

NALC News

North American Lutheran Church

February - March 2011

NALC, LCMC leaders address International Theological & Mission Conference in Ethiopia

Leaders from the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) and Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) were among the presenters for the International Theological and Mission Conference Feb. 15-17 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

This historic gathering was organized by the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, one of the largest Lutheran church bodies in the world.

More than 2,000 pastors and seminarians of the EECMY attended the conference which also attracted other church leaders from Africa, Europe, and North America.

There were also significant bilateral discussions between leaders of the EECMY and leaders of the NALC, LCMC, and the Lutheran Church—Canada.

“The days we spent in Ethiopia were among the most Spirit-filled days of my life,” said NALC Bishop Paull Spring, who was the preacher for the closing worship service.

“When you consider what the Mekane Yesus Church has endured — civil war and political unrest, military dictatorship, and Communist persecution — and that this church has continued to grow to almost 6 million members — well, there’s only one word to describe this, and that is ‘miracle,’” Bishop Spring said.

The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Desta Buba, missions director for the NALC and a native of Ethiopia, was a keynote speaker for the conference. Dr. Buba’s address focused on the subject of missional leadership. Dr. Buba also was a featured speaker for the Oromo Ilammee Mission Convention Feb. 12-13.



NALC Bishop Paull Spring and EECMY President Wakseyoum Idossa.

The Rev. Dr. James A. Nestingen, professor emeritus from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., addressed the conference on “The Pillars of Evangelical Lutheranism.” Prof. Nestingen used the image of a tent. Christ is the pillar (tent post) in the middle and around him are three smaller pillars (tent poles) — Word alone, grace alone and faith alone.

The Rev. Dr. David N. Glesne, pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Fridley, Minn., spoke about Biblical authority and sexual behavior.

NALC General Secretary John Bradosky offers his reflections on the experience of NALC leaders in Ethiopia — Page 4

God & Ga-Ga Ball!

God transforms crazy game into mission opportunity

God and a crazy game called Ga-Ga Ball.

That's the story of an amazing experience in mission shared by youth from Holy Ghost Lutheran Church, a NALC congregation in Fredericksburg, Texas, inner-city youth from East St. Louis, Ill., and the children of a Hispanic neighborhood in San Antonio. There God transformed a crazy game into an opportunity for outreach and opened doors for a developing mission congregation.

A group of youth and adults from Holy Ghost Lutheran Church in Fredericksburg traveled to San Antonio for a special servant mission through Can Do Missions. The youth had been on many missions to Mexico, but this trip was unique. The group worked alongside inner-city youth from East St. Louis, Ill., sponsored by the Acts 1:8 Mission Society led by Pastor Randy Wilken.

The trip included work projects at the host congregation, Mision Luterana, visits to adult day care centers, and reaching out to neighborhood children and families at a nearby community center and park.

What was at the center of it all? Certainly, God — God and a crazy game known as Ga-Ga Ball.

Ga-Ga Ball is a simple game played inside a two-foot tall circular enclosure 15 yards wide. As many players as possible pack into this Ga-Ga Ball Ring and try to knock others out by hitting them with a playground ball below the knee.

This circular ring was transported by the group from Fredericksburg and set up at Mision Luterana where it was first used to bring the two very different groups of youth — rural and inner-city — together.

It was then packed up in the church bus, hauled to the local park every afternoon and used as a means of inviting the local Hispanic children to come and play this unique game.



Kids of the community would look forward to the time when the Ga-Ga Ball Ring was set up, and in no time at all special connections were made. While many kids played the game, others were invited to make Christmas and Bible crafts sharing the story of Jesus.

At the conclusion of the week, the Holy Ghost group decided to give their beloved Ga-Ga Ball Ring to the mission, so that it could be further used as an outreach tool for building relationships and spreading the Good News about Jesus!

The outreach continued the next week as 30 college students came to Mision Luterana to serve over their winter break. Patricia Fick of Can-Do Missions reported that they participated in the same projects and invited the children of the community to the church for a "fiesta." The children enjoyed playing ga-ga ball, breaking piñatas, eating king cake, singing, hearing the story of Jesus, and re-enacting the story of Noah's ark!

We thank Clint Pluenneke, youth and family minister at Holy Ghost Lutheran Church in Fredericksburg, Texas, for this story.

NALC congregations are invited to share stories of their experiences in carrying out God's mission. Please send stories to news@thenalc.org.

NALC receives \$1 million gift for missions, theological education

The North American Lutheran Church has received a \$1 million gift that will expand the new church body's work in carrying out its mission and in training and educating its pastors.

The NALC will use the gift to launch two designated funds that will be significant for the church body's future. One fund will support theological education — the training and continuing education of NALC pastors. The other fund will be used to provide "Great Commission Grants" to fund special mission projects, including new congregation starts, missionaries, and other initiatives to spread the Gospel and make disciples for Christ.

The \$1 million gift was given by Tom and Sandra Smith of Elderton, Pa. The Smiths are members of Mount Union Lutheran Church of Elderton. The Smiths were reluctant to be recognized for their gift, but they agreed to the public announcement because it could inspire others to support these special projects in the NALC.

"Tom will tell you that he is just a country boy. I will tell you that Tom and Sandy are caring folks that love God, their country and family. Their love and caring has reached the lives of many people in our community," said the Rev. Joyce A. Dix-Weiers, pastor of Mount Union and Christ Lutheran Churches.

"What a marvelous gift from Tom and Sandra Smith. Their generosity is a sign of their confidence in the future of the North American Lutheran Church and their personal commitment to our mission. The funds they have provided will enable us to carry out a vigorous ministry and outreach," said NALC Bishop Paull Spring.

"I hope that their gift will motivate all of us to be generous supporters of the North American Lutheran Church," Bishop Spring said.

"The new 'Great Commission Grants' reflect the NALC's commitment to be a mission-driven church.

We want to keep the true mission of the Church to preach the Gospel and make disciples for Christ at the center of the NALC's common life. This fund is an expression of that commitment," said Ryan Schwarz, NALC treasurer.

"The NALC has also set a goal to provide funding for the seminary education of its pastors through support from its members. This gift provides us a good start toward that goal as well," he said.

The NALC's general operations are funded by its congregations through their benevolence offerings. The two new funds will enable individuals and congregations to support the NALC's priority ministry initiatives above and beyond basic operating support.

"We have been very pleased by the support the NALC has received from its congregations and from many individuals. This support illustrates the deep commitment of our members to the NALC and their excitement about being a part of this new church body," Schwarz said.

The NALC Executive Council also set aside a portion of the gift as a contingency fund for NALC operations. "In these still-challenging economic times, we think it prudent to establish a sort of 'rainy-day fund' for the church," Schwarz said.

The North American Lutheran Church, which embodies the theological center of Lutheranism in North America, has been growing rapidly since it was constituted Aug. 27, 2010. More than 140 congregations have voted to join the NALC in its first six months of existence.

Additional gifts to the "Great Commission Grants" fund or the theological education fund or general gifts for the NALC may be sent to: NALC; 2299 Palmer Drive, Suite 220; New Brighton, MN 55112.

If you would like your gift to go to one of the special funds, please note that with your gift.

Reflections on Ethiopian experience

By Pastor John Bradosky
NALC General Secretary

It was an honor and a privilege to travel to Ethiopia and to be in the epicenter for the rapid growth and expansion of the Christian Church. It is inspiring and humbling to know that Lutherans are at the forefront of this great growth.

In our many meetings with leaders of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), we acknowledged that mission work is a partnership among equals. We have just as much, if not more, to learn from them as they have to learn from us. To that end we were able to craft an agreement between the North American Lutheran Church and the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. Our Executive Council took action to adopt it at our February meeting, and their leadership will take action on it at



More than 2,000 EECMY pastors wore vestments for a special service at the theological conference.

their meeting in March. Once it is adopted by both groups we will take great joy in celebrating all that the future holds for our work together.

Throughout our time together I attempted to listen, observe and discern the reasons for the rapid growth in mission and ministry the church is experiencing there. I pray these five observations will provide an opportunity for conversation within the NALC and with our partners in Ethiopia.

1. The Great Commission is not only the mission of the church but a *personal mandate* for each Christian as they grow in their identity as a disciple of Jesus. The work of the Great Commission is not accomplished by a program or a technique but by every believer accepting personal responsibility for witnessing, evangelism and fulfilling the Great Commission. The goal is not only to train and equip but to hold one another accountable for the mission. Every relationship with family, friends, neighbors and co-workers is an opportunity for sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ and leading people into a life-saving relationship with Him. This concept is integrated throughout the church and a part of every ministry.



NALC Missions Director Gemechis Desta Buba addresses the Oromo Ilammee Mission Convention.

Continued on Page 5

2. The *training and equipping of the laity* who can disciple others is another critical component. The expectation to learn, grow and accept leadership responsibilities is highly valued among the laity of the church. This is a source of great strength and necessity in a body that has nearly 6 million members with only 2,300 pastors. That is a ratio of 2,600 followers for every pastor. The training of lay evangelists, catechists, mentors, youth leaders, worship leaders, etc. is a high priority and a way of demonstrating the commitment of the church to reach all people with the Gospel. It is also evident in the training of every individual that the Word of God is the authoritative norm for all matters of life and faith. The key to equipping others is through Bible study and the encouragement of its daily use for devotions and discussions with others.

3. Caring for the needs of people as a way to manifest the love of Jesus is never disconnected from sharing the Gospel of Jesus. The EECMY's vision for ministry is "*Caring for the whole person with the whole Gospel of Jesus.*" The symbol is that of a dove with two wings unfurled. One wing represents the work of the church to manifest the love of Jesus in acts of mercy and care. Without the experience of Christ's love, people will not appreciate the reality of the Gospel. The other wing represents the goal and hope that the person might experience life that is eternal in Christ Jesus through sharing the whole Gospel (our understanding of Law and Gospel) with them. They remind each other that a one-winged bird cannot



The first Mekane Yesus church in Addis Ababa.

fly; the emphasis on both elements is critical in reaching those who are yet unreached.

4. I am always amazed at the insight others have about us. During one of my meetings with the General Secretary of the EECMY, he asked an insightful question, "*Why do Christians in America spend so much time in fear?*" You worry about what someone else will think. You seem worried

about what some other Christian group or people of another faith might say about you. You are worried about lawyers, and political groups. You live in the freest nation in the world and yet you spend so much time being afraid that you quench the Spirit. In our discussion we talked about the way fear takes us away from God and focuses us on ourselves and our own survival. Their insight and perspective comes from having faced severe persecution and



Children sing at the Oromo Ilammee Mission Convention.

Continued on Page 6

personally knowing those who were martyred for their faith in Jesus. As they have stood firm and remained faithful in their convictions in spite of their dire circumstances, the church grew stronger and more effective in fulfilling its mission. When we allow our problems to overshadow God's promises we doom ourselves to a defeat that was never a part of God's eternal plans. By trying to avoid adversity and conflict we increase our worry and diminish the effectiveness of the church in fulfilling its mission.

5. Every other insight I have mentioned depends on this one, *a complete dependence on the power and work of the Holy Spirit*. Our brothers and sisters in Ethiopia are living out what we confess in Luther's explanation to the third article of the Apostles' Creed: "I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith." Their focus on the power and work of the Holy Spirit is evident in their worship, their prayer, their teaching, and their expectations that through the



NALC Bishop Paul Spring preached for the closing worship service. An EECMY pastor enthusiastically translated.

faithful proclamation of the Gospel and their witness the Holy Spirit will be at work leading people into that life-giving relationship with Jesus. They believe the work that started at Pentecost is continuing to unfold as the Church takes the Gospel to the ends of the earth. There can be no doubt that what worked then is still working now! If it can work for Lutherans in Ethiopia, it can work for us as Lutherans in North America.

We have an exciting future together. I look forward to our dialog within the NALC as well as our dialog with the ELCMY about these and the other insights that are bound to follow.



The delegation of church leaders from North America received the gift of traditional Oromo stoles.

'Salvation Today' is theme for the 2011 Lutheran CORE theological conference

"Salvation Today" is the theme of the Lutheran CORE theological conference Aug. 10-11.

The annual theological conference is held in conjunction with the convocations of Lutheran CORE and the North American Lutheran Church.

The Lutheran CORE convocation will be Aug. 9. The convocation of the North American Lutheran Church will be Aug. 11-12. The convocations and theological conference will be held at Upper Arlington Lutheran Church's Mill Run campus in Hilliard, Ohio.

"To proclaim the good news of Christ's salvation to all the nations is the chief reason for the church's being. . . . Yet, some Christians and churches act as though we have come to the end of the missionary era," conference organizers explained.

Presentations for the theological conference include:

The Uniqueness and Universality of Jesus Christ
Professor Gerald McDermott
Roanoke College - Salem, Va.

Calling Lutherans Back to the Evangelistic Task
President Wakseyoum Idossa
Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

Engaging in Politics, Yes; Politicizing the Gospel, No!
Professor Robert Benne
Roanoke College - Salem, Va.

The Lutheran Legacy in the Worldwide Church
The Rev. Dr. Sarah Hinlicky Wilson
Institute for Ecumenical Research - Strasbourg

Orthodoxy At Stake: A Symposium
Anglican, Lutheran and Reformed Perspectives
Anglican - The Rt. Rev. Bishop Ray Sutton
Reformed - The Rev. Dr. Joseph Small
Lutheran - Professor James Nestingen

Nominations requested for NALC leaders

The North American Lutheran Church is seeking nominations of individuals to serve as leaders for the church body.

The 2011 NALC Convocation Aug. 11-12 at Upper Arlington Lutheran Church's Mill Run campus in Hilliard, Ohio, will elect a new bishop to serve a four-year term. NALC Bishop Paull Spring has said that he will not be available for reelection.

NALC congregations may nominate candidates for bishop and for the Executive Council. The Nominating Committee is also seeking the names of individuals to serve on the Court of Adjudication and the 2012 Nominating Committee.

Each NALC congregation will receive a letter explaining the nominating process. Information will also be posted on the NALC website.

Lutheran CORE's 2010 Convocation elected provisional leaders to guide the NALC through its first year and to enable the congregations that join the NALC to elect their own leaders in 2011.

Elections for all NALC positions will take place at the 2011 NALC Convocation. Executive Council and Court of Adjudication members will be elected to staggered terms.

All nominees must be members of a NALC congregation at the time of the Convocation. All ordained nominees must be received as NALC pastors by the date of the Convocation.

Pastor Carl Haynes of Christiana Lutheran Church near Salisbury, N.C., is chair of the Nominating Committee. He can be reached at nominations@thenalc.org or 704-279-4655.

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church Abington, Pennsylvania

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Abington, Pennsylvania (north of Philadelphia), is a sparkling gem of a congregation.

Holy Trinity people enter whole-heartedly into music and worship and Christian education and possess an endless spirit of generosity in responding to a constant flow of requests from the community, the region, and the world.

Come to a service, a Sunday school class, a committee meeting, a men's or a women's group gathering and you will feel the enlivening presence of the Holy Spirit binding and energizing the members.

Holy Trinity Church is and always has been a can-do congregation, drawing upon the love and power of the Lord God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Started as a mission that met in a storefront in 1930, the church has been ably led by seven pastors as the congregation built its first church, then enlarged the structure with further building until today it includes a beautiful New England style nave seating more than 300 and a wing that includes offices, a kitchen, parlor, chapel, library, fellowship hall and Sunday School rooms.



Under the current leadership of husband-and-wife team Pastor Michael G. Tavella and Pastor N. Amanda Grimmer, both Harvard Divinity School graduates, Holy Trinity is solidly biblical in teaching and preaching the Word, liturgical in worshiping and administering the Sacraments, and traditional in music style (although one can enjoy praise music at the Saturday night service).

The Sunday School program offers something for everyone: from toddler and nursery groups, through elementary and secondary (confirmation) classes, to three choices in adult study.

Continued on Page 9

Holy Trinity

Continued from Page 8

Christian education is augmented by weekly Bible studies and seasonal theology courses as well as the highly successful summer Vacation Bible School which attracted more than 100 children this past summer.

Church members are especially in love with their music program, led by the exceedingly talented Jacqueline Smith and complimented by her husband Kile who is an accomplished composer. A bell choir and instrumentalists as well as children's and adult vocal choirs not only enhance and inspire worship, but also provide wonderful concerts and music for special services throughout the year. Holy Trinity has an active committee life that spearheads evangelistic outreach: booths at community events, highway banners, yard signs for holiday services, etc. as well as social ministry that seems to touch every aspect of human need: blood drives, AIDS dinners, a food pantry, linens and health kits for world disaster relief, toiletries and school supplies for shelters, toys and gifts to brighten the lives of children and the elderly, supplies for mission trips ... the list goes on. And, just when you think this congregation is maxed out, a new need is presented and the response is overwhelming.

The women's group has been supporting five to six monthly circles for decades, and in recent years, a men's devotional fellowship has taken root. For years, one couple in the congregation has devoted



countless hours to youth ministry for the high school set.

This is a church that prays devotedly through prayer groups, lay prayer ministers, and special prayer events. Trained Christophers support the work of the pastors in visiting the hospitalized and shut-in members.

With such great commitment to following Jesus, expressed in myriad ways, it is probably not surprising that this congregation voted its desire to be an orthodox, confessing Lutheran body that joined the newly formed North American Lutheran Church.

It should also be mentioned that this congregation knows how to enjoy one another. A prime example is the annual Fastnacht talent show on Shrove Tuesday or Mardi Gras to showcase a healthy share of comedy — all written and produced by fun-loving Holy Trinity members.

We hope that if you ever pass our way, you will allow us to welcome you to worship with us. In the meantime, pay us a virtual visit at www.holytrinity.net.



This article is part of a series of profiles of NALC congregations. All NALC congregations are encouraged to send a profile introducing their congregation to others in the NALC. Please share whatever you'd like others to know about your congregation, your area, and especially your mission. Send the article and a few photos to news@thenalc.

In pursuit of the Great Commission

Small Groups

By Pastor Don Brandt

First, a disclaimer: A congregation-wide small groups ministry is not a growth (i.e., numbers) strategy, it's a discipleship strategy.

And when it comes to discipleship there is probably no other single congregational effort ("program?") that will accomplish as much as launching and maintaining multiple, lay-led small groups.

What is it about groups of between six and 14 adults (or youth) that makes such a difference when it comes to personal, spiritual growth?

Primarily it's about being part of a discussion-oriented group where the group's size encourages verbal sharing.

The content for a given group can vary (e.g., Bible study, topical study, book study, support group, etc.), but the number of participants needs to be large enough to feel like a "group," while still being small enough so every participant can "get a word in edge-wise."

In addition to fostering discussion, these groups are an ideal context for both care-giving and sharing in times of prayer.

Now for the story of one Lutheran congregation's transformation from a typically programmatic and pastor-led church into a congregation of small groups.

The transformation was accomplished over a period of a few years. It became a major congregational ministry priority when it was first launched. There were, at that time, already three small groups meeting; this in a congregation averaging around 350 in worship attendance.

After this ministry initiative had been in place for five years there were 25 small groups, 22 of them being lay-led. The bottom line in this type of ministry, by the way, is not so much the total number of groups

or the total number of different people participating; the bottom line is how many of your active worshipers are in a small group? The goal is to strive for as high a percentage as possible. (By the way, the smaller your congregation, the higher your percentage goal can reasonably be.)

At the risk of repeating some of what I shared in last month's column, here are key principles that should govern this type of congregational small groups effort:

1. You want a high level of lay ownership; not just committing to the idea of most groups being lay-led, but having key, respected lay leaders helping to publicize and advocate for this ministry.
2. There's a direct relationship between the quality (and maturity) of your small group leaders and the overall "success" of this effort. This congregation I've mentioned recruited their best, most trusted lay people to lead small groups. In some cases they were told they could resign from their current roles in congregational life if that was what it would take to get them to lead a small group.
3. Small group leaders should have ownership of their own small group. They pick the night their group meets, whether it will meet weekly or every other week, and what the group study focus will be. (The pastor, of course, should have a list of small-group curriculums from which they can make their selection.) Also, these leaders help recruit for their own small group; always leaving space for some people they do not know who will be recruited from the congregation at large on Sunday mornings.
4. Your small group leaders need training. This will be somewhat token; maybe a six-week class led by the pastor. Fact is, these leaders will probably be more than qualified with or without training. (After all, you are recruiting the "best and the brightest.") However, the training will build their enthusiasm and self-confidence.

Continued on Page 11

Continued from Page 10

5. When it comes to the content for these groups (different groups, different content), this is the principle: When in doubt, Bible study. Small-group Bible study materials are available from a whole host of publishers; including Augsburg- Fortress, Concordia, Sola, NavPress, Lifeways (formerly Serendipity), Zondervan, InterVarsity, and Willow Creek. Participants will be more than willing to reimburse the church for the cost of their own study books.

6. Once you start multiple, new small groups, try to add at least one new small group each year thereafter. These new, additional groups are for new members and to replace groups that choose to disband. Your overall goal is to, over time, have a significant percentage of your members in a small group.

7. Let your small groups meet for as many years as they want. Do not try to shut down a group. You probably couldn't even if you tried. Most well-led small groups will meet for years! They will, of course, likely take the summers off, and some will choose not to meet between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

8. Most of your small groups — except those requiring childcare — should meet in homes. This facilitates a level of hospitality (and refreshments) that is difficult to duplicate in the typical church setting. And speaking of hospitality, you widen the ownership base of each small group if your leaders recruit some friends to offer their homes as the regular gathering place for the group.

9. When recruiting participants for your small groups, consider asking for only a one-quarter (two or three month) commitment when they first sign up. This way they are more likely to consider participating. Your leaders, however, have been asked for a one-year commitment, and the groups will be on-going. You'll find that the great majority of those who sign up for just the first quarter will end up staying in their group after that.

10. Some of your small groups should be targeted; i.e., identified for a specific constituency. This will make a huge difference in the total number of members "signing-on" as participants. Examples

might be "active retired," "young couples," "young parents," "singles," etc. However, have some of your groups only identified by the group's study focus. Some of your members will want to be in a mixed, multi- generational group.

The most remarkable aspect of a "congregation of small groups" is the way it involves key lay leaders in the priesthood of all believers, and the degree to which it contributes to the spiritual growth of your participating members. And from this pastor's perspective, it is truly a liberating experience for clergy. When a significant percentage of members are in lay-led small groups they are most likely receiving a level of pastoral and spiritual care that their pastor alone is not able to provide.

So in the case of pastors who see their role, in part, as "gate-keepers," this is probably not the ministry strategy for you! On second thought, do it anyway. It will probably make you a better, more faithful pastor!

If you have any questions regarding this kind of ministry, don't hesitate to e-mail me at DonB@oursaviorssalem.org.

Model Constitution for NALC Congregations

The North American Lutheran Church has prepared a model constitution to assist congregations that are interested in updating their existing constiutions.

The NALC Model Constitution for Congregations provides a template upon which a constitution for a congregation may be adopted. Congregations of the NALC are not required to adopt any particular constitution; rather, this model is offered as a resource for those who choose to use it.

"Governing Documents for NALC Congregations" is a companion document to the NALC Model Constitution for Congregations. This document provides an overview of the questions that may be asked as congregations consider their governing documents.

The documents are available online at www.thenalc.org/resources.php.

Common Convictions - Common Mission NALC, Lutheran CORE event in Florida

“Common Convictions - Common Mission” is the theme of a ministry gathering in Florida sponsored by Lutheran CORE and the North American Lutheran Church March 31-April 1. The event will be held at the Westin Hotel-Orlando North in Lake Mary, Fla.

The Rev. Dr. J. Larry Yoder of Lenoir-Rhyne University will open the conference speaking on the theme, “Why Orthodoxy is Important - Why Right Convictions Matter.”

The Rev. John Bradosky, NALC General Secretary will speak on the topic, “The NALC: A Church of Common Convictions,” and the Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, NALC Missions Director, on “The NALC: A Church of Common Mission.”

The Rev. Eddy Perez, pastor of Iglesia Evangelica Luterana San Pedro in Miami, will provide an update on Lutheran CORE. Perez is a member of

the Lutheran CORE Steering Committee. He also is the NALC’s provisional dean for Caribbean and Hispanic ministries.

The Rev. Rebecca M. M. Heber, co-pastor of Oasis Church, a NALC mission congregation in Lake Mary, will address planting a mission church. Pastor Heber is the NALC provisional dean for Florida.

Registration for the conference is \$50 per person or \$95 per couple, which includes the Thursday night banquet.

The conference will be followed by a Family Life “Weekend to Remember Getaway” April 1-3. A special discount has been arranged for NALC members to attend the event. NALC members may attend at half price (\$159/couple). NALC pastors and spouses may attend at no cost.

More information is available at www.thenalc.org.

Midwest NALC conference in Minnesota to feature Bishop Spring, Prof. Nestingen

The Midwest NALC Conference Saturday, April 2, in Erskine, Minn., will feature NALC Bishop Paull Spring and Lutheran theologian the Rev. Dr. James Nestingen. It will be held at Grace Lutheran Church in Erskine, Minn.

The conference begins with worship at 10 a.m. There will be keynote presentations by Bishop Spring and Professor Nestingen.

Bishop Spring and Professor Nestingen will also participate in a panel discussion with the Rev. Timothy Lundeen, pastor of Grace and provisional NALC dean for northern Minnesota.

The conference will conclude with a 5 p.m. banquet featuring Professor Nestingen, professor emeritus at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn.

Registration fee for the conference is \$25 per person and includes lunch. The banquet is an additional \$20.

The conference will be preceded by a family concert by Christian artist Peder Eide at 7 p.m. Friday, April 1, at Win-E-Mac High School in Erskine. The concert is \$15.

Eide has led Christ-centered praise and worship events for youth students and their families. His passion-filled and creative approach to helping his audience “draw closer to God and closer together” through worship and experience been called “refreshing” and “heartfelt.”

More information is available at www.thenalc.org.

NALC Congregations

More than 140 congregations have already voted to join the North American Lutheran Church. The NALC has been experiencing rapid growth since it was constituted on Aug. 27.

The NALC Executive Council has formally received 118 congregations during the NALC's first six months of existence.

More than 20 additional congregations have passed resolutions indicating their intention to join the NALC upon completion of their departure from their current church body.

Many more congregations are expected to vote to join the church body in the coming weeks and months.

A list of NALC congregations is online at www.thenalc.org. It is updated as new congregations are received by the NALC Executive Council.

Here is the current list of NALC congregations:

Alaska

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Kodiak, Alaska

Arizona

St. Peter Lutheran Church
Mesa, Ariz.

California

St. John Lutheran Church
Arroyo Grande, Calif.

St. Timothy's Lutheran Church
San Jose, Calif.

Colorado

St. Luke's Lutheran Church
Colorado Springs, Colo.

Florida

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
Dade City, Fla.

Oasis Church
Lake Mary, Fla.

Iglesia Evangelica Luterana San Pedro
Miami, Fla.

First Evangelical Lutheran Church
West Palm Beach, Fla.

Georgia

Christ the King Lutheran Church
Evans, Ga.

Word of God Lutheran Church
Peachtree City, Ga.

Illinois

First Lutheran Church
Kirkland, Ill.

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Metropolis, Ill.

Zion Lutheran Church
Philo, Ill.

First Lutheran Church
Pontiac, Ill.

American Lutheran Church
Rantoul, Ill.

St. John Lutheran Church
Royal, Ill.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
St. Joseph, Ill.

Immanuel Lutheran Church
Thomasboro, Ill.

Indiana

St. Mark Lutheran Church
Auburn, Ind.

St. John Lutheran Church
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Antioch Lutheran Church
Hoagland, Ind.

Living Faith Lutheran Church
Wabash, Ind.

Iowa

Faith Lutheran Church
Monona, Iowa

St. John Lutheran Church
Plainfield, Iowa

Zion Lutheran Church
Ruthven, Iowa

Mission in Christ Lutheran Church
Strawberry Point, Iowa

Ullensvaag Lutheran Church
Thor, Iowa

Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church
Waterville, Iowa

Old West Paint Creek Lutheran Church
Waukon, Iowa

Kentucky

House of Prayer Lutheran Church
Elizabethtown, Ky.

Maryland

River's Edge Ministries
Mount Airy, Md.

Michigan

Salem Lutheran Church
Bark River, Mich.

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Ewart, Mich.

Redeemer Lutheran Church
Owosso, Mich.

Zion Lutheran Church
Skanee, Mich.

Minnesota

Immanuel Lutheran Church
Crosby, Minn.

Grace Lutheran Church
Erskine, Minn.

Faith Lutheran Church
Mentor, Minn.

Albion Lutheran Church
St. James, Minn.

Riverside Lutheran Church
Wannaska, Minn.

Missouri

Trinity Lutheran Church
Ava, Mo.

Nebraska

Faith Lutheran Church
Dannebrog, Neb.

New York

Christ Lutheran Church
East Amherst, N.Y.

Nile Lutheran Mission
Rochester, N.Y.

North Carolina

St. John Lutheran Church
Asheboro, N.C.

Concordia Lutheran Church
China Grove, N.C.

Mount Calvary Lutheran Church
Claremont, N.C.

Miller's Lutheran Church
Hickory, N.C.

New Jerusalem Lutheran Church
Hickory, N.C.

Advent Lutheran Church
Kings Mountain, N.C.

Trinity Lutheran Church
Landis, N.C.

Bethel Lutheran Church
Lincolnton, N.C.

Grace Lutheran Church
Newton, N.C.

St. James Lutheran Church
Newton, N.C.

Christiana Lutheran Church
Salisbury, N.C.

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
Salisbury, N.C.

Union Lutheran Church
Salisbury, N.C.

St. John Evangelical Lutheran
Church
Statesville, N.C.

Lutheran Church of the Atonement
Wilkesboro, N.C.

North Dakota

Peace Lutheran Church
Devil's Lake, N.D.

First Lutheran Church
Washburn, N.D.

Ohio

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Bolivar, Ohio

Upper Arlington Lutheran Church
Columbus, Ohio

Living Water Lutheran Church
Dayton, Ohio

St. John Lutheran Church
Greenville, Ohio

St. John Evangelical Lutheran
Church
Grove City, Ohio

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Mansfield, Ohio

Oakland Lutheran Church
Mansfield, Ohio

First English Lutheran Church
Marysville, Ohio

St. Peter Lutheran Church
Monroeville, Ohio

St. John Lutheran Church
Montpelier, Ohio

Resurrection Lutheran Church
Port Clinton, Ohio

Grace Lutheran Church
Springfield, Ohio

Trinity Lutheran Church
Springfield, Ohio

Pennsylvania

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Abington, Pa.

Zion Lutheran Church
Brentwood, Pa.

Lutheran Church of the Cross
Covington, Pa.

Dunmyer Lutheran Church
Johnstown, Pa.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church
Pittsburgh, Pa.

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Sarver, Pa.

One in Christ Lutheran Mission
Telford, Pa.

Puerto Rico

Iglesia Luterana Resurrección
Carolina, Puerto Rico

South Dakota

Badger Lutheran Church
Badger, S.D.

Heritage Lutheran Church
Brandon, S.D.

American Lutheran Church
Castlewood, S.D.

Hayti Lutheran Church
Hayti, S.D.

New Hope Lutheran Church
Hayti, S.D.

Trinity Lutheran Church
Lake Norden, S.D.

First Lutheran Church
Philip, S.D.

Genesis Lutheran Church
Rapid City, S.D.

Immanuel Lutheran Church
Whitewood, S.D.

Tennessee

Faith Lutheran Church
Chattanooga, Tenn.

Word of Life Lutheran Church
Maryville, Tenn.

Texas

Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church of Welcome
Brenham, Texas

First Evangelical Lutheran Church
Floresville, Texas

Holy Ghost Lutheran Church
Fredericksburg, Texas

Immanuel Lutheran Church
La Vernia, Texas

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Meyersville, Texas

St. Stephen Lutheran Church
Portland, Texas

Joy Lutheran Church
Richmond, Texas

Peace Lutheran Church
Rockdale, Texas

Peace Lutheran Church
Rosenberg, Texas

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Rosenberg, Texas

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Runge, Texas

Our Savior Lutheran Church
Three Rivers, Texas

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
Tyler, Texas

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Yorktown, Texas

Virginia

Reformation Lutheran Church
Culpeper, Va.

Lebanon Lutheran Church
Lebanon Church, Va.

Advent Lutheran Church
Winchester, Va.

Washington

St. Mark Lutheran Church
Seattle, Wash.

West Virginia

St. Timothy Lutheran Church
Charleston, W.Va.

Zion Lutheran Church
Letart, W.Va.

Wisconsin

Zion Lutheran Church
Caroline, Wis.

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nekimi
Oshkosh, Wis.

Peace Lutheran Church
Split Rock, Wis.

Wyoming

Christ the King Lutheran Church
Newcastle, Wyo.



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