



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church



www.iowamissiondistrict.com

November 2024

A Word from the Dean

Mission Driven

From its founding and still today, one of the four core values as the NALC is that we will be Mission Driven:

“We believe that the mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel and to make disciples for Christ. We believe that making disciples — in our congregations, in our communities and nations, and around the world — must be a priority of the Church in the present age.”

Each NALC congregation is expected to hold this value as well, and to live it out. Although congregations aren't told how to do this, a primary goal has always been that a congregation will have a 'local' mission partner and a 'broader' mission partner. Many of our congregations are actively engaged in operating or helping a local food bank. Many support one or more solid Bible camps. Others partner with NALC Disaster Response, and agencies who are equipped to send aid beyond our borders.

But an often overlooked mission partner is with a mission church. I say overlooked because I was surprised to learn a couple months ago that one of our own mission congregations receives no ongoing support from any congregations within our Mission District. Years earlier, when Emmanuel in Rochester was a new mission start, they received support from several of our congregations, and these were not simply one-time gifts, but gifts were given over several years. And these were needed because the congregation lacked the resources many of us take for granted, most notably a worship space of their own.

When I installed Pastor Doug Hedman at Trinity Lutheran in St. Charles, MN, I never would have guessed that, in the ensuing three and a half years, no financial would be received by them from any of our congregations. I don't say this in order to scold, but simply to remind each of our congregations that part of being a Mission Driven congregation is that we ought to find room in our missions budget to help such fledgling congregations, especially those within our own Mission District, like Trinity. Admittedly, I have been more vocal about First Grace Lutheran, the newer mission congregation in Osage, and so I acknowledge that I have been lacking in this situation.

But now, especially as budgeting season is on the horizon for many of our congregations, I ask each congregation to prayerfully consider allotting some of its mission money to Trinity Lutheran, making a commitment (monthly, quarterly, or annually) for three to five years as they continue to develop as a thriving congregation. And if a congregation would also want similarly to support First Grace Lutheran, that would be even better. And, in addition to this financial support, prayers are always needed, and better yet, relationships can be built. And an idea just occurred to me: if it could be worked out on a given weekend, your congregation and Trinity could have a pulpit swap in order to foster such a relationship.

As someone once said, “that's my two cents worth.”

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



Bearers of the Highest Gift (LOVE)

*Pastor Doug Hedman
Trinity Lutheran Church
St. Charles, Minnesota*

The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:3, 13: “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administering, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understanding all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

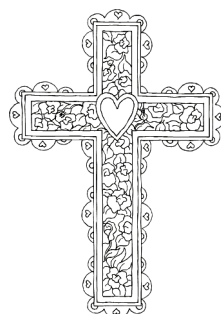
Sometimes English is an impoverished language. For example, we who speak English are stuck with only one word for “love.” That one word covers the waterfront. You love pizza, love to read books, love you spouse, love Lutefisk, love Jesus, and love to play cards. Without additional words you cannot tell the difference between loving God or dill pickles!

The Greek language has at least four words for love:

- Phileo, which is love for a friend. From it comes the word Philadelphia.
- Eros, namely love between and husband and wife.
- Storge, lifting up affection within a family.
- Agape, which is servant love, self-giving love, sacrificial love.

In the 1 Corinthians reading, the word used for love is agape. It is the highest gift, the “greatest of these.” Paul lists a host of gifts that people bring to the work of the Kingdom of God. Some are called to be apostles, others are prophets, then come teachers, workers of miracles, healers, helpers, administrators, and finally, those who speak in different tongues. The gifts that most frequently appear in the Church are likely teachers and helpers. There seem to be no set order of gifts according to their value, although it is worth noting that in all of Paul’s lists of gifts of the Spirit, speaking in tongues is always last. Probably that is the case because it so often had a divisive and self-centered impact on the Church.

However, the greatest gift of all is agape – servant love, love used for the benefit of others. The good news is that this gift is available to all people. The simplest and wisest bear this gift. It is reserved for no one person. Every person can be a bearer of agape, of servant love. It results from God’s prior love for all people. It is God’s most profound gift to the Church. You, even you, are a bearer of “the highest gift.”



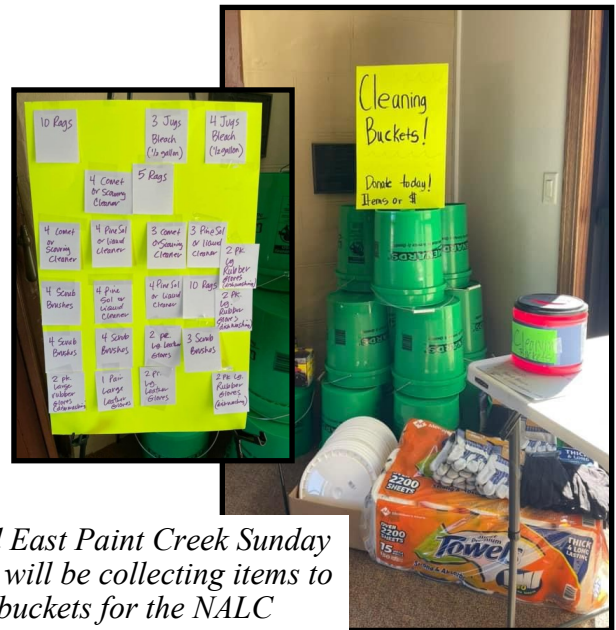
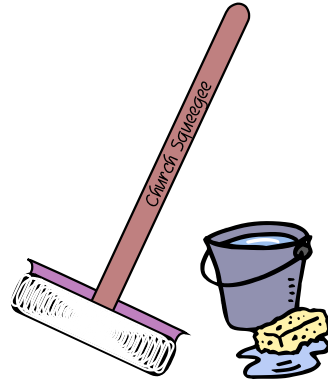


This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District

Right: A group of ladies from First Lutheran, St Ansgar, gathered to fill kits for the NALC Disaster Response. Congregation members responded to a call to help by donating money that was used to buy enough items to fill 18 Flood Buckets, 24 Kitchen Kits, 14 Student Kits, and 38 Health Kits.



Aurora Borealis shining down on First Lutheran, Saint Ansgar



Right: The Old East Paint Creek Sunday School children will be collecting items to fill 15 cleaning buckets for the NALC Disaster Response.

Pastor Mel Harris Faith Lutheran Church Monona, Iowa

An informal gathering of Faith Lutheran members, colleagues, and friends celebrated Pastor Harris' retirement on October 5, 2024. Cake and ice cream were served. Thank you for your service Pastor Harris.



Pastor Mel and Jacki Harris



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

Right: Confirmation students from First Grace, Osage, participated in the Crop Walk on October 13th. They raised ~\$700. CROP Hunger Walks help to support Church World Service, especially grassroots, hunger-fighting development efforts around the world. Also 25% of money raised stays in our county (Mitchell County) and is given to the local food banks!



**Pastor Khrystle Sullivan
Emmanuel Lutheran Church
Rochester, Minnesota**

Pastor Khrystle Sullivan was installed as pastor of Emmanuel Lutheran in Rochester on October 26, 2024. The service was held in the shelter house on the property where their new church building is under construction. Iowa Mission District Dean, Pastor Christopher Staley, presided and preached at the worship service. Prior to the service attendees were invited to write a favorite Bible verse, greeting or prayer on the walls and studs inside the new building. A turkey dinner followed the ceremony at the Oasis Church in Rochester where the Emmanuel congregation currently worships.



**Emmanuel Lutheran Church
Rochester, Minnesota**



Disaster Response

While many teams of volunteers are busy dealing with the floods out east, a large group of volunteers worked in North West Iowa helping those in need with recovery from the flooding this past spring.

SEMAC (South East Minnesota Area Christians) have been working together for over 25 years under the leadership of Larry Vomhof. Larry is a member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church In Rochester. Larry and his wife Deb manage the NALC Disaster Response Warehouse located in Chatfield Mn. The group is made up of Christians of many denominations who come together to help those in need. They generally do two mission trips each year. Their team is made up of experienced carpenters, electricians, plumbers and drywallers.

Do you have to live in SE Minnesota to work with this group? Absolutely not! While many of the team members are from SE Minnesota, there were people from Georgia, Wisconsin, and North Dakota. Gerald Meyer from St John's Lutheran in Boyden jumped in and helped for two days once his harvest was done. Pastor Gary and I had the opportunity to join them the week of October 20.

St John's Lutheran in Boyden Iowa provided housing and a couple of meals for us. Mary Bates arranged for a shower trailer for us to use. Deb Vomhof and her sister, Judy, provided the remainder of the meals, including items for us to pack a sack lunch each day.

We worked in Rock Valley at five separate homes. What did we do? We painted, reinforced the entire first floor joists before new subfloor was installed, insulated, replaced a shower and toilets, put in a new header in a living room, removed walls, built walls, sheet rocked, mudded and taped the sheet rock, repaired plumbing in the bathrooms, electrical in basements, and made a 13-year-old girl very happy by getting her basement bedroom ready to move into. This included putting in a drop-ceiling, putting in flooring, and putting in her closet door and the door to her bedroom.

There is still a lot of work to be done in Rock Valley as well as other communities in NW Iowa. More volunteers are needed. Maybe you and/or your congregation want to form a team by yourselves or with other congregations in your community. I can get you the work if you can get a team together! Let me know how I can help!

*Betty Burkhalter
NALC Iowa Mission District
Disaster Response Coordinator*





Pondering the Parables: Firm Foundations

[Jesus said] *“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But he who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation; against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”* (Luke 6:46-49)

In recent weeks, many people in the southern part of the U.S. have experienced devastating damage from hurricanes. Strong winds and ocean waves wreak havoc on buildings and leave death and destruction in their wake. Those who live along the banks of the Mississippi River have also experienced the devastation of flooding in recent years, and we sometimes hear of broken dams and smaller rivers that flood nearby communities and do extensive damage. Even without a driving wind, the sudden rush of large amounts of water is a powerful force that breaks down and engulfs everything in its path.

The people listening to Jesus on the day He told this parable were surely familiar with strong winds and the fearful power of moving water. As our Lord so often did, He used the well-known things of everyday life to teach about the more difficult concepts of our Life in Him. So often, people would flock to Him for healing and welcome such miracles as water being turned to wine and a few small loaves of bread becoming a feast that fed thousands. But when His teachings became uncomfortable and encroached on their personal choices, they often turned a deaf ear. They wanted to define Jesus, to relate to Him on their own terms, and to avoid the responsibility of a long-term commitment. Perhaps they were looking for a “bargain basement” god; a loose association with “no strings attached”.

Jesus’ words bring to mind the people of the Old Testament whom the prophets condemned: those with ears who could not understand (Isaiah 6); and those who kept the holy days but cheated and oppressed the poor (Amos 5:21-24; Isaiah 1:12-17). Jesus also asks the people of His time, *“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?* And then He describes those who built the two kinds of houses. The house built on the sand looked sturdy enough. By all appearances it

would make a lovely home. And the people who flocked to Jesus seemed the faithful sort—they called Him “Lord”; they begged Him for mercy; they even sat still and seemed attentive when He taught and preached. But perhaps they were like the servant in the parable who was forgiven a huge debt but showed no mercy to his fellow servant who owed him a much smaller debt (Matthew 18:23-35); or like those who publicly did “good works” like praying and being sure everyone saw them contributing large sums of money at the temple, but who cheated their customers or refused to help their elderly parents. Perhaps they were the ones who followed Jesus as long as He was giving free bread and healing their ailments, but when He started questioning their favorite misinterpretations of the Law, and talking about loving their enemies, sharing with those in need, and refraining from condemning others, they found His “sayings” too difficult. Their interest in Jesus was not strong enough to trust Him, or even to give Him a fair hearing. They most likely had chosen the parts of the Law that made them comfortable, and when He reminded them of those ancient prophecies that called for a change in their attitudes and interactions with others, they balked. Their “faith” had been built on the sand of their own desires and preferences.

But the folks who truly listened—who had ears to hear and who opened their hearts to understand—were like the man who had built his house on a solid foundation. Even though digging through the hardness of their misunderstandings and prejudices was difficult, and they had to sacrifice their “comfort zones” to do it, they embraced the Lord’s teachings. Their questions were not meant to deflect Jesus’ teachings but to dig deeper into them, seeking understanding. Instead of turning away from the Lord, they sought to spend more time with Him, “abiding in Him” (John 15) so that, like the branches firmly attached to the good vine, they might bring forth the good fruit of love, compassion, and justice. They listened carefully to the gems of wisdom and truth that Jesus shared with them so that they might store up the true treasures that would stand firm in times of trial and would produce faithfulness and steadfast love in their daily relationships with the Lord and those with whom they came into contact each day. Built on the solid foundation of Jesus’ teaching, their faith would stand firm and not be shaken in times of trial and temptation.

Pastor Barbara M. 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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Pastor Solveig Zamzow, Secretary
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Belinda Borchardt, Treasurer
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*The Iowa Mission District
has 40 congregations.*

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