

**Reports  
of**



**2011 Convocation**

**August 11 and 12, 2011**

**Upper Arlington Lutheran Church**

# Bishop's Report

Sisters and Brothers in Christ!

In my letters of welcome to pastors, I have regularly quoted a verse from the Psalms, "Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes in the morning." Those words reflect my own feelings as I have become an ordained minister in the North American Lutheran Church. From my conversations with both pastors and lay people, I know that the words of the Psalmist reflect the feelings of many of others. Even in those cases where the transition into the North American Lutheran Church has been relatively smooth, there is a deep sense of sorrow and pain.

At the same time, joining the North American Lutheran Church carries with it a great promise and an abiding hope. It is a promise and hope that are grounded in Christ, who is himself God's promise and hope. His resurrection from the dead, attested in Holy Scripture, sustains us all as we continue our life in this new day for our church. "Joy comes in the morning."

I defer to the other units of our church for an account of what we have been about this past year. As you will understand, much of my ministry has been occupied with facilitating the organization of our church and assisting congregations and pastors in the certification process.

I thank God that I have been supported by the prayers that so many of you have offered on my behalf. I also thank God that I have been so ably supported by so many colleagues in our church - our executive council, our provisional deans, and those who have served on the different committees and task forces. I give particular thanks to the capable members of our small and hardworking staff: Pastor John Bradosky, general secretary; Pastor Gemechis Buba, missions director; and Ms. Rachel Sosebee, administrative assistant. While the burdens of this past year have been considerable, the task would not have been possible without the contribution of so many committed servants and friends.

I leave the leadership of the North American Lutheran Church in the firm confidence that God will continue to raise up leaders, both lay and ordained, who will faithfully bear the Word of God in ministry and mission.

I leave in the hope that we will always keep before ourselves the four attributes we have used to identify who we are as God's people and as Lutheran Christians. With the Spirit's help we seek to be Christ-centered, mission-driven, congregationally-focused, and tradition-grounded. To maintain these four attributes will require diligence and a focused attention to prayer by all of us.

I have mentioned elsewhere that members of the North American Lutheran Church express a genuine sense of excitement for our church. Many tell me that they are absolutely thrilled to be with us in the North American Lutheran Church. A pastor of Ethiopian background related to our mission planters conference that he and his people had now found a true "home" in the North American Lutheran Church. Those are marvelous sentiments, and we will want to keep them in our hearts as the future opens before us.

Mercifully we do not go into the future by ourselves. We are a community of faith, dedicated to the Holy Scriptures and to the Lutheran Confessions. God goes with us with His Word, and his Spirit goes by our side. We are His church and the sheep of His pasture. He cares for us in grace, far beyond our merits. God is gracious, and His presence acts for us as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

In Christ's name,



Paull E. Spring

## General Secretary's Report

Dear disciples of Jesus who share in the ministry of the North American Lutheran Church,

The struggle of this past year for many has given way to a renewed sense of peace and gratitude. I am reminded of Paul's words in Colossians 3:16-17. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." I am thankful to God and grateful to you for the opportunity to serve as your General Secretary during this year. After 32 years in parish ministry, this new opportunity for serving the North American Lutheran Church has been filled with excitement, learning, growing and using my gifts for ministry in new ways. I have had the wonderful opportunity and great privilege to serve with Bishop Paull Spring, to be inspired by his faith, guided by his wisdom and refreshed by his sense of humor. I have also been blessed laboring with our Mission Director, Pastor Gemechis Buba whose passion for mission and prayer has been a tremendous source of spiritual renewal. Our administrative assistant, Rachel Sosebee and our financial administrator, Anne Gleason have offered their gifts and provided a wealth of expertise without which fulfilling the responsibilities as general secretary would not be possible. I have also been honored to work with a wise, discerning and highly committed Executive Council who lead and serve by their faithful example. I would be remiss not to mention my deep gratitude for the gracious hospitality of Upper Arlington Lutheran Church and every member of their staff. From the Senior Pastor, Paul Ulring, to the occasional office volunteer, they have provided expertise and generous support beyond measure.

My responsibilities have been divided into two major categories. The first is to provide the infrastructure for the North American Lutheran Church to accomplish its mission, consistent with its values: Christ Centered, Mission Driven, Traditionally Grounded and Congregationally Focused. In this first year, that included providing for the following: office space, office furniture, computers, networking, printer, copier, phone system, database, recording keeping, forms, certificates, call documents, logo, signage, calendar platform, phone conferencing, certification for pastors including the background check process and provider, system for providing compensation guidelines, securing data for 501c3 application, budget process, pastoral and congregational reports, mapping potential geographic boundaries for regional expressions of this church and most recently working with a team to develop an alternative plan for pension and healthcare. In addition to coordinating the details for meetings of the Executive Council, I have provided support or expertise for each of our committees including: Court of Adjudication, Constitution, Ministry, Nominating, Candidacy, Ecumenical Relations, Commission on Theology and Doctrine, Missions, Communication, and Convocation. I have also interfaced with and supported our Deans as needed.

The second category of my work has been to provide a personal and public presence representing the North American Lutheran Church. These contacts have given me the opportunity to offer pastoral support to other pastors and lay leaders of our congregations, through countless telephone calls, emails and face to face conversations. It has meant travel almost every weekend to preach, celebrate and offer presentations regarding our ministry. I have been asked to speak about what created the necessity for our inception, discipleship, missions and our hopes for the future. Those events included our own Mission Conference, several Lutheran Core Events, the Carolinas Chapter Convocation, open forums in congregations as well as Sunday morning worship. Developing relationships with Ministry Partners, including Sola Publishing, World Mission Prayer League and Youth Encounter has also been a part of my portfolio. We have also worked to advance our relationship with LCMC. However, the most exciting work has been the creation of partnership agreements between the North American Lutheran Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church Mekane Yesus in Ethiopia as well as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Uganda. The first resulted from our participation in the International Theological and Mission Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where we were able to develop personal relationships that will continue to influence and shape our life together, realizing that perhaps we have more to receive than to give. Relating to the Candidacy

Committee, I am encouraged by the large group (nearly 50) candidates who are in the most vulnerable of situations, yet have decided to sacrifice security for the sake of faithfulness, making the bold step to join us. Our staff has been working hard to create new partnership agreements with seminaries and other academic institutions where our students can receive faithful training in orthodox Christian theology.

Throughout the year our commitment has been to offer the best quality of faithful care in the shortest amount of time. In all we do we have attempted to keep the needs of our pastors and congregations our first priority as a way of encouraging and strengthening them for mission and ministry.

While we do not forget those who are still immersed in the struggle, the greatest hope we can offer others as a Confessing church is to continue to press on, boldly confessing Christ. Let me close with two additional verses from Paul's letter to the Philippians that I pray will bring you as much encouragement as they do me. "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead" (3:12-13). The best is yet to be!

With you following Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

John F. Bradosky

# The Missions Director Report

*Glory to God in highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests. Luke 2:14*

## NALC Mission Plan

The NALC mission plan has four focal points:

1. Planting New Mission Congregations
2. Revitalizing our existing congregations
3. Missional Leadership Development
4. International mission connections

### Planting New Mission Congregations

So far the NALC has planted over 50 mission congregations. These are mission congregations in the rural, urban and suburban and language specific communities. Our mission congregations have Asians, Africans, African Americans, Latinos, Anglos and Arab speakers. These congregations are working hard on their self-reliance and self-multiplication. In our approach we encourage them early on to be self-reliant and self-multipliers. Thus most of them are right now self-supporting while others are supported but the community of mission partner congregations. Few of them are subsidized by our missions office from our great commission fund.

May 2011 we conducted our first mission planter's conference. This first gathering attracted 92 leaders, almost four times the number we anticipated for our first gathering. We will continue that conference every year in the month of May. Mission planters conference aims to inspire and equip lay and ordained leaders in the work of planting and growing new mission congregations.

In 2011/12 the new planters missions team of the NALC will continue to proactively plant mission congregations in various mission fields. Our work is driven by prayer, context study, strategic planning and wise preparation of good support systems to sustain the growth and fruitfulness of our mission congregations.

### Revitalization of Existing Congregations

The NALC is reaching and passing a membership of 250 congregations. It is anticipated that this number will continue to grow in the years to come. Revitalizing our congregations is taken as one of the key works of the missions team. There are four avenues being pursued to achieve these revitalization objectives. Those are:

1. Grounding every renewal and revitalization work on word and sacrament ministry along with intentional prayer movement with greater emphasis to the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit. In other words we completely depend on God's grace through the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit.
2. Organizing a high quality revitalization conference for lay and ordained leaders of these congregations annually.
3. Preparing a follow up mechanism of coaching, mentorship and support system to get the leaders into an accountability system and keep the momentum going.
4. Organizing a good pool of quality resources and tools for leaders and congregations to use in their mission and renewal endeavors.

In the year 2011, all of these are being done. Our first revitalization conference is organized for **November 3-5, 201, in Asheville, North Carolina**. There is a team that is already working on a congregational and leadership resource kit to enhance and assist revitalization of congregations. It will be posted on our website in the fall. During the revitalization conference, our goal is to gather congregations with an active membership of 30-150. We are preparing to welcome up to 150 participants.

### Missional Leadership Development

Our mission pastors come from a great pool of ordained and lay leaders we have in the NALC. We strongly believe that our missions work is going to be as strong as our lay and ordained mission leaders.

Therefore we prayerfully identify and deploy mission pastors. So far most of our mission pastors are self-identified and some are lifted up by mission congregations. There are also a good number of mission pastors that we have identified, interviewed and deployed. In the future we have planned for a three way approach to enhance the culture and performance of stronger missional leadership:

1. Surround and encourage our mission planters or mission pastors who are already in the mission work with every support we can to assure their faithfulness and fruitfulness in the mission field.
2. Proactively engage and identify gifted mission pastors for the future works of mission. That is the collective work of the church body as a whole.
3. Provide all of our ordained leaders an annual missional leadership gathering opportunity. That gathering will have a motivational and theological aspect. This gathering is going to be in collaboration with the Bishop's office. February 2012 will be the first Missional leadership gathering.

#### International Missions Connections

The NALC works to be in evangelical and ecumenical connections with other church bodies in the US and around the world. So far leaders and pastors of the NALC, along with leaders of LCMC, LCC and others, have participated in the International Theological Conference held in Addis Ababa Ethiopia Feb. 2011.

The NALC encourages all of our congregations to have one domestic and one global partner congregation in their mission plan. Our missions office is prepared and is already doing the pairing of congregations. Therefore we have congregations who are connected to our mission congregations throughout USA. In order to move on and grow at the pace we are going, we are very eager and in need of mission partner congregations who would generously support mission congregations in their endeavors for growth. There are numerous congregations in the NALC who are related to Tanzania, Ethiopia, Germany, South Africa, Haiti, Russia, Ecuador, India and many other places in the world. We encourage congregations to consider these global connections as part of their outreach initiatives.

Our international mission facilitates and works in connection with world mission prayer league and other partners to sponsor and send out global missionaries. Our first missionary family is finishing their training to be placed in Ecuador. The second batch is in the works for Pakistan and Ethiopia. In 2011/12 the number of missionaries we send out will be increasing.

#### Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society

Making and mobilizing disciples for mission

*<sup>4</sup> In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy <sup>5</sup> because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, <sup>6</sup> being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. **Philippians 1:4-6 (NIV)***

Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society (ELMS) is a being launched to advance our commitment and dedication to the work of evangelical mission in partnership with one another. Through this partnership in the Gospel our Lord, who began this good among us, will carry it on to completion.

Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society (ELMS) is a membership organization. Individuals (lay and ordained), congregations and mission agencies can join the ELMS. ELMS strives and aims to engage and transform individual members of churches into active disciples and congregations into vital mission agents. ELMS works towards these goals through these four specific approaches:

1. Organizing and mobilize congregations, leaders and the laity for the sake of reaching the unreached with the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. Whatever we are unable to accomplish alone, we can do it together.
2. Mobilize the financial and human resources of the people of God for the sake of doing mission together.

3. Involving congregations, leaders and the laity in the actual work of evangelism and world mission through first-hand experience and direct involvement.
4. Creating a platform and central space where Lutherans of the similar mission conviction, confessions and doctrinal stand can work together across denominational boundaries for the sake of doing evangelical mission.

Now join us in this fertile and mission driven space called Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society.  
Together we can cross borders and carry out the great commission of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!!

Submitted with gratitude;  
The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Desta Buba  
Missions Director, North American Lutheran Church

## **Treasurer's Report**

As the NALC completes its first year of operation, I am pleased to report that our young church body is on solid financial footing. Benevolence from congregations and other donations have exceeded operating expenses. Our cash reserves are strong, buttressed by one extraordinary donation and much other generosity. We've launched two funds dedicated to our core priorities of mission and theological education. We give thanks to God for these gifts, and look forward to the future with anticipation.

The second page of this report summarizes the NALC's audited financial statements for 2010. During the four months between the constituting of the NALC and the end of 2010, expenditures were minimal, as NALC staff had not yet begun their service and many startup costs were still being covered by Lutheran CORE. Consequently, the NALC received operating donations of \$94,269 and generated expenses of only \$3,364 in that period.

At the end of 2010, the NALC received an extraordinary donation of \$1 million from Tom and Sandra Smith of Elderton, PA. From this donation, dedicated funds have been created for two of the NALC's core ministry priorities: (1) missions/evangelism and (2) theological education. Each fund was established with an initial balance of approximately \$400,000.

Over the past year, the NALC has grown much faster than was anticipated. Consequently, both income and expenditures in 2011 will substantially exceed the original budgeted amounts. For the first half of 2011, the NALC received donations and other income of \$319,339, and generated operating expenses of \$264,503. Importantly, however, that operating surplus was entirely generated in the first quarter; for the second quarter of 2011, donations were slightly less than operating expenses.

For the full year 2011, we now estimate that operating donations and other income will total approximately \$715,000, and that operating expenses will total approximately \$642,000.

For 2012, we are proposing a balanced operating budget with total income and total expenditures of approximately \$970,000. The budget includes funding for two additional senior staff positions: a full time Bishop, and a Ministry Director who will work with pastors in the colloquy process and pastors and congregations in the call process. We have also created budgets for the two dedicated funds, proposing 2012 missions expenditures of \$100,000 and theological education expenditures of \$68,000.

This report, the Treasurer's presentation at the Convocation, the 2012 budgets and the 2010 audited financials will shortly be posted on the NALC website for further review.

In His service,

Ryan M. Schwarz  
NALC Treasurer

**NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**Summary 2010 Financial Statements**

**Statement of Activities**

**Income**

Unrestricted Donations

Member Congregation Donations

Other Donations and Income

**Subtotal - Unrestricted Donations**

Restricted and Temporarily Restricted Donations

**Total Income**

**Expenses**

Mission and Evangelism

Administrative Expenses

**Total Expenses**

**Change in Net Assets**

**Audited  
2010**

\$73,172

\$21,097

**\$94,269**

\$1,007,257

**\$1,101,526**

\$3,257

\$107

**\$3,364**

**\$1,098,162**

**Balance Sheet**

**Assets**

Cash and Cash Equivalents

Due from Lutheran CORE

Prepaid Expenses

**Total Assets**

**Liabilities and Net Assets**

Liabilities

Due to Lutheran CORE

Total Liabilities

Net Assets

Unrestricted

Temporarily Restricted

Total Net Assets

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets**

\$78,065

\$1,020,097

\$4,898

**\$1,103,060**

\$4,898

\$4,898

\$94,162

\$1,004,000

\$1,098,162

**\$1,103,060**

NOTE: Complete Audited Financial Statements will be available on the NALC website.

## **The Candidacy Committee**

The Candidacy Committee of the NALC had its inaugural meeting in November 2010 in Columbus, Ohio. At this meeting committee members with Bishop Paull Spring outlined a process that would serve as the church's guide for seminarians, as candidates discern God's call to the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

The candidacy process includes the stages of entrance, endorsement for internship, internship in a ministry setting, then final approval for ordination. Throughout these stages the candidate will meet regularly with the committee, submit evaluations, essays on biblical & theological matters, along with reflections on pastoral ministry and the Christian church. References, criminal background checks and psychological evaluations are also required.

In March and June 2011, the committee met in Columbus with Bishop Spring and General Secretary John Bradosky to interview seminarians and approved the NALC's initial group of qualified candidates for ordained ministry. Our next meeting is scheduled for October 2011.

Currently, the Candidacy Committee is actively working with candidates from across the United States who come into this process in various stages of ministry formation: some already have M.Div. degrees, while others have completed internships, are currently in seminary or are prayerfully considering entrance into seminary.

We are blessed and delightfully overwhelmed by the number of qualified candidates seeking entrance into this process and ultimately ministry in the NALC. As a result, the committee agreed at our June meeting to expand from five to eight members so that we may more faithfully respond to candidacy inquiries.

The committee is also directing NALC candidates in non-Lutheran seminarians toward additional theological training that will assist them in gaining orthodox-confessional learning opportunities for Lutheran specific courses (i.e. Lutheran Confessions, Lutheran history and Lutheran theology). Furthermore, candidates in non-Lutheran seminaries are being assigned local NALC pastors who can serve as mentors during their formation for ministry.

Formation for ministry is a priority during the years of candidacy. The goal of this process is that each candidate will demonstrate an understanding of the unfolding formation process and his/her discernment of a possible call. Each candidate is provided with a list of selected resources to be used during this process of formation: The NALC document, Standards for Ministry, will be utilized and discussed throughout the formation process. Candidates will seek to live and serve in a way that is compliant with that document.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the committee

Rev. Ken Reed, Chairperson  
Rev. Rafe Allison  
Ms. Margie Kamm  
Rev. Scott Ness  
Rev. Norm Sulaica

## **COMMISSION ON THEOLOGY AND DOCTRINE**

The Commission on Theology and Doctrine is somewhat unique in that its membership is composed of representatives from the North American Lutheran Church and Lutheran CORE. Members from the North American Lutheran Church are: Robert Benne, Salem, Virginia; David Hahm, Dublin, Ohio; James Nestingen, St. Paul, Minnesota; Eric Riesen, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Amy Schifrin, Strawberry Point, Iowa; Henry Schulte, Boerne, Texas; Sue Tolton, Willow Grove, Pennsylvania; and Larry Yoder, Lincolnton, North Carolina. Members from Lutheran CORE are: Carl Braaten, Sun City West, Arizona; Stephen Hultgren, New York, New York; Stephen Paulson, St. Paul Minnesota; and Kenneth Sauer, Columbus, Ohio. Pastor Paul Uring, Lutheran CORE moderator, and Bishop Paull Spring of the North American Lutheran Church serve as co-chairs for the Commission.

Because of scheduling and other commitments, the Commission was only able to meet once over the past year. It is expected, however, that the pace of the Commission's activity will increase significantly during the year to come.

The executive council for the North American Lutheran Church referred to the Commission four items of concern: the development of a proposal for a single office of lay ministry, and consideration of statements on divorce, abortion, and women in ministry. In addition, the Commission received requests for statements on the interpretation of Scripture, mission and evangelism, and lay presidency at the Holy Communion.

This already heavy agenda was increased by a need to begin planning the 2012 Theological Conference and a draft statement on ecumenism for the North American Lutheran Church.

The Commission agreed to give priority to two issues: a proposal for one office for lay ministry and a paper on lay presidency at the Holy Communion. The Commission began plans for the 2012 Theological Conference.

The Commission reviewed the statement on ecumenism, as presented by the Committee on Ecumenical Relationships of the North American Lutheran Church. The Commission endorsed the statement, made several editorial changes, and submitted the statement to the executive council.

The Commission also reviewed the future of theological education in the North American Lutheran Church and in Lutheran CORE and recommended that a task force on theological education be appointed to study the matter and bring forward implementing recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,  
Paul Uring, Lutheran CORE  
Paull Spring, North American Lutheran Church

## **The COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

The Committee on Ministry met by conference call every other month throughout the past year. Members of the Committee were: Pastor Jeff Carpenter, Boerne, Texas; Ms. Luana Langford, Seattle, Washington; Mr. John Pleuss, Madison, Wisconsin; Pastor Dan Selbo, San Jose, California; and Ms. Marianne Yoder, Lincolnton, North Carolina, who also served as secretary. Bishop Paull Spring served as committee chair.

The Committee spent a considerable amount of time developing policies for the North American Lutheran Church: Standards for Ministry, a process for clergy mobility, and profiles for pastors and congregations in the calling process. All of these policies were approved by the executive council.

In addition, the committee gave attention to special ministries, ministries in non-congregational settings. The Rev. Tim White, LCMC, agreed to serve as the endorsing agent for North American Lutheran Church military chaplains. The Rev. Victor Kolch, Fort Wayne, Indiana, agreed to serve as endorsing agent for other chaplaincy ministries.

The original purpose of the committee was to assist the bishop in the calling process. The committee regularly reviewed the list of congregations seeking pastors and the list of pastors available for call. As the year progressed, it became obvious that the committee could not function very effectively in this responsibility. At the suggestion of Bishop Spring, the committee decided to put its work on hold and to ask the newly-elected executive council to determine whether the committee should be reconstituted and its purpose redesigned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Paull E. Spring,  
Committee Chair

# The Constitution Task Force

On August 27, 2010, at its founding Convocation, the NALC approved a “Provisional Constitution.” The “provisional” label reflected an understanding that the NALC would continue work on its Constitution during the year ahead.

The Executive Council understood this. Moreover, it understood that under Section 17.01 of the Provisional Constitution, it is responsible for proposing constitutional amendments for consideration by the Convocation. To assist it in fulfilling this responsibility, the Executive Council in November 2010 appointed a task force and directed the task force to report any proposed amendments to the Executive Council by early April 2011.

The task force first met on November 22, at which time it approved a plan for completing its work. Under that plan, the task force members – two pastors and three laymen from five different states – contributed their own perspectives. The task force also consulted with Bishop Spring, General Secretary Bradosky, and the Executive Council. And finally, understanding the importance of drafting amendments that reflect the will of the broader church body, the task force used email and a website posting to invite comments and proposals from all pastors, lay leaders, and congregations. (Approximately twenty persons or groups of persons submitted comments to the task force.)

At its April 7, 2011, meeting, the task force approved the recommended amendments reflected in the attached draft (Appendix A). The task force explains its proposed amendments in Appendix B. It also explains why it chose not to propose certain amendments that it considered.

The amendment process is governed by Article 17 of the Provisional Constitution. In order for any amendment to be considered by the 2011 Convocation, the Executive Council must “propose” it “no less than 90 days” before the Convocation. The Executive Council obviously will satisfy this obligation with respect to any amendment it approves at its regular April meeting.

To be approved by the Convocation, “an amendment shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates present and voting.”

To become effective, amendments approved by the Convocation must be ratified by the NALC’s congregations. Section 17.03 provides that amendments to some constitutional articles require ratification by two-thirds of all congregations (Articles 2-4, 6-8, and 17) and that amendments to other articles require ratification by only a simple majority (Articles 1, 5, and 9-16). Ratification occurs as soon as the required number of congregations have voted “yes.” At the end of twelve months, those that have failed to take any action “shall be deemed to have approved the amendment.” Applying this presumption, if the matter has not already been settled, a final determination is made regarding whether ratification has been successful.

Over time, the total number of congregations changes. However, a definitive count must be made to determine the number of votes required for ratification. The Provisional Constitution does not dictate the time at which the count should be made. However, the best practice seems to be to base ratification on the number of congregations belonging to the NALC as of the end of the Convocation that approved the amendments under consideration. The task force recommends that the Executive Council proceed accordingly.

**One very important additional note:** The NALC would benefit greatly if congregations were to complete the ratification process promptly, preferably within six months after the 2011 Convocation. If ratification is not completed until at or near the end of the twelve-month ratification period allowed under the Provisional Constitution, the Executive Council and Nominating Committee will face enormous challenges in preparing for the 2012 annual Convocation. They will not know until uncomfortably late

whether to proceed under the Provisional Constitution or instead to assume ratification of any amendments approved by the 2011 Convocation. To avoid such difficulties, **we urge the Bishop and Executive Council to use their influence to encourage congregations to vote on ratification as soon as possible after the 2011 Convocation.**

To assist the Executive Council, the task force has prepared draft language for a resolution (Appendix C) that the Executive Council could submit to the Convocation for approval of the proposed amendments. The task force is available to answer questions or to provide further information. Otherwise, the task force has discharged its mandate.

May God bless the ministry of the NALC.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Constitution Task Force  
Mr. James Gale, chair  
The Rev. Jay Johnson  
The Rev. Alan Knoke  
Mr. Branson Pethel  
Mr. Thomas Schied

# The Court of Adjudication

The Court of Adjudication respectfully presents this report of its work during the last year.

## I. Court Composition

In August 2010, the NALC's founding Convocation elected each of the Court's members (listed below) to a one-year "provisional" term. The 2011 Convocation will elect seven members to terms ranging in length from one to four years. Going forward, the Convocation will elect two members each year to four-year terms; except that every fourth year, the Convocation will elect just one member.

## II. Cases Handled

No cases were filed, considered, or decided in the last year.

## III. Setting the Groundwork for the Future – Establishing Procedural Rules

Under Section 15.04 of the Provisional Constitution, the Court is obligated to "draft rules of procedure sufficient to ensure fairness to all interested parties and to enable the Court to reach informed decisions." The Court has completed this task with respect to two of the three categories of cases assigned to the Court by Section 15.03 of the Provisional Constitution – (i) cases involving requests by NALC officials or institutions for "advisory" opinions regarding the meaning of the NALC's governing documents and (ii) cases involving disputes that turn on the interpretation of the NALC's governing documents.

The Court adopted a provisional procedural rule regarding the third type of case assigned to the Court by Section 15.03 – appeals in disciplinary cases. Under Section 14.05 of the Provisional Constitution, the Executive Council is to "develop and approve a process for discipline and appeal proceedings." The Executive Council's work on this task is still ongoing. Once it is complete, the Court will draft rules that are consistent with the NALC Constitution and with the process adopted by the Executive Council. The Court also has approved "administrative" rules governing its internal operations.

## IV. A Commitment to Access to The Court

With a few exceptions relating almost exclusively to disciplinary matters, the Court intends to make public the material related to its work. This will include papers filed by parties and all decisions made by the Court. The Court intends to use a page on the NALC web site as the portal into the Court's documents and operations. The process of establishing this page is ongoing.

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These are exciting times for the NALC and for American Lutheranism. The Court members give thanks to God for the opportunity to serve.

Respectfully submitted,  
Richard F. Currey, Esq.  
Jon Evans, Esq.  
James H. Gale, Esq.  
The Rev. Dr. Jeffray Greene  
The Rev. Dr. Ralph A. Kempinski  
Carolyn Nestingen, Esq.  
The Rev. Dr. Ron Warren

Date: June 10, 2011

# The Report of the Ecumenical and Inter-Lutheran Relations Committee

*“...that they may all be one...so that the world may believe...” John 17:20-21*

There are times in the life of the Church when it becomes necessary to stand for the truth of God’s Word, in spite of division that may result. This was the case with Martin Luther in the 1500’s, and this was the situation which gave birth to the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) in August, 2010. And yet, when such division occurs, it is important to continue to align ourselves with those who likewise hold to God’s Word that the world may believe. On behalf of the NALC, the Ecumenical and Inter-Lutheran Relations committee has been reaching out to other Christian denominations and Lutheran groups to affirm our desire for unity and co-operation in God’s Word of Truth with all who continue within the one, holy, catholic and apostolic tradition, and share our confessional commitments.

The provisional constitution of the NALC states:

*13.01 The North American Lutheran Church shall participate in inter-Lutheran, ecumenical, and inter-religious relationships as a part of its ministry and mission. These relationships may vary from one another in character on a case-by-case basis.*

Since the August 2010 inaugural convocation of the NALC, our committee met in Columbus, OH in Dec. 2010, followed by two phone conference call meetings in March and June 2011.

Our committee had three initial goals to address immediately. Our first was to have Bishop Spring draft a letter to be sent to select Christian bodies for the purpose of introducing the NALC, and to express our intention to be ecumenical in nature, desiring to be in conversation and cooperation with all those who would share our biblical and theological commitments. This letter was prepared and sent. Responses of encouragement and support were received.

Second, we wished to prepare a brief statement affirming our commitment to ecumenical and inter-Lutheran relations, to guide our committee, the newly organized NALC, and to make public our intention to continue within the long history of Lutheran work for unity in Christ. This proposed statement has been prepared, reviewed and revised by the NALC Commission on Theology, and the Executive Council, which is recommending it for adoption at this convocation.

Third, in conversation with a representative of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, it seemed useful to arrange a meeting in Rome with persons within the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, to introduce our new Lutheran body, to discuss the changed Lutheran landscape in North American, and to seek avenues for continuing co-operation and joint endeavor. Especially in the realm of human sexuality and marriage, we have much in common with the Roman Catholic Church, and the Pontifical Council is interested in being in communication with the NALC. It is worth noting that this common ground was the reason Bishop Spring was invited to sign a joint ecumenical and inter-religious statement on marriage which was prepared by the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops. A visit in Rome is scheduled for Sept. 29, 2011, with Bishop Spring, our newly elected bishop, and myself representing the NALC.

In addition to these primary goals, our committee has also been addressing the following:

- + The NALC has applied for membership within the Lutheran World Federation, which is pending.
- + We are in conversation with Lutheran World Relief, that we may fully participate in the work of this organization.

- + In addition to a number of representatives of the NALC visiting Ethiopia in Feb. 2011 for the mission conference of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, a joint statement of co-operation has been prepared by leaders of the NALC and the EECMY. Adoption of this statement is pending.
  - + A possible meeting between leaders of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the NALC has been discussed, and may take place within the next few months. The goal of such a meeting would be to begin a conversation between our two Lutheran bodies.
  - + Two meetings have taken place between leaders of the NALC, and Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ. The first was an informal meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in Feb., 2011, and the second, a more formal meeting in Minneapolis, MN, April 12-13, 2011. We are exploring how we can work together, strengthen the relationship between our two Lutheran bodies, and encourage communication and common mission on the local level. We are hoping for a third meeting in the coming months.
  - + We are in conversation with representatives of the Anglican Church in North America, and will be scheduling a joint meeting of our two ecumenical committees in fall of 2011. Conversations are focusing on the possibility of joint or shared theological education, the possibility of greater co-operation on the local level, and areas of common interest and endeavor.
  - + Bishop Spring has been in conversation with representatives of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North American, with several members of their clergy being present at this convocation. While this brief listing does not present all of the areas which are being addressed by the NALC Ecumenical and Inter-Lutheran Relations Committee, it does highlight topics of major concern and action.
- Presently serving on the committee are: Ms. Donnie Burgner, Ms. Susan Bushard, Pr. Jason Sigmon, Dr. Larry Yoder, Dr. Gemechu Olana (advisory), and Bishop Paull Spring. Many thanks to these persons for their commitment, time and energy.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pr. David M. Wendel, chair

## **Report of the Nominating Committee**

The 2011 Convocation of the North American Lutheran Church will call individuals to serve in all of the elected positions of the NALC. The Nominating Committee was mindful of the significant task of gathering the names of those who would be willing to serve our church body and guide our work together.

The 2011 Nominating Committee met by conference call monthly from January through May for the purpose of gathering nominations for the Office of Bishop, the Executive Council, and the Court of Adjudication.

The following persons were appointed to serve on this committee: Pr. David Baer, South Dakota; Mr. Chris Nevins, Texas; Ms. Rachel Sosebee, Ohio; Pr. Michael Tamorria, Maryland; Pr. Michael Tavella, Pennsylvania; Pr. Carl Haynes, Chair, North Carolina; and Bishop Paul Spring, ex officio, Pennsylvania.

The committee members worked to develop guidelines for nominations and forms to be completed by the congregation making the nomination and the person being nominated. A letter with this information was mailed to all NALC congregations requesting nominations from them. This information was also made available online on the NALC website.

After nominations were received for the Office of Bishop, biographical information on the nominees was sent to all congregations and pastors, in accordance with the requirement in the NALC constitution that this information be provided to NALC members 90 days before the Convocation.

A final letter was sent to NALC congregations and pastors announcing the names of those nominated for the Executive Council and the Court of Adjudication. This letter also announced a distribution of nominees by length of term to begin a system of staggered terms.

We are grateful for those who have made nominations and those who have been willing to serve. We are pleased that so many people have been willing to serve God through our church body. We thank God for all of them and pray that God will work through those who are elected to His glory and for the sake of the mission we share as the Body of Christ.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pr. Carl M. Haynes, Chair