



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL UPDATE

By Pastor Melinda H. Jones
Recording Secretary

The Executive Council of the North American Lutheran Church held its quarterly meeting via web-conference on Jan. 19-20.

Here are actions of the council and items of interest:

+ The Executive Council approved the second phase of management service between the NALC and Crow's Feet Consulting. Crow's Feet is a human resource agency. It will be working with the Executive Council to review and revise the policies and procedures in place for staffing, along with offering support for more efficient and effective working relationships and models.

+ Treasurer's report reflects a strong finish to 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of note, congregational support for local and global ministry increased. The NALC was able to end the year on a positive note, with offerings that fully supported our ministry and mission work.

+ The Executive Council is working with the Lutheran Week Planning Team to prepare for an in-person Mission Convocation to be held in Corpus Christi, Texas, in August. More details will be made known as decisions are made and finalized for the entire Lutheran Week schedule.

+ The Pastors' Conference will be held in-person in San Antonio, Texas, May 4-6. Registration will be available soon through the NALC website.

+ The Executive Council is in the discussion stage of considering a central denominational office. No decisions have been made at this time. As the discussion moves forward and direction is set, more information will follow.

+ The proposed amendments to the NALC Constitution approved by the 2020 Convocation are pending final ratification. The deadline for congregational voting is Feb. 8. Congregations are encouraged to send in the results of their ratification vote as soon as possible.

+ The Executive Council is considering a three-year Vision Appeal in support of the 2020 *Vision* component related to the financial stability of our denomination. As the campaign takes shape, more information will be sent to pastors and congregations.

+ A proposal for denominational restructuring is being developed. More information will be coming as the proposal moves forward and is finalized in the next few months.

+ The Executive Council approved memoranda of understanding between the North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS) and two possible future houses of study for the NALS system. The plan for the NALS includes the Seminary Center at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, and Houses of Study at locations across North America. A memorandum of understanding was approved with Sioux Falls Seminary in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. A separate memorandum of understanding was approved with Beeson Divinity School in

Continued on Page 3

FOLLOWING GOD'S STAR

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." — Matthew 2:1-2 NIV

There are several things that come to mind as I write this article. One, it is the first newsletter article for this new year. There is something about a new year that gives opportunity for each of us to look back on where we have been and to look forward to what is possible in the months to come.

Two, it comes during the time in the church year we call Epiphany. An epiphany is when something is seen or revealed for the first time; something we never saw before that we now see; something we never knew or understood that we do now. The story of the wise men reminds us of how they came to know and to see and to understand who Jesus is and what God had revealed to us about Himself in His Son.

Three, it is offered at a time in our world's history when it is easy for us to become discouraged. The political instability in our nations, the global pandemic that continues to rage, the civil unrest that seems to raise its ugly head in far too many unhelpful and unhealthy ways.

And, four, this article based upon the story of the wise men reminds us of God's never-ending desire and resolve to save the world in Jesus. In the face of wicked King Herod, a man hungry for power and ready to do anything to destroy the one born to be a king, God was faithful to His promise, clear in His voice, and ready to reveal Himself to anyone willing to trust.

"Following God's Star." It is obvious that the wise men did exactly that. They followed God's star. They followed the star God had given. And when they did, they had an epiphany. They came to see and to know and to understand something they had never been able to before.



FROM THE BISHOP

REV. DR. DAN SELBO
BISHOP

Now, we do not know too much about those wise men. They were well-educated, most likely. Maybe scientists? Maybe astronomers? Maybe they had studied many things? We do not know. What we do know is what they did. What we do know is the One they found. What we do know is that these wise men were wise.

One of the wisest men I ever knew was my grandfather, my dad's dad. He was a wise man. He knew a lot. He never went too far in school. He had no college, no seminary, no academic degrees following his name. But he was a wise man. He understood life. He understood what matters in life.

The wise men followed the star. It led them to Bethlehem. They did not know where it would lead, but they followed. They had no idea what they might find, or what it might mean for their lives, but they kept on searching until they found, and then they knew.

Let me ask you. What is it that made these wise men wise? Why is it that, 2000 years later, they are still remembered as they were? Were they wise because of what they knew and what they had learned? Or were they wise because of what they did and how they applied what they knew in their lives?

I have known many learned men over the years and many well-educated women. They were all smart. They all knew what they were doing. But not all of them were wise. Not all of them understood life.

Continued on Page 3

Continued from Page 2

Later in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus told a story about a man who had built his house on the rock, in contrast to one who had built his house on sand. When the rains came and the winds blew, the house on the rock stood strong, while the house on the sand fell apart.

Do you remember what Jesus said? He said the ones who hear His words and put them into practice are the wise ones in life. It is the ones who take what they have heard and respond to it and apply it in what they are doing whose houses will withstand the storms.

There are many storms from this past year we have been forced to weather. There are, undoubtedly, many storms in the forecast for the months ahead.

What is also in the forecast for our future are the fulfilled promises and the irrevocable claim and calling laid on our lives by the One who was born to us at Christmas, who was revealed to those wise men in an epiphany offered through a star, and who was willing to go to the cross, die for our sin and be raised to new life for our salvation.

I do not know what lies ahead for us, and where God is leading us in this coming year any more than you do. What I do know is that God knows what the future holds and that you and I have been called to follow wherever He leads. That is what the wise men did. They saw the star and they followed, and it led them to where God wanted them to go.

What has often struck me in this story is the fact that these wise men could not have been the only ones to see the star. Hundreds, if not thousands, of others must have seen it as well. But nothing happened. They did not do anything. They saw the star, knew that it was there, but nothing changed.

The same thing can happen in the Church. The same thing can happen in each of our lives. This is the first newsletter in this new year, a time in our life together when we remember the epiphany that led the wise men to Christ. It is also a time in our world's history when it is easy to become discouraged.

Thankfully, we know how the story ends and where and to Whom the star leads. His name is Jesus. He is the promise and the fulfillment of all of God's promises. And He has been given and revealed to us in God's Word, through the Holy Spirit, in and through the Sacraments, and in the Body — His Church.

There are many paths we can take in today's world, many voices we can listen to, many stars we can follow. Everyone is following something. But only one path leads to life. Only one star leads to a place that is wise.

And so, here is the challenge. I challenge you, in this new year, to set out on a journey that is led by God. Set out on a journey where you are no longer the one in control.

Get deep into your faith, whatever it takes. Commit to reading your Bible every day. Spend more time in prayer. Look for ways to share your faith with others. Focus more intently on trying to know and understand where God is leading you in life.

Whatever it takes, it does not matter. You decide. But do not just decide. Do it. Put it into practice. Pay attention. God has given us a star to follow. Do not be a fool.

Continued from Page 1

Birmingham, Alabama. These agreements are positive extensions of our North American Lutheran Seminary System.

+ The Executive Council approved funding for MapDash as a resource for NALC pastors and congregations. MapDash provides helpful data for congregations working on the expansion and focus of their mission, along with useful application for new mission starts. This resource will also be an asset for the new "Fresh Eyes for Mission" initiative being developed.

+ The Executive Council's next meeting is scheduled to be in-person on March 9-11 in Columbus, Ohio.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS

A denomination in which our international and ecumenical relationships strengthen our shared commitment to the Great Commission, the Great Commandments, and the Church catholic, and which enhance our partnership on the congregational level.

Goal: Review our current international and ecumenical relationships and clarify the goals for each of our partnership commitments by the end of 2021.

From its founding, the North American Lutheran Church has been committed to that work for which the Lord Jesus Christ prayed in His prayer on the night of His betrayal. In the introduction to *An Initial Statement on the Ecumenical and Inter-Lutheran Commitment of the North American Lutheran Church*, approved in 2011, we call to mind:

The Lord Jesus Christ prayed for His church, “that they may be one, even as you, Father, are in me and I in you” (John 17:21). For the apostle Paul the oneness of the Church as the Body of Christ is founded on the confession of “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:5-6). Such a vision commits Lutherans to work and pray for cooperation and unity among Christians and churches both within and beyond world Lutheranism.

The statement affirms:

We intend to engage in ecumenical and inter-Lutheran endeavors at the international, national, and local levels, in accordance with our commitment to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

The NALC will explore ecumenical relationships with those churches and communities whose teachings are compatible with its confessional beliefs.



For the sake of mission and ministry and out of fidelity to our Scriptural and Confessional principles, we encourage and support participation in national, regional and local ecumenical activities that are consistent with our confessional commitment, such as organized councils of ministers, informal collegial gatherings, or services such as those during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, as well as fellowships and agencies to reach the lost, feed the hungry, house the homeless, and serve our neighbors in need, spiritually and physically.

Through our ecumenical and inter-Lutheran relationships, the NALC wishes to be an expression of our oneness in Christ, the uniqueness of Christ as the Savior of the world, and the apostolic mission we share in his name.

Under the oversight of the Commission on Theology and Doctrine, the ecumenical and international relationships of the NALC have focused on the Great Commission and our unwavering commitment to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.

As we are now 10 years old, as an expression of the Lutheran reforming tradition, the 2020 Vision calls us to an appropriate and timely reflection upon all our current and potential relationships in light of our *Initial Statement* and the aim of the vision point to keep us focused on the Great Commission, the Great Commandments and the Church catholic, with particular attention to impacting the relationships of local congregations and mission districts.

Implementation of this vision point will have Pastor David Wendel as staff lead, in conversation with Bishop Selbo, the executive staff and the NALC Commission on Theology and Doctrine.

Continued on Page 5

TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATION

A communications strategy focused on forming identity, unity and testimony across our church body.

Goal: Identify, train and resource communication specialists in every mission district, ministry, committee and vision component of the NALC by August 2023.

In 2020, all of us found ourselves navigating the world of technology and communications in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Overnight, pastors needed to learn an entire field not covered in their seminary training! While this shift happened in the midst of calamity, it also gave us an opportunity to evaluate the ways we communicate with one another, share the Gospel in our communities and assess the tools we use in our congregations.

Ten years in, the North American Lutheran Church is also entering the next phase of ministry in a rapidly changing society. As a denomination, we have grown far beyond the structures set in place by those who planned this new church body. Just as large-scale structural proposals are in discussion for the next season of fruitful ministry, we also have an opportunity to be intentional about our structures for communication. With nearly 450 congregations and counting, gone are the days in which one person in the NALC office can effectively communicate the stories of God at work across the continent.

This vision component aims to really do two things: first, to improve our existing communication streams and processes (NALC News, websites, emails, social media, etc.), bringing various parties in the NALC together in a way that maximizes and unifies our work; and second, moves the focus on communicating how God is moving in the NALC to those who see it best — our pastors and congregations on the ground. To that end, our goal is to raise up communications specialists in every mission district. These are people who know the



congregations in the district well and are passionate about the work these congregations are doing. Our work at the continental level then becomes training and equipping these individuals and giving them the tools to share and inspire the rest of us.

As we continue to grow, our focus these next few years is to increase unity across our church body, lean into our identity and values as a confessional Lutheran church in 21st-century North America, and expand our ability to proclaim and share testimonies of both God at work and congregations engaging in mission in their communities. We'll provide the training and the tools. Can you help us identify individuals passionate about joining our work?

This vision component is led by the Rev. Andrew Ames Fuller, Maddie Benson and the NALC Communications Team. If you'd like to learn more, contact them at communications@thenalc.org or visit thenalc.org/vision.

Continued from Page 4

In short, this vision point is about "alignment and realignment." How are we doing with regard to current relationships, in light of our *Initial Statement*? How are we doing with regard to alignment of goals for each of our existing ecumenical and international relationships? What other relationships might be established or deepened to more fully live out our initial commitments and vision point #8? Ultimately, we will be asking how these relationships and activities may impact and involve mission districts and congregations locally.

This vision component is led by the Rev. Dr. David Wendel. If you'd like to learn more, contact them at dwendel@thenalc.org or visit thenalc.org/vision.

DAILY PRAYER AND BIBLE READING CALENDAR

Devoted to Prayer, a new daily prayer and Bible reading calendar for 2021-2022, is now available from the North American Lutheran Church.

The daily readings follow the two-year daily lectionary in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*.

A guide to praying the daily office — morning prayer, evening prayer and prayer at the close of day — and resources for ecumenical commemorations and festivals are included.

“After a challenging year in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been provided with a unique opportunity to revitalize the ancient practice of daily prayer and Scripture reading in our homes,” said the Rev. Andrew Ames Fuller, NALC director of communication.

“While the *Reading the Word of God* three-year lectionary provided a much-needed and refreshing calendar for our congregations to engage in Scripture reading, this calendar includes a missing component of daily devotion: prayer,” he added. “This guide is to provide the average layperson and pastor with the simple tools for sorting through the busyness of their lives and reclaiming an act of daily discipleship with their Lord.”

“Our hope is that this calendar and guide will provide new life for congregations learning and re-learning to pray in the midst of a difficult and changing world,” Deacon Ames Fuller said.

You can learn more and download the calendar at thenalc.org/devoted-to-prayer.

NALC Reads
Critical Conversations
Engaging Theology and Culture

**THE MEANING OF
PROTESTANT
THEOLOGY**
by Philip Cary

5 Sessions on Zoom | Fourth Tuesday starting Jan 26
Register online at thenalc.org/nalsreads

ABOUT THE BOOK

The Meaning of Protestant Theology
Luther, Augustine,
and the Gospel That Gives Us
CHRIST
PHILLIP CARY

Philip Cary's *The Meaning of Protestant Theology* opens by asking "Why Protestantism?" (as opposed to Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, or post-Christian spirituality). The author's aim is to show how Martin Luther conceived the Gospel as "the word of God that gives us Christ" — and so Protestantism's gift to the whole Church. Another way to look at it might be this. Now more than ever, the Church and to the world need the insight — offered especially by the Lutheran tradition — that God, Christ, Spirit, Word, Sacraments, Kingdom are all relentlessly *external*, that they come from outside us to do what they do in us, and that only in this way can they deliver and transform us. *The Meaning of Protestant Theology* develops that insight rigorously and accessibly.

ABOUT THE FACILITATOR

Maurice Lee is the pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Santa Barbara, California, a lecturer in theology for the North American Lutheran Seminary, and a member of the NALC's Commission on Theology and Doctrine. He was educated at Wheaton College, the California Institute of Technology, Fuller Theological Seminary, and Yale University, and did postdoctoral work at Harvard University and taught at Westmont College before becoming involved with the NALC. He lives with his family in Lompoc, California.

SMALL AND RURAL MINISTRY: A FUTURE OF HOPE

By Pastor Brad Hales

Whether located in towns, farmlands or out on the prairie, the North American Lutheran Church's mainstay is small and rural congregations.

While other faith communities look for ways to close and minimize these churches, the NALC values these parishes as they continue to seek avenues to enhance ministry and make disciples for Jesus. Like all other congregations, small and rural missions face both challenges and opportunities.

Small and rural churches deal with dwindling memberships, aging parishioners, lack of finances, older buildings, conflict, fewer resources and memories of the past. While these challenges are real, they cannot thwart the resilience of these parishes and the opportunities available to them.

Too often in the church, we are asking the wrong question. Instead of asking, "What do we need to *bring in* to do ministry?" We should be asking, "What has God already blessed us with which to do ministry?"

The Holy Spirit continues to provide the small and rural church with the talents and abilities of its people to make Christ known in their communities.

Sadly, many small and rural churches feel "less than" their larger counterparts. This is due to a lack of programming, size and staff. The worst thing that a congregation can do is compare itself with another. Every church is different and has a unique opportunity to share Christ and His saving love.

What are some of the advantages of a small and rural congregation?

Relationships: In towns and villages, relationships are paramount. It is in these personal relationships where neighbors help others and Christ can be



shared. A smaller church is a natural place for these bonds to be nurtured and deepened. These relationships assist in developing and maturing discipleship.

Aging: While many might conclude that an "aging church is a dying church," they are missing the mark. While a majority of small and rural churches have older members, this should be recognized as an asset. Ministry and evangelistic efforts can be centered around this age group. Also, bringing older adults, teens, and younger children together in inter-generational ministry can enhance discipleship growth.

Participation: If a smaller congregation is going to prosper, then many will have to be involved in ministry. This is the beauty of this size church. The talents of the members are needed for service, outreach and to keep the parish going.

Flexibility: While rural and village congregations may not be known for flexibility and nimbleness, they are. Smaller churches can respond more quickly to adapt and re-tool to changing situations in the communities that they serve. These advantages and others show why the small and rural congregation is the "backbone" of the Christian church in North America.

Continued on Page 8

Realizing their value and importance in sharing faith, the missions office of the North American Lutheran Church, specifically the NALC Renewal Team, has developed an online course entitled, “Small and Rural Church Ministry.” This comprehensive learning module is structured around the following components:

- + Small Church Management
- + Struggles
- + Importance of Relationships
- + Gift of Aging and Inter-generational Ministry
- + Discipleship
- + Equipping
- + Outreach and Evangelism
- + Attitudes

+ Technology and Digital Ministry

This course is easy to use and is recommended for pastors, church members, leadership teams and others interested in strengthening small and rural ministry.

We urge you to consider embarking on this continuing education journey and participating in an affirming teaching on ministry in towns and rural areas. This course is free to all NALC members. To access this course or for more information, please visit thenalc.org/smallandruralcourse.

While some may see the small town and rural church in a spiral of decline, clinging to former days, we see it with a “future of hope.” God is still using these congregations to build relationships, serve and make disciples for Christ. As these congregations continue to be the “bread and butter” and majority of the NALC, let them be strengthened and renewed to witness to Jesus.

Pastor Brad Hales is the NALC’s director of renewal ministries. You may contact him at bhales@thenalc.org.



ORDINATION

Ray Zhu was ordained on Jan. 10 at Chinese Lutheran Church of Honolulu, Hawaii, where he is called to serve as pastor.

CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL REPORTS

Congregational leaders and pastors are reminded to complete their annual reports to the NALC by Feb. 15.

Information for completing the annual congregational reports for 2020 was sent to all pastors and congregations in mid-January.

Information gleaned from the reports is very helpful for the NALC’s long-range planning and for how best to support congregations in their ministries.

It will work best to print and answer all the questions by hand before you begin filling in the online form.

You can download the preview version at thenalc.org/congregationalreport.

HOPE IN THE MIDST OF DECLINE

More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. — Romans 5:3-5 RSV

I was in conversation recently with a lay leader in a congregation which has been in decline for decades and is now one of the first willing to engage in our “Fresh Eyes for Mission Summit” aimed at renewal, restoration and revitalization. I asked him if he could point to one thing which was the major cause of the congregation’s current reality and his reply was insightful. He said, “I guess we became too accepting of the decline.”

Studies have shown that worship attendance and involvement in church life has been in decline for decades. We live in an increasingly secular culture which no longer values faith, Christian teaching and morals, and participation in the community of Christian believers.

I have written on this decline in previous “Ministry Matters” articles, with supporting data. But we don’t need to see the data — it’s all around us in the Church. Even the largest, most vibrant, most engaging NALC congregations see a decline in membership, worship attendance and involvement. As this is true in mainline, as well as evangelical, Christianity, it is true in the NALC — in the United States and in Canada.

Secularism and Satan want to squeeze Christianity and belief in Christ out of the public square altogether, and then, want to squeeze faith out of believers, as well!

Commentators are predicting that the pandemic has pushed this process of secularization ahead by at least 10 to 25 years by forced shut-downs and restrictions on churches and congregational worship.

Carey Nieuwhof, a pastor and writer in Ontario, reports that churches reopening are seeing 10 to 40



MINISTRY MATTERS

REV. DR. DAVID WENDEL
ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP
FOR MINISTRY AND ECUMENISM

percent of their pre-COVID-19 attendance. After an initial surge in online worship “attendance” following Easter 2020, attendance has declined and current in-person and online attendance is only higher than pre-COVID-19 attendance in 18 percent of congregations. This means online and in-person attendance in congregations is flat or declining in 82 percent of congregations. These figures come from the “ChurchPulse Weekly” podcast which provides updates from all Barna research and data.

There are two responses possible, as I see it: accept the decline or don’t accept the decline!

To accept the decline in Christianity means we don’t believe in the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection to transform and enliven His Church, like the valley of dry bones suddenly filled with the very breath of God (Ezekiel 37:1-14).

To accept the decline means our congregations will strive to maintain until the last body is buried or the last dollar is spent and the doors are closed in defeat. Some of our congregations are on this path and are already functioning as if this is inevitable.

To reject the decline is to embrace the words of St. Paul, that “*we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.*”

Continued on Page 10

To reject the decline is to believe in the power of God for transformation, trusting and rejoicing that in spite of suffering, or even through suffering, God leads us finally to hope — and hope which will not disappoint us, because God is continually pouring His love into our hearts *through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us!*

So let's not accept the decline! God is continually pouring His love into our hearts, through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us! The evil one wants us to accept the decline and surely is using the pandemic to further drive us into despair, fear and decline, hoping we will more readily accept it. To reject the decline is to reject Satan and the increasing secularization which is infecting our culture, church and lives.

How can we reject the decline?

Embrace the hope of the Gospel! Rejoice in the midst of our current realities, knowing that God is in control, Christ is Lord of His Church and we have been given the Holy Spirit!

Let's make prayer for the Holy Spirit a regular part of our personal and community prayer — for it is through the indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit that our congregations will be renewed and energized!

Let's focus on God's means of grace showered upon us in Word and Sacrament! Let's make the Word of God and the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion our primary means for creating and sustaining our faith. And let's be fervent in inviting others to Christ in our midst — the Word become flesh to dwell among us.

Yes, there may still be restrictions affecting our worshiping communities, but let's keep preaching the Word of God, in person and online, and let's make the Sacrament available to small groups in churches, families in their homes through pastoral visits, parking lot services and any and every opportunity we get to feed the sheep!

Let's commit ourselves to being and becoming healthy congregations. The pandemic and long-term decline have caused many of our congregations to be unhealthy and dysfunctional. Let's be honest about that. Decline increases when there is in-fighting, blaming, criticism and nit-picking. No one pastor or lay leader causes decline, just as no one pastor or lay leader will "save" a congregation.

It takes the whole, healthy Body of Christ in a congregation working together in all its parts, to bring about renewal and restoration. Now is the time, as we are moving out of the pandemic, to commit ourselves as congregations to healthy patterns of living, ministering and relating to one another for the sake of our local community and the world.

Finally, let's become pastors and congregations full of joy, hope, life and peace. Decline robs us of energy and enthusiasm. Decline causes us to feel, "what's the use?" Decline creates anxiety and tension for the future. We have God's love and His Holy Spirit! What more do we need to be the people of God?

Pastor David Wendel is the assistant to the bishop for ministry and ecumenism. You may contact him at dwendel@thenalc.org.

NALC LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

From Ashes to Easter, an NALC Lenten devotional booklet, will be available soon. The devotions are being written by the NALC executive staff.

The devotions will be available in a variety of formats: downloadable for distribution in congregations or printing at home, digitally for e-readers, on Facebook in a video format and more.

You will be able to access all formats of the devotions from the NALC website.

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

By Laurie Pecuch

Welcome to 2021! Hopefully, you have remained healthy through the holidays. The two of us are doing well and looking forward to some exciting ministry in 2021.

1. St. John Lutheran Church in Boerne, Texas, is looking to hire a full-time (with benefits) director of youth and family ministries. The staff member will work primarily on the faith formation of youth in Grades 6-12. Interested parties may contact Matthew Olson at matt@stjohnlutheran.com.

2. Monthly webinars continue on Zoom. The next webinar is Tuesday, Feb. 9, at 2 p.m. ET. The topic is Ephesians and Philippians. Zoom ID: 87266339131. Passcode: 909666.



3. Looking to move more toward an outcome-based or inter-generational ministry? Consider contacting us in 2021. We "Go-to-Meeting" and "Zoom" all the time!

4. Need resources or ideas? Contact us or visit faithwebbing.com or get connected with the NALC Youthworkers page on Facebook.

Stay Warm! (Depending on where you are.)

Laurie Pecuch serves the NALC as a youth ministry coach. You may contact her at families@thenalc.org.

June 7-11, 2021 InterTerm Course



Confessing Christ Today

What Does it Mean to be Christ Centered in the 21st Century?

with Dr. David Luy



An ATS accredited course | Ideal for NALC Candidates
Followed by the NALC Seminarian Retreat June 11-12
More info at thenals.org

THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE TO ADDRESS CHAOS AND DIVISION

“Is It Really Black & White? Gospel in the face of chaos and division” is the theme of the NALC Atlantic Mission Region Theological Conference to be held online on Thursday, Feb. 11. The conference is scheduled to run from noon to 3 p.m. ET.

Presenters for the conference are the Rev. Dr. Victor J. Belton, mission facilitator for the state of Georgia for the Florida-Georgia District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and the Rev. Dr. Maurice Lee, pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in

Santa Barbara, California, and a lecturer in theology for the North American Lutheran Seminary.

The Rev. K. Craig Moorman of River’s Edge Ministries in Mt. Airy, Maryland, will be the moderator for this important and timely conversation.

Registration is open to all pastors and members. To register go to thenalc.org/atlantictheoconference2021. For more information go to atlantic-nalc.org.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Bishop

The Rev. Dr. Daniel W. Selbo
San Jose, California
dselbo@thenalc.org

General Secretary

The Rev. Mark C. Chavez
Landisville, Pennsylvania
mchavez@thenalc.org

Assistant to the Bishop for Missions

The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba
Atlanta, Georgia
gbuba@thenalc.org

Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry & Ecumenism

The Rev. Dr. David Wendel
Jacksonville, Florida
dwendel@thenalc.org

Assistant to the Bishop for Domestic Mission & Discipleship

The Rev. Phillip Gagnon
St. Albert, Alberta
pgagnon@thenalc.org

Let's keep in touch

The Rev. Dr. David J. Baer, *editor*
Whitewood, South Dakota
news@thenalc.org

Director of Communications

The Rev. Andrew S. Ames Fuller (ACNA)
Ambridge, Pennsylvania
aamesfuller@thenalc.org

President, North American Lutheran Seminary

The Rev. Dr. Eric Riesen
Ashland, Ohio & Ambridge, Pennsylvania
eriesen@thenals.org

Director for Aging Ministry & Congregational Renewal

The Rev. Brad Hales
Culpeper, Virginia
bhales@thenalc.org

Disaster Response Coordinator

Mary Bates
Caldwell, Ohio
disasterresponse@thenalc.org

North American Lutheran Church

2655 Innsbruck Drive, Suite A
New Brighton, MN 55112-9304
+1-651-633-6004

Please copy and share this newsletter widely.