



# 2022 MISSION CONVOCATION TO MEET ONLINE ON AUG. 5

The 2022 Mission Convocation of the North American Lutheran Church will meet online from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. ET on Friday, Aug. 5.

The meeting will be held over Zoom. Delegates will be able to vote and to join in discussion using their computer, tablet or phone.

The meeting is being held online as part of the transition to holding convocations every other year.

The 2022 NALC Mission Convocation will elect one lay person and one pastor to the NALC Executive Council and two members of the Court of Adjudication — all to three-year terms.

The convocation will also elect three members of the Board of Regents of the North American Lutheran Seminary to five-year terms.

The term lengths — three years instead of four for Executive Council and Court of Adjudication and five years instead of six for the Board of Regents — were changed as a part of the NALC's transition to having in-person convocations every other year.

The convocation will hear financial reports and consider a proposed \$3.56 million budget for 2023. The Executive Council is proposing a unified budget. The 2023 budget will combine the operating budget with the budgets of the church's designated funds — the Theological Education Fund (which includes the North American Lutheran Seminary), Great Commission Fund and Disaster Response Fund.



***Bishop Dan Selbo leading the 2020 NALC Mission Convocation — the last convocation to be held online.***

NALC leaders will host an online discussion forum on the treasurer's report and proposed 2023 budget at 8 p.m. ET on Thursday, July 28, to present the new budget and provide an opportunity for delegates to ask questions prior to the convocation.

Dr. David Luy, the newly appointed associate professor of systematic theology for the North American Lutheran Seminary, will be the featured devotional leader for the convocation.

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# NOMINATIONS ANNOUNCED FOR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The Nominating Committee of the North American Lutheran Church has announced the names of three lay people and five pastors who have been nominated to serve on the NALC Executive Council.

The 2022 NALC Mission Convocation will elect one lay person and one pastor to the NALC Executive Council to three-year terms.

The nominees for the lay position are Joshua Corey of Buena Vista, Pennsylvania, a member of St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Jerry Roehr of Winnipeg, Manitoba, a member of St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Winnipeg; and Dr. Michael Shasberger of Roanoke, Virginia, a member of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Santa Barbara, California.

The nominees for the ordained minister position are the Rev. Tony Ede of First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Manchester, Iowa; the Rev. Dr. Franklin J. Gore of Epiphany Lutheran Church in Pensacola, Florida; the Rev. William Hartfelder of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Westerville, Ohio; the Rev. Theresa A. Jacobson of Grace Lutheran Church in Thornville, Ohio; and the Rev. Christopher Porter of Lebanon Lutheran Church in Lebanon Church, Virginia.

The Executive Council functions as the board of directors for the NALC, providing leadership for the church between annual convocations. Biographical information on the nominees is available online at [lutheranweek.com/nominees](https://lutheranweek.com/nominees).



***Joshua Corey***



***Jerry Roehr***



***Michael Shasberger***



***Tony Ede***



***Franklin Gore***



***William Hartfelder***



***Theresa Jacobson***



***Christopher Porter***



# NOMINATIONS ANNOUNCED FOR COURT OF ADJUDICATION

The Nominating Committee of the North American Lutheran Church has announced the names of four pastors who have been nominated to serve on the NALC Court of Adjudication.

The 2022 NALC Mission Convocation, to be held online on Friday, Aug. 5, will elect two members of the Court of Adjudication to three-year terms.

The Rev. Dr. George E. Black of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Auburn, California; the Rev. John Moffett of Trinity Lutheran Church in Ashland, Ohio; the Rev. Ronald Hoyum of Port Madison Lutheran Church on Bainbridge Island, Washington; and the Rev. Dr. David E. Schafer of Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church in Waterville, Iowa.

The Court of Adjudication hears appeals from disciplinary decisions; resolves questions of interpretation of NALC governing documents; and decides claims that a person or entity has violated these governing documents. Both pastors and lay members may be elected to the Court of Adjudication.

Biographical information on the nominees is available online at [lutheranweek.com/nominees](https://lutheranweek.com/nominees).



**George Black**



**Ronald Hoyum**



**John Moffett**



**David Schafer**

## CONVOCAION

*Continued from Page 1*

Bishop Dan Selbo will present a report to the convocation.

There will also be an update on “Today, Tomorrow and Forever” — the fundraising appeal component of the 2020 Vision.

Registration fee for delegates is \$25. There is no charge for visitors.

To register, review reports or for more information on the convocation go to [lutheranweek.com](https://lutheranweek.com).

The convocation will be live streamed on Facebook to enable those who are not delegates to observe the meeting. There will be link to the live stream at [lutheranweek.com](https://lutheranweek.com).

The next in-person convocation will be Aug. 9-11, 2023, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The other events of Lutheran Week — including the Braaten-Benne Lectures in Theology and Women of the NALC gathering — are also planned for 2023.

# NOMINATIONS ANNOUNCED FOR NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY BOARD OF REGENTS

The Nominating Committee of the North American Lutheran Church has announced the names of four people who have been nominated to serve on the Board of Regents of the North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS).

The 2022 NALC Mission Convocation, to be held online on Friday, Aug. 5, will elect three members of the NALS Board of Regents to five-year terms.

Nominees for the Board of Regents are Lynnae Douglas of Emmanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Export, Pennsylvania; Richard Jansak of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Gastonia, North Carolina; the Rev. Dr. Stephane Kalonji of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Rosenberg, Texas; and Roger Weyersberg of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Owosso, Michigan.

The Board of Regents is made up of nine members (clergy or lay), the bishop and the seminary president. Its chief responsibilities are to provide oversight, supervision and direction for the NALS Network and president, including fiscal plans, new programs and initiatives, resolution of disputes and raising funds.

Biographical information on the nominees is available online at [lutheranweek.com/nominees](https://lutheranweek.com/nominees).

You can learn more about the NALS at [thenals.org](https://thenals.org).



*Lynnae Douglas*



*Richard Jansak*



*Stephane Kalonji*



*Roger Weyersberg*

## LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

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NORTH AMERICAN  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH

*Please copy and share this newsletter widely.*



# MISSION HIGHLIGHT: CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

**By Pastor Amy Little**  
*NALC General Secretary*

In March, I had the wonderful opportunity to visit with Pastor Pedro Portillo of Dallas, Texas. Pastor Portillo's ministry is not confined to four walls in a physical building. Instead, his is an itinerant mission to the Spanish-speaking communities in and around the Dallas area. His only funding at the time of our visit, was from an Airbnb in El Salvador, his home country.

As we drove along the busy highways of Dallas headed to his nephew's congregation in Fort Worth, Pastor Portillo chatted excitedly about ways in which he reaches an under-served population of Christians.

"The people work two jobs to make ends meet. They don't have weekends off to attend the local church," mostly which he indicated were Roman Catholic. "They don't care if I'm not Catholic, they know I'm a Lutheran pastor. They only want to know that someone cares."

He described how families will ask for a weekend off of work, months in advance, as they prepare for his arrival to preside over baptisms, weddings and quinceañeras. (A quinceañera is a traditional and particularly joyous celebration of a girl's 15th birthday. It recognizes her transition from childhood to adulthood.)

Pastor Portillo explained to me that families all chip in funds to make these events possible for the family of the girl. Many times there are multiple quinceañeras held at the same time. The entire community gathers together to celebrate.

What is most interesting is that these ceremonies, which begin with a worship service and Holy Communion, also serve as an Affirmation of Baptism. Families gather around the Lord's Supper, pray and give thanks to God for their family, community and blessings. The young people confess their faith and are confirmed. Pastor Pedro says he is happy to do this



**Pastor Pedro Portillo**

kind of ministry because he is able to reach so many people, "up to 1,000 every weekend."

Pastor Portillo does it all! He is the preacher, presider and musician. He comes with his guitar and leads people in worship. Once or twice a month he shows up at various house churches that gather in the Dallas area.

During the pandemic he was very busy going to different homes to lead worship and teach. "They trust me," he said humbly. He hears their confessions and seeks to overcome the barriers that are set in place by the church that prevent access to the sacraments. "The Catholic Church expects them to be in worship every Sunday. If they are not, they cannot receive the sacraments," he explained. Pastor Portillo gives them Jesus, and he has no intention of stopping.

Since our visit together, the North American Lutheran Church has granted Pastor Portillo a mission grant to continue his work.

# THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

On June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) overruled the decisions of *Roe v. Wade* (1973) and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992) by ruling that the Constitution of the United States does not confer the right to abortion. The majority opinion held that abortion was not a protected right under the Constitution and returned the decision regarding abortion regulations to the states.

This landmark decision, which overturned prior Court decisions and precedent, was not favorably received by all.

On the religious front, the voices were anything but united, as were the conclusions and defenses offered.

The decision was described by many as a victory for the unborn and a first step toward a return to Judeo-Christian morals. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Anglican Church in North America and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod were all strongly in favor.

At the same time, other Christian denominations and religious groups opposed the decision, arguing that it turned back the clock on women's freedom and was a step in the wrong direction away from social progress and justice.

On the political front it was no different. Leading Republican politicians praised the decision, while many of their Democratic counterparts opposed it. A wide range of protests have taken place throughout the United States, as have many rallies in favor of the Court's ruling.

The American public is divided, as are many others from around the world who are watching and responding to what has become a new chapter in the ongoing fight in the United States over when life begins and who has the right to decide.

I am thankful for the courage and wisdom of our appointed Justices to overturn a decision that was



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## FROM THE BISHOP

REV. DR. DAN SELBO  
BISHOP

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contrary to the United States' founding documents and that resulted in the death of countless millions of unborn children in the past five decades.

I am grateful for the work of the many who have opposed the *Roe v. Wade* decision, who have tirelessly worked for it to be overturned, and who, in the process, have served as a voice for the unborn who have no voice.

I am also proud of the position we have taken in the North American Lutheran Church against the abortion practices of the United States and Canada and in favor of human life at all stages.

At the same time, I am deeply concerned that our nation, if not our nations in North America, will continue to struggle and be divided as long as they fail to accept and be held accountable to the only Word and Authority that counts.

I am also concerned that the recent SCOTUS decision might lead many, even in the Church, to the conclusion that, either the fight for life is now over or that the primary battle to be fought is limited to the abortion question itself. Nothing could be further from the truth on either count.

The Bible is clear in its teaching regarding the sanctity of human life. Created in the image of God, the life of every man, woman and child has eternal value. The only One who has the right and the authority to end the life of a yet-to-be-born child — let alone the life of an elderly and aging person, and any other person in between — is the One who

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formed and fashioned it in its mother's womb and who has prepared for it an eternal place in the Father's house.

The NALC, since its inception, has unapologetically taken a public stand in favor of life from conception to natural death.

At its Constituting Convocation in 2010, a resolution was presented that called for the preparation of a statement on abortion. The convocation referred the matter to the Executive Council, which, in turn, referred it to the Joint Commission on Theology and Doctrine of the NALC and Lutheran CORE.

The commission, after studying the matter, wrote and adopted "The Lord is with You: A Word of Counsel to the Church on the Sanctity of Nascent Life" in 2012. The Executive Council and Bishop John Bradosky received this document, approved its contents, and commended it to the church as an educational and theological resource. This document, available on the NALC website, continues to provide a biblically based word of counsel to the church.

Similarly, the NALC's Commission on Theology and Doctrine has offered support for an essay written by Dr. Robert Benne entitled "Against Physician-Assisted Suicide." The essay is also on our website and is offered as a study resource for congregations, pastors and members.

As followers of Jesus, if our witness is going to have any positive and lasting impact in changing the course of our nations and their people, it needs to be aligned with what God has said to us in His Word, consistent in how we speak to life questions on every front, and ready to offer a word of forgiveness and hope to all who place their trust in Jesus Christ.

Our witness needs to be voiced and spoken in love — not with harsh and condemning words and not with lines drawn so straight and absolute that there is no room for forgiveness and no chance for a second chance. That type of witness only serves to deepen the divide that already exists. Our witness needs to be spoken in love and with grace and with a

recognition that all of our lives come up short and that we all need a Savior, every one of us.

It also needs to be backed, when it comes to the question of abortion, by actions that support those who have made the decision to continue the pregnancy and give birth. Whether working with local adoption and foster home placement agencies, or simply supporting those who need help in raising their new child, the Church's witness in word must always be backed by action in deed. Our calling in Christ requires us to be faithful to both.

Ultimately, the future of any nation that loses sight of the sanctity of life and of how all people, from the time they are conceived until that day when they breathe their last earthly breath, is tenuous at best. Created in the image of God, no one has the right to bring a life to an end.

Similarly, the future of any church body that loses sight of its need for forgiveness and its calling to offer a word of hope and assurance to all who confess their sin and reach out for help — and to then back that word with actions and commitments consistent with its confession — is short-lived. Saved and redeemed by the blood of Jesus, our only hope for life and salvation is in Him.

As Christians, we know the Author of life and we know the Author's will. And He has called us, as a denomination, as faith communities and as individual followers of Jesus Christ to speak a word of love and forgiveness and grace, supported by our actions, that point the world to Him.

Thanks be to God for the life He has given to us and for the eternal life that is ours in His Son, Jesus Christ!

Bishop Dan

***You may read statements of the NALC Commission on Theology and Doctrine and other NALC statements at [thenalc.org/nalc-statements](http://thenalc.org/nalc-statements).***

***A statement from NALC Life Ministries on the Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization decision and the reversal of Roe v. Wade is printed on Page 8.***

# NALC LIFE MINISTRIES' STATEMENT ON U.S. SUPREME COURT DECISION

**A statement from NALC Life Ministries on the Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization decision and the reversal of Roe v. Wade (1973):**

We rejoice that our Supreme Court has revealed the truth: that the Constitution never created a right to end unborn lives in the womb.

We rejoice in the hundreds of thousands of unborn children that will be saved every year.

We rejoice in our God who loves all human life — a Lord who knit us together in our mother's womb (Psalm 139).

We rejoice in God's forgiveness and consolation, offered to everyone by Jesus on the cross, not just over the sin of abortion, but over any sin!

We even rejoice in the real work that is still ahead of us, which is to change the hearts and minds of others to understand that abortion is not "women's health care" or "women's rights" but is an evil that needs to be opposed.

And so, as disciples of Jesus, we look forward in joy. We look ahead to the fulfillment we will experience as we continue to support mothers and fathers facing unexpected pregnancies — not in judgment, but with understanding, compassion, love and material support.

Indeed, we see great hope and joy in the future — increasing our support for local pregnancy centers, sharing the Gospel joyfully, and above all, serving others as Jesus commands — in love!



*Some of the NALC participants in the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., on January 21, 2022, pose in front of the Supreme Court building.*

*This statement was written by the Rev. Dr. Dennis Di Mauro for the NALC Life Ministries team.*

**NALC Life Ministries team members are:**

- + The Rev. Mark Chavez
- + The Rev. Dr. Dennis Di Mauro — Treasurer
- + Ms. Rebecka V.A. Frontz — Chairperson
- + The Rev. Melinda Jones
- + The Rev. Scott Licht
- + The Rev. Steve Shipman

*You can learn more about NALC Life Ministries at [thenalc.org/lifeministries](https://thenalc.org/lifeministries).*

*A message from NALC Bishop Dan Selbo on the sanctity of human life is printed on Pages 6-7.*



# UPDATE ON NALC OFFICE IN TEXAS

**By Pastor Amy Little**  
NALC General Secretary

We are making slow but steady progress on establishing the continental office for the North American Lutheran Church in the Dallas-Fort Worth area of Texas.

We have rented a small office space (one desk!) at a work-share place in Grapevine, Texas, called Venture X. You can see some photos of the location at [venturex.com/locations/grapevine-dfw-airport-north](https://venturex.com/locations/grapevine-dfw-airport-north).

We continue to seek a permanent location.

In September we will welcome Pastor Susan Fox to our NALC staff in Texas as office administrator. Pastor Fox is currently serving First Lutheran Church in Ridgway, Pennsylvania.

We are still looking for a missions specialist and communications specialist for our Texas team. If you are interested in applying for the positions, please contact me.

This is all part of the NALC's 2020 Vision. Remember it's not about the year 2020, it's about a clear vision from God.

Phone calls and mail will still go to our Minnesota office for the near future.



**Susan Fox**

We will let everyone know when that changes.

## CONGREGATIONS JOINING NALC IN 2022

The following congregations have joined the North American Lutheran Church thus far in 2022:

St. John Lutheran Church, Creston, Illinois  
St. John Lutheran Church Hubbells, Sunman, Indiana  
Bethany Lutheran Church, LaPorte, Indiana  
Reformation Lutheran Church, Middlebury, Indiana  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Great Bend, Kansas  
Joy Lutheran Church, Escanaba, Michigan  
West County Lutheran Church, Manchester, Missouri  
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Newcomerstown, Ohio  
Abundant Grace Lutheran Church, West Chester, Ohio  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Hermiston, Oregon  
Community of Faith Church, West Linn, Oregon  
St. James Lutheran Church, Muncy, Pennsylvania  
Saint Paul Lutheran Church, York, Pennsylvania  
English Lutheran Church, Zelienople, Pennsylvania  
Zion Lutheran Church, Scotland, South Dakota  
Joy Lutheran Church, Rockwall, Texas

## NALC EXECUTIVE COUNCIL UPDATE

The Executive Council of the North American Lutheran Church met July 13-14 in Dallas, Texas.

A major portion of the council's time together was spent discussing the upcoming 2022 NALC Mission Convocation to be held online on Friday, Aug. 5, as well as the proposed 2023 unified budget.

Soon the NALC office will be moving toward a new accounting system to serve the needs of the seminary and the continental church. This will streamline many of our financial operations.

The council said farewell to Richard Jansak and Pastor Melinda Jones who are completing two four-year terms of faithful service on the council. We give thanks to God for the many contributions they have made to the NALC in the past eight years.

# OHIO CONGREGATION PARTNERS WITH CONGREGATION AND ORPHANAGE IN BARIADI, TANZANIA

*By Pastor Bert Schultz*

I would like to share greetings with you from our brothers and sisters in Christ from the region surrounding Bariadi, Tanzania. This includes the people of Bariadi-Tumaini Lutheran Parish, Home of Peace Orphanage, the South East of Lake Victoria Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT-SELVD), One Plus God (a Christian mission-focused ministry) and Grace Lutheran Church in Jackson Center, Ohio. It's quite a team our Lord Jesus has put together to serve God and His people in the region. You are a part of it too. Please allow me to explain.

Grace Lutheran Church, with strong encouragement from Bibi Marge Beam, partnered with the Tumaini-Bariadi Lutheran Parish to establish Home of Peace Orphanage on the church grounds. Together the above-mentioned ministries support 24 orphans and staff so that the orphans may have the support they need to be nurtured in their faith in Jesus, grow up and be educated in a caring Christian environment.

The Grace Tanzania Fund is a ministry partner of the Great Commission Society of the NALC. Last year, in prayer and conversation with the people connected to Home of Peace, it was suggested that we might be able to widen our impact by sending an evangelist and social worker to the remote villages in the area.

These villages struggle with issues like witchcraft, high unemployment, low education, polygamy, child marriage, genital mutilation and alcoholism, among other things. Church leaders believe that sharing Jesus and reflecting His love for people by helping to care for their physical and emotional needs can and will transform lives and communities.

Last fall we applied for a Great Commission Society grant to help implement this plan. Thank you for



*Home of Peace secondary students and staff*

being a part of this ministry as we received the grant. One Plus God Ministries is doing a wonderful job of helping us administer this grant and facilitating all of our ministries in Tanzania.

In April, Pastor Wayne de Wet and I flew to Tanzania to help implement this grant by helping to hire an evangelist and social worker to serve in six remote villages.

We were greeted warmly and enthusiastically at the airport and again in Bariadi. In Bariadi, there was a wonderful reception with a lot of singing praises to God, sharing a feast together and introductions so that we might better get to know one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. We toured the schools and met with the children. What a great group of young people!

When I traveled there in April, the orphans all shared with me how thankful they are for the opportunities they are getting. They have responded by praying for those who support them. The children are also

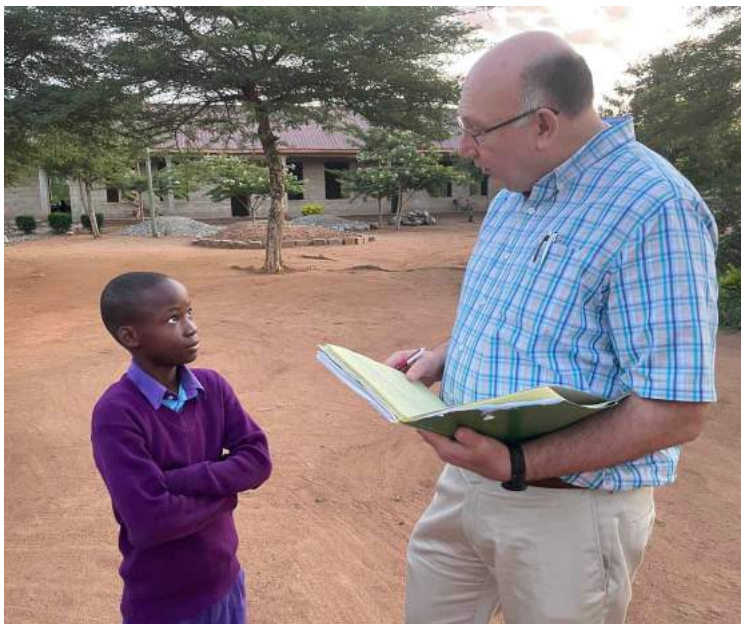
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receiving the education and training they need to have opportunities for meaningful work and to become Christian leaders in Tanzania. They hope to help provide opportunities for future generations to be blessed in the same way.

The children are now being educated at three different schools. The primary school is run by the local Bariadi Lutheran church. They tell me it is ranked eighth in the country. They are working to make it in the top five. You can help make it happen!

They are looking for volunteers with a teaching background to teach English to the primary school children. There are about 250 children and one English teacher. We invite you to pray for one or more volunteers to serve three months to two years with these young children teaching them English in a caring Christian environment. Who knows, it might be you or someone you know. The school and church can provide housing and limited transportation. The children would love to see people come. In fact, so would the teachers, the church and the bishop! We had the opportunity to visit and discuss ministry with Pastor Yohana Nzulu, the assistant to the bishop and headmaster at the Mwadui Secondary School. He was very thankful for all the ministry we share and excited for the new grant and the ways in which



***Elegius, an elementary student, visits with Pastor Bert Schultz.***



***Worship at Bariadi Lutheran Church***

it will help reach out to the remote villages in Jesus' name.

We also visited with Bishop Emmanuel Makala. We had much to talk about. He joins us in highly valuing our relationship for ministry and support. Bishop Makala shared a strong invitation for more groups to come and visit. We hope to organize another trip for ministry in the next two years. He was also really excited for the potential blessings from the new outreach grant.

We can also learn from one another. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania is growing rapidly. The bishop shared with me that they have both congregations and worship centers. The worship centers are small groups of people who usually worship with an evangelist. A pastor joins them occasionally to preach and administer the sacraments. Perhaps we can train more evangelists too.

While in Bariadi, Tanzania, we toured six remote villages to get a feel for the ministry needs there. As fellow evangelists, we also spent time sharing Jesus, leading to my participation in more than 20 baptisms. God is at work in amazing ways in Tanzania just like everywhere else.

After touring the remote villages and seeing the need, it was time to interview candidates that Pastor Prosper and others had identified for the evangelist

***Continued on Page 12***



and social worker positions. What an experience! God surely does inspire and gift His people.

We hired Ndumieshi as our evangelist. She had traveled to Bariadi as a social worker for the opportunity to combine social work and evangelism. Each of the five of us doing the interview sensed she should be the evangelist and wondered what the others would think. When we talked afterwards it was amazing the way the Holy Spirit was active in our midst.

Tunsubilege was hired as our social worker.

Immediately after being hired, they spontaneously met to pray together. What an excellent start to their ministry. They have been serving for more than a month now caring for the people, meeting in homes, sharing Jesus and building up worship centers and Sunday schools.

Thank you for your support for this ministry as lives are being impacted in positive ways by Jesus and His people. Pastor Prosper wanted us to know what a wonderful thing we are doing with these ministries.

Worship with the people was a delight. We were singing, dancing and praising God from the depths of our hearts as He renewed our spirits. It is an amazing experience to draw near to brothers and sisters in Christ as Christ is drawing near to you as you serve Him around the world.



***Home of Peace vocational students with Pastor Prosper and Pastor Bert***



***Newly called evangelist Ndumieshi and social worker Tunsubilege join in prayer.***

I would like to encourage you to be both blessed and be a blessing in following the recommendations of the NALC to be involved in a local, a national and an international mission. You have many options because God is active throughout the world.

Join us in serving in and around Bariadi, Tanzania, discern if God is calling you to join in one of our other NALC established international missions, or start a new one if that is what God is calling you to do. Please feel free to ask questions about this ministry. Other sources for information include the NALC website under partners/grace-tanzania-fund. Sign up for the mailing list or by visiting [oneplusgod.org](http://oneplusgod.org), find the "Get Involved" tab, click on "Ministry Partnerships" and enjoy reading more about "Home of Peace Tanzania." We can also come and visit your church, at no cost to you, if you desire.

***Pastor Bert Schultz serves Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jackson Center, Ohio. You can reach him at [jcgracepastor@outlook.com](mailto:jcgracepastor@outlook.com) or 937-596-6516.***



# TERESA PETERS IS NAMED DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

The Rev. Teresa Peters of Winnipeg, Manitoba, has been named as the director of Youth and Family Ministry for the North American Lutheran Church.

Pastor Peters will be providing opportunities for individuals, Sunday school teachers, youth workers and pastors to connect and form a Christ-centered community of faith, while they work together to care for and equip young people.

She is available to consult with and support individuals who are serving in the area of youth and family ministry in their congregations.



*Teresa Peters*

"I feel there isn't a better place to be than working with kids and teens. Of course, that is a bias, because prior to becoming ordained, and becoming associate pastor at Joy Lutheran Church in Winnipeg, I worked in youth and family ministry for almost 15 years," Pastor Peters said. "I am excited to share with everyone some new opportunities coming to Youth and Family Ministry in the NALC."

Pastor Peters said that the NALC is aware of the challenges we face today in the church:

- + Declining and/or erratic involvement of families in congregational life.
- + Faith formation marginalized by the pressure of school, sports, hobbies and other pursuits that distract from or distort faith maturing.
- + Questions regarding the appropriate developmental age for catechism and confirmation.
- + Lack of programming to attract and engage families and youth.

+ Congregational resistance to change.

+ Perceived shortage of staff, finances and other resources.

+ Pastors and leaders burdened and sometimes exhausted by the breadth of their responsibilities.

"What we don't always know is how to tackle these challenges, and sometimes we feel isolated, like we're alone in the middle of the woods where no one else can hear us," Pastor Peters said. "So, what I want to do is make sure that there are multiple ways for people to connect through Facebook, Zoom, phone calls, email, mission district meetings and convocations."

"The most important thing about Youth and Family Ministry is relationships. It is young peoples' relationship with Christ, relationship with the Church (the Body of Christ) and relationship with the community (peers who confess Christ), and it is our role as ministry leaders to support and equip young people in these relationships. And often that starts by supporting each other," Pastor Peters said.

"Scripture tells us, 'Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow' (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10a). God designed us as social beings in need of fellowship and encouragement from one another. Two or three people together make ministry a pleasure and strengthen one another," she said.

The NALC is also excited to bring on board Melanie Corn, director of Christian education at St. Peter

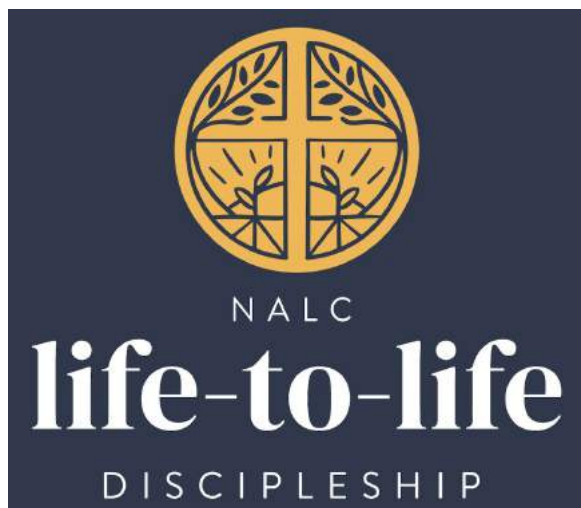
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# NALC LIFE-TO-LIFE: AN EXPERIENCE IN DISCIPLESHIP FOR CONGREGATIONS

**By Pastor David Keener**

I am pleased to report that almost 200 people have already downloaded this new congregational tool designed to help our congregations become more focused on disciple making. My hope is that many have begun, or will soon begin, using this challenging and motivational tool in their congregations.

It is also my hope that those using this resource will keep the NALC Life-to-Life Discipleship Team in the loop by letting us know where you are in the process. I would love to hear your feedback on how it is going and would appreciate any suggestions you might have as we move forward. Feel free to send your updates, suggestions or questions to me at [dkeener@thenalc.org](mailto:dkeener@thenalc.org).



The manual can be downloaded for free by clicking the "Getting Started" button on the bottom of the NALC Life-to-Life Discipleship webpage, [nalclifetolife.org](http://nalclifetolife.org).

Printed copies of the manual can be preordered at a cost of \$40 each. Make checks payable to the NALC with "Discipleship book" in the memo line. Please make checks payable to the North American Lutheran

Church with "Discipleship book" in the memo line. Mail the check to: NALC; PO Box 806565; Minneapolis, MN 55486-0565. Be sure to include your address for shipping.

The video links are embedded in the pdf version of the manual so you will also want to download the free copy to access the videos.

## YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

**Continued from Page 13**

Lutheran Church in Chapin, South Carolina, to consult as a youth and family specialist in the area of mission district day camps. Watch for more information about Melanie's work in the months to come.

Anyone who is involved in Childrens, Youth and/or Family Ministry is invited to:

+ Join the "NALC Youth and Family Workers" group on Facebook.

+ Connect on Zoom at 11 a.m. ET on July 28, Aug. 11 or Aug. 25.

+ Beginning in September, connect on Zoom on the second Thursday of each month at 8 p.m. ET, and the fourth Thursday of the month at 11 a.m. ET.

+ Talk to Pastor Peters about setting up a workshop for your mission district or mission region.

Reach out and connect with Pastor Peters personally by phone, email or zoom. You may contact her at 204-292-6229 or [tpeters@thenalc.org](mailto:tpeters@thenalc.org).



**Melanie Corn**





*Pastor Ricky Richards was ordained on July 24 at Peace Lutheran Church in Clifton, Texas, where he serves as pastor.*



*Pastor Kansa Deresa was ordained on May 7 at Oromo Evangelical Church Columbus, Ohio, in Baltimore, Ohio, where he serves as associate pastor.*



*Pastor Philip Sandi was ordained on May 12 at St. Peter Lutheran Church in Chapin, South Carolina. He serves St. John Lutheran Church in Danforth, Illinois.*



*Pastor Hailey Halmstad was ordained on June 12 at Bethany Lutheran Church in Catawba, Wisconsin. She serves Bethel Lutheran Church and Bethany Lutheran Church in Hawkins, Wisconsin.*

# ORDINATIONS



*Bishop Dan Selbo presiding at the ordination of Pastor Philip Sandi.*



# VISIT TO THE HOLY LAND WAS SACRAMENTAL EXPERIENCE

As many are aware, 33 NALC pastors and laity spent two weeks in June traveling in the Holy Land — Israel and Jordan.

Bishop John Bradosky, Pastor Bassam Abdallah and I had visited Israel for a week in 2018 as guests of Anglican leaders who gathered for the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON).

Some NALC folks have asked about this most recent trip. Since I shared some reflections after the 2018 visit, it seemed worthwhile to do so again. And what has been my initial reaction? In 2018, the trip was “church business,” while this was a spiritual pilgrimage.

It may sound callous and cold to say that our previous visit was church business, but it isn’t intended in that way. While we had a small amount of time for sightseeing in 2018, it was squeezed in-between many lectures, meetings and ecumenical conversations. It’s hard to have a spiritual focus when rushing back and forth between ecclesiastical commitments.

It was a blessing to be present in Jerusalem and areas within close driving distance of the city, but I was left in 2018 with less than an impactful spiritual experience. Visiting for a decidedly spiritual pilgrimage in 2022 with no scheduled church business impacted me in ways expected and unexpected! And for this, I say, “Thanks be to God!”

Trained, educated, licensed Israeli tour guides speak of the Holy Land as the “Fifth Gospel,” meaning the good news of God in Jesus Christ is communicated, shared and proclaimed really through the various sites in the history of Israel and the locations pertinent to the redemptive life, death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.

While I understand the meaning of the term, “Fifth Gospel,” I find it wanting. It’s not sufficient to explain



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## MINISTRY MATTERS

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

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the impact one may experience from a spiritual journey in the Holy Land. I have come to think of the holy sites, locations, churches and areas as “sacramental.”

Clearly, Christ instituted two sacraments as Means of Grace: commanded by Christ, involving an earthly element and communicating God’s grace. Holy Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar, for Lutherans, are the two Means of Grace which are meant for our salvation.

Granted, others count seven sacraments — adding Confirmation, Marriage, Penance and Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick and Holy Orders (Ordination).

Lutherans prefer to uplift Baptism and Holy Communion, but do not deny the other five as “sacramental” but not Sacraments in the same way.

Our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters use the term “sacramentals” to refer to sacred objects not commanded by Christ as sacraments but still serving as touchstones (my word) to faith, God’s presence and the reality of Christ in our world and in our lives.

In this light, a beloved heirloom Bible or cross from a parent or grandparent might be a sacramental for you. Your home church may be a sacramental — speaking Christ’s presence to you in a certain way — as here you received the Sacraments, as the Body of Christ gathered through the generations.

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As an acolyte at a Good Friday Tenebrae service, holding the burning candle in the sacristy while the congregation sat in silent darkness, the candle was truly a sacramental to me, as that was the first time I heard the distinct call to ministry, as it seemed the Lord was saying to me, “Bring my Light to those in darkness.” From that moment, I experienced a pull toward ordained ministry.

In this way, then, our recent trip to the Holy Land caused me to think of Bethlehem and the Shepherd’s Field, the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, our Lord’s baptismal site, the Temptation Wilderness, the Mount of Transfiguration, as sacramental — touchstones.

And then, the places of our Lord’s passion, death and resurrection — the actual Upper Room that is now a lower room under St. Mark’s Syriac Orthodox Church (the oldest church in Christendom); the Garden of Gethsemane where the Lord sweat drops as of blood; the Golgotha outcropping where the Lord was crucified, now enclosed in the great and historic Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which surrounds also the place where the Lord was prepared for burial, the place where He was entombed and on the Eighth Day, resurrected!

It’s all within the one church building, filled with the candles and lamps of the faithful, smelling of sweet



***Church of the Beatitudes with the Sea of Galilee in the background***



***Church of All Nations on the Mount of Olives beside the Garden of Gethsemane***

oriental incense, all burning with the faith of believers throughout the ages.

That’s what the Holy Land is all about, really — the faith of believers, faith that already exists, but finds a home in this ancient land, wavering faith that seeks conviction and commitment. Faith that has burned low, but is rekindled.

As I have reflected upon our journey, the words, “Do you believe this?” keep echoing in my ears. As the Lord spoke with Martha and Mary upon the death of their brother, Lazarus, Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.” And then the Lord asked, “Do you believe this?” (John 11:25-26).

The Lord, after His resurrection, upon appearing to Thomas, said, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe” (John 20:29).

We believe by faith in God’s Word, by the testimony of those who saw Jesus risen from death, firsthand, and because of the faith of those who, though they didn’t see Jesus bodily resurrected, receive Him and witness to His presence in their lives throughout history.

And yes, the real, concrete, visible places of our Lord’s life, death and resurrection can serve as

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# INTERNATIONAL MISSION TOUR TO ETHIOPIA, TANZANIA, DUBAI

The North American Lutheran Church, in partnership with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) and Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT), is going to conduct a church-to-church relationship mission trip and participate in a Lutheran Reformation Celebration in Africa. The trip is scheduled to take place Nov. 9-20.

The first part of the trip is going to be visiting with leaders of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, visiting the Mekane Yesus Seminary, conducting the Reformation Celebration Conference, and visiting various Leadstar International Ministry activities Nov. 10-13 in Ethiopia.



The second leg of the trip is visiting the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, meeting with the Presiding Bishop and visiting the ELCT seminary in Makumira, Nov. 14-17.

The last leg of the trip is going to be visiting the NALC's mission work in the Middle East — especially visiting our missionary in Dubai, meeting with the church leaders and students, fruits of our work and finishing with mission leaders meeting from various countries in the Middle East gathering to meet us in Dubai, Nov. 18-20.



## MISSION UPDATE

**REV. DR. GEMECHIS BUBA**  
ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP  
FOR INTERNATIONAL MISSION

Our entire tour will be completed and back to the United States no later than Nov. 21.

**Onesimus Nesib** is commemorated in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* calendar of saints on June 21. Onesimus was an Oromo Bible translator and missionary in Ethiopia. He is now being celebrated as more than a Bible translator or missionary but as a national hero.

From June 21 to July 11, we conducted multiple mission and ministry seminars, church visits, Bible distribution campaigns, pastoral training sessions and strategy meetings to address drastic shortage of Bibles in the country. In the Oromo language alone, we have fewer than 500,000 copies of the Bible for more than 20 million believers.

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This is more than a problem. It is a major crisis for the Christian community. To address this critical matter of faith and mission, a multifaceted strategy is being devised including planning of establishing a printing house just to print the millions of Bibles that are needed.

In Ethiopia, 600 pastors received executive pastoral leadership training July 9-11.

Various training sessions, mission work evaluations and strategy meetings were conducted, with our mission work in the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia July 13-22. This was another successful and fruitful mission and ministry time here in the Middle East.

Leaders and pastors from the United Arab Emirates took part in this conference. In addition to that, more than 30,000 people followed the meeting on Facebook during and after the training. The Lord was truly blessing the gathering.

Pastor Martha, our global worker, is getting ready to start a two-month tour of the United States in August. She will be in the United States during our online mission convocation.

We are now organizing a comprehensive schedule for her mission tour to connect with various congregations and leaders who already have a strong



relationship with her work. This is going to bring a tremendous impact and empowerment to the link we are creating to link our congregations and leaders to what God is doing in East Africa and the Middle East.

**Pastor Gemechis Buba is the assistant to the bishop for international mission. You may contact him at [gbuba@thenalc.org](mailto:gbuba@thenalc.org).**

## MINISTRY MATTERS

*Continued from Page 17*

touchstones for our belief — as material objects which strengthen and encourage us, making us bold to say, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God! Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the resurrection and the life!”

As you receive the Word made flesh, present for us in the Means of Grace, may you be convinced more and more that Jesus is the Christ and that through Him, we have forgiveness, life and salvation!

**Pastor David Wendel is the assistant to the bishop for ministry and ecumenism. You may contact him at [dwendel@thenalc.org](mailto:dwendel@thenalc.org).**



# NALC DISASTER RESPONSE OFFERS IDEAS ON PREVENTING HUMAN-CAUSED DISASTERS

Human-caused disasters include mass shootings which are incidents involving multiple victims. The precise inclusion criteria are disputed, and there is no broadly accepted definition. Throughout the world, there have been more than 300 incidents.

In the United States, the incidents of human-caused tragedies are often explained by citing mental health issues, social and cultural factors, and many other characteristics. It is quite possible that some of us have been directly impacted by such an event.

As the Church, we respond with our prayers and prayer vigils for the impacted victims and their families. Since the easing of COVID-19 lockdowns, our prayers and support are needed more now than ever. What can we do? Following are some thoughts and suggestions:

1. Respectfully, reinforce the need for our young people to be in attendance at Sunday school and church. Each and everyone one of us needs Jesus!
2. Offer or form teams of volunteers in our schools who are willing to seek out the young people who do not fit in and appear to be loners. Be a good listener. Do we have a neighbor or know someone who might not fit into our community?
3. Be involved with our school boards and administration. Know the school curriculum.
4. Engage the young adults (18 and older) with volunteer opportunities such as mission trips, food pantries and other options in your community.
5. Share your thoughts and God-driven ideas with other congregations in your community and the



## DISASTER RESPONSE

**MARY BATES**  
NALC DISASTER RESPONSE  
COORDINATOR

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NALC as a whole. Are ideas coming to mind as you are reading this?

As the Church, we need to be on the offense rather than thinking in the defensive mode. By thinking offensively, we will reach out to this hurting world and gain so much ourselves. Jesus came to serve and we are to be His servants. Praise be to God!

### NALC Disaster Response updates

During the month of June, six congregations have provided volunteers, responding to the Kentucky tornadoes of Dec. 10, 2021.

Christ the King Lutheran Church in Evans, Georgia, repaired homes in Benton, Kentucky.

Union Lutheran Church and Salem Lutheran Church, both of Salisbury, North Carolina, completed two homes in Hardyville, Kentucky.

All Saints Lutheran Church in Arlington, Texas, worked in Mayfield, Kentucky, and witnessed total devastation first hand.

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jackson Center, Ohio, and St. John Lutheran Church in Greenville, Ohio, assisted families the week of July 5.