June 10th, and conclude following 11:30 Suffrages, the next day. Cost of the retreat is covered by the Mission District and includes two meals—dinner on Monday and breakfast on Tuesday. The only cost is for those who want a private room or who wish to bring their spouses. In these cases the extra cost for the room is \$65, payable to the Iowa Mission District and sent to our treasurer, Pastor Gary Burkhalter. Our keynote speaker for this retreat will be the Reverend Jess Abbott, Area Assistant to the Bishop of the NALC. Pastor Christopher Staley, Dean of the Iowa Mission District, emailed detailed information to pastors and lay ministers earlier this month. Information regarding registrations will be forthcoming. Please send questions to Pastor Staley, Mission District Dean. Contact information for Pastor Burkhalter and Pastor Staley can be found on the last page of the newsletter.

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**NALC  
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DISTRICT**

# SPRING RETREAT

*wildcard*

Hosted by: Eagle Grove Evangelical Lutheran Church  
April 12th-14th | Students 7th-12th grade  
Eagle Grove, Iowa

*Register Now!*

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIPQLSCZUA-EQJAUXCIRY870EGBYOEWHLK8BZVXUKIFVW\\_MTL2VIEP-A/VIEWFORM?USP=SF\\_LINK](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIPQLSCZUA-EQJAUXCIRY870EGBYOEWHLK8BZVXUKIFVW_MTL2VIEP-A/VIEWFORM?USP=SF_LINK)

## Upcoming Youth Opportunities

*Spring Retreat—grades 7-12*

*NEXUS—grades 9-12*



The NALC is sponsoring NEXUS again this year. This is for high school students who might be considering a call to ministry—or who might be encouraged to consider such a call.





## Pondering the Parables: The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

*[Jesus] also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:9-14)*

We are in the season of Lent, a time set apart in the Church year during which we reflect on our relationship with the Lord as we travel with Jesus on His way to the cross. During this season there is a strong emphasis on humility, repentance, and prayer. These are things that Jesus often spoke about in His teachings, and we find much guidance from Him on these matters in His "Sermon on the Mount" in the fifth through seventh chapters in Matthew. But sometimes our Lord spoke about humility and prayer in parables, and this one from Luke's Gospel is especially compelling.

In first century Palestine, the nation of Israel was part of the Roman Empire, occupied by Roman soldiers, and ruled by Roman governors and kings who were appointed by the Roman Emperor. Tax collectors were employed by the Romans to collect taxes from Jewish citizens, and were often Jewish themselves. Often viewed as traitors to their own people, tax collectors were despised and held in contempt by many of their fellow Jews. In addition, the Romans didn't seem too concerned with the ethical standards of these employees, as long as they handed over the amount of taxes required, so many tax collectors collected far more money than was required and became quite wealthy at the expense of their fellow citizens. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were very strict Jews who studied God's Law and had the reputation for being upstanding citizens. They often looked down on others who were less strict, and they wielded a considerable amount of power within the Jewish community. Some were members of the Jewish Sanhedrin, which was the Jewish legislative body that enforced the Jewish

laws. This body was allowed to function in matters having to do with the Jewish religion and were usually left alone by the Romans as long as they didn't infringe on matters of Roman law.

With this background in mind, we approach the parable Jesus tells about two men who go to the temple to pray. The Pharisee, who was considered by those listening to be a man of better morals and more acceptable to God than the tax collector, begins to pray. Jesus says he "*prays with himself*"—an interesting choice of words. He addresses God, thanking the Lord that he's better than everyone else, and he lists all the good things he does. He also stands proudly before the Lord and lifts his head as he prays. His attitude seems to be that of a person who is confident that he is acceptable to the Lord and has no need to bow, repent, or request God's help. His attitude is also disdainful of others. Granted, those he mentions are those exhibit obvious sins, and many are people who take advantage of others. But his own attitude calls into question whether he has really heard such prophets as Micah: "... *what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*" (Micah 6:8) However, he's an influential man, and those listening to Jesus may have found nothing particularly surprising or objectionable in his words and attitude.

Then Jesus describes the tax collector's prayer. This hated man lowers his eyes and beats his breast as he speaks to the Lord. His words are far different from those of the Pharisee: "*God, be merciful to me a sinner!*" What the tax collector says may have surprised Jesus' listeners, even though they would have agreed that he was a sinner. They knew that tax collectors were often cheats and that they served a foreign government, but to hear him admit his sins may have surprised them. Instead of trying to defend himself, he lays his heart open before the Lord and begs for mercy. But what is most shocking is that Jesus then tells His listeners that this terribly sinful man leaves the temple justified, while the proud Pharisee does not.

The Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 3:23-24 that we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We are unable to justify ourselves, as the Pharisee tried to do, but can only be justified by God's grace, bestowed upon us by the death and resurrection of Christ. Once again, Jesus holds up a repentant sinner as our role model rather than the confident follower of the Law.

*Pastor Barbara M. Wills*

# Announcements

## Upcoming Events

**April 12-14 - Spring Retreat Weekend**—Eagle Grove Lutheran Church for students in grades 7-12. For more information contact Alana DeMoss, Mission District Youth coordinator at [fivekids crazy@outlook.com](mailto:fivekids crazy@outlook.com)

**June 10-11—Iowa Mission District Pastor's/Lay Minister's Retreat**—Best Western Holiday Lodge, Clear Lake, Iowa. Begins at 1:00 pm June 10th, concludes at noon June 11.

**July 21-27, 2024—NEXUS Institute**—at Grand View University, Des Moines. The week is being sponsored by the NALC. For more information: <http://www.grandview.edu/NEXUS>

**August 9, 2024—NALC online Convocation**—all day meeting online

**September 21, 2024—Iowa Mission District Convocation**—St. John, Western Douglas

## Please Pray for:

**Pastor James Puotyal** who is awaiting a kidney transplant.

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](mailto:barbaramwills@gmail.com).

## Pastors available for pulpit supply:

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](mailto: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  
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**, Pastor Ryan Henkel  
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. Chris Meier  
Manchester: **First**, Call Process  
Monona, **Faith**: Pr. Mel Harris  
Northwood: **Peace**, Pr. Barbara Wills  
+ Osage: **First Grace Lutheran Church**  
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. 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](mailto:cbstaley@netins.net)  
Pastor Solveig Zamzow Secretary  
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Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer  
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### Mission District Communicator/Newsletter Editor

Pastor Barbara Wills  
[barbaramwills@gmail.com](mailto:barbaramwills@gmail.com)

*The Iowa Mission District  
has 39 congregations.*

*The Iowa Mission District website may be found  
at: [www.iowamissiondistrict.com](http://www.iowamissiondistrict.com).*