

NOMINATIONS ANNOUNCED FOR POSITIONS TO BE ELECTED AT 2024 MISSION CONVOCATION

The NALC Nominating Committee has announced the names of people who have been nominated to serve in positions to be elected at the 2024 NALC Mission Convocation which will be held online on Friday, Aug. 9.

The convocation will elect members of the NALC Executive Council, Court of Adjudication, and the Board of Regents of the North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS).

The convocation will elect one lay person and one ordained minister to three-year terms on the NALC Executive Council.

Kathaleen Lilley, a member of Messiah Lutheran Church in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, has been nominated for the lay person position on the Executive Council.

Nominated for the ordained minister position on the Executive Council are:

+ The Rev. Karl Faltin, a retired pastor and member of St. Peter Lutheran Church in Stettler, Alberta.

+ The Rev. Jay D. Jackson Jr., pastor of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Joppa, Maryland.

+ The Rev. Kristen Phillips, pastor of Shepherd of the Woods Lutheran Church in Jacksonville, Florida.



Kathaleen Lilley



Karl Faltin



Jay Jackson



Kristen Phillips

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NOMINATIONS

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

The convocation will elect one member of the Court of Adjudication to a three-year term. Samuel Duncomb of Peace Lutheran Church in Northwood, Iowa, and the Rev. Ken Reed of St. James Lutheran Church in Newton, North Carolina, have been nominated for the Court of Adjudication.

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

The convocation will elect two members of the Board of Regents of the North American Lutheran Seminary to five-year terms. Both ordained ministers and lay members may be elected to the Board of Regents.

Nominees for the Board of Regents are:

- + The Rev. Alliyah (Greaver) Blakeley, pastor of St. John Lutheran Church in Greenville, Ohio.
- + James T. Caldwell, a financial professional who is a member of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Westerville, Ohio.
- + The Rev. Dr. Judson Merrell, pastor of St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lexington, South Carolina.
- + The Rev. Mark Metze pastor of Annapolis Lutheran Church in Edgewater, Maryland.
- + The Rev. Alan Peacock, assistant pastor of Shepherd of the Woods Lutheran Church in Jacksonville, Florida.



Samuel Duncomb



Ken Reed

The Board of Regents provides oversight, supervision and direction for the NALS Network. The NALS Network includes the seminary center at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania; and partner seminaries Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina; Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama; Concordia Lutheran Seminary in Edmonton, Alberta; and Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, and Houston, Texas.

The elections to Executive Council and Court of Adjudication will be for three-year terms. The normal four-year terms were shortened as a part of the NALC's process of moving to holding convocations every other year. The 2020 Mission Convocation voted to amend the NALC Constitution to hold convocations every other year and to elect two lay members and two pastors to Executive Council at each convocation, but the NALC is still in the transition period toward electing two lay members and two pastors at each biennial convocation.

The Nominating Committee has published biographical information on the nominees to meet the constitutional deadline to distribute this information to NALC members 90 days prior to the convocation. The biographical information on the nominees is available at thenalc.org.

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Additional nominations are possible. Three or more delegates representing at least three congregations may together submit an additional nomination. The nomination and biographical information from the candidate must be submitted to the Nominating Committee no later than 45 days prior to the convocation.



Alliyah Blakeley



James Caldwell



Judson Merrell

The final deadline for submitting additional nominations is June 25, but it is helpful for additional nominations to be submitted as soon as possible so that biographical information can be prepared for distribution.

Information on the nominating process, including the nomination form and descriptions of the positions, is available at thenalc.org/nominations. All nominations must be submitted electronically.

Questions may be addressed to the Nominating Committee at nominations@thenalc.org.



Mark Metze



Alan Peacock

NALS PRESIDENT TO STEP DOWN

The Rev. Dr. Eric M. Riesen has announced that he will step down as president of the North American Lutheran Seminary (NALC) in January 2025. Pastor Riesen has made the decision to step away from his role to focus on other vocations and projects.

Pastor Riesen's decision was announced on May 17 in a press release and in a video discussion with Bishop Dan Selbo as a part of the NALC's weekly email update.

Pastor Riesen has served as NALS president since Feb. 1, 2020.

"I think this is a good time to pass the torch or pass the baton for new leadership," Pastor Riesen said.

"We are grateful for Pastor Riesen's years of service and leadership with the NALS," Bishop Selbo said. "His passion for theological education and unwavering dedication to raising up pastors and leaders have left a lasting mark on the NALC. It has been an honor to serve our Lord Jesus with him."



Eric Riesen

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TRIP TO ETHIOPIA AND KENYA

Bishop Dan Selbo, Pastor Carol Fryer and Angela Breidenbach visited Ethiopia and Kenya on behalf of the North American Lutheran Church March 2-12. They offer this report of their trip.

Gemechis and the international congregation at Cambridge Academy

After a very long flight to Addis Ababa, what a delight it was to be met by someone you know and love! We were warmly greeted by our dear friend, the Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, who, with hugs and smiles, ushered us into the vehicle that took us to our hotel for our stay in Ethiopia.

The next day, Gemechis took us to Cambridge Academy, an international preparatory school for children kindergarten through Grade 12, where his children attend. We had been there before and were once again impressed with the students and their achievements, but learned that there is an important component to their education that many are desiring.

We met with two women from the admissions office of the school, who expressed to us the earnest need for an English-speaking congregation for this international community. Parents bringing their children to school there are longing for Bible study and for an opportunity to worship. Gemechis



Potential space for Cambridge Academy congregation



Prayer meeting at mission church in Bishoftu

showed us proposed plans for a worship space on the top floor of the main building, overlooking the expanse of the city. When we saw the space, we were thrilled with the possibilities to reach so many people with the Gospel!

In response to this need, we are working with Gemechis and leaders from the international community to organize a congregation under the auspices of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY). We will be looking for an NALC pastor who would be interested in the opportunity to serve as the pastor of this congregation and as chaplain at the school. As the details of this ministry are confirmed, more information will be coming.

Visiting a prayer meeting at a mission congregation with 4,000 members

After visiting Cambridge Academy, Gemechis took us to a prayer meeting at a mission congregation in the community of Bishoftu, just outside of the city. This is a mission congregation that already has 4,000 members!

We were introduced to the people gathered there to pray, and Bishop Selbo brought greetings from

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the NALC. An elderly gentleman sitting in the front stood up and asked to speak to us. He said, "There are so many beautiful churches in the world, but you came here to visit us!" He was so moved by this that it reminded us of old Simeon in the temple who, after seeing the infant Jesus, said, "Now I can depart in peace!" The irony in this was, like with so many of the contacts we made, that we were blessed as much as, if not more, than they were.

We also visited a building site where the foundation of a new school has been laid. This school will serve underprivileged students with a desire to receive a high-quality education and is being built in an area that is becoming a hub of tourism.

The hope is that students graduating from this school will be prepared to take on jobs created by new industry, negating the necessity to have these jobs filled by non-citizens. Additionally, Gemechis is planning for the place to be a retreat center for clergy of the EECMY. He noted that clergy burnout is a problem because the church in Ethiopia is growing so rapidly that there are not enough pastors to serve all those people and congregations.

Committee for Mutual Christian Responsibility meeting with EECMY and partners

For the next few days, we were immersed in meetings with the EECMY and their many partners from all over the world.



International Women's Day at CMCR conference



Dr. Sam George speaking at the Committee for Mutual Christian Responsibility (CMCR) meeting.

Three compelling presentations were given during the Committee for Mutual Christian Responsibility (CMCR) meeting.

The first one, and perhaps the most thought provoking, was given by Dr. Sam George, director of Global Diaspora Institute at the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College and a catalyst for The Lausanne Movement. It focused on the idea that Christianity has spread throughout the world, over the past 2,000 years, primarily through migration.

Dr. George showed that the movement of people from place to place has done more to spread the Christian faith than the sending of missionaries. This was not offered as a critique of the many missionary-sending efforts that have happened, but rather a reminder of the powerful ways in which God uses all people to spread the Gospel. Even though faith in Jesus has reached every corner of the world, about 42 percent of the world's population remain unreached by the Gospel. We still have a lot of work to do!

Today an unprecedented amount of people are migrating from one place to another for many reasons. We were challenged to rethink how we do mission work in the Church, considering all this movement of peoples and its impact. We were led to ask how the diasporic groups among us might better engage us in mission. Also how can we better support those groups as they become part of the American religious culture?

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We met many people from various mission agencies from Europe and Scandinavia that have been partners with the EECMY for many years and, as with many conferences, laid the foundations for future relationships over coffee and meals. Carol learned especially about Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT) from Paul Federwitz, director of LBT field programs, stationed there in Addis Ababa at the Mekane Yesus Seminary.

On Thursday evening, we were treated to a tour and celebratory dinner on the grounds of the seminary. We visited a beautiful brand-new recording studio on the campus. We were also able to tour some of the new buildings that are replacing the housing that was destroyed in the recent flood as well as seeing the progress on additional housing for students and faculty. There was music by students at the music school, a bonfire, and a buffet which included a whole roasted goat! And, of course, the traditional Ethiopian coffee ritual.



New recording studio at Mekane Yesus Seminary



Ordination of Dagaga Gemachu

We celebrated International Women's Day on March 8 with the women pastors and leaders of the EECMY. The Ethiopian women came in traditional dress that day, and the men served cake to all the women present.

The CMCR meeting ended on Friday with a celebration of Holy Communion. President Yonas had asked Pastor Carol Fryer to preside at the liturgy. It was a great honor and privilege!

Bishop Albert Ngoma and the Lutheran Church in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

While we were in Addis Ababa, we met with Bishop Albert Ngoma, the presiding bishop of the Community of Confessional Lutheran Church in Congo (CELCCO), and with our global worker, the Rev. Didi Panzo. We are presently exploring the possibility of a deeper relationship with the Lutheran Church in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and this was a great opportunity to meet face to face and talk about how we might work together for the benefit of Christ's Church.

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Dagaga's ordination and ministry with Ethiopian refugees in Kenya

One of our reasons for visiting Nairobi was to participate in the ordination of Dagaga Gemachu to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Bishop Selbo was invited to preach and Dr. Gemechis Buba led the service on behalf of President Yonas of EECMY.

Before he was ordained, Dagaga was serving a congregation in Ethiopia as an evangelist. He was called to serve the Oromo mission in Nairobi, which is mainly a refugee community. Earlier this year, Dagaga Gemachu was approved as a global worker of the NALC.

The liturgy was held on Sunday afternoon in a church of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya (ELCK). The church was full! Bishop Selbo preached in English, but most of the liturgy was led in Oromo. Afterwards we were invited to the home of Dure Negassa, who has been a significant leader in the congregation and community. The primary focus of the ministry, apart from serving the needs of the members of the congregation, is to share the Gospel with people in the northern part of the country who have been displaced from their own countries and, in many cases, have not learned about what God



Bishop Dan Selbo preaching at the ordination service for Dagaga Gemachu

has done for them in Christ. This ministry needs our continuing prayers and support.



Dr. William Obaga, Pastor Didi Panzo, Angela Breidenbach, Pastor Margaret Obaga, Pastor Carol Fryer, Bishop Dan Selbo and Pastor Gemechis Buba

William and Margaret Obaga and Didi Panzo Global Workers in Africa

One of the great blessings of being in Nairobi, Kenya, was the opportunity to meet with some of our global workers there. Didi Panzo had traveled from Congo with Bishop Ngoma and then on to Nairobi with us. We were met at the airport by William and Margaret Obaga who live and work in Kenya.

William is the World Mission Prayer League Director (WMPL) for Africa, and it was wonderful to meet him and his wife Margaret and to learn about their work. William is a fountain of knowledge and information about

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the churches in Kenya, and we are so grateful for his presence and leadership there.

Theovision and Kathleen Lutz

On our last full day in Kenya, we visited with Kathleen Lutz who is also with WMPL. Kathleen has just been approved as our newest global worker! She is working with a wonderful ministry called Theovision. In many parts of Africa, there are nomadic tribes, each with their own language. Because they are always moving from place to place, they do not have schools. In many cases, their language has never been written down. As a result, nomadic people do not know how to read or write.

Theovision is teaching these people groups about Jesus by recording the Bible in their tribal “heart” language. Beginning with the New Testament, Scripture is recorded on small hand-held devices called “proclaimers.” These devices have solar panels on the back so that they can be charged by the sun. They come in different sizes with the largest able to project audio to groups as large as 100 or more and are often highly prized by the tribe as precious objects.

Members of the tribes are taught how to use the



Bishop Dan Selbo, Pastor Carol Fryer and Angela Breidenbach pose with Kathleen Lutz (third from left) and staff at Theovision.

proclaimers in listening groups and Bible studies with questions and answers. Theovision walks with the tribe, discipling them for at least two years and then connecting them with a pastor who can continue to shepherd them. We were told that an older man from one tribe was amazed to learn about Jesus. He said, “Who is this Jesus who knows so much about me? Who is this Jesus who loves me so much that he would die for me?”

From 2003 to 2024, Theovision has recorded the Bible in 89 different languages from 11 countries in Africa. There are 32 of those language groups in Kenya and 18 in Tanzania. We were so impressed by the dedication of the leaders of Theovision that we have invited them to apply to become Mission Partners of the NALC.

Safari in Nairobi

On our last morning in Nairobi, we treated ourselves to a safari at a park on the outskirts of the city. We were blessed to see four of the “big five.” The park was not large enough for elephants, so we got to see hippopotamus, rhinoceros, giraffes, and lions. We also saw many birds, crocodiles, ostriches, springboks, box turtles, and pea hens.

Later that day we said goodbye to Nairobi and Africa and made our way back home grateful to God for a very full and amazing visit with our brothers and sisters in Christ in Africa.



Proclaimers from Theovision

PRAY FOR NALC GLOBAL WORKERS

*By Pastor Carol Fryer
NALC Mission Specialist*

I invite you to pray for our global workers around the world. Please include them in your private prayers and in the intercessions in worship so that our congregations will become more familiar with their names and where they are serving.

Mission support begins with prayer! Let us be always lifting up these wonderful servants of God before our Lord with heartfelt petitions for their safety and for the Holy Spirit's presence and guidance as they proclaim the love of Jesus in Word and deed around the world.

Here is a schedule for the next 12 months:

June – Dagaga Gemachu and Kathleen Lutz in Kenya

July – Didi and Serafina Panzo in Congo

August – Heidi Punt in Haiti and Jonathan Gowin in Gambia

September – Martin Lalthgliana in Myanmar

October – Ndumeishi Nkya and Tunsubilege Philemoni in Tanzania

November – Randy Stubbs and Stephen Katterhenrich in Tanzania

December – Sam Chim in Cambodia and Swapon Sarker in Bangladesh

January – Slavomir Slavik in Slovakia and Aleksandr Gross in Ukraine

February – Nijar and Neeraj Minz-Ekka in India

March – Valery Hryhoryk in Belarus and Gemechis Buba in Ethiopia

April – William and Margaret Obaga in Kenya

May – Thomas Thorstad and family in Laos

RECENT ORDINATIONS



Pastor Bert Eldredge was ordained on April 19 at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Casper, Wyoming, where he serves as pastor. (Photo courtesy of Libby Ngo)



Pastor Dagaga Gemachu was ordained on March 10 in Nairobi, Kenya. He is called as an NALC global worker to serve the Oromo mission in Nairobi.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACTIONS

The NALC Executive Council took the following actions from January through March of 2024:

Appointed Pastor David Abuya of County Line Lutheran Church in Markesan, Wisconsin, and Pastor Steve Hartten of Bark River, Michigan, to serve three-year terms on the Candidacy Committee.

Authorized the Board of Regents of the North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS) to negotiate and make the purchase of a proposed Bonhoeffer House at the seminary center at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania.

The Finance Committee recommend that the NALC terminate its relationship with its current accounting firm, and that a different plan for financial administration be proposed.

Bishop Selbo reappointed Pastor Jess Abbott and Pastor Bill White as area assistants to the bishop for four-year terms.

Approved a recommendation from the NALC Mission Vetting Team to remove Lutheran World Relief from the list of NALC mission partners.

Received a report from the Candidacy Committee that 15 students are moving forward in the process leading toward ordination. Thirteen are seeking to be ordained as pastors and two are seeking ordination as deacons. There are four candidates moving through the Ordination Under Special Circumstances process.

Eight candidates have been approved for ordination: Luke Beaver, Candice Carter, Bert Eldredge, Megan Shaffer, Khrystle Sullivan, Anthony Wick, Jonathan Thompson, and Craig Wheaton.

Eight pastors were received into the NALC the Rev. Mark Brodbeck, the Rev. Shane Hein, the Rev. Bobby Leggett, the Rev. Kelly Loy, the Rev. Kevin McNamara, the Rev. Neil Ray, the Rev. Marta Shanka, and the Rev. Carol Weist.

Eight congregations were received into the NALC:

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Lake Wilson, Minnesota

St. John Lutheran Church
West Alexandria, Ohio

Denny Park Lutheran Church
Seattle, Washington

Oromo Evangelical Church
Atlanta, Georgia

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Spokane Valley, Washington

St. John Lutheran Church
Nanticoke, Pennsylvania

First English Lutheran Church
Wapakoneta, Ohio

Shepherd of the Lakes Lutheran Church
Sayner, Wisconsin

LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

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NORTH AMERICAN
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

Please copy and share this newsletter widely.

NATHAN YODER INSTALLED AS DIRECTOR OF LUTHERAN STUDIES AT GORDON-CONWELL SEMINARY

The Rev. Dr. Nathan Howard Yoder was formally installed as director of Lutheran Studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina, on May 4 at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Little Mountain, South Carolina. The installation ceremony took place during the convocation of the Carolinas Mission Region. Dr. Yoder began serving in this role a year ago.

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary is a part of the North American Lutheran Seminary Network. The NALS Network includes the seminary center at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania; and partner seminaries Gordon-Conwell; Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama; Concordia Lutheran Seminary in Edmonton, Alberta; and Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, and Houston, Texas.

“Dr. Yoder’s appointment reflects our commitment to providing exceptional theological education within the North American Lutheran Church. His wealth of knowledge and expertise, combined with



Participants in the installation service included the Rev. Jeff Morlock, director of vocational discernment for the NALS; the Rev. Dr. Dan Selbo, bishop of the NALC; the Rev. Dr. Eric M. Riesen, president of the NALS; and the Rev. Dr. Nathan H. Yoder, director of Lutheran Studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

his dedication to pastoral ministry, makes him a valuable addition to the NALS faculty,” said the Rev. Dr. Eric M. Riesen, NALS president.

“The installation was a celebration of Dr. Yoder’s leadership and the collaboration between Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and the NALS. As we look ahead, we are excited about the opportunities this partnership will bring for theological and pastoral formation across the Carolinas Mission Region and beyond,” Dr. Riesen said.

“We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Yoder on this role and express our gratitude to Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary for their support. Together, we remain committed to equipping pastors and leaders for the North American Lutheran Church,” Dr. Riesen said.



Formal installation of the Rev. Dr. Nathan Yoder as director of Lutheran Studies.

NALC DISASTER RESPONSE RETREAT CENTER DEDICATED

By Pastor Mark Werner

The North American Lutheran Church Disaster Response Task Force met in retreat May 1-2 at the newly constructed NALC Disaster Response Retreat Center in Caldwell, Ohio.

The Task Force meets annually face to face and virtually six times a year.

The Rev. Brad Hales, director of church planting and aging ministries, dedicated the retreat center on the last day of the retreat.

The building can host 30 individuals, and is also equipped with showers, a kitchen, and meeting space as well as a place for worship. The retreat center is on the same property as the NALC Disaster Response U.S. national warehouse.

The task force reviewed reports from Mary Bates, NALC Disaster Response coordinator, and reviewed its policies and procedures for responding to disasters that occur throughout the United States.



Pastor Brad Hales presides at the dedication of the new NALC Disaster Response Retreat Center.

The Task Force also loaded a truck with flood buckets, health kits, kitchen kits, quilts, Bibles, and yard tools headed for Iowa. The truck was delivered by Pastor Gary Burkhalter and his wife Betty Burkhalter who is the Iowa Mission District Disaster Response Coordinator.

Pastor Ernie Sheldon, chair of the task force, led a closing worship service. In his homily, Pastor Sheldon highlighted that the work of disaster response is where the rubber hits the road in our love for God and love for one another.

Equipped by the Holy Spirit, congregations have greatly supported this ministry that has brought comfort and aid to thousands impacted by disasters since this ministry started in 2010.

The following individuals were elected to one-year offices on the Task Force: The Rev. Ernie Sheldon,



Members of the NALC Disaster Response Task Force pose for a group photo in the new retreat center.

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chairperson, Dan Richardson, vice-chairperson, and Pat Dittrich, secretary. The Rev. Mark Werner also serves on the Executive Committee of the Task Force.

The retreat was preceded by a one-day training led by Mary. This “train the trainer” event means that we now have 20 individuals capable of leading disaster training in our congregations, mission districts and regions.

Due to the numerous disasters that have struck the United States since the first of the year, the regional disaster warehouses have been emptied and need your help to collect flood buckets, health kits, quilts, Bibles, school kits, baby items and kitchen kits.

There have been recent tornado outbreaks in Nebraska, Iowa, Oklahoma, Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Florida. These storms are causing massive devastation and loss of life. NALC Disaster Response provided six box truckloads of emergency relief supplies in both Nebraska and Iowa.

Gift cards and physical supplies should be sent to: NALC Disaster Response, 16500 Noble Ave., Caldwell, Ohio 43724.

Monetary donations may be made online at thenalc.org/giving or mailed to: NALC Disaster Response, PO Box 860565; Minneapolis, MN 55486-0565.



WORD AND WITNESS: NALC YOUNG ADULT INNER-CITY MISSION EVENT

*By Pastor Teresa Peters
Director of Youth and Family Ministry*

Six young adults from across North America traveled to inner-city Winnipeg, Manitoba, in May to study God's Word and witness to the city of almost 850,000 people. The young adults came from California, Illinois, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

While in Winnipeg they ministered to the physical and social needs of the most vulnerable.

In addition to being a witness for Christ, they also studied the Word of God together. These young people exhibited the characteristics of a true disciple of Christ throughout the week.

The young adults arrived on Saturday, May 4. Sunday morning the worship service at Joy Lutheran Church in Winnipeg was led by Pastor Teresa Peters and the young adults. The message was delivered by Corey from Illinois, and the young adults were commissioned for the week. Sunday afternoon was spent sightseeing.

Monday morning the group baked and decorated cookies to take with them in the afternoon to Luther Home a personal care home in the city.



Cole Peters of Joy Lutheran Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba, writes: "On the second day of the Word and Witness week, we went to Luther Home, a seniors' home in Winnipeg. It felt good to volunteer and get to know some of the residents. At one point, I asked the question, 'What did you use to do for work?' One of the ladies sitting at the table said that she sold dresses, and the other lady said that she made dresses for a living. They proceeded to bond over the dress industry, and it seemed to spark a friendship between the two of them. This experience was very impactful for me because we, as young adults, are just beginning our journeys of adulthood, and the residents at the home are at the end of that journey, but just like us they bond over common interests."



Tuesday morning early the young adults went to serve at Agape Table, a Christian non-profit organization that provides a bagged meal of soup, a sandwich, a pastry, fruit, and a drink at breakfast time. Agape Table serves men, women and children housed at-risk people, those who are homeless, working, and low-income, seniors, single parents, persons with disabilities, newcomers, and many others. A few of the young adults made meals while others distributed the meals.

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Josie Hansen of New Beginnings Lutheran Church in Mahomet, Illinois, reflects on the experience saying: "One of the things I enjoyed on this trip was serving at Agape Table, a private organization that gives out about 800 meals a day to anyone that needs it. I got the opportunity to prep the meals. It was very fulfilling knowing that someone who needs a good meal is getting one because I'm making a bunch of sandwiches or cutting up vegetables for the soup the chefs are making. It was also very cool because many of the people who helped at the Agape Table were once people who got meals from Agape Table and now they are back on their feet and they want to help out others who are in the place they were not long ago."

Tuesday afternoon and early evening the young adults served at Siloam Mission, an organization that offers meals, shelter, clothing, health care, and transition services to those experiencing homelessness. Some of the group prepared and dished meals while two of the young women served beverages and visited with the community members.

Stephanie Hollenbeck of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Fresno, California, writes: "I had a truly impactful experience at Siloam Mission. I helped serve juice to the homeless community members. To see the joy and thankfulness that this simple act brought to their faces was truly beautiful. I would ask many



how their days were going, and, although they all had different responses, like many of us, you could see their faces completely change like they almost felt that their humanity was being acknowledged for the first time in a while. Honestly, it broke my heart that something I greatly take for granted could be so impactful to someone else."

Wednesday the group served with the Bear Clan Patrol and an Aboriginal group of people working with the community to provide personal security in the inner city in a non-threatening, non-violent, non-judgmental, and supportive way.

Corey Johnson from First Lutheran Church in Pontiac, Illinois, writes: "On Wednesday, our group of young adults prepared to walk with the Bear Clan, a group committed to assisting in the clean up of the north side of Winnipeg. The first thing we did that day was go to the store to buy bread, deli meat, and various fruits to pack into meals to handout while on the walk. At first, I thought this was going to be a mobile soup kitchen similar to Agape Table and Siloam mission, but much to my surprise, this involved immersion into the life of living on the north side of Winnipeg. While one of our tasks was to hand out meals, we were also charged with cleaning up and properly disposing of needles and various pipes used for the consumption of narcotics, no questions asked. With that, we faced the same issue that many of our first responders face on any given day when they respond to a call. We risked getting poked by a needle, exposure to diseases, and those various substances, and putting ourselves



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in the situation where we are the first responders to any overdose that we may witness. Though we did not witness any usage, we cleaned up a large sum of needles (using proper disposal procedures and supplies) and spoke with dozens of at-risk and vulnerable inhabitants of the north side. What separated this event from others is that it constantly called on us to create and maintain a relationship with those at-risk and vulnerable individuals built on trust and love. We had to set out of our comfort zones to make a personal impact on a problem that blazes like wildfire. I've been on other mission trips, but this trip demonstrated the issues that we young adults will be charged with finding solutions too so that we may serve Christ in our communities and advance the Church."

Thursday morning the young adults went to the elementary campus of St. Aiden's Christian School, an inner-city school where more than three-quarters of their students are newcomers to Canada from



Eritrea, Africa, therefore English is not the student's first language.

Ella Hopkins of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Outlook, Saskatchewan, reflects on the experience saying: "I really enjoyed going to St. Aiden's School. While we were there, we gave a presentation about the fruits of the Spirit and then got to go and visit the classrooms. I worked in Pre-K/Kindergarten and had so much fun. All of the kids were so friendly and inviting, and the teacher made us feel right at home. My favourite part was all the hugs and high-fives I got throughout the day. It was really impactful to see these kids getting the support they need in a Christian environment."

On Friday, the young adults joined the high school campus of St. Aiden's Christian School on their field trip. While the elementary campus students are mostly from Eritrea, the high school students are mostly inner-city students who have struggled in larger educational settings. Here students have their education tailored individually. Students in Grades 9 and 10 are given the opportunity to continue their credit work from year to year, rather than repeating units they have already completed.

Rachel Peters of Joy Lutheran Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba, reflects: "You never know the impact you can have on someone's life. On Friday we went to spend time with the students from St. Aidan's Christian School's high school campus. The high school campus is in the rougher part of Winnipeg.

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We went to spend time with the students and be a good example for students who may have grown up in rougher situations. On Fridays, the school goes on outings, and we were lucky enough to go to Narcisse Snake Dens with them. Going into this experience I was unsure of what to expect, I wondered how I could make an impact on the students, but, after spending time talking with students and just being with them, I felt a connection with one of the students and when we were leaving it was evident that the time I spent with her made an impact on her.”

Friday evening and Saturday the young adults spent time recreating, visiting, and reflecting on the week together before heading home. In the book of 1 Timothy 4:12, we read: “Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.” Each of the young adults who took part in this Word and Witness Week, truly took this verse to heart.



A big thank you goes out to the NALC Canadian Mission District for sponsoring this event.

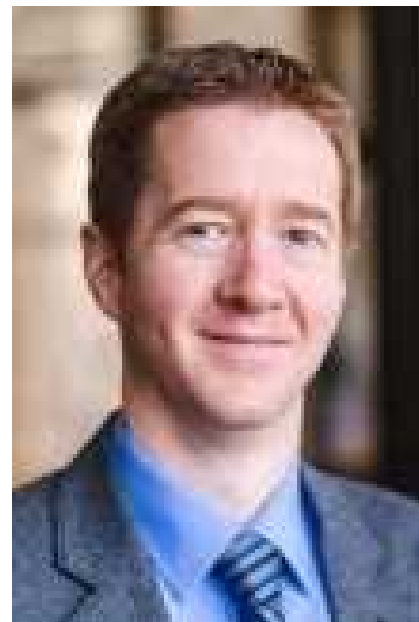
DR. DAVID LUY OF NALS TO SPEAK AT PRO-ECCLESIA CONFERENCE

Dr. David Luy, associate professor of systematic theology at the North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS) and Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, will be a featured speaker at the upcoming Pro-Ecclesia Conference June 10–12. The conference will be held at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama. Beeson is one of the seminaries of the NALS Network.

The conference theme, “One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic? Championing the Marks of the Church in an Age of Polarization and Ecclesial Confusion,” addresses pressing issues facing clergy and laity in today’s ecclesiastical landscape.

Other speakers for the conference include Dr. Paul Gavriluk of the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota; Dr. Francesca Murphy of Notre Dame University near South Bend, Indiana; Dr. Angela Franks of St. John’s Seminary in Boston, Massachusetts; the Rev. Dr. Matt O’Reilly of Christ Church in Birmingham, Alabama, and Wesley Biblical Seminary in Ridgeland, Mississippi; and the Rev. Dr. Russell Levenson Jr. of St. Martin’s Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas.

For more information on the Pro Ecclesia conference go to pro-ecclesia.org/2024.



David Luy

NEERAJ AND NIJHAR

MOBILIZING PRAYERS AND SERVING FOR THE BLESSING OF NATIONS

India is a country of many nations. There are more than 2,000 unreached people groups (nations in the sense of Matthew 28:19) that are waiting to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ and experience the love of God.

Before commissioning His disciples to go, Jesus taught them and commanded them to pray. In the Lord's Prayer, He taught them to pray, "Thy Kingdom Come." In Luke 10:2, He commanded them to pray for workers for the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Indeed, the harvest is plentiful in India.

Serving as NALC global workers through World Mission Prayer League (WMPL), we have focused on this Gospel priority and invite others to join in this privilege of praying for the Unreached People Groups (UPGs) of the world.

For our encouragement and anticipation, the Lord has already unveiled the final outcome of our



prayers. In Revelation 7:9, we read about "a multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and the lamb." What a glorious vision for us to join in prayer for UPGs.



We are networking with seminaries and Bible colleges to mobilize prayer for UPGs in India. Many young people are joining in a movement of prayer for UPGs as part of growing in discipleship. As we continue to pray, the Lord is also calling us to touch and transform peoples' lives by sharing His love and hope in Jesus.

One night in December of 2015, a young girl of 10-11 years old came to us in the middle of the night in great distress. Her name was Anjelina. That night, she was physically beaten and was kicked out of her relative's

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house where she was staying after the death of her father. Soon after her father's death, her mother became mentally ill, so Anjelina came to stay with her relatives close to the place where we were serving in India. As we prayed with Anjelina that night, the Lord called us for children ministry.

After praying for eight years, we started a school last year for poor and marginalized children like Anjelina, for children of persecuted believers and others. At present, the school has only three classes: preschool, kindergarten, and Class 1. The vision is to establish a boarding school from Class 1 to Class 12 so that children like Anjelina will not only get a chance in life for education but, more importantly, they will grow to be what God wants them to become.

Along with education ministry we are providing scholarships for school-going children (many of whom lost their fathers during the COVID-19 pandemic); skill training for livelihood and partnering with local pastors and kingdom workers to proclaim the Gospel and for church planting.

We praise and thank God for many across India are accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior and many more are being served by kingdom workers. It is indeed an awesome privilege for us to serve for God's glory and for the sake of His kingdom, and we deeply value and remain grateful to individuals and churches for your partnership in the sharing of the Gospel in India and beyond.

Neeraj and Nijhar are NALC global workers serving in India. Their last name is not included to protect their safety. To learn more about their ministry or partner with them go to thenalc.org or wmpl.org.



NALS PRESIDENT

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“This has not been an easy decision because I love working with all the people,” Pastor Riesen said.

“Pastor Riesen has led the NALS with exemplary dedication and vision. Under his stewardship, the seminary has flourished and expanded, thanks to his commitment to fostering a vibrant academic community and nurturing the spiritual growth of students,” the press release said.

The Board of Regents will initiate a search for the next president of the NALS, “aiming to continue the seminary’s trajectory of robust spiritual formation, rigorous and distinctive theological education, and intentional pastoral mentorship.”

“On behalf of the entire NALS community, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to Pastor Riesen for his contributions to the NALS and encourage our community to pray for the NALS and Pastor Riesen as this transition begins,” the press release said.

The NALS Network includes the seminary center at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, and four partner seminaries.



NALS students and faculty posed with area NALC pastors following the Wednesday Communion service.



NALS professor Dr. David Luy preached for the Wednesday service of Holy Communion.

LUTHERAN WEEK

North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS) students at the seminary center at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, took part in Lutheran Week Feb. 26-March 1.

During Lutheran Week, daily chapel services are led from the *Lutheran Book of Worship* and Lutheran faculty and students are featured as leaders for worship. Normally worship is led from Anglican resources. Lutheran Week is held once each semester.



Ethan Zimmerman, an NALS student from Trinity Lutheran Church in Jeromesville, Ohio, preached for a Morning Prayer service.



The Rev. Dr. Eric Riesen, NALS president, presided at Holy Communion service.

