



NORTH AMERICAN  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH

2023 NOMINEE  
BIOGRAPHICAL  
INFORMATION

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## Report of the Nominating Committee

The 2023 Nominating Committee presents the candidates named below for positions to be elected at the August Mission Convocation. We believe that all the individuals named are qualified and would do well in their service if elected. Please note that responses to the questions posed to candidates for bishop have been limited to 150 words.

### Bishop

This year, the Convocation elects one ordained minister who is a member of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) to serve as bishop of the NALC. The bishop shall serve as the chief pastor and chief evangelist of the NALC, responsible for ensuring the priority of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16–20) in the life of the church.

The 2023 candidates are as follows (name, congregational membership and nominating congregation):

- The Rev. Dr. Daniel Selbo, St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – San Jose, California; first nomination by Immanuel Lutheran Church, Whitewood, South Dakota
- The Rev. Dr. David M. Wendel, Shepherd of the Woods Lutheran Church – Jacksonville, Florida; first nomination by Shepherd of the Woods Lutheran Church, Jacksonville, Florida

### Executive Council

During the interim between convocations, the Executive Council shall implement the work and policies of the NALC and shall act for the NALC, subject in all matters to review of its actions by subsequent convocations. This year the Convocation elects one pastor and one layperson to the Executive Council for four-year terms.

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The 2023 clergy candidates are as follows (name, congregational membership and nominating congregation):

- The Rev. John Conrad, First Evangelical Lutheran Church – Floresville, Texas; nominated by St. Paul Lutheran Church, Rosenberg, Texas
- The Rev. Dr. Scott Ness, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church – Senoia, Georgia; nominated by Joy Mission Church, Lexington, South Carolina
- The Rev. Dieter W. Punt, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church – Troutman, North Carolina; nominated by Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Troutman, North Carolina
- The Rev. Dr. Douglas Schoelles, St. John’s Lutheran Church – Ft. Wayne, Indiana; nominated by Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church, Waterville, Iowa
- The Rev. Pamela Thorson, Grace Lutheran Church – Erskine, Minnesota; nominated by Grace Lutheran Church, Erskine, Minnesota

The lay candidate is as follows (name, congregational membership and nominating congregation/nominating delegates):

- Mr. Scott Kramer, St. John Lutheran Church – Boerne, Texas; nominated by St. John Lutheran Church, Boerne, Texas

## Court of Adjudication

The Court of Adjudication has jurisdiction to decide appeals from disciplinary decisions, questions regarding interpretation of the NALC’s governing documents, and claims that any person, body or entity has violated the governing documents of the NALC.

This year two individuals, clergy or lay, will be elected to a four-year term on the Court of Adjudication. The 2023 candidates are as follows (name, congregational membership and nominating congregation):

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- The Rev. Thomas M. Brodbeck, Grace Lutheran Church – Springfield, Ohio; nominated by Grace Lutheran Church, Springfield, Ohio
- The Rev. Leslie Haines STS, St. John's Lutheran Church – Fort Wayne, Indiana; nominated by St. John's Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana
- The Rev. Ryan Henkel, Emmons Lutheran Church – Emmons, Minnesota; nominated by Immanuel Lutheran Church, Fresno, California

Respectfully submitted,

**The Rev. Hugh W. Brewer, chair**

**The Rev. Dan Mershon**

**The Rev. Jack Richards**

**The Rev. Dawn Rister**

**The Rev. Kevin Scott**

## Nominees for Bishop

**THE REV. DR. DANIEL SELBO**

*Grapevine, Texas*



**Congregational Membership:** St. Timothy's Lutheran Church  
(San Jose, California)

**Basic Biographical Information:** Married for 37 years, my wife, Mary, and I have been blessed with four children and five grandchildren. I graduated from San Jose State University in 1982 with a B.A. in Religious Studies, received my Master of Divinity in 1986 from Luther Seminary, and earned a Doctor of Ministry in Biblical Preaching in 2013, also from Luther Seminary. I enjoy golfing, fishing, hiking, home projects, and spending time with family and friends.

### **Word and Sacrament ministry (list each congregation and dates of service):**

- American Lutheran Church (ALC) Global Mission: Called to serve as a missionary in South Africa (June 1986–December 1986). The call never materialized as the South African government closed the door to the U. S. Christian Church.
- St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Elk Grove, CA; served as Associate Pastor (February 1987–November 1994)
- St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, San Jose, CA; served as Lead Pastor (December 1994–September 2019)
- North American Lutheran Church; serving as bishop (October 2019–present)

**Mission Experience:** My mission experience began during my seminary internship, serving in a remote South African homeland. My wife and I agreed to serve as missionaries for seven years but were denied access because of the conflict between the U.S. and South African governments. As a result, we served two congregations in California, both in settings where much of the community was unchurched.

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The priorities of my years in parish ministry were built around the mission calling we have in Jesus. Adult Bible study was a central ministry component, not only to deepen the biblical knowledge of our congregational members, but to equip them for their calling in the world. Three years of discipleship training, followed by more than seven years of implementation in the parish, were the beginning steps in developing a disciple-making culture designed to strengthen our mission efforts.

As NALC bishop, I have worked directly with our mission staff and mission district deans to support and encourage local, domestic, and global mission connections for our congregations, as well as to enhance our denominational mission efforts through our global workers and our Lutheran, ecumenical, and ministry partners.

**What are the 2-3 most important things you've learned from your pastoral experience that you would apply to the role of bishop?**

The priority of the Great Commission in the life of the Church, the centrality of the cross and resurrection in our witness to the world, and the importance of an ongoing relationship with Jesus are among the significant lessons and priorities that have grown out of my years in parish ministry and my service as NALC bishop. It is clear to me that our ministries will bear no lasting fruit apart from a daily and ongoing connection to Christ (John 15:1-8).

In my role as bishop, I will continue working with our staff, mission district deans, and elected leaders to ensure that the priorities of our work and our witness are consistent with the calling we have received and the relationship with Christ we must have. In a world seeking to pull us away from our identity, we must always remember who we are as children of God, why we exist as the Church, and what our Lord has called us to do, and to be as, His disciples.

**In your ministry and life experience, what has prepared you to fulfill the role of bishop of the North American Lutheran Church?**

Professionally, my 33 years as a parish pastor and nearly four years as NALC bishop are central to the experience I bring and foundational to the support I can offer to our church body and clergy. I have a clear understanding of the challenges and opportunities the role of bishop affords, as well as a keen awareness of the responsibilities and limitations of the role. I have firsthand experience of the scope

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of pieties in Lutheranism, as well as within the NALC. I work well with staff and leaders to cast vision, build consensus, and execute on the commitments and priorities set.

Personally, as a husband and father of four, I have learned the importance of balancing my time and energies in each of my life vocations. I pray with my wife regularly, look to her for support and strength, and seek to model in my own life the relationship I pray our pastors will have with their own families.

I am a follower of Jesus first. I have a daily dependence upon the Word and promises of God. In all I do, I strive to listen to and trust the Holy Spirit, seeking to be humble, compassionate, and faithful to the Lord I serve.

**Describe how the four Core Values of the NALC would guide your ministry as Bishop, and how those values can become more and more prominent in the life of the NALC and its congregations.**

The NALC Core Values are at the heart of our denominational identity and serve as litmus tests for the decisions we make and the priorities we set. I would be responsible for ensuring that our ministry and mission priorities remain aligned with the values we hold.

Two values, Christ Centered and Traditionally Grounded, shape our witness to the world and our connection to the apostolic faith. The other two, Mission Driven and Congregationally Focused, establish our ministry priorities and the means through which those priorities are carried out.

Our Core Values would continue to be central in setting my own priorities, working with our elected leaders, and directing our staff. I would emphasize them at our Pastor's Conferences and Mission Convocations, and prioritize them in our seminary training, mission district gatherings, and in the hiring and focus of our staff.

Increased discipleship training and continued education opportunities, rooted in the Core Values we share, would be priorities in my role as bishop.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

My years of parish ministry and serving as bishop have enabled me to develop skills in preaching, teaching, public speaking, and worship leading. I have experience



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working with staff and leadership teams. I have been blessed with the gift of discernment, with a caring and pastoral heart, and with a deep and endearing love for and faith in the Lord Jesus. I remain calm in challenging conversations, situations, and circumstances, and am able to offer Christ-centered counsel. I have a passion for speaking and sharing the name of Jesus. My leadership grows out of my call to follow the Lord, and my following of the Lord leads me to encourage others to do the same. I bring a visionary perspective to my work, always seeking to know and discern God's will and desire for the present, while having an eye toward the implications of our decisions and actions for the future.

### **What are your strengths and areas for growth?**

My strengths include the ability to develop strong personal relationships, organizing and leading a broad and diverse set of tasks and people, and working to develop consensus, if not unanimity, on a staff and with leadership teams. I am trustworthy, approachable, and have learned to multi-task. I am patient, faithful, and have a deep trust in God's Word of promise. I am a good preacher and a good listener. I have a calming presence, and I am deeply committed to keeping Christ central in our witness and work.

Areas for growth include a deeper understanding of technology and how to use it to benefit the Church, a more direct approach to decision-making, especially when timeliness is essential, and a better understanding of the ecumenical differences and gifts found within the Church catholic. In each of these areas, I have proactively sought to grow and will continue to do so throughout my years of service.

### **What are your top four ministry priorities for the NALC in the next four years?**

My top ministry priority is raising the next generation of faithful and well-grounded pastors, equipping them to work in a culture that does not know Jesus. The future effectiveness and witness of our denomination depends upon this prioritized commitment.

Second is a commitment to resourcing our pastors and mission districts to faithfully serve our congregations at a time when the expected retirements will outnumber the anticipated ordinations. This will require creative solutions to be explored and a

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change in mindset – in our clergy willing to serve, and in our congregations desiring to be served.

Third, we need to prioritize the Gospel of Jesus Christ, lived out in discipling relationships and in the sharing of our faith, as the key to growing our denomination and unifying our efforts around common purpose and goals. This outward-looking perspective on our calling must far outweigh any inward-looking concerns we have for ourselves.

Fourth, as a Mission-Driven church body, we need to strengthen the connection our congregations have with believers throughout the world, all the while raising up an increased number of global workers to speak the name of Jesus. This passion for increasing our kingdom impact must remain strong.

### **What are the top two challenges you see facing the NALC?**

Apart from the obvious need for pastors, the renewal of our congregations, and the increasing age of our members, we need to (1) strengthen our ability to engage a culture that has not been raised with the same Christian foundation, and (2) increase the awareness and urgency of our laity to share their faith stories and love for Jesus with those they meet.

The health and growth of the NALC will directly parallel the strength of the relationship we have, individually and together, with Jesus and the incarnational approach we take to our ministry. Living in a culture that has less understanding of the Christian faith and that is becoming more unaccepting of who we are and what we believe, we need to intentionally develop loving relationships outside of the church and leverage the opportunities we have to share our faith with others. If our relationship with Jesus does not matter enough to us to share it with those we know, we will never be able to convince them that they need that same relationship themselves.

### **Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

I begin each day with time in God's Word, praying and listening for His voice, and seeking to know His heart. Without this daily time with God, I feel unprepared for the day as well as for the calling I have received.

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I have learned to hear God’s voice through trusted colleagues and friends, as well as in times when this world’s voices are crying out for attention. God’s Holy Spirit regularly whispers as I make time to listen for His still small voice.

I am continually reminded of His presence as I submit to His Word in my own life, as well as in my calling as bishop. His Word never returns empty, but always fulfills that for which it is sent. I have seen it play out in countless ways in my ministry and in my own life.

Recognizing my dependence in all things upon God’s Word, I regularly find peace when decisions are made consistent with His will, in contrast to times when an unsettled heart causes me to pray, listen, and discern even more.

### **Describe a time in your ministry when you felt out of your comfort zone.**

During my years in the parish, I was twice drawn into litigation involving families attending our Christian school. Although I was called to be the pastoral leader of the congregation and school, including the families involved in the litigation, I was not prepared for effectively navigating pastorally in the legal realm. I quickly learned to lean on those who had been trained and who had the necessary expertise for such circumstances, as well as to give my burdens to the Lord.

Similarly, during my years as bishop, I have been involved in making decisions that have significant implications for our clergy, congregations, and church body. I have learned to seek the wisdom and experience of those who have served in this role in the past, as well as to weigh the implications of those decisions carefully and compassionately. When I find myself out of my comfort zone, I rely on the experience of those who have been there before, the knowledge and expertise of those who have been trained, as well as the strength and wisdom of God.

### **What ideas or plans do you have for raising up new pastors to serve in the NALC?**

My plan for raising up pastors begins with a strong emphasis on praying to “the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into the harvest field” (Matthew 8:38). From

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there, I will consistently remind our pastors to be planting seeds in the hearts of those in whom they see gifts for ministry. I will continue to support the recruiting efforts of our seminary, challenge our students and faculty to be ambassadors for the call to Word and Sacrament ministry, and work to put in place training for congregational leaders who will serve the Church in a variety of ways, including pastoral ministry. I will support the expansion of discipleship resources for families and congregations and will encourage an emphasis on vocational discernment through our Youth & Family Ministries. I will work with our communication staff to leverage our technology platforms to expand the awareness of the NALC and its Core Values to Christian colleges, universities, and camps. I also will work with our elected leaders to ensure that funding is available for tuition assistance, faculty and leadership development, and our recruiting and vocational discernment efforts.

### **Describe how you deal with conflict.**

Whether personally involved in conflict or helping to resolve conflict between others, the same approaches apply. I work to avoid unnecessary conflict, to bring reconciliation between those involved, and to approach every situation with an open and caring heart. I follow the guidance of our Lord to encourage the involved parties to talk directly with each other (Matthew 18:15-17). I lift up Luther's admonition to the eighth commandment to "put the best construction on the actions of your neighbor." And I always remind those involved to remember Paul's words to, whenever possible, "as far it depends upon you, live at peace with everyone" (Romans 12:18).

I am an active and careful listener. I try not to project my personal thoughts or assumptions on the situation but work to find the facts of who and what is involved and what is at stake. I refrain from taking a reactive posture to the conflict but work to be proactive in seeking a Christ-honoring resolution between those involved.

**How would your preaching as bishop be different from your preaching as pastor of a congregation?**

My preaching would be similar insofar as its basic purpose would not change, to proclaim God's saving Word of Law and Gospel to the hearer. My preaching would challenge and encourage the listeners in their faith-walk with Jesus and assure them of the love and forgiveness that is already theirs because of the cross and resurrection of Christ. The essential elements of admonition and declaration would not change in my preaching as bishop.

My preaching would differ insofar as I would be speaking on behalf of the greater Church. Faithful to the texts, I would look for opportunities to encourage a deeper and broader understanding of the Great Commission for all believers, and a stronger and more intimate connection to the work we share as a church body.

Whenever possible, I would bring greetings on behalf of the NALC, encourage greater connections to our shared efforts as a church body, all the while keeping a clear distinction between personal greetings on behalf of the Church, and public preaching on behalf of Christ.

**As bishop, how would you lead and challenge the NALC in its life of stewardship?**

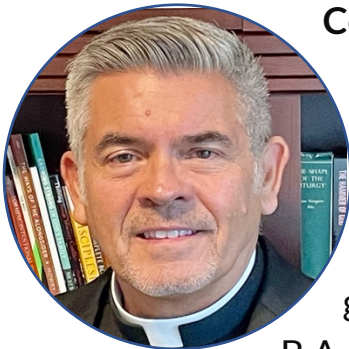
Four priorities would guide my leadership in this area. 1) I would encourage our pastors to take advantage of the resources provided by our Living and Giving Stewardship Team, challenge them to regularly preach and teach on stewardship, and to help their congregational members to make the connection between the faithful use of their gifts, abilities, and time and their faithful and obedient response to our Lord's call. 2) I would continue to challenge our pastors and congregations, through visionary leadership, to increase their financial support for our shared ministries and mission, and to remind them of the importance of doing so if we are to fulfill the calling and respond to the opportunities we have been given. 3) I would work with our NALC staff and elected leadership to ensure that we remain good stewards of the sacrificial gifts we have received from individuals and congregations in our budgeting and spending. And (4), I would continue setting an example for our denomination in my own stewardship, through tithing, above and beyond giving, and

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offering my first and my best to all I do for the Lord, knowing that I cannot and will not ask anything of others that I am not willing to do myself.

### **THE REV. DR. DAVID M. WENDEL**

*Jacksonville, Florida*



**Congregational Membership:** Shepherd of the Woods Lutheran Church  
(Jacksonville, Florida)

**Basic Biographical Information:** A life-long Lutheran, Pastor Wendel was born and raised in Columbus, Indiana. He graduated from Indiana University, in Bloomington, IN, with a B.A. in Speech Communication. He is a 1981 graduate of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, having served his internship at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Los Alamos, N.M. He earned a Doctor of Ministry in Preaching degree from the Association of Chicago Theological Schools in 2001 and completed the course “Ecumenism and Inter-Faith Relations” in Rome, offered by the Atonement Friars in 2011. Pastor Wendel and his wife, Susan, currently live in Jacksonville, FL, and are members of Shepherd of the Woods, NALC. They have two adult children, Christopher, an NALC pastor serving as an active duty Army chaplain (Captain) Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, and Rebekah, married to a U.S. Army Sergeant Major (James), Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. Susan and David have four grandchildren. David enjoys walking for exercise and reading!

### **Word and Sacrament ministry (list each congregation and dates of service):**

Pastor Wendel served as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Hobbs, N.M. from 1981–1986 before being called to Saint Luke’s Lutheran Church in Colorado Springs in 1986. After serving as pastor of Saint Luke’s for 25 years, he was called to serve as assistant to NALC Bishop John Bradosky, relocating to Columbus, OH, in January 2012. He has served as assistant to Bishop Dan Selbo since 2019.

**Mission Experience:** The two congregations I served were both “redevelopment” congregations, struggling with conflict which left them devoid of mission and outreach. I participated in mission developer training which allowed me to guide

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these congregations to renewal and growth. During my pastorate in Colorado Springs, the congregation grew from 40–50 average worship attendance to 225–250 in 2012, having completed three building programs, five capital stewardship campaigns and outreach educational childcare ministry to 119 preschoolers and their families. I work with NALC mission congregations as an additional resource when needed. I developed the Fresh Eyes for Mission summit process, aimed solely at renewing congregations through a commitment to mission, outreach and growth in faith and numbers. I have now facilitated renewal and re-visioning within 30 NALC congregations. The effectiveness of these mission summits is well-documented. I would work hand-in-glove with deans and mission districts for redevelopment, renewal and new mission starts!

**What are the 2-3 most important things you've learned from your pastoral experience that you would apply to the role of bishop?**

My pastoral experience now reaches beyond my 30 years of parish ministry to 11 additional years serving alongside three NALC bishops.

1. I believe biblical, confessional Lutheranism has much to offer in terms of strengthening and growing congregations, reversing the decline, and setting a powerful, positive course forward that is grounded in the incarnation and saving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ! For example, the Fresh Eyes for Mission summits I have developed and facilitate are bringing realistic hope, excitement and energy for renewal and redevelopment of our congregations.

2. I have learned that congregations and the church thrive when pastors and leaders develop trust. Trust is built and maintained by honesty, transparency, and open straightforward communication. This is true within congregations and in the NALC as a whole. I have earned and developed trust by being honest and speaking the truth in love.

3. I know that congregations and the NALC are inspired and thrive when their pastor/bishop leads with energy, excitement, and enthusiasm—sprinkled with humility and good humor!

**In your ministry and life experience, what has prepared you to fulfill the role of bishop of the North American Lutheran Church?**

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The bishop preaches, teaches and leads from a deep and abiding faith in the Holy Trinity, and especially from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ which shapes not only one's life as a disciple and follower of the Lord, but one's call and service as a minister of Word and Sacrament. This is especially important as the NALC bishop is the "chief evangelist," able to share the faith that is in us and inspire others to do so. I have proven myself as one who clearly and effectively shares the Gospel, inspiring others to faithfulness and maturity in Christ. Three NALC bishops have entrusted significant responsibilities to me with regard to mission, ministry, theological discernment, leadership, administration, conflict resolution and ecumenism. This speaks to my ability to serve at this level within the NALC and the Body of Christ. I have a clear vision of how we can do better!

**Describe how the four Core Values of the NALC would guide your ministry as Bishop, and how those values can become more and more prominent in the life of the NALC and its congregations.**

People are drawn to the NALC because of our Core Values! We are easily distracted from these values when they become a tagline rather than a driving force. Under my leadership, we would focus on Christ centeredness, acknowledging and witnessing to the only Savior, Jesus Christ, revealed in God's Word – the incarnate Word who is with us, calling us to follow as His disciples. I would focus on being Mission-Driven so that each congregation would understand itself as on the front-line of ministry, receiving support and encouragement to be equipped for practical, real-life outreach, realizing the strength of our congregations directly impact and is foundational to the strength of the NALC. I would emphasize that we are Traditionally Grounded, leading from the foundation of Scripture and our confessions, and I would be strongly Congregationally Focused, aiming all that I do at support for our congregations and pastors who serve them!

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

God has blessed me with a heartfelt commitment to Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. I have an abundance of energy and enthusiasm for the ministry of the Church and the NALC. More than that, however, I have a deep and abiding love for the Church – for pastors and congregations, which has been and continues to be a spiritual gift! I also believe I have the gift of vision, being able to see the big picture



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as well as the individual parts. My congregational and NALC ministries have been marked by the ability to see needs and develop new directions to strengthen and support the ministry of congregations, pastors, deans, mission districts and the NALC. Although I have thrived in ministry at the tactical (congregational) level, I have also been able to make the jump to the strategic, larger church perspective, a transition not possible for many parish pastors.

### **What are your strengths and areas for growth?**

I am goal-oriented, and one might say “Mission-Driven!” I am a pastor/person with proven leadership abilities, seeking consensus and bridge-building, yet willing and able to assess and evaluate different strategies and solutions to arrive at faithful and wise decisions. I am committed to and love the call to preach and teach Jesus crucified and risen and consider preaching and teaching to be a strength. At the same time, I am able to step into almost every situation, bringing about creative and positive resolutions. I respect and listen to those who disagree with me, seeking to learn from those who may have different opinions. I love our congregations and congregational life and this appreciation is a strength for a bishop. I never tire of investing in our congregations. Finally, as with our previous bishops and Executive Councils, I am trusted to “get things done” effectively and efficiently – with faith and grace!

### **What are your top four ministry priorities for the NALC in the next four years?**

1. I would challenge Executive Council and staff, deans, pastors, and congregations to evaluate every decision in light of our Core Values, ensuring alignment.
2. Focus on congregations! This would include leadership development so pastors are able to effectively shepherd congregations and we have sufficient pastoral support for every congregation. To support congregations, I would establish an expectation that every communication to NALC staff from a congregation receives a response within 24-48 hours.
3. Foster trust in the NALC by providing honest, straightforward communication and information. I would strive to visit every mission district/region as soon as possible to ask and to hear – “How can we support you? What are your priorities?” A true bottom-up approach!

4. I would lead to encourage and develop faithful Lutheran worship in our congregations, together with spiritual awakening – awakening congregations and disciples to Christ’s presence, that we are enlivened and energized for ministry!

**What are the top two challenges you see facing the NALC?**

The greatest challenge is to be prepared to stand, with Martin Luther, on the truth of God’s Word, making a powerful witness to people living in fear and uncertainty! “Hold fast the Word of life” (Phil. 2:16). Closely connected is the challenge for all in the NALC to be able to share, simply, how God is active in our lives – ready and able to reach out and engage unbelievers and the unchurched in meaningful relationships, with Jesus Christ and His Body! My vision for the NALC is one of being awakened to Christ’s presence so that all are encouraged and emboldened – prepared to preach the Gospel always, to make disciples, able to share the reality of God, in Christ Jesus, with those who are lonely, isolated and in need of forgiveness, life and salvation. This is incarnational, life to life discipleship! May the Holy Spirit so awaken and inspire us!

**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

God is in my life through His incarnate presence in Word and Sacrament, as well as in the community of believers – the Church! This is why I prefer to be out among our people – working with pastors, congregations, and mission districts. I am most aware of God when the community of the faithful gather for worship, hearing the Word, receiving the real presence of my Lord for my forgiveness, life, and salvation in the Lord’s Supper. I also experience God active and speaking to me in my personal time of Scripture reading and prayer, together with time with others gathered for Bible study, prayer, mutual conversation, and consolation. We believe, not in a spiritualized Christ, but a present, embodied Lord. Together with Luther, I cling to our incarnate God, the Word made flesh who dwells among us! I want every person to so experience Christ!

**Describe a time in your ministry when you felt out of your comfort zone.**

Each time I began a new call, it was a challenge. In a new call, we wonder if we have the gifts and abilities needed to fulfill our calling. I can also say that at first, I was uncomfortable in some of our meetings with ELCA, ELCiC and LWF leaders when representing the NALC and our firm stand on Holy Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions. Who is prepared for such experiences, which were sometimes contentious? And yet, I valued the opportunities and went whole-heartedly and with great joy as we had the chance to introduce and lift up the NALC to brothers and sisters in the wider Lutheran and ecumenical context. Each new “un-comfortable” situation has challenged me to grow in faith, in character, in skills and in confidence – gaining new perspective and new relationships. In this sense, I embrace being out of my comfort zone!

**What ideas or plans do you have for raising up new pastors to serve in the NALC?**

As assistant to the bishop, I have been uniquely aware of the increasing need for pastors in the NALC and I’ve been integrally involved with the development of strategies for raising up new pastors. I believe what we are doing will bear fruit, with a seminary recruitment director, strengthened relationships in the NALS Network, Ordination Under Special Circumstances process, and new and creative partnerships between congregations. However, I believe we must work harder at increasing faith in all our young people, exciting them about Jesus as Savior and Friend! As bishop, I would strive to be present at every youth event possible throughout the NALC, sharing the joy of the Gospel, the real presence of Jesus in our lives, inspiring our youth to greater faith, which will lead to increased workers in the harvest! We need youth who know Jesus, are following Him, and respond with lives of service.

**Describe how you deal with conflict.**

I deal with conflict positively, directly and with respect, grace, and love. Having many opportunities to step into situations of conflict in the NALC, I begin by acknowledging our human sinfulness, that all have sinned and are in need of

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forgiveness and reconciliation. I have also worked to create congregational climates of Christ-like love and service, proactively, before there is conflict. I encourage pastors and congregational leaders to meet regularly for mutual evaluation, assessment and goal setting, with clarity about expectations. Much church conflict can be avoided with healthy leaders who are able to disagree yet arrive at consensus for the sake of the whole. With a shared vision for mission, leaders can work toward health and wholeness, renewal, and growth. I believe conflict can be a catalyst leading to greater health and faithfulness. I developed the PCAT model and congregational intervention process to assist with conflict positively.

### **How would your preaching as bishop be different from your preaching as pastor of a congregation?**

The biblical message of Law and Gospel would remain unchanged, as the preacher always preaches death to the old Adam and Eve, and new life, hope and promise through the Good News of salvation in and through Jesus Christ! The bishop of the church preaches as one who is also under the authority of the Word, yet uniquely aware of the situations and needs of pastors and congregations. This is why the bishop must be out, always visiting among the people, developing and sustaining relationships which lead to preaching that is appropriate, timely and inspiring! Hopefully, the bishop's preaching will connect with every hearer; direct, plainly spoken, not excessively heady, but defending the faith, communicating biblical truth and confessional insight that is full of joy and inspiration! The bishop also brings a perspective that is broader than the local congregation, always aware of the North American and global contexts.

### **As bishop, how would you lead and challenge the NALC in its life of stewardship?**

I love talking about stewardship that is biblically grounded and surrounded in prayer, born of my own experience being challenged to live a life of faithful trust and response to God, who created and sustains us! I am excited about the faith, hope and joy that flows from giving ourselves to God! I would strive to help pastors and congregational leaders to become excited about stewardship and its relationship to discipleship, as faith is awakened, and we understand the biblical call to trust and

give! Having suggested the formation of the NALC Living and Giving Stewardship Task Force, I would commit to continued support for and involvement in this work to raise visibility and awareness, encouraging congregations and members to grow their stewardship of the totality of life, asking, “How am I living my life as a follower, disciple and steward of all God has entrusted to me?”

## Nominees for Executive Council (Clergy)

**THE REV. JOHN CONRAD**

*Floresville, Texas*



**Congregational Membership:** First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
(Floresville, Texas)

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Basic Biographical Information:** I have a wife, four kids, four grandkids, and a Cairn Terrier. I got my M.Div. from LSTC in 1990, and a bachelors in religion/philosophy in 1984 from Bethany College, Lindsborg, KS.

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position.**

I have served as the chair of the Texas Mission Region Missions Team. Over my 30+ years of ordained ministry, I have had the opportunity to experience ministry in a variety of different geographical settings, as well as church sizes ranging from church planting to larger multiple-staff congregations.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

Over the years, I have grown in my gifts and abilities. Some have named my giftings in the areas of administration, faith, discernment, giving, leadership, and teaching. I have no problem naming the obvious and speaking the truth in love. I enjoy collaborating and networking, and pulling teams of people together to work on common tasks.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

The NALC is at a very interesting point in its life. We have grown in numbers of congregations but for the most part, we are still growing older. A good number of the people and congregations we're gaining are still "refugees." Focusing on kingdom advancement, discipleship, and mission are no less important for us today than ever before.

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

I hope that the NALC may grow as a culture of kingdom advancement that involves intentional discipleship as a lifestyle, focused efforts on church planting, a greater number of congregations engaged in international missions, and a willingness to be creative and learn from the wisdom of non-Lutherans.

**What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

The NALC has great academic strengths, some of the greatest minds in North American Lutheranism. At the same time, we would do well to focus on the practical. We run the risk of being theologically grounded and yet practically unprepared in today's world. We need to continue to be bold in our efforts to be creatively evangelical, unafraid to learn from others and do things differently.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its mission districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church?**

I believe the NALC is right to focus on discipleship, something that is inherently more lifestyle than program. It is easy to underestimate the power of the Word in community. I believe the existing NALC priorities are appropriate. At the same time, I believe that we would do well to be continually mindful that we cannot function and structure ourselves like a larger church body.

**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

My day begins in the Scriptures. I read, reflect on, and write on scriptural texts. God speaks through His Word. My daily walk is a good time to listen to God contemplatively, especially as I meditate on the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. I find

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that knowing the voice of the Shepherd makes it possible to hear when He speaks, and see when He acts.

### **List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

“Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me” (John 15:4). The life of faith is not just about us. It is about what God hopes to accomplish through us. Our primary calling is to abide in Christ Jesus. Everything else flows from that.

### **THE REV. DR. SCOTT NESS**

*Senoia, Georgia*



**Congregational Membership:** Prince of Peace Lutheran Church  
(Fayetteville, Georgia)

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Basic Biographical Information:** Married with six children; B.A. from Wittenberg University; M.Div. from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, D.Min. in Semiotics and Future Studies from Portland Seminary. I enjoy traveling and camping with my family.

### **Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position.**

I was ordained in 2005 and have served the NALC on the Candidacy Committee and am currently the dean of the Mid South Mission District. I've also served the NALC as a part of our Theologians Without Borders in Denmark and Ethiopia. I am also on the Board of Directors for Wittenberg University as well as other leadership positions within smaller organizations.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

I have been blessed by the Holy Spirit with the gift of faith, exhortation, and teaching. I also have a strategic mind that helps develop pathways towards intended results. I am a people person that has a humble confidence. In all of these, my hope is to grow deeper in my love and service to Jesus.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

There are many. The impending wave of clergy retiring and forming the next generation of pastors. Learning, as a church body, how better to speak to, with, and into a culture that is far less invested in what we have to say or that we exist at all. Within our own church body, how do we move towards unity and forward in mission with the different pieties that exist among us.

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

My hope is that we draw deeper upon the love of Christ that calls us to love others. In service. In proclamation. In fellowship. In witness. In unifying people through the gift of love all built upon our discipleship to Jesus Christ. And that we would grow in faith, number, and impact.

**What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

As our world is mired in identity questions (Who am I? Why am I?) — I believe articulating, cultivating, and living into and out of our baptismal identity as a continental church, local congregation, and as disciples of Jesus is a vital part of how we interact and witness with the world around us.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its mission districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church?**

Pray. Read through Scripture together — an NALC reading plan. Leverage technology as a communication device more fully. For example, develop a blog, contributed by pastors, that cultivates discipleship — based on Sunday's lectionary readings.



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"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together... but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" Hebrews 10:24-25.

### **Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

Most vividly, through the Word and through relationships. In reading God's Word, it comes alive most clearly in seeing the Gospel connections that span the two testaments and in this the Holy Spirit speaks to my current reality. In relationships with others I see God's handiwork – live better into Christ's "fullest." I learn more of Christ's unending pursuit and I grow, on most days, to shine and reflect the light of Jesus a little more. I fail often, but His grace is sufficient and unending.

### **List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

"You come at me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied..." (1 Samuel 17:45). These are some of the last words that Goliath heard as David picked up his sling and a stone. David's confidence came not from himself. It was the Lord alone and His power that David rested in fully. This passage draws to mind so many others – Elisha and the angel army; The raising of the dry bones; and 1 John 4:4. These all bring me hope because the battle belongs to the Lord. They give me strength and a roadmap as I encounter insurmountable situations.

## **THE REV. DIETER W. PUNT**

*Troutman, North Carolina*



**Congregational Membership:** Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church (Troutman, North Carolina)

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Basic Biographical Information:** I have been married to Pastor Heidi W. Punt for 31 years. We have three adult children Angelique (Jan), Nadia, and Michael. Educated in South Africa (M.Div. equivalent degree) at the Lutheran House of Studies in Pietermaritzburg, two and a half years of internship, both in RSA and

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USA. Served congregations as a solo pastor, associate pastor, and lead pastor. I have served a single parish congregation and a four-point parish planted a mission congregation. We moved to the USA in 2000 and have served two congregations.

I love to tinker, I am an avid DIY'er, part-time woodworker, and metalworker. I love summer days and being on the boat on the lake.

### **Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position.**

Over the past years, I have served in many different administrative positions at the local and synodical, and national church levels.

- Chair of global missions for the Central Southern Illinois Synod for six years, and vice chair for three more.
- Vice and chair of the local ministerium in Pontiac, IL, for at least five years.
- Served the NALS for a six-year term on the Board of Regents.
- In my previous call, I was blessed to not only be a pastor but help with oversight of a preschool that had 120 scholars in it.
- 2008: When Pontiac, IL, was struck by bad flooding I, with several community leaders, formed a board to help plan for the rebuilding of our town as well as prepare for future disasters.

### **What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

I believe one of the gifts God has granted me is to do administrative work, and with God all things are possible. He has given me the gifts and ability and I get to serve His kingdom as He sees fit. I am always open to new opportunities that God is leading me to go and serve. The gift of administration and teaching are instrumental for a church that wants to make disciples on every level as the Body of Christ.

### **What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

Growth is one of the challenges. Growing into who we are and Who's we are. Growing our identity in the landscape we find ourselves. Growing a clear understanding of where it is God wants us to be. Growing in the diversity of worship

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styles and being tolerant with one another, not compromising the Gospel but knowing we are blessed with a diverse understanding of doing worship and proclaiming the truth of the Gospel.

### **What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

It is my hope that we will remain faithful to the Word of God. In a landscape of constant pressure, we will not give into the culture of our day. As one who was blessed to come and study in the USA, it is my hope to open more avenues for orthodox students in the world to be able to do the same. To grow our alliance with other orthodox church bodies in and outside of the USA.

### **What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

That is simple — EDUCATION. The education of faithful pastors to serve God and His kingdom as well as educational opportunities for catechetical workers and evangelists. And educate our congregations to look at serving God in multi-congregation parishes.

### **What tangible actions can the NALC, its mission districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church?**

Not to look inward all the time — but have an outward focus in ministry. Trusting that God will provide, and be diligent in teaching stewardship of time, talents, and gifts. Be the disciples of God and go and do the mission of God.

### **Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

God is active in my life as I read His word, take time to be covered by His word, and as I allow the Holy Spirit to work in me through the people God places in my daily journey. Being open and receptive to the places He sends me and the opportunities to serve Him. This all starts with an active daily devotional and prayer life. Thus, being in His word daily.

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### List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.

John 14:6 – Jesus is the way, truth, and life. Jesus is the only way that leads us to God. Jesus is the truth – through Him, we know the truth about our sins and how He has dealt with them through his death on the cross. Jesus gives us new life – new life right now and eternal life in the future. There is only one way to live – and that is through the truth of Christ.

### THE REV. DR. DOUGLAS SCHOELLES

*Roanoke, Indiana*



**Congregational Membership:** St. John's Lutheran Church (Ft. Wayne, Indiana)

**Occupation:** Lead Pastor

**Basic Biographical Information:** Married to Debra. Children (4); Bethany, Richard, Joshua, Rebekah.

**Education:** D.Min. – Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky, 5/09; Beeson Fellowship for Biblical Preaching and Church Leadership; Dissertation: “Equipping Parents to Be Spiritual Leaders in the Home”; M.Div. – Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio, 5/92; B.A. – The University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 12/86

**Hobbies:** History, Travel, Biking, Cross-Fit, Skiing. **Forced Hobby:** Yardwork

### Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position.

Lead Pastor – St. John’s, Ft. Wayne, IN, 11/20–present.

Initiated revitalization and mission in exurbia church.

Lead Pastor – Concordia, Kingsburg, CA, 11/15–11/20

Guided growth in discipleship and mission.

Mission Developer – Resurrection, Haslet, TX, 7/03–11/15.

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Started a church from scratch, developed multicultural congregation.

Lead Pastor – Triumphant, San Antonio, TX, 5/95–5/02.

Revitalized suburban congregation to grow in numbers and in mission.

Pastor – Trinity Evangelical, Miles, TX, 7/92–5/95.

Brought healing and growth to rural congregation.

### **What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

- Crisis tested faith and the joy of being a redeemed sinner.
- Ability to hear and preach Scripture.
- Passion for Christ and His people.
- Being teachable and willing to invest and mentor others.
- Visioning and tactical strategies for implementing ministries.
- Recruiting and developing leaders.

### **What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

- Having enough pastors to serve our congregations.
- Demographic decline in congregations.
- Facing an increasingly hostile neo-pagan society.
- Sense of urgency for the Gospel in congregations.
- Increasing costs for doing ministry with stagnant or declining revenues in congregations.
- Significant number of small congregations that struggle to exist, let alone thrive.

### **What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

- Raise up enough pastors and congregational leaders to serve our congregations.

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- Increase the discipleship depth of congregations to expand their capacity to care for people.
- Strengthen leaders in adherence to the Scriptures in midst of overwhelming societal opposition.
- Ignite a missional spirit in congregations that moves them from compliancy to compassion.
- Make faith in the home a primary goal for every NALC member in order to pass on the faith to the younger generations.

### **What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

- Raising up new pastors.
- Strengthening pastors and their families.
- Equipping pastors and leaders to sustain confessional Lutheran practice in the midst of societal malaise and hostility.
- Equipping pastors and leaders to initiate and implement discipling and missional efforts.
- Fostering fellowship between congregations, especially in the west where distances are an obstacle, through cooperative efforts.

### **What tangible actions can the NALC, its mission districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church?**

- Begin issuing the call to ordained ministry earlier in life (6–13 years old).
- Translate missional initiatives into practical processes for congregations, regardless of size.
- Find ways to encourage and equip small membership congregations to become missional.

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- Strengthening pastors and their families who are the leading edge of ministry and mission.
- Equipping congregations to teach parents to teach the faith.
- Train and equip every congregation, regardless of size, how to enact the NALC Life-to-Life Discipleship initiative.

### **Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

Every day I am in the Word and prayer. The LORD speaks to me in the Word for every day. The Word brings me to the Father, Son, and Spirit who redeem, call, and love me. I am always looking for ways to have an attitude of gratitude for the blessings in my life. The LORD lifts my eyes to see His presence. I am blessed to be a servant of God's people.

### **List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

"If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you" (Romans 8:11). The essential power of the Gospel is raising the dead to new life. This verse sustained me after a near fatal hit and run accident on my way to teach Baptism to an unchurched couple.

"But we have this treasure in earthen jars so it may be made clear that this all-surpassing power is from God and does not come from us" (2 Corinthians 4:7). Sorry, can't just do one. I am completely reliant upon the Lord for my faith and ministry. All glory goes to God. I am a cracked pot.

### **THE REV. PAMELA THORSON**

*Erskine, Minnesota*



**Congregational Membership:** Grace Lutheran Church  
(Erskine, Minnesota)

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Basic Biographical Information:** I've been married to Kevin, US Army (MAJ Retired) for 45 years. We raised four sons as we moved with the Army around the US and Germany. We have one

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daughter-in-law and three terrific grandchildren. Hobbies: Making music, flower gardening, and fixing things.

Education: M.Div. from Asbury Theological Seminary. Lutheran affiliation through Luther and Trinity Lutheran Seminaries. Post-graduate work in Preaching and Leadership.

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position.**

Leadership in the military chapel community. Local church leadership in Anglican, Lutheran, and interdenominational ministries. Fourteen years as a part-time community hospital chaplain. Mission work with Native American and with the Lutheran Church in Malawi. Heartland Mission District (Kentucky/Indiana) formation as clergy member and two terms as dean. Vision, planning, and setting in motion the groundwork for support and communication for the pastors, churches, and people of the mission district. Served on the NALC Restructuring Task Force.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

Spiritual Gifts: prayer, vision, discernment, compassionate pastoral care, teaching.

Skills: I have served in many contexts on various councils and boards gaining skills in administration, leadership, and planning. I am told that I am a good preacher, teacher, communicator, and encourager. I enjoy collaborative teamwork.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

A major challenge is to reach the unchurched with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our members must learn to tell the Gospel while sharing our lives as easily as we talk about the weather. It is that simple. Evangelism training will help the church to grow disciples who make disciples. We face challenges in this changing world which increasingly becomes hostile to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We must keep to the mission for which we were formed on the pure message of salvation in Jesus Christ.

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

I hope we will continue to focus on the unity we have in Christ as the central mission of discipleship. Our mission field in the local community can grow where all our



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churches engage neighborhoods on the ground level working with and for everyone. Our mission has not changed, but engagement of more of our members in the wonderful work of reaching lives with the hope of Jesus Christ is an exciting and reachable goal.

### **What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

The 2020 Vision has given focus and direction. Church planting is a major priority which should utilize emerging models of ministry as fits the area and people involved. These may reflect the early church's house meetings with larger gatherings.

Another priority is the equipping of the church for ministry. As a church, we can expand training at the congregational level through churchwide efforts utilizing our areas and mission districts.

### **What tangible actions can the NALC, its mission districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church?**

- At the national, area, and mission district levels we can provide training events throughout the year on various topics that congregations identify.
- Increased avenues for communication within the mission districts and areas. This can be done through email updates, webpages, and group networking software such GroupMe.
- Congregations do not all understand the structure of the NALC. Regular explanation of various topics would help and could be in simple manual form. Example: suggested benevolence to the national and mission districts.

### **Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

I begin the day most often with the Daily Office readings and prayer and a section of a book (currently Dietrich Bonhoeffer). I pray with the staff upon arrival at church. I have set times for devotion and prayer. But living in the Spirit is a joy of simple communion. As the day unfolds, I seek to go where I'm led and ask for direction and wisdom for those whom I encounter.

**List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight” Proverbs 3:5–6 ESV.

This reminds me that all the intelligence I have cannot match God’s wisdom and understanding. Trust the Lord with ALL the heart. God has the answers – I ought not get sidetracked wondering and trying to plot a way through a difficulty that I cannot fathom. God is faithful and will make the path straight.

## Nominees for Executive Council (Lay)

**MR. SCOTT KRAMER**

*Boerne, Texas*



**Congregational Membership:** St. John Lutheran Church  
(Boerne, Texas)

**Occupation:** Retired

**Basic Biographical Information:** Scott and his wife Diane have been married for 49 years; they have two daughters and two grandchildren, all members of St. John Lutheran in Boerne, Texas. He holds a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Missouri and an M.B.A. from the University of Utah. His hobbies are model railroading, antique tractors, and running marathons.

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position.**

Scott is a lifelong Lutheran. He has been a member of seven Lutheran churches in five states, serving in urban, suburban, small town and rural settings. Scott has served as president, vice president and member of call, mission, endowment, administration and property committees. He has also served on many corporate boards, public and private, from startups to companies on the major stock exchanges. He currently serves on the board of a major telecommunications

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company; he also manages Kramer Lone Tree Farms, established by his great grandfather 133 years ago.

### **What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

Scott has been blessed with a gift for strategic thinking, leading teams, and innovation. From his childhood, he has witnessed how the church's long-term planning has borne good fruit, the direct result of patient strategic thinking. He has been blessed with skill for leading teams, enabling groups to exceed the results of their individual contributions. On the NALC Executive Committee, he has chaired multiple task forces and committees; he is currently chairman of the EC's Long Range Planning Committee and a member of Finance Committee.

### **What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

We need more pastors. We must continue stepping up to this massive challenge with our comprehensive strategy of candidate identification, education, and ministry training. We must reinvigorate all our congregations to address the needs of a society which needs to hear the Gospel – and we must proudly stand on the Scriptures, in a political climate that devalues religious institutions or is openly hostile toward them.

### **What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

My hope and prayer is that the NALC can feed and nourish our people with the Gospel, that we are well known for preaching and teaching the Scriptures. At the same time, I pray that the NALC can bolster outreach to those high growth areas of the world, spreading the Good News to all nations. By expanding on our solid foundation in North America, we can strongly project the Gospel and change many lives.

### **What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

The NALC should put a priority on making and growing disciples through our existing congregations. The NALC should continue to provide tools and resources to change lives in North America and worldwide. And, of course, the NALC should continue the progress in building a strong, vibrant seminary. Our goal is to provide

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the best Lutheran seminary education in America; pastors and teachers are absolutely crucial for our future.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its mission districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church?**

We must continue our vigorous implementation of the 2020 Vision for the NALC. It is a comprehensive and closed loop, with progress monitoring as well as fund raising. We must continue intentional, focused fundraising for our seminary, being unyielding in our determination to raise up future pastors.

**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

I experience God in Bible study and prayer time in my daily life. The Bible is an amazing book; in my seventh decade of reading it, I continue to learn each time I read or hear the words. Prayer is a calming influence in my life, where I am reminded that God remains on the throne. The NALC devotional podcasts have been very valuable to my spiritual growth; they enable me to hear scripture and meditation while on the go.

**List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

In honor of my great grandmother, Anna Paulsen, I choose Psalm 86:11 – “Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name.” It was her confirmation verse on April 6, 1884, where Pastor Matzon officiated in Sieverstedt, Germany. She immigrated to America soon after. And she attended my Baptism in Iowa, 70 years later.

## Nominees for Court of Adjudication

**THE REV. THOMAS M. BRODBECK**

*Springfield, Ohio*



**Congregational Membership:** Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church (Springfield, Ohio)

**Occupation:** Clergy

**Basic Biographical Information:** Married 43 years to Karen; father of three; grandfather of six. M. Div., MCM, CAGS. I enjoy woodworking and reading presidential biographies.

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position.**

Served 25 years in denominational roles where he bore responsibility for resolving conflict in congregations; eight years as a member of the Ohio P-CAT team; eight years as an adjunct professor in conflict resolution at the GSCM, Huntington, IN, and 10 years as founding consultant of “Pastoral Leadership Academy,” a consulting service to congregations experiencing conflict.

Doctoral work focused on matters of church conflict and resolution, with specialized training from the Alban Institute.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

Pastor Tom has the gifts of leadership, faith, proclamation, and discernment. The gift of discernment is especially important as one processes the emotional components of a dispute. His leadership and proclamation gifts allow him to speak truth into troubled situations.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

Recruiting growing, developing, and supporting new clergy and expanding the kingdom through new church starts and the revitalization of existing ones.

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

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It would solidify its understanding of the necessity of discipleship as the foundation for spiritual growth and development, and find renewed passion for carrying the Good News next door to those who need to know Jesus in a personal way.

**What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

The Great Commission. The rest is merely a distraction from the single mission of the Church.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its mission districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church?**

At the mission district level, pastors need to regularly meet together and hold each other accountable for their calling and commitment to the mission of the church. At the local church level, we need to refocus our efforts on the essentials and willingly sacrifice that which does not advance the mission. The denomination needs to set the course, emphasizing, as it has, discipleship, faithfulness to the Scriptures and the development of clergy (new and existing) who know Jesus.

**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

My morning devotional time is an essential. I have recently begun to add to it extended time for silence and solitude so that I can clearly hear God's voice as He speaks to me.

**List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

My life verse is Philippians 3:10-11 — I want to know Christ — yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. My greatest aim is to know Jesus in all that might mean. I want to be stretched, challenged, humbled and broken so that I might stand before Him and my congregation with confident assurance that my life and message proclaim Him and Him only.

**THE REV. LESLIE HAINES, STS**

*Fort Wayne, Indiana*



**Congregational Membership:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Lake Township (Fort Wayne, Indiana)

**Occupation:** Chaplain, Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries, Inc. Executive Director

**Basic Biographical Information:** I am single, with one cat and two dogs. Education includes: A.A. in Music, B.A. in Criminal Justice, graduated with a M.A. from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. I served 33 years in the Army (MP). My hobbies include creating period specific military miniatures (WWI) and studying both military history and British history.

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position.**

In my role as a pastoral counselor, I work with veterans and their family members who have unique challenges and experiences well outside that of most civilians. When dealing with sometimes very troubling moral issues, I have to get down to the root cause of what is going on – I challenge and educate with a goal of bringing repentance, and reconciliation to the offender and those offended.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

I believe my particular gifts and talents are spiritual discernment and the ability to look at issues from all perspectives. With that, I look at problems with the view of finding a solution or resolution when possible. I work well with conflict resolution.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

One of the biggest and most divisive challenges we must address is deciding whether we are truly a Lutheran confessional body regarding what we teach and believe. With that, we have to address the issues of pastoral standards both educationally and doctrinally, including those already ordained pastors who come from different church traditions. Accountability for what we teach and believe cannot occur until these issues are decisively addressed.

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

Many people in the church tend to define the word mission with leaving the country to go to some third-world country, all the while ignoring what is next door to them. My prayer is that, before we lose another mission start or congregation, the larger church would seek to find ways to assist, invest, nurture, and strengthen the churches we currently have. This is not to say we should not go to third-world countries, but we need to look closely at how our missions are planned.

**What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

The priorities include deciding whether we are truly a Lutheran confessional body in what we teach and believe. Address the issue of pastoral standards both educationally and doctrinally, including those already ordained pastors who come from different church traditions. Strengthen our churches so that they will be effective in their mission outreach. We need to also encourage and strengthen our relationships with church bodies we are in pulpit/altar fellowship with.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its mission districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church?**

The NALC needs to review the amount of necessary, versus costly unnecessary, internal and overseas travel – as well as be better stewards of our resources. Before we add another layer of bureaucracy by adding "regional deans" we need to first allow deans some authority over the churches in their mission district. If we are going to add regional deans, then they need to be elected by the deans – not appointed from the top. Pastors must be faithful to the tenets of our faith and held accountable for doing so.

**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

As a counselor I see God's activity in the lives of those I work with. I see Him in the ministry opportunities He gives me and my staff serving Him as we care for those we are called to minister to. I've seen Him take some of the seemingly most hopeless cases and completely turn them around. I feel His presence even during my toughest days.



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### List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.

Psalm 23:4. This psalm has been an inspiration, comfort and promise for me that has strengthened me in combat, and during life's most challenging moments. I wear a dog tag inscribed: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (KJV).

### THE REV. RYAN HENKEL

*Emmons, Minnesota*



**Congregational Membership:** Emmons Lutheran Church  
(Emmons, Minnesota)

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Basic Biographical Information:** Married to Natalie (five years). Two children: Jonah (2) and Hannah (newborn). I have my B.A. in Religion from Wartburg College and my M.Div. from the NALS/Trinity School for Ministry. Hobbies: professional singer (tenor), sightseeing, hiking, biking, camping, canoeing, fishing, hunting, golfing, carpentry/woodworking, cooking, and baking.

### Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position.

A pastor for three years. I play an active role within our area ministerial association. I serve as the local fire department chaplain. I am one of the clergy council members of the NALC Iowa Mission District Council as well as our youth mission trip planning team. In the last three years, I have written/rewritten policies and procedures to make positive and needed changes within several organizations I oversee.

### What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?

I have been blessed with the gifts of administration and leadership. I have excellent listening skills and wisdom in seeking to understand each situation. I am always thinking and praying about how to serve the whole representation of the Church best. I have the gift of discernment and a pastor's loving heart for those in crisis. God

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has brought me to seemingly impossible situations but has blessed me immensely with the gifts to accomplish each task.

### **What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

Mass retirement of NALC pastors – need for pastors and even a diaconal ministry. As a pastor, I am constantly affirming the gifts and talents of my parishioners for ministry within the church, not just pastoral ministry. To connect with our youth/young families – we live in the days when going to church for worship is no longer a priority within the norms of society for young families.

### **What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

To see each NALC church connected with each other in mission districts (MD), their mission area, and the national church. One of the great opportunities utilized in the Iowa Mission District is the annual youth mission trip that brings youth together across the mission district to work together for a week in a devastated area from a natural disaster. This model can be utilized for every project/task to bring churches together for the betterment of society.

### **What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

Cultivating candidates for ordained ministry as well as strong lay leaders. Develop camping ministries throughout the U.S. and academic relationships with colleges, perhaps even starting our own college/university someday. Being a recent grad, there is a pressing need for a solid biblical foundation for our young people if we continue to grow into the next era of ministry as biblical Lutherans.

### **What tangible actions can the NALC, its mission districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church?**

My favorite opportunity is being the hands and feet of Christ on mission trips. I believe that going on these mission trips leads people to grow their faith and possibly affirm their callings into ministry. This is exactly where our bodies are put to work because we are physically helping those around us on these trips and people are able to witness selfless acts of love to help others in their time of need.

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### **Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

Each day is a gift from God because I'm simultaneously a saint and a sinner, but through God's grace I am forgiven each day. He provides me the courage, strength, patience, and love for all that I do. In my daily devotions and prayers, I take time to listen to where God is calling me to spend time to invest in the Church, her people, and those that do not yet know her.

### **List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

My favorite Scripture verse is John 8:12 – "Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." This is my confirmation verse and speaks directly to me becoming a pastor, bringing Christ's light to all who walk in the darkness of this world.