



## 2023 Lutheran Week to meet in Oklahoma City

Lutherans from throughout North America will gather Aug. 7-11 at the Omni Oklahoma City Hotel in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, for the 2023 Lutheran Week of the North American Lutheran Church around the theme “Missio Dei: The Work and Mission of God.”

Lutheran Week, the biennial gathering of the church, revolves around the NALC Mission Convocation.

Other events are held in conjunction with this every-other-year meeting of pastors and delegates representing the congregations of the NALC.

The 2023 NALC Mission Convocation will be held Wednesday, Aug. 9, through Friday, Aug. 11.

Perhaps the most significant event of this year's convocation will be the election of the bishop who will lead the NALC for the next four years.

The Rev. Dr. Dan Selbo, NALC bishop, and the Rev. Dr. David Wendel, assistant to the bishop for ministry and ecumenism, have been nominated for bishop. Additional nominations for bishop are possible at the convocation.



Bishop Selbo was elected in 2019 and is eligible for reelection. An NALC bishop is able to serve a maximum of three consecutive four-year terms.

This year's Mission Convocation will be a mission-oriented and mission-driven gathering. There will be three “On Fire for Mission” sessions — focusing on domestic mission, international mission and mission related to congregational life.

Each day, these two-hour focus times will begin with Bible study and devotional periods, followed by presentations on the theme, with extended time for table talk, reflection, breakout sessions and strategies for “taking it home” to congregations.

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The convocation will begin at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday with a Service of the Word.

The worship service will be followed by introductions and organizational matters. There will be an introduction to the election process for bishop and the opportunity for additional nominations for bishop.

Bishop Selbo will present his report to the convocation on Wednesday afternoon.

Wednesday's "On Fire for Mission" focus is congregational life.

Mission district and mission region gatherings will take place on Wednesday evening.

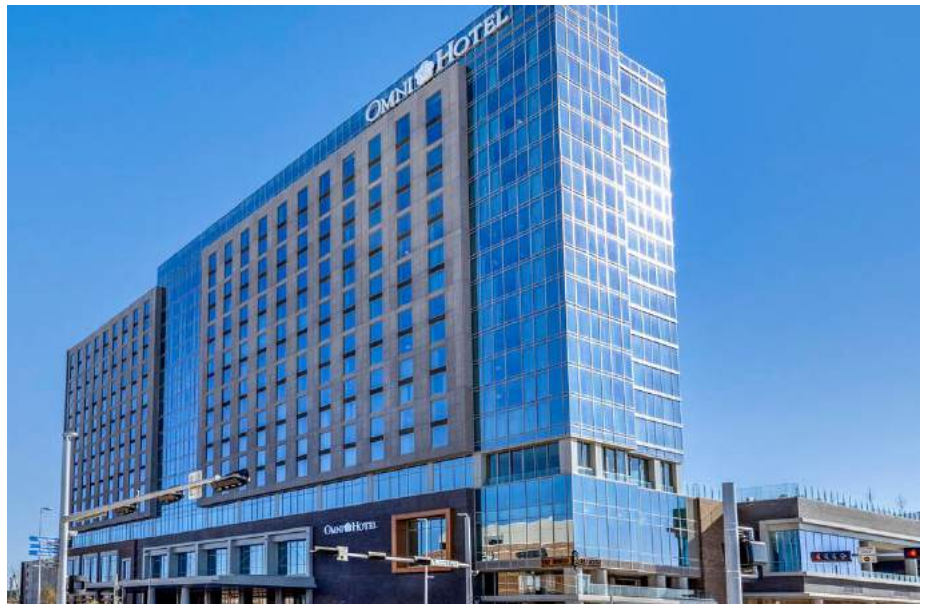
Thursday will begin with an "On Fire for Mission" focus on domestic mission.

Thursday morning will include recognition of military chaplains and significant ordination anniversaries and congregational anniversaries. There will also be introduction of new NALC pastors and those preparing for ordained ministry. Pastors who have died since the last convocation also will be honored.

Thursday will also include a presentation from the North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS). The convocation will note the appointment of the Rev. Dr. Nathan Howard Yoder to the NALS faculty as director of Lutheran Studies at the new NALS Network School at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Dr. Yoder follows the Rev. Dr. Mary Havens as director of Lutheran Studies. Dr. Havens, also an NALC pastor, will continue to teach as an adjunct professor. Dr. Havens will be honored by the convocation for her teaching ministry.

The first ballot for bishop, Executive Council and Court of Adjudication is scheduled to take place on Thursday afternoon.



***All of the events of Lutheran Week will be held at the Omni Oklahoma City Hotel.***

The proposed agenda has a time for devotional presentations by the candidates prior to the first ballot if there are only two candidates for bishop. The devotional presentations are followed by a question-and-answer session with the candidates. If there are more than two candidates, the candidates receiving the most votes on the first ballot will address the convocation on Thursday afternoon if there is not an election on the first ballot.

Thursday afternoon will feature an update on the 2020 Vision. There will also be greetings from ecumenical and inter-Lutheran guests.

Thursday afternoon will conclude with opportunities to attend breakout sessions on a variety of topics.

A banquet is planned for Thursday evening. Featured entertainment will be Randy Stubbs, a new NALC global worker, and his family from Tanzania. Randy is a church musician who trains church musicians and pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania at



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***Randy Stubbs***



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Tumaini University in Makumira, Tanzania, the primary training school for pastors in East Africa.

A choir from the school was scheduled to attend this year's convocation, but they have been unable to get visas to enter the United States.

The banquet will include a video presentation honoring two NALC scholars who died in 2022: the Rev. Dr. James Nestingen and the Rev. Dr. Jacob Larry Yoder.

The banquet will also honor Anne Gleason and Becky Seifert for their service to the NALC.

Anne Gleason has worked for the NALC since before the church was constituted in 2010. She worked for the WordAlone Network and Lutheran CORE prior to the formation of the NALC. She has been the primary financial official and support staff for all of those organizations. She is expected to conclude her work for the NALC later in 2023.

Becky Seifert served as the assistant to executive staff from 2011 to 2023 at the NALC Ohio office and later from her home after that office was closed.



***More than 400 people attended the 2021 NALC Mission Convocation in Corpus Christi, Texas. This was the last in-person convocation. An online meeting was held in 2022 to approve the budget and hold elections as part of the NALC's transition to holding convocations every other year. Constitutional amendments moving to biennial convocations were approved by the 2020 convocation and then ratified by congregations.***

The 2021 NALC Mission Convocation voted to support plans for a central NALC denominational office in the Dallas-Fort Worth Area and to move support staff to the Texas office. The office opened in 2022, and the bishop and general secretary moved to Texas.

The NALC is finalizing plans for its permanent office near the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport. NALC leaders and staff have been working in a shared office facility in Grapevine, Texas.

Friday will begin with an "On Fire for Mission" focus on international mission.

Friday will include consideration of the proposed NALC budget as well as reports from a variety of task forces and ministries. The reports and proposed budget will be available online at [lutheranweek.com](https://lutheranweek.com).

Second and third ballots for the elections process will take place on Friday morning.

The convocation is scheduled to conclude with a service of Holy Communion at 3 p.m. on Friday. This service will include the installation of the those who are elected at the convocation.



**Anne Gleason**



**Becky Seifert**

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**More than 800 delegates and visitors attended the 2019 NALC Convocation in Indianapolis, Indiana, when the last election for bishop was held.**

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## **Elections**

In addition to electing the NALC bishop to a four-year term, the convocation will also elect one lay person and one pastor to four-year terms on the NALC Executive Council and two members of the Court of Adjudication.

Julia Hartfelder of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Westerville, Ohio, and Scott Kramer, a member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Boerne, Texas, are nominated for the lay person position on Executive Council. Scott Kramer is currently serving on the Executive Council.

Five pastors have been nominated for the ordained minister position on Executive Council. They are:

- + The Rev. John Conrad, pastor of First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Floresville, Texas.
- + The Rev. Dr. Scott Ness, pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Fayetteville, Georgia.
- + The Rev. Dieter Punt, pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Troutman, North Carolina.
- + The Rev. Dr. Douglas Schoelles, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana.
- + The Rev. Pamela Thorson, pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Erskine, Minnesota.

The Executive Council functions as the board of directors for the NALC, providing leadership for the church between convocations.

The Rev. Bassam Abdallah of Prospect, Kentucky, is not seeking reelection to the Executive Council.

Three pastors have been nominated for two positions on the Court of Adjudication:

- + The Rev. Thomas Brodbeck, pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Springfield, Ohio.
- + The Rev. Leslie Haines, executive director of Lutheran Military Veterans and Family Ministries in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She is a member of St. John's Lutheran Church of Lake Township, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Pastor Haines is currently serving on the Court of Adjudication.
- + The Rev. Ryan Henkel, pastor of Emmons Lutheran Church in Emmons, Minnesota.

The Court of Adjudication hears appeals from disciplinary decisions and resolves questions of interpretation of NALC governing documents. Both pastors and lay members may be elected to the Court of Adjudication.

Biographical information on the nominees has been published in accordance with the requirement of the NALC Constitution. It is available online at [thenalc.org/nominationbios](http://thenalc.org/nominationbios).

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# 2023 Convocation Nominees

## Bishop



*Dan Selbo*



*David Wendel*

## Executive Council - Lay



*Julia Hartfelder*



*Scott Kramer*

## Executive Council - Ordained Minister



*John Conrad*



*Scott Ness*



*Dieter Punt*



*Doug Schoelles*



*Pamela Thorson*

## Court of Adjudication



*Thomas Brodbeck*



*Leslie Haines*



*Ryan Henkel*

# 2023 Braaten-Benne Lectures

## “God the Father Creates ... in His Image”

The 2023 Carl E. Braaten and Robert D. Benne Lectures in Theology, a mainstay of NALC Lutheran Week, are set for Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning, Aug. 8-9, at the Omni Oklahoma City Hotel in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

The theme for this year's lectures is “God the Father Creates ... in His Image (Genesis 1:27).” This is the second half of a study on God the Father begun in 2021, and the final installment of a six-year focus on the Holy Trinity.

Theological anthropology will be at the forefront of the discussion. To be created in the image of God – what does this mean for us? According to the apostolic faith, what is the nature of humanity, and what kinds of moral challenges does the Church face in this respect when it comes to being in, but not of, the world?

The lectures from the 2021 and 2023 Bratten-Benne Lectures in Theology will be published together in a single book. Those who registered for either year's lectures will receive a printed copy.

This year's speakers and their lectures are:

**“A Remedy for the Mind and a Gymnasium for the Soul: Why Theology Conferences are Good, but Not Enough for What Ails Us.”** – Dr. David Luy, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at the North American Lutheran Seminary and Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania. He has published a book entitled *Dominus Mortis: Martin Luther on the Incorruptibility of God in Christ* and has contributed to various theological journals and encyclopedias.

**“Diversity, Inclusivity and Equity: The New Trinity that Undermines Christian Anthropology and What the Church Can Do About It”** – Dr. Robert Benne, Jordan-Trexler



**Robert Benne**



**Paul Blowers**



**David Luy**



**Micky Mattox**



**Gilbert Meilaender**

Professor of Religion Emeritus and Research Associate in Religion and Philosophy at Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia. He has taught for 58 years and is currently Professor of Christian Ethics for the online Lutheran Institute of Theology. He has lectured and written widely on the relation of Christianity and culture. He is the author of 14 books including *The Paradoxical Vision: A Public Theology for the Twenty-first Century* and *Good and Bad Ways to Think about Religion and Politics*.

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# Braaten-Benne Lectures

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**“A Blessing Love Gives Into Our Arms: The Meaning of Procreation”** — The Rev. Dr. Gilbert Meilaender, Senior Research Professor of Theology at Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Indiana. He is the author of many books and articles in the field of Christian ethics including *Friendship: A Study in Theological Ethics*; *Bioethics: A Primer for Christians*; and *The Way that Leads There: Augustinian Reflections on the Christian Life*.

**“Ratzinger v. Luther? Logos, Cosmos, Anthropos”** — Dr. Mickey L. Mattox, Flack Family Foundation Chair and Professor of Theology at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan. His interests include Martin Luther, the history of biblical exegesis, the doctrine of creation and ecumenical theology. His books include *Luther at Leipzig* and *Changing Churches*. He is presently writing a book on Luther’s cosmology entitled *Sacred Cosmos: Martin Luther’s Medieval Catholic Worldview*.

**“A Christoform and Cruciform Cosmology: The Shaping of the Doctrine of Creation in the Early Church”** — Dr. Paul Blowers, Dean E. Walker Professor of Church History at Emmanuel Christian Seminary at Milligan University in Milligan, Tennessee. He is a scholar of patristics and early Christianity. He is a former President of the North American Patristics Society and Associate Editor of the *Journal of Early Christian Studies*. He is the author of *Drama of the Divine Economy: Creator and Creation in Early Christian Theology and Piety* and *Maximus the Confessor: Jesus Christ and the Transfiguration of the World*.

The North American Lutheran Seminary will host a reception on Tuesday evening starting at 5:30 p.m.

Registration fee for the Braaten-Benne lectures is \$150 and includes lunch on Wednesday. Go to [lutheranweek.com](http://lutheranweek.com) to register or for more information.

# Lutheran Week

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No more nominations are possible for Executive Council and Court of Adjudication. The constitution requires nominations for those positions to be submitted 45 days prior to the convocation.

Registration fee for the 2023 NALC Mission Convocation is \$275 and includes lunch on both Thursday and Friday and the banquet on Thursday night.

## Other Lutheran Week Events

**The Carl E. Braaten and Robert D. Benne Lectures in Theology** are set for Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning, Aug. 8-9. Registration fee is \$150 and includes lunch on Wednesday. (See Page 6 for more information.)

**A Faith Formation Festival** is set for Tuesday, Aug. 8, and Wednesday, Aug. 9. The festival promises to include “everything you want to know about youth and family ministry.” Cost is \$120 and includes lunch on both days. The Faith Formation Festival begins at 8 a.m. on Tuesday and concludes with lunch on Wednesday. (See Page 8 for more information.)

**The Women of the NALC Gathering** is on Tuesday, Aug. 8. It begins at 8:30 a.m. and concludes at 5:30 p.m. Registration fee is \$100 and includes lunch.

**Lutheran Theologians for the Church Conference**, a gathering of NALC and other Lutheran theologians for formal and informal theological discussion, will be held on Monday, Aug. 7. This gathering, formerly known as “younger theologians,” is held as a part of the NALC’s commitment to raise up a new generation of Lutheran scholars.

## Registration

Registration is open for the NALC’s 2023 Lutheran Week. All events are open to delegates and visitors. Go to [lutheranweek.com](http://lutheranweek.com) to register or for more information.

# Faith Formation Festival

The NALC Youth and Family Ministry has begun a new event series to provide resources to pastors, Christian education directors, youth leaders, Sunday school teachers and anyone who works with children and youth in North America.

The Rev. Teresa Peters, NALC director of Youth and Family Ministry, works with churches around the country to host Faith Formation Festivals, teaching leaders how to navigate youth and family ministry in their congregations. This event will take place Tuesday and Wednesday, Aug. 8-9, during Lutheran Week in Oklahoma City.

Each event hosts a panel of speakers that cover topics such as tackling best practices for youth and family ministry, how to have honest conversations with teens about hard topics, commissioned living and more.

Speakers for the Faith Formation Festival and their topics include:

**The Rev. Teresa Peters**, NALC director of Youth and Family Ministry: Update on Youth and Family Ministry in the NALC.

**Heather Ruesch**, author, founder and speaker of “The You Matter Tour” and executive director of L3 Resources: Sexuality Mentality.

**The Rev. Jeff Milsten**, pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Dayton, Washington: God Matters Today.

**Emily A.**, Discipleship and Mobilization, World Mission Prayer League: Commissioned Living.



**Emily A.**



**Wondmagegn Bidire**



**Melanie Corn**



**Jeff Milsten**



**Teresa Peters**



**Heather Ruesch**

**Melanie Corn**, Christian education director at St. Peter Lutheran Church in Chapin, South Carolina, and Youth and Family Ministry specialist for the NALC: Solid Rock Program.

**Wondmagegn Udesa Bidire**, Children and Youth Ministry director for the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, a spiritual radio program producer, a preacher and teacher, and youth leadership trainer.

Registration fee for the Faith Formation Festival is \$120 and includes lunch on both days. Go to [lutheranweek.com](http://lutheranweek.com) to register or for more information.



# Purpose of our 2023 Lutheran Week and Mission Convocation

An inspiring, informative and energy-filled time together is being planned for our 2023 Lutheran Week in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Having moved to an every-other-year approach to our in-person gatherings, this year's convocation is the first time we have met together since Corpus Christi, Texas, in 2021. As a result, we don't want to miss the opportunity we have to take in the events being planned and the opportunities they afford.

The purpose of Lutheran Week, however, goes far beyond the events themselves. It's an opportunity to support and encourage each other, and to gain the support and encouragement that comes from our connection with Jesus. While many of us are in regular contact with colleagues and friends, many others are spread out, isolated and in need of support. During Lutheran Week, we have the chance to be there for one another — for prayer, for worship and for Christian fellowship — and to strengthen the unity that is ours in Christ.

The week begins with a gathering of our **Lutheran Theologians for the Church**. Formerly known as our younger theologians, this group of biblical scholars, theologians, historians and pastors come together for the purpose of thinking through and praying about ways in which the foundations of our faith and the biblical witness can be shared most effectively in a post-Christian culture.

They also take on the task of addressing what needs to happen in our congregations and seminaries to continue passing on the faith to future generations. Several of our current seminary professors took part in this event long before they became faculty members. I'd encourage you to be praying for this



## From the Bishop

Rev. Dr. Dan Selbo  
Bishop

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gathering as some of our strongest and most influential theologians come together to be strengthened and encouraged in the important work to which they have been called.

The week also includes a **Faith Formation Festival**, designed for anyone working with youth and family ministries. Led by Pastor Teresa Peters and Melanie Corn, the gathering is designed to encourage and support our collective ministry to and with our youth, as well as to offer practical ways for engaging and equipping our youngest members to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.

In a world in which our young people are being pulled in many directions and in which families are regularly challenged in setting priorities consistent with our faith, this gathering is designed to provide inspiration for our youth and tools and resources for families to remain connected daily and together in Christ.

**The Gathering of the Women of the NALC** is always one of the bright spots of Lutheran Week. This year's gathering, built around the theme of "Using Our Gifts to Serve," will include worship and Bible

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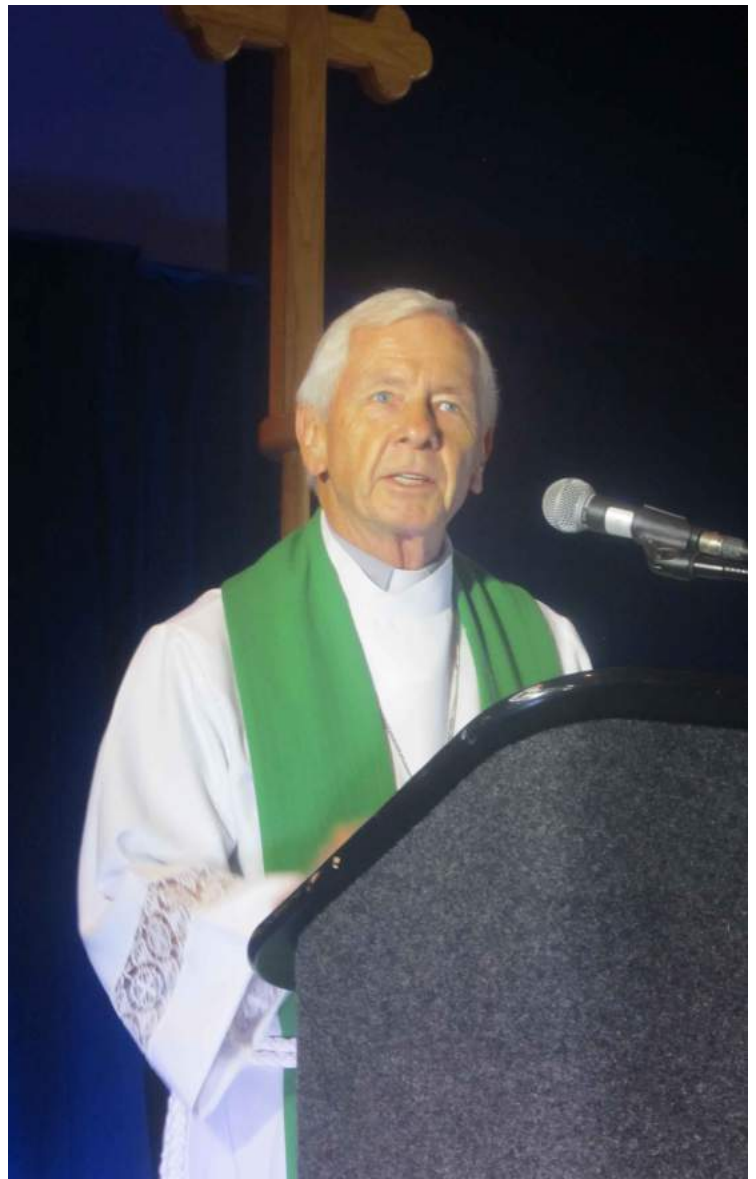
study, reports on activities from the past year, and ways to strengthen the ministry and witness of women throughout the NALC. Again, the reason for this event is to deepen the faith and the partnership our women have with each other in Jesus, and to strengthen the witness we offer together in Christ.

One of the highlights of the week of activities is the **Braaten-Benne Lectures in Theology**. The theme for the lectures this year is “God the Father Creates ... In His Image.” Based upon a few key verses from Genesis chapter one, the lectures will address the question of Christian anthropology and how, created in the image of God, we are called to live out and bear witness to the world as His representatives.

We have a strong group of presenters this year, helping us to think through and take hold of what it means for us to bear — in our very persons — the image of God. In a culture in which identity is defined and given in so many empty and short-sighted ways, it is essential that we cling to the identity we have in Christ, rooted in the love of God for us in Jesus, and the image we bear eternally as ones created by and for Him.

This all leads to our two-and-a-half-day **Mission Convocation**, beginning on Wednesday afternoon and continuing through Friday. This year’s gathering comes at the end of a six-year focus on the identity and work of our Triune God — two years on each of the three persons of the Trinity — Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The theme for this year’s convocation, “Missio Dei — The Mission of God,” grows out of that six-year focus. The identity of God as a Trinity is intimately connected to the Mission God is about, and has been about, from the time this world was first created, as well as the mission and commission He has given and entrusted to us. Our focus will be on exactly that — the way in which God has invited us into and claimed us for and allowed us the opportunity to be about a work that has its purpose and foundation in Him.



***Bishop Selbo preaching at the opening worship service of the 2021 NALC Mission Convocation.***

Throughout the course of the Mission Convocation, focused time and attention will be given to the mission we have in our congregations locally, domestically and globally. Three two-hour sessions will help us to zero in on the opportunities we have in each of those three areas. Several international guests — global workers and ecumenical leaders — will be joining us. It will be a challenging and encouraging time together.

We will also be doing some of the business of the church, which is just as crucial to our mission as anything else we do. The adopting of spending plans for our work and the electing of leaders to serve in

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some key areas of our shared life are among the important decisions we will be making.

This year we will also be making a decision about our next bishop and who we believe God is lifting up for us to serve in that role for the next four years. My encouragement to all of you is to read through the materials offered online, to be prayerfully listening to and discerning God's voice, and trusting the Holy Spirit to lead and to guide His Church in decisions and directions that would be honoring to Christ.

Throughout our time together, we'll be casting a vision for our future, making decisions that will enable us to stay on task and on course, and celebrating the many ways in which God has blessed us in our life together and is opening doors for our mission work in the years ahead.

If you have not already done so, I encourage you to finalize your travel plans and register for the Convocation. As always, if you need help attending this year's gathering, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Lutheran Week promises to be an inspiring, informative and energy-filled time together, filled with events to encourage and strengthen us in our faith. But the purpose of Lutheran Week goes far beyond the events themselves. It's an opportunity to support and encourage each other in our common and shared witness, and to gain the support and encouragement that comes from our connection with Jesus.

Blessings to all of you. I hope to see you in Oklahoma City. In the meantime, be praying for our church body, for our upcoming Lutheran Week, and for a renewed excitement and energy for sharing in "Missio Dei — The Mission of God."

# New pastors are approved

The NALC Candidacy Committee met on July 10-11 at the NALC offices in Grapevine, Texas.

Rick Robers and Therese Whitten were approved for ordination.

The committee also endorsed three seminarians for internship: Khrystle Sullivan, Dale Stanley and Quinn Silco.

Other candidates for ministry came to the meeting for ongoing discernment and progress updates.

The meeting included a message from Bishop Dan Selbo on the parable of the sower. Pastor David Wendel presented tips for a pastor's first call. There was lively discussion and time spent in prayer.



***Candidacy Committee members and candidates for ministry posed for a group photo.***

The Candidacy Committee will meet again on Oct. 9-10 in Columbus, Ohio.



# Seminarian week seeks to form future NALC pastors and build relationships

NALC seminary students from throughout North America gathered together June 12-16 for a week of intensive learning and fellowship at the North American Lutheran Seminary Center at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania.

All candidates seeking ordination in the NALC are required to take two one-week June residential intensive courses as part of their seminary education. The NALC covers most of the cost of this required week of learning together. An overnight retreat was held following the course.

One purpose of these June seminary weeks is for students to “learn together about and discuss the



***Dr. David Luy, NALS professor, teaches the June intensive class entitled, “The Patristic and Medieval Horizons of the Lutheran Reformation.”***

unique ethos of the North American Lutheran Church.”

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***North American Lutheran Seminary students and staff present for the June week posed for a group photo.***





**NALC students and faculty were able to join the other students from Trinity School for Ministry for morning and evening daily prayer.**

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Another purpose is to bring all of the NALC students together in the hope of building ongoing relationships with other future pastors that will continue throughout a lifetime of ordained ministry.

NALC students are studying at many different locations. The NALS Network consists of the Seminary Center at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, as well as Houses of Study at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama; Concordia Lutheran Seminary in Edmonton, Alberta;



**Dr. Alex Pierce (standing) and Dr. David Luy, both NALS professors at Trinity School for Ministry, taught the course.**

Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, and Houston, Texas; Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina; and Luther House of Study at Kairos University in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

This year's June course was entitled, "The Patristic and Medieval Horizons of the Lutheran Reformation." It was taught by Dr. David Luy and Dr. Alex Pierce, NALS professors at Trinity School for Ministry.

For more information on the NALS Network go to [thenals.org](http://thenals.org).



**The NALC students and faculty gathered separately in a smaller chapel for some daily prayer services so that they could use a Lutheran Book of Worship service.**



**Some of the students shared an evening meal together at a local restaurant. One of the goals of the June NALC seminarian gatherings is to build relationships among future NALC pastors.**

# Mission update from Randy Stubbs in Tanzania

**By Randy Stubbs**  
*NALC Global Worker*

*Mwendo* means “movement” in Swahili. We give thanks to God that this past quarter we have seen a lot of movement in many areas of our work at Tumaini University Makumira in Makumira, Tanzania.

From a humble start of four music students in the new music program in 2007, we are now finishing this semester with 60 music students – our largest number ever.

We also welcomed two new full-time permanent music teachers to our staff: Sophia Kuyenga (voice, piano and music education) and Dr. Excel Haonga (music technology, research and music education). They join our other four Tanzanians, all of whom are our graduates that have gone on for further studies. I round out the permanent music staff, but we also rely on a steady stream of short and not-so-short term visiting teachers.

The music programs and Cultural Arts Centre (CAC) will soon be a new institute under Tumaini University Makumira, as approved by the Council of



the University. We have had this as a goal since 2018, and now concrete steps are in motion. This should give more autonomy both formal and informal music and cultural opportunities, while still remaining under the umbrella of the university as a constituent institute.

The CAC implemented one of the most meaningful projects to date. A program called *Naweza* (I can) using music and dance with children with special needs. We designed a pilot program with three schools (two private Christian and one private Muslim). The results were stunning for the students, our CAC teachers, and the school teachers.

We are working on how this program can be replicated in other settings here in Tanzania. There is a desperate need for education, activities and inclusion for those with special needs here. We think this can be a positive start.

We recently returned from Finland for a three-year project titled *EduCase* that deals with cross-cultural arts education at university level. The partners are University of the Arts (music, dance and theatre) in



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Finland, Tumaini University Makumira (music and dance), Bagamoyo College of Arts in Tanzania (visual arts and theatre), and Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique (music and theatre). Last October we hosted participants for a two-week camp. This year we went to Finland. Next year we go to Mozambique.

A major recording project (recording 515 hymns and songs) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) is under way. The committee appointed by the national church includes all graduates of our music program plus myself. Plans are underway to begin this massive recording project covering eight regions of Tanzania in September. This will complement the hymnal (*Tumwabudu Mungu*) that we created last year for the ELCT. We researched all the hymns, typeset all of the notes and lyrics, created indices and included all of the notes for the liturgy – all of these for the first time here in Tanzania!

Two weeks ago we received a pipe organ for our chapel on campus. There are only 20 pipe organs in the entire country – 19 of them made by a German organ builder, Mr. Kammleiter, who heads a vocational training school under the Lutheran Church.

I have a Master's Degree in (Pipe) Organ Performance and Pedagogy and this is something I have been dreaming of since I arrived. The one manual, five rank organ with full pedal board will allow me to teach organ technique right on campus and will greatly aid our hymnody, liturgy and church keyboard playing courses. That the university agreed to pay half of the cost is a wonderful affirmation of the importance of music here.



Five of our music teachers were appointed by the government to write the new arts curriculum for primary and secondary schools for Tanzania. This is an incredible opportunity for our graduates to have a direct, national impact on the future of music and arts education in Tanzania.

These incredible movements are the result of slow and steady persistence and overcoming challenges each step of this journey. I can only credit God for walking with me and my family for the past 16 years to now see tangible results that will lead to better sustainability in the future. *Bwana asifiwe!* (Praise the Lord!)

***Randy Stubbs in an NALC global worker in Tanzania. To learn more about his ministry and how to partner with him go to [thenalc.org](http://thenalc.org).***





# Mission update from Didi and Serafina Panzo in Democratic Republic of the Congo

*By Pastor Didi and Serafina Panzo*

God is so good to us and the mission is advancing because of donations and prayers coming from NALC churches and beyond.

**Here is the progress we are making in different areas:**

We work with women in domestic violence, but we are only able to help a limited number because of a lack of facilities. Many of them are fully involved in church activities and participate in the women's gathering. For now, only five of them are still in the program.

We take care of a group of orphans. We share the Good News with them three times a week, and many of them are beginning to discover the love of Jesus for them. We share meals as often as we can, have given scholarships for 25 of them and clothe them when we receive donations.

We have Bible study two times a month with a group of farmers to make them aware of how to take care of God's creation and only trust in Him for the harvest. We help sometimes in providing seeds.

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*Theological students*





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We support the leadership of the church in advising and building the capacity of pastors in church administration and evangelism. This is our main focus since we opened and organized a theological school to train pastors to replace pastors who are nearing retirement. The school has at least 60 students. Last December our first group of eight students graduated with associate degrees in theology.

Praise be to God that we were able to open a mission church called Sanzi mission in a place where the Gospel has never been shared before. After a year and a half, the church has 130 members. Last year the congregation was able to open an elementary school through their own efforts. Let us pray and support this area that recently was invaded by the Muslims to build mosque.

**Here are some difficulties we are facing:**

There are no appropriate places for counseling women in abuse or transitional places where they can be placed for safety. This is also the situation for orphans.



***Worship at Sanzi mission church***

The theological school is advancing, but we have a lack of professors because there is not enough money available to pay the professors and students don't have support in paying tuition.

***Pastor Didi and Serafina Pano are NALC global workers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. To learn more about their ministry and how to partner with them go to [thenalc.org](http://thenalc.org).***



***Elementary school at Sanzi mission church***



# Puerto Rico mission trip

*By Pastor Dieter W. Punt*

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Troutman, North Carolina, is a congregation deeply focused on God's Word and its call to be in mission to all the world. We have a strong understanding of mission in our local context and on a national level, and we love to serve our brothers and sisters in Christ internationally. We support several missions and ministries.

Over the last few years we have had a strong relationship with SMI Haiti and have supported the ministry in Haiti financially, through prayer and various other means. We have been to Haiti on mission trips two times.

In the midst of planning another mission trip to Haiti, COVID-19, and unrest there caused us to look into other options. We started praying and seeking where God wanted us to serve. We came across Praying Pelican Mission that serves Puerto Rico.

Each year we do a mission trip, switching between a domestic location with our youth and an international location with a group of mostly adults.



This year was a different kind of trip. Since we could not get to Haiti in 2022 and this year was scheduled to be a youth mission trip, we combined them. It was a wonderful blessing to do an inter-generational mission trip. I strongly encourage congregations to investigate this possibility.

Eighteen members of Holy Trinity Lutheran and two students from the North American Lutheran Seminary made the trek to Puerto Rico June 24-30. Seminarians Luke Ratke and Ethan Zimmerman joined us sponsored both by Holy Trinity and congregations from the Carolinas Mission Region.

We worked with Iglesia Metodista San Juan Moderno church and Pastor Germán Acevedo. We knew we would be assisting the congregation with VBS and scrapping and painting projects.

On arriving we were housed in a local Christian school, sleeping on air mattresses. We were very thankful for air conditioning.

Sunday morning we joined the congregation for worship, witnessed a Baptism, had lunch with the pastor and started preparing for the VBS. Our last task for the day before leaving the church complex was to pray for individuals in the

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community and go door-to-door to invite children to VBS. We also prayed for the congregation and the pastor and his work in the community. We prayed that God would sustain them for the mission that God set before them.

Monday through Thursday we engaged the local congregation in the task placed before us. We started off with breakfast and then traveled 25 minutes to the church. The trip to and from our lodging made us pray. San Juan traffic is crazy. If you did not do your prayer time before leaving, you prayed a lot on the road.

Our group split up — half helped with VBS and the other half started painting a two-story school building which is now used to house missionary groups that come to San Juan.

The theme of VBS was the human body and we gave thanks to God for making us who we are — “I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully



made” (Psalm 139:14). We shared snacks and lunch with the local community.

Wednesday evening Pastor Germán and a few members of the congregation went into downtown where many homeless people gathered. There we held a service with them. The two seminarians blessed those who are homeless with a powerful, encouraging word from the Holy Scriptures. We then handed them food, drinks and blessing bags.

Each evening after supper we had time together to review the day and spend some time in God’s Word. Thursday evening we celebrated the Lord Supper in our community.

Thursday we went on a field trip to a local university learning more about how the body functions. Thursday afternoon was our recreational day which we gladly spent at the beach.

Friday we toured Old San Juan, enjoying the sights and sounds of the city.

We flew back Friday evening. We missed our connection in Atlanta and spent the night in the airport with a few thousand new friends. We arrived back in North Carolina on Saturday morning.

It was a great week filled with many blessings giving thanks to God for leading us to the new friends we made in San Juan. We want to thank Pray Pelican staff Daphne, Jorge and Francismar who took great care of us and made sure we were where we were supposed to be at all times.

# The Unseen Pandemic: Sex and pornography addiction

*By Kathy and John Kelm  
Redemption Road Mentoring*

Beginning in late 2019 the world changed to some degree for most of us and the phrase COVID-19 pandemic quickly began to saturate our day-to-day lives. Before that time, I certainly wasn't familiar with what COVID-19 meant, while intellectually understanding the definition of a pandemic, most of us have never experienced one. This pandemic impacted all of us to varying degrees. For some the impact was limited to inconveniences, but to others the impact was severe ranging from job and financial loss to the loss of loved ones.

We seem to have climbed out of the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic, but I'd like to take this opportunity to talk about another pandemic. Sex and pornography addiction is called the "unseen pandemic" because, while it has been building for more than 20 years and most everyone knows what it is, this issue tends to fly under the radar. While other addictions, such as alcohol and substance abuse, are better understood and accepted, this issue continues to have a stigma of shame and isolation attached to it.

The following is a sampling of statistics extracted from a Barna Group study commissioned by Covenant Eyes in 2016.

+ More than 40 million Americans are regular visitors to porn sites. The porn industry's annual revenue is more than the NFL, NBA and MLB combined. It is also more than the combined revenues of ABC, CBS and NBC.

+ 47 percent of families in the United States reported that pornography is a problem in their



homes. Pornography use increases the marital infidelity rate by more than 300 percent.

+ 56 percent of American divorces involve one having an "obsessive interest" (read addiction) in pornographic websites.

+ 68 percent of church-going men and more than 50 percent of pastors view porn regularly. Of young Christian adults 18-24 years old, 76 percent actively search for porn.

+ 59 percent of pastors said that married men seek their help for porn use.

+ 57 percent of pastors say porn addiction is the most damaging issue in their congregation.

+ 93 percent of pastors see porn as an increasing problem in the church, but only 7 percent have any plan to deal with it.

These statistics are shocking. But, when you consider that they date back to 2016, the reality is even more concerning. What has transpired since that time is that the digital culture has been driving

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a relaxation of social mores taking us ever deeper into the pornographic pandemic. Another recent survey found that, while 56 percent of millennials consider not recycling morally wrong, only 32 percent said that viewing pornography was a problem.

This presents a significant challenge for our churches. The last statistic in the above list should concern us within the NALC. While most clergy and leadership recognize the problem, we don't have a consistent and effective plan to address it.

But where do we start? As always, the best solution to a problem such as this is prevention — through communication, creating awareness and providing effective tools such as device monitoring software. But we also need to understand how to help those already struggling with pornography addiction.

One of the biggest hurdles for those who recognize the problem is knowing where to go to find help. While getting counseling from clergy is always encouraged, most have never experienced the issues specific to this addiction and betrayal and find it difficult to provide effective guidance. Another obstacle facing clergy is the desire for anonymity due to the shame and stigma associated with pornography addiction.

Redemption Road Mentoring is a faith-based ministry that works with individuals and couples struggling with pornography and sexual addiction and the consequences of spousal betrayal trauma to find the path toward a restored life and relationships. To explain the role of a mentor, I would liken it to comparing a travel agent to a tour guide.

A travel agent sits behind a desk and makes recommendations, shares pictures and brochures, makes reservations and assists in getting you to your destination. The travel agent may have an understanding or awareness of the destination but often has not made the journey themselves.



A tour guide meets you at your destination and is willing to walk with you through both the easy and difficult parts of the journey. They have been on this road before and can share their experiences with you.

They both serve a purpose. They both add value. They both can help you get to your destination — but only one takes the journey with you.

Redemption Road's mentoring model for both strugglers and survivors follows the story of Nehemiah and creates a path toward rebuilding a redemptive life. The program progresses through the phases of surrender, assessment, and plan design, followed by the work of clearing away old behaviors and focusing on healing and rebuilding trust and relationships. This rests upon a foundation of relationship/trust/faith established with God, self and others.

John and Kathy Kelm began Redemption Road Mentoring as a response to God's call for them to use their experiences in their lives to aid others in the process of rebuilding from a life of pornography addiction and betrayal to a life of redemption, to live free of sexual sin and mistrust.

They completed the Bravehearts Mentor training and certification program and began working with mentees in early 2023. As long-term members of an NALC congregation, their objective is to create a heightened awareness of this problem within the NALC.

For more information about creating a communications plan or to schedule a call to learn more about mentoring, contact us at [info@redemptionrd.com](mailto:info@redemptionrd.com) or visit [redemptionrd.com](http://redemptionrd.com).

# Youth and family ministry

Register for the Faith Formation Festival Aug. 8-9 or one of the Youth and Family Ministry breakout sessions during Lutheran Week to find out more about these great opportunities and more.

## **NALC Young Adult Gathering May 5-11, 2024 Winnipeg, Manitoba**

The NALC Young Adult Gathering is a week-long gathering where young adults from all over North America gather to study God's Word and witness together. The gathering is for members of NALC congregations ages 18 to 28.

This year the participants will be doing mission work in inner-city Winnipeg. Winnipeg is a city of almost 850,000 people, and we will be ministering to the physical and social needs of the most vulnerable as well as being a witness for Christ and the Gospel during the day and studying the Word together in the evenings.

Cost of the gathering is only \$50 plus personal travel to Winnipeg. Cost of accommodations, food, and transportation at the gathering are being covered by the Canadian Mission District.

## **NALC Continental Youth Gathering July 1-4, 2024 Boerne, Texas**

The NALC Continental Youth Gathering is a four-day gathering to provide opportunities for NALC youth to grow in faith and relationships with others as the Body of Christ. It is a time to worship together, study God's Word, be equipped through large and small group sessions, reach out to the community through mission events, and engage in fellowship and fun.

Youth ages 12-18 can attend as youth participants. Young adults ages 19-24 can attend as leaders in training. Adults over age 24 can attend as team leaders.



## Youth and Family

**Rev. Teresa Peters**  
Director of Youth  
and Family Ministry

Cost of the gathering is \$250 for youth and adults and \$175 for leaders in training.

For more information on the youth gathering go to [thenalc.org/cyg](https://thenalc.org/cyg).

## **Solid Rock Day Camp Manual**

Melanie Corn, youth and family specialist for the NALC, has developed a manual for mission districts to put together their own five-day day camp program. This program is geared toward elementary-age children, where college-age counselors go to a different church each week to lead camp activities and Bible study and build relationships with the kids. Manuals will be available at Lutheran Week.

## **Online Confirmation Classes**

Is your church currently without a pastor? Or do you only have one or two youth? Online confirmation classes will again be offered in the fall.

The weekly gatherings will run from mid-September until mid-May. The program is for two years. In addition, the students work with mentors in their congregation and help with worship activities.

Our curriculum is quite traditional with the focus on the Bible, Luther's Small Catechism, prayer and Christian living. In addition, we are building some fun and wonderful relationships.

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We hope to be flexible enough that students can join our NALC program if a pastoral vacancy occurs in their home congregation or that students can shift from the online program back to their home congregation when the congregation is able to offer confirmation again.

We are currently offering two evening classes via Zoom. Wednesday evenings classes are run by the Rev. Mark Braaten, NALC southern area assistant to the bishop, and other supporting pastors and Thursday evenings run by me, the Rev. Teresa Peters with support from other pastors.

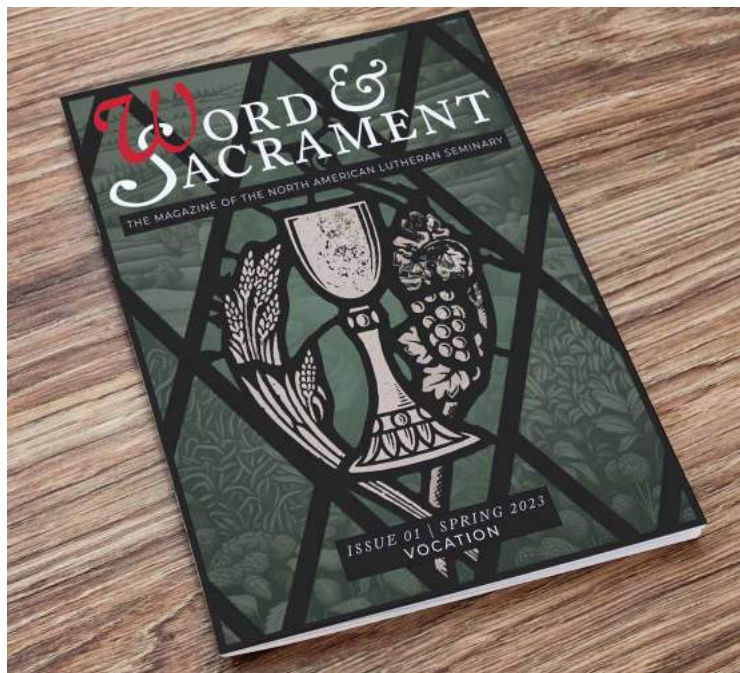
If you or anyone you know is interested in this opportunity, please register by Aug. 21 to aid us in our planning. We expect that we will be offering a number of groups this fall as we expect more students to be joining.

For more information, or to sign up, please contact either Pastor Braaten at [southernaab@thenalc.org](mailto:southernaab@thenalc.org) or Pastor Peters at [tpeters@thenalc.org](mailto:tpeters@thenalc.org). We will also both be available to talk at Lutheran Week in Oklahoma City.

**Pastor Teresa Peters is the director of Youth and Family Ministry for the NALC. You may contact her at [tpeters@thenalc.org](mailto:tpeters@thenalc.org).**

## Call process

You may find a list of congregations seeking pastors at [thenalc.org/call-process](https://thenalc.org/call-process).



## NALS begins magazine

The North American Lutheran Seminary has begun publishing a magazine called *Word & Sacrament: The Magazine of the North American Lutheran Seminary*.

The inaugural issue of the magazine explores the meaning of Christian vocation. It was published in June and sent to all NALC congregations and pastors.

*Word & Sacrament* will be published twice a year. To read or subscribe to the magazine or for more information on the NALS Network go to [thenals.org](https://thenals.org).

### LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

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NORTH AMERICAN  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH

*Please copy and share this newsletter widely.*

# The NALC in renewal: Traditionally and confessionally grounded

Pastors and congregational leaders often ask, "What are common issues being raised during the Fresh Eyes for Mission Summits?"

Having now facilitated 31 summits in many and varied congregations throughout the United States and Canada, one challenge and hindrance which surfaces again and again is the fact that our Lutheran members — even life-long Lutherans — are not familiar with our Lutheran Confessions and so are unprepared to understand and share with non-Lutherans and non-Christians, "Why be Lutheran?"

Certainly, as congregations are being renewed in their commitment to and excitement for reaching the unchurched and unaffiliated, the first step is to know and understand the Word of God. While anyone anywhere can share, simply, how God is active and moving in their lives, knowing God's Word helps to shape how we live and how we communicate with others the saving Gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

To more fully grasp the Word of God, it is important for us to also know and understand the Lutheran confessional writings, as they completely and accurately represent Holy Scripture and the faith of the Church.

This may seem a monumental and unnecessary goal for average, ordinary NALC laypersons. However, as I facilitate the Fresh Eyes for Mission Summits, participants regularly, in most every congregation, express appreciation that the summits work from a decidedly Lutheran perspective, so that their outreach, their mission, their congregation can more clearly embody what it means for us to be confessionally Lutheran and why, then, others might want to become part of an NALC congregation.



## Ministry Matters

Rev. Dr. David Wendel  
Assistant to the Bishop  
for Ministry and Ecumenism

The Confession of Faith in the NALC Constitution states:

*The North American Lutheran Church confesses:*

*2.01 The Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

*2.02 Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.*

*a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.*

*b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.*

*c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by the Holy Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them the Holy Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.*

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*2.03 The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith and life, “according to which all doctrines should and must be judged.” (Formula of Concord, Epitome, I)*

*2.04 The Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of the Church.*

*2.05 The Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.*

*2.06 The other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.*

*2.07 The Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God’s mission in the world.*

*2.08 The NALC honors and accepts The Common Confession (2005) ... as a summary of teachings otherwise affirmed in the Lutheran Confessions.*

This is one aspect of what it means for us to be “Traditionally Grounded” as the North American Lutheran Church. It means we are a confessional Lutheran church, founded on specific beliefs which are presented in the Word of God. These Lutheran confessional statements help us to understand and explain, not Lutheranism, but biblical Christianity.

While our confessional statements are specifically Lutheran, growing out of the Reformation, they offer nothing new or innovative in Christianity. In



**Pastor David Wendel leads a Fresh Eyes for Mission Summit May 19-21 at St. Peter Lutheran Church in Chapin, South Carolina.**

fact, they were written to “reform” and return the Church to biblical teachings, lost and often misunderstood through the centuries.

While you may not aspire to read through the entire *Book of Concord*, which contains the confessional writings mentioned in our constitution, it would serve every congregation, church council and member to spend time reading anew Martin Luther’s Small Catechism and Large Catechism and the Augsburg Confession, written by lay theologian Philip Melanchthon, to be presented at the Diet of Augsburg, Germany, on June 25, 1530.

While the Small Catechism was written by Luther for children and new Christians, the Large Catechism deals with the same major articles of the faith found in the Small Catechism, but Luther wrote it for priests and adult lay persons, to help them better know and understand the Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, Holy Baptism and Holy Communion.

The Augsburg Confession is easy to read, as it contains 28 articles about matters of faith. The first 21 are intended to state in clear language, how the Lutheran reformers were not departing from the

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historic catholic faith, but teach only that which has been believed by Christians, “always, everywhere and by all,” as Saint Vincent of Lerins wrote of the Christian faith around A.D. 434.

It affirms that Lutherans confess God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Original Sin; the Son of God, Jesus; how we are justified by grace, for Christ’s sake through faith. It has succinct statements on the office of the ministry, the new obedience — good works that are a response to salvation, what the Church is, what we believe about Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, Confession and Absolution, repentance, the use of the sacraments, order in the Church, and other various doctrines which Lutherans share with Christians who confess the historic, apostolic, catholic (small “C”) faith throughout all time.

The Augsburg Confession then offers seven additional paragraphs on issues which were in dispute, not church-dividing, but worthy of reform. These have to do with using both bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper, marriage of clergy, “the Mass (the Sunday Divine service of Word and Sacrament), fasting, monastic vows and finally, the power of the Church or “ecclesiastical” power.

Although many Lutherans are familiar with the Small Catechism, it would be a fruitful and profitable endeavor for the NALC to embark upon both a renewed emphasis on the Word of God, with more and more disciples and followers of Jesus engaged with Holy Scripture, day by day, but also an increased familiarity with at least, Luther’s Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession.

Why? First, because it is empowering and renewing to better understand who we are and why we are Lutherans! Second, because it provides us with the tools and the knowledge to better engage the unaffiliated, the unchurched and unbelievers as we invite them to “come and see” Jesus, as He is present in every congregation of the North American Lutheran Church!

Older translations of the Augsburg Confession and Luther’s Small Catechism and Large Catechism and other documents from the *Book of Concord* are available online. The most recent translation of the *Book of Concord* was published in 2000 and edited by the Rev. Dr. Robert Kolb and the Rev. Dr. Timothy Wengert. It is available for purchase.

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



## Ordination

***Lara Kathryn Simone Bhasin was ordained on June 18 at Immanuel Lutheran Church in New York, New York, where she serves as pastor.***



# NALC meets with Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and Lutheran Church—Canada

The inter-Lutheran consultation involving representatives of the Lutheran Church—Canada, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the North American Lutheran Church met on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, on April 27-28.

The groups have met in consultation since the formation of the NALC, at the invitation of the Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, LCMS president. Initially, the consultation met in person twice a year, but since the pandemic, the group meets in person in the spring and online in the fall of each year.



*Participants in LCC-LCMS-NALC Consultation pose for a group photo.*

The schedule included a presentation by the Rev. Dr. Lawrence Rast, president and professor of American Christianity and American Lutheranism at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne (CTS), on the migration of Lutherans to the United States and Lutheran inter-synodical relations in North America.

Also included in the consultation was discussion on issues of shared concern such as the shortage of clergy available for call, increasing number of retirements, increased number of vacancies, smaller congregations with limited resources, and lay worship leadership in light of Augsburg Confession Article XIV.

The time together also included a tour of the campus, daily chapel services and a memorial remembrance in honor of the Rev. Dr. Jim Nestingen, a member of the consultation since its inception and close friend and colleague of many participants in all three Lutheran bodies.

Consultation participants in attendance were the Rev. Michael Keith, LCC pastor of St. Matthew Church and Christian Academy, Stoney Plain, Alberta; the Rev. Michael Frese, LCMS deputy director of church relations; the Rev. Dr. Joel Lehenbauer, LCMS executive director of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR); the Rev. Dr. Rick Serina, LCMS associate executive director, CTCR; the Rev. Dr. Larry Vogel, LCMS assistant to the executive director, CTCR; the Rev. Dr. John Pless, LCMS assistant professor of pastoral ministry and missions at CTS; the Rev. Dr. David Wendel, NALC assistant to the bishop for ministry and ecumenism; the Rev. Dr. Eric Riesen, president of the North American Lutheran Seminary, and the Rev. Dr. Maurice Lee, chair of the NALC Commission on Theology and Doctrine.

Members of the consultation unable to attend were the Rev. Timothy Teuscher, LCC President; the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Shaw, LCMS director of church relations, and the Rev. Dr. Dan Selbo, NALC bishop.

# Pigs for pastors

*By Pastor Douglas Schoelles*

After Pastor Thomas Thorstad of First Lutheran Church in Kirkland, Illinois, introduced me to the bishop of the Laos Evangelical Church last year, I have been looking for a way to support Lutheran pastors there.

Pastor Thorstad, who served as a Bible translator there, said most pastors in Laos must supplement their income. The cost of living for an average sized family is about \$500 a month, but the average salary of a pastor in Laos is only \$100 a month. Most pastors are bi-vocational which limits the amount of work they can do to grow disciples and the congregation.

Even though Laos, a country in Southeast Asia, is a communist nation and predominately Buddhist, the Christian faith is spreading. Through Awakening Lives to World Missions (ALWM) we worked to help support a pastor and his congregation in Laos.

ALWM is working with the Laos Evangelical Church to help provide capital for pastors to have small pig farms that can supplement the pastor's income. This creates a recurring income for the pastor's family.

A small pig farm costs about \$2,000 — to build a shed enclosure, to purchase a sow and 10 piglets and the feed for the first six months — everything they need to launch a business that will provide a steady income as they serve the Lord.

We supported Pastor King who both serves a congregation and serves as president of the church in the Phonsavan province, supervising at least 20 other congregations. He graduated from Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong. He and his wife converted to the Christian faith as young teenagers. They have two children. Pastoring since 2013, he plans to complete a doctoral process in order to train other pastors in Laos. They hope to build a provincial training center at his church to raise up evangelists and lay pastors.



At St John's Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana, we focus on a different mission emphasis each month for the entire month. We announce the mission focus each Sunday. We distribute a half-page hand out the first Sunday. We set up a table with a display board to explain the project with an emphasis on large pictures.

Here at St. John's we are always trying to find a project which has a clear definition and goal so that our people can clearly understand what we are supporting. I came up with the title, "Pigs For Pastors," to get people's attention and clearly point to the purpose of the project.

For our project, we got a nine-inch plastic piggy bank for a promotional table. We raised \$1,900. We plan on doing this every year. We would like to get about 100 miniature piggy banks with the ALWM logo that we could re-use every year.

Pastor Bill Moberly of ALWM says this "Pigs for Pastors" program replicated across 25 to 50 congregations could have a huge impact. We are excited about the potential to provide support to more and more pastors in Laos. To find out more go to [Pigs For Pastors go to alwm.org/pigsforpastors](http://alwm.org/pigsforpastors).