



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

November 2023

A Word from the Dean

It's Wednesday afternoon; do you know what's trending?

Chances are, if you're my age or older, you have no idea what I'm talking about. And even if I told you, I would guess the chances are pretty good that you wouldn't really care. But if you're 40 or younger, you know exactly what I'm talking about, and could maybe even tell me what the answer is to the question of "What's trending?"

The fact is "what's trending" is roughly equivalent to "what's everybody talking about." And since we live in Iowa, the answer is almost always the weather, like the need for rain for the dry ground and stream beds, especially before a deep freeze could come. A second popular topic of everyday conversation around these parts is that of sports with high school teams heading into tournament season.

But beyond our small-town Iowa lives, the world is talking about much different things. And thanks to the Worldwide Web no one has to wonder what those things are any longer. We can go right now to Yahoo, or Twitter, to see what all the buzz is about. Moment by moment news stories and topics rise and fall as more and more people are more and more attached to this flow of information. And part of what makes it remarkable is that the very thing that's all the buzz right now will be gone within a few hours in most cases, only to be replaced by the next "big thing."

If a person wants to be relevant in such an age, it could be a full-time job just to try to keep up with it all. And what if a church wanted to keep up with it all? There are plenty of companies that reach out to churches, wanting to help them in the attempt to appeal to the latest trends in

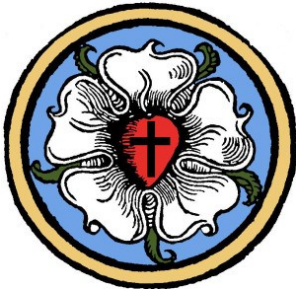
marketing. Praise and worship bands, large projection screens in the worship space to display song lyrics or still images or movie clips, new creeds, theater style seating so that worshipers may even forget they are in a church, small group ministries, coffee cafes, book shops, cowboy worship, or even the Beyoncé mass. All these and other like-attempts have been made and are still being made to attract people to attend churches.

From my point of view, such attempts may be well-meaning, but they are likely only temporary solutions because such things that come into fashion tend to go out of fashion to make way for the next new fashion. And a church can spend a lot of energy and funds chasing after the breeze.

Instead, the Church has largely been anachronistic, which is a fancy word that means "out of step with modern times." The Church gathers each week to read from the same Bible, sing many of the same old hymns (time-tested and rich in meaning—don't believe me? sit down with one of them and read it through), pray the same prayers that have been used for centuries, and eat the same meal. Why? Because the source and object of our worship is unchanging. And in the midst of a world that is changing every moment, I find this to be very comforting.

And, in case you're curious to know the answer to my initial question, it's none other than the next would-be (or maybe won't-be) Speaker of the House, Mike Johnson. Apparently it's what everybody's talking about... for today anyway.

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



The Assurance of Things Hoped For

*Pastor Christian Meier
St. John Lutheran Church
LeMars, Iowa*

*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for;
the conviction of things not seen.*

(Hebrews 11:1)

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is a favorite of mine. Every word captures my attention and seizes my soul; it grasps me by the arm and walks me down the path God's people have traveled for generations. And on this path – the journey of faith – all the ancestors of our faith cheer us on – me and you – that we may persevere in this first life, keeping the goal, the finish-line, in our mind's eye!

The whole Bible is God's gift to us, and some of His greatest encouragement for you and me is to be found in Hebrews chapters 11 & 12. These are some of the Bible's most beautiful and poetic passages (of course, *all the Bible* is helpful and wonderful to us in one way or another, for it is God's very word to us!). But I suppose chapters 11 & 12 mean so much to me, because they have given me such strength, motivation, and stamina over the course of my life. They give me the assurance that God will provide for us, just as He has provided for and sustained His people for thousands upon thousands of years.

Because I know God has been faithful to His children before me, I can trust that He will be faithful to me, too, keeping His promises and guiding me continually. I believe this because He has said so in His word, the Bible; and I confess this to be true, even if I cannot prove it forensically to someone else. But there is proof beyond forensics, for the Father's love – the Light of the World, Jesus – shines through our lives into even the darkest of places.

Because I've come to believe and trust, know and love God and all He has promised, I am eager to share my faith with others; for I believe that God wants every person to know His promises to them, and trust that He knows them and calls each of them by their name, and be confident that He will be gracious to them through His Son, Jesus Christ. In a word, God wants every person to be included in that *great cloud of witnesses* (Hebrews 12:1) looking to Jesus, setting aside sin and every weight, and running together, with perseverance, in the hope Jesus gives us.

And so we run the course of faith in our own lives. We bring alongside everyone who will run with us. In this race, this marathon of life, there is a tremendous, if unseen, grandstand of the faithful – those who have run before us – now cheering us on at every step and every turn. And so we run with confidence and perseverance, knowing that God will provide, strengthen, and direct. We run, knowing, trusting, believing, confessing that God's love in Christ Jesus will bring us to that kingdom which cannot be shaken, the New Jerusalem, Mount Zion, our heavenly home. When we arrive, we shall be greeted by that great assembly of the firstborn, the angels in festal gathering, God the great judge, and all the spirits of the righteous made perfect – our sisters and brothers in Christ!

Yes, the day will come, friends, when we shall stand with all the saints, when we shall be made perfect with them.

Peace to you – you people of faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ – as you run the race of faith!

This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District



Waterloo Ridge Lutheran Church

On Sunday, October 22nd, Pastor James Glesne was installed as Pastor at Waterloo Ridge Lutheran Church, Dorchester, by Iowa Mission District Dean, Pastor Christopher Staley. On hand to help celebrate the event were Pastors Marshall Hahn, John Saethre, (Pastors Staley and Glesne in the center), Douglas Hedman, and Gary Burkhalter.



Disaster Response

I have two exciting updates to share with you this month! St John's Lutheran Church in Boyden is able to host a second warehouse for the Iowa Mission District! All of your donations from the Convocation, held in September, were delivered to the new warehouse on Friday, October 13. While the warehouse is being made ready for storage, the donations are being stored in a garage on the church property. By having this additional warehouse in western Iowa, the NALC congregations in western Iowa as well as North and South Dakota have a closer location to leave their donations.

The other exciting news is the Iowa Mission District Council approved the purchase of a trailer to be used for Disaster Response as well as Mission Trips (adult and youth). A used trailer was purchased.

As always, let me know what questions you have.

Betty Burkhalter



*Above: Pastor Jeremy Winter offers a prayer of blessing for the new warehouse at St. John's, Boyden.
Middle: The group of folks who unloaded Disaster Response kits from the trailer in Boyden. Lower right: The Iowa Mission District trailer that was recently purchased to use for transporting Disaster Response contributions and for Mission Trips.*





Abiding in Christ: Give Us this Day

“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ... For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.”

(Matthew 6:25, 32-33)

When our Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He included a request for daily bread. Yes, we must begin with “Our Father”—our heavenly Father—the Lord God who gave us life and sustains it. He is the One above all others who is to be loved, honored, and praised; the One whose will we are to seek above our own. But what might seem surprising, if we stop to think about it, is that even before our Lord Jesus turns to forgiveness of sins, our relationships with other people, and protection from all things evil, He addresses our physical needs: *“Give us this day our daily bread.”*

In the Small Catechism, Luther tells us that our daily bread includes all we need for this life. He speaks of our relationships with others, as well as food, shelter, and work; good weather and government; peace and health. Knowing that all things come from the gracious hand of our loving Heavenly Father, we are invited into a deeper contemplation of our relationship with our Lord—a broader appreciation of the many aspects of “daily bread” and a more profound appreciation of what it means to “abide” in Christ. We cannot claim that “we earned” our daily provisions, nor that we are responsible for our choices in where we live, from which family we come, or what gifts, abilities, or opportunities we possess or have been offered. All is provided by the Lord!

In our nation, the fourth Thursday of November each year is a public holiday, a day set apart to give thanks. Despite the popular story of the first Thanksgiving being celebrated with a meal shared by Pilgrims and the Indians after the native people helped the colonists through a long hard winter and shared their farming skills with them, there are

various stories and differing dates and places that claim to have been the first Thanksgiving on American soil. It seems that the earliest celebrations centered around worship services rather than feasts, and the thanks was offered to the Lord who had sustained colonists in a wild environment that differed dramatically from the home countries from which they came. In our modern public celebrations, many aspects of the day have been trivialized with cartoonish décor, the emphasis on stuffing oneself beyond the normal daily intake of food, and a rather vague thanks which is offered to no one in particular. There’s a rather large disconnect in saying “thank you” to nothing. It’s even more meaningless than thanking oneself.

In our lives of faith, thanksgiving is (or should be) a daily occurrence, rooted in prayer and worship, and offered to the Lord God Who created, redeems, and sustains us. This daily thanks is offered for our “daily bread”—for all of those things in our physical environment that are outlined by Luther, and also for the “Bread of Heaven” (Christ Jesus), and for “every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” by we are sustained each day. (*“And [the Lord] humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know; that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but that man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.”* (Deuteronomy 8:3)) This reminder of what is most important for our daily sustenance was spoken by Moses to the people of God in the wilderness, and repeated by our Lord Jesus when He rebuffed the devil’s attempt to seduce Him into sin during His temptation in the wilderness. (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4)

When our Lord Jesus called His disciples to abide in Him, it was an invitation to keep our priorities right, and to be sustained and strengthened in our faith, so that all our “doings and life” might bring forth the fruits appropriate to God’s people: Faith, love, compassion, forgiveness—and *thanksgiving!*

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

Announcements

Upcoming Events

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—at St. John, Western Douglas

Please Pray for:

Pastor James Puotyual 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.

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

Mission District Pulpit-Supply Guidelines

A year ago, 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. Following our recent meeting, we also 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 rate is \$0.655 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
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

Iowa Mission District Leadership

Pastor Christopher Staley Dean
cbstaley@netins.net
Pastor Solveig Zamzow Secretary
solveigzamzow@gmail.com
Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer
pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com

Mission District Council Members:

Pastor David Klappenbach
klappenbach98@rpt.coop
Pastor Ryan Henkel
pastorhenkel@gmail.com
Pastor Doug Hedman
pdhedman@gmail.com
Dean Armstrong
idedarmy@gmail.com
Elise Patzke
ekbieri@gmail.com
Cindy Gibbs
mcgibbs@acegroup.cc

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 38 congregations.*

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