

# NALC News

North American Lutheran Church

August 2011

## John Bradosky elected Bishop of North American Lutheran Church

The Rev. John F. Bradosky of Centerville, Ohio, was elected Bishop of the North American Lutheran Church on Aug. 11.

Bishop Bradosky — who has served as the General Secretary of the NALC since January — was elected by the NALC Convocation, the church's annual meeting, which met Aug. 11-12 in suburban Columbus, Ohio.

Eight hundred Lutherans from throughout North America gathered at Upper Arlington Lutheran Church at Mill Run in Hilliard, Ohio, to elect leaders and to set direction for the church body.

Bishop Bradosky, 59, was formally installed as bishop Friday afternoon at the closing worship service of the Convocation.

"Today I stand before you even more deeply honored and humbled. Thank you for the trust you have placed in me," Bishop Bradosky told those at the



*Bishop John Bradosky responds to acclamation from those at the Convocation following his installation as bishop of the North American Lutheran Church. Also pictured are, from left, Bishop Ron Warren; the Rev. Dr. Berhanu Ofga'a, General Secretary of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus; Bishop Henry Schulte; and Bishop Ralph Kempski. Bishop Paull Spring presided at the installation.*

Convocation after the voting results were announced Friday morning. "Thank you for this opportunity to serve you. You have the promise of my prayer for each of you and your ministries that together, through the work of the Holy Spirit, we will boldly confess Christ.

"I cannot fulfill this office by anything within me. My wisdom and experience are completely insufficient. I can only fulfill this

office through the work of the Holy Spirit, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the promise of your faithful prayers and support," he said.

"I humbly ask that you would pray for wisdom and discernment that I might preach and administer the sacraments faithfully. Pray for courage that I might teach boldly according to the Word and our

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Confessions. Pray that I might encourage and support all those in Word and Sacrament ministry. Pray that I might be filled with the love of Christ that I might love others with His love and strengthen the witness of the Church. Pray that, in all I do, I would build up and strengthen this church body and the one holy catholic and apostolic Church to whom we belong," he said.



***Bishop Paull Spring presides at the installation service for the Rev. John Bradosky as Bishop of the North American Lutheran Church.***

"The local congregation is the front line for mission and ministry. Our work is to support, facilitate and encourage the ministry and mission work of local congregations. This is where people come to faith in Jesus, where disciples grow and mature in their faith, where people experience Christian community." Bishop Bradosky said. "Our structure must keep pastors and congregations connected for learning, growing, offering support and care."

Bishop Bradosky has 32 years of pastoral experience with diverse experience in organization and administration. He has served in urban, suburban, and multi-cultural settings.

Prior to his appointment as General Secretary, Bishop Bradosky was senior pastor of Epiphany Lutheran Church in Dayton, Ohio. He has also served St. John Lutheran Church in Springfield, Ohio; Trinity Lutheran Church in Canton, Ohio; and Grace Lutheran Church in Huntington Beach, Calif.

He is a graduate of Hamma School of Theology at Wittenberg

University in Springfield, Ohio, and Indiana University of Pennsylvania in Indiana, Pa.

Bishop Bradosky's hobbies include being a private pilot, running, scuba diving, and skiing. He also serves as a high school and collegiate sports official for basketball, soccer and football.

He has completed seven marathons including the 2011 Boston Marathon which he completed with his son, Jacob (winner of the 2010 Marine Corp Marathon).

Bishop Bradosky and his wife, Kristi, have been married for 34 years. Kristi is a registered nurse. They have four children — three of whom are still living — and two grandsons. Their first-born son, Joshua, died in a tragic car accident at the age of 6.

The North American Lutheran Church was constituted at the 2010 Convocation of Lutheran CORE (Coalition for Renewal) Aug. 26-27, 2010, in Grove City, Ohio. The NALC has been

growing rapidly since then. More than 250 congregations, representing more than 100,000 Lutherans, have joined the NALC in its first year.

The 2010 Lutheran CORE Convocation had elected provisional leaders for the first year of the NALC. The Rev. Paull Spring of State College, Pa., was elected as provisional bishop to guide the NALC through its first year.

Bishop Spring presided at the installation service. Three other former ELCA bishops — the Revs. Ralph Kempfski, Henry Schulte, and Ron Warren — and the Rev. Dr. Berhanu Ofga'a, General Secretary of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church Mekane Yesus, took part in the installation.

Elections for all NALC positions took place at the 2011 Convocation. Among those elected were eight members of the NALC's Executive Council, the church's national board of directors, and members of the church's Court of Adjudication.

# Executive Council members elected

Seven of the eight members of the North American Lutheran Church's provisional Executive Council were elected to continue to serve on the Executive Council by the 2011 NALC Convocation.

Ten lay people and 16 pastors were nominated to serve on the Executive Council, which functions as the board of directors for the NALC by providing leadership for the church body between Convocations.

**The Rev. Rebecca M. M. Heber**, pastor and mission developer for Oasis Church in Lake Mary, Fla., will be the new member of the Executive Council.

Pastor Heber was a member of the Lutheran CORE Steering Committee and was the NALC provisional dean for Florida. She was elected to a three-year term.

**James L. Hansen** of Hurricane, W.Va., was elected to a one-year term as a lay member. He is a retired statistical expert who worked for Union Carbide.

**Carol H. Lattier** of Bullard, Texas, was elected to a two-year term as a lay member. She is a part-time parish administrator at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Tyler, Texas. She is retired from



**James L. Hansen**  
*Lay 1-year term*



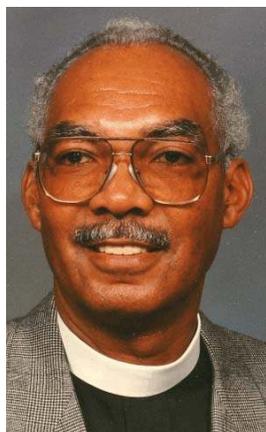
**Carol H. Lattier**  
*Lay 2-year term*



**Kay J. Weaver**  
*Lay 3-year term*



**Ryan M. Schwarz**  
*Lay 4-year term*



**Victor C. Langford**  
*Clergy 1-year term*



**N. Amanda Grimmer**  
*Clergy 2-year term*



**Rebecca Heber**  
*Clergy 3-year term*



**James T. Lehmann**  
*Clergy 4-year term*

management at the Johnson Space Center.

**Kay Weaver** of Vale, N.C., was elected to a three-year term as a lay member. She is a high school data manager and registrar.

**Ryan M. Schwarz** of Washington, D.C., was elected to a four-year term as a lay member. He works in venture capital. He also serves as NALC treasurer. He was a member of the Lutheran CORE Steering Committee.

**The Rev. Victor C. Langford III**, pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Seattle, Wash., was

elected to a one-year term.

Pastor Langford served on the Lutheran CORE Steering Committee. He also serves as the NALC provisional dean for Washington and Oregon.

**The Rev. N. Amanda Grimmer**, pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Abington, Pa., was elected to a two-year term.

**The Rev. James T. Lehmann**, pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Thomasboro, Ill., was elected to a four-year term. He also serves as the NALC provisional dean for Illinois.

# Seven elected to Court of Adjudication

The seven people who have served the North American Lutheran Church for its first year as provisional members of the Court of Adjudication were elected to regular terms of from one to four years by the 2011 NALC Convocation on Aug. 12.



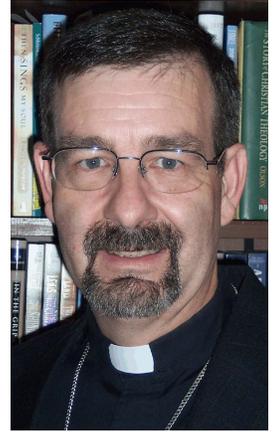
*Richard Currey*



*Jon Evans*



*James Gale*



*Jeffray Greene*

The Court of Adjudication is available to decide appeals from disciplinary decisions and questions regarding the interpretation of the NALC's governing documents should such situations arise.

Those elected were:

**Richard Currey**, a staff attorney at the Air Force Academy Federal Credit Union in Colorado Springs, Colo. He served in the U.S. Air Force before retiring at the rank of colonel.



*Ralph Kempksi*



*Carolyn Nestingen*



*Ron Warren*

**Jon Evans**, an attorney in Pittsburgh, Pa., practicing primarily in the areas of corporate and real estate law. He has served in leadership for the West Penn Lutheran CORE Fellowship.

**Jim Gale**, a business litigator in Washington, D.C. He has served as chair of the Gustavus Adolphus College Board of Trustees and has expertise in the structuring of nonprofit corporations and in drafting governance documents that establish the desired structure. He served on constitutional task forces for both Lutheran CORE and the NALC.

**The Rev. Dr. Jeffray Greene**, pastor of American Lutheran Church in Rantoul, Ill. He earned a Ph.D. in church administration with a focus on the development of the constitution in American Lutheranism. He was a leader of the Fellowship of Confessional Lutherans and served on Lutheran CORE's Advisory Council.

**The Rev. Ralph Kempksi**, Aiken, S.C., bishop of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the Lutheran Church in America 1979-1987 and of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the ELCA 1987-1998. He was a representative of the ELCA Board of Pensions 1998-2004. He served on the Lutheran CORE Ministerial Policies working group and as NALC provisional dean for South Carolina.

**Carolyn Nestingen**, an attorney in Minneapolis. She has practiced law for more than 30 years, focusing on employee benefits, pension, and trust law. She was a member of the Lutheran CORE Vision and Planning Working Group.

**The Rev. Dr. Ron Warren**, Grove City, Ohio, bishop of the ELCA's Southeastern Synod 1995-2007. He was a member of the Lutheran CORE Vision and Planning Working Group. He has also served as NALC provisional dean for Ohio.

# Convocation approves full communion relationship with Ethiopian Lutherans

*Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus has 5.6 million members*

The 2011 Convocation of North American Lutheran Church Convocation unanimously approved a full communion relationship with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, the Lutheran church in Ethiopia, is one of the largest Lutheran church bodies in the world, with 5.6 million members. It is also among the world's fastest growing churches — adding 300,000 members last year.

The Convocation urged the congregations of the NALC to ratify the church-to-church relationship. Such relationships — and other major decisions — must be ratified by NALC congregations before going into effect.

The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Desta Buba, NALC Missions Director, is a native of Ethiopia. He is widely respected among Ethiopian Lutherans and was instrumental in building the strong relationship between the EECMY and the NALC.

The Ethiopian church and other Lutheran churches in Africa have been supportive of efforts by Lutheran CORE and others to maintain Biblical teaching on sexuality in the ELCA. EECMY leaders have challenged changes in teaching on marriage and sexual ethics by the ELCA and the Church of Sweden as being against the clear teaching of Scripture.

The Ethiopian church has also been distancing itself from the ELCA over the past year, while at the same time developing its relationship with the NALC.

Leaders from the NALC, Lutheran CORE and Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) were invited to attend the International Theological and Mission Conference Feb. 15-17 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Americans were also among the presenters for the conference.



*The Rev. Dr. Berhanu Ofga'a, General Secretary of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, addresses the 2011 NALC Convocation. The Convocation approved a full communion relationship with the EECMY.*

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.

The Rev. Dr. James Nestingen, professor emeritus from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., and a NALC pastor, will be teaching at the EECMY seminary in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, beginning in January as a missionary professor from the NALC.

# Amendments to NALC constitution approved

Amendments to the constitution of the North American Lutheran Church were approved by the 2011 NALC Convocation on Aug. 12.

The amendments must be ratified by NALC congregations before they will go into effect.

The constitution and the proposed amendments, as approved by the Convocation, are available online at [www.thenalc.org](http://www.thenalc.org).

Lutheran CORE's 2010 Convocation approved a provisional constitution for the NALC and elected provisional leaders to guide the NALC through its first year.

Many of the amendments to the constitution remove provisions related to the first year of the NALC's life. The constitution included several items addressing the NALC's first year such as providing leaders for the first year and electing leaders to staggered terms at the 2011 Convocation.

Information detailing the terms of office for officers and Executive Council members was added to the constitution, as was information on how to fill a vacancy in any office. Also added was a process for removing a person from elected office should that become necessary.

One significant amendment adds a section articulating the NALC's commitment to be a mission-driven church body: "It is also the mission of the Church to obey the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20), to preach the Gospel to all people, to do the ministry of evangelism, and to witness to others the mighty acts of God. In Holy Baptism, God calls all members of the Church, both lay and ordained, to testify in word and deed, that God has acted for the world's salvation through Jesus Christ. The NALC is mission-driven, relying on the Holy Spirit to lead it."

There were also style and typographical changes to the constitution. For example, references to "pastors" were changed to "ordained ministers" and references to the annual Convocation are now capitalized rather than lower case.

NALC congregations will be receiving information on the process for ratification of the constitutional amendments. It is recommended that churches include the ratification decision as a part of a regularly-scheduled congregational meeting such as their annual meeting.

The NALC uses a ratification process for most significant decisions to insure that congregations have a role in the decision-making process.

# Statement on ecumenism is adopted

A statement providing guidance for the North American Lutheran Church's relationship with other Christian churches was unanimously adopted by the 2011 NALC Convocation on Aug. 12.

The statement — entitled "An Initial Statement on the Ecumenical and Inter-Lutheran Commitment of the North American Lutheran Church" — was prepared by the Committee on Ecumenical Relationships and reviewed by the Commission on Theology and Doctrine.

"We intend to engage in ecumenical and inter-Lutheran endeavors at the international, national, and local levels, in accordance with our

commitment to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

"The NALC will explore ecumenical relationships with those churches and communities whose teachings are compatible with its confessional beliefs," the statement says.

The statement also affirms the practice of welcoming all baptized Christians "who believe in the real presence of Christ in, with, and under the bread and wine" to receive Holy Communion in NALC congregations.

The statement is available on the NALC's website.

# Budgets and benevolence plan approved

The 2011 NALC Convocation approved the church body's 2012 budgets and adopted a plan to provide guidance to congregations on their benevolence giving beyond their local congregations.

"It shall be the prayerful goal of the North American Lutheran Church that each congregation of the NALC shall remit at least 12 percent of its income for benevolence ministries of the church, which will include benevolence for the NALC, local benevolence, and giving for designated causes," the plan states.

The NALC asks its congregations to support the church body — but not to do all of its benevolence giving through the church body. Congregations are encouraged to give 5-8 percent of their offerings to the NALC. Congregations are encouraged to support other ministries — including those specifically recommended by the NALC — with the remainder of their benevolence giving.

The plan recommends partnership relationships between NALC congregations and other ministries — both domestic and global. The intention is that NALC members will build relationships with those ministries that will be about more than money. The hope is that those relationships will build NALC members' sense of mission and that relationships will be built between the other ministries and the congregation.

"It shall be the prayerful goal of the North American Lutheran Church that each congregation shall enter into a covenantal partnership with one domestic and one global ministry. Such partnership will include, among others, mutual prayer, exchange of resources, and financial assistance," the plan says.

Some delegates to the Convocation raised concerns that the "at least 12 percent" recommendation for congregations seemed a low standard for a congregation's faithful Christian stewardship. In response, it was noted that congregations are in very different situations. For some congregations, 12 percent is a difficult goal while others may be able to give significantly more to the mission of the church.



*NALC Treasurer Ryan Schwarz explains the budgets and benevolence plan to the Convocation.*

The Convocation approved an operating budget of \$970,000 for 2012. Budgets were also approved for two of the NALC's designated funds.

The 2012 Great Commission Fund budget is \$100,000. This fund supports the planting of new mission congregations, revitalization and renewal of NALC congregations, missional leadership development and international mission connections.

The 2012 Fund for Theological Education budget is \$68,000. This fund supports scholarships for seminarians, summer seminars, subsidies for theological conferences, global scholarships, adjunct professors, grants for lay education programs, and exchange programs for theologians. Individuals and congregations are welcome to give gifts to both funds.



*The Rt. Rev. Ray Sutton of the Anglican Church in North America preached for the opening worship.*



*About 800 people gathered for the NALC Convocation's opening worship.*



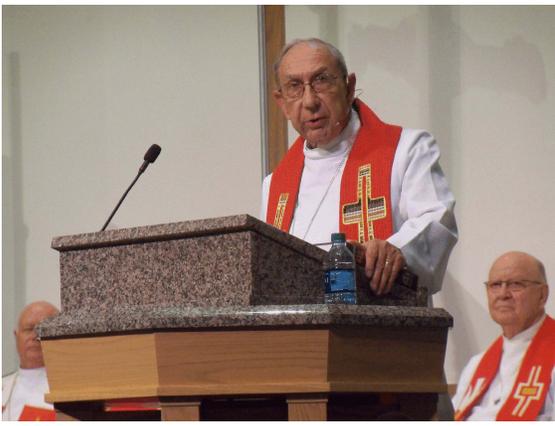
*Those at the Convocation shared a barbeque dinner Thursday evening. Tents were set up outside of Upper Arlington Lutheran Church at Mill Run to provide additional seating for all the meals.*



*Jim and Carolyn Nestingen, left, and Diedone and Serafina Panzo are the first NALC missionaries. The Panzos will serve in Ecuador. The Nestingens are going to Ethiopia.*



*NALC seminary students and newly-ordained pastors at the Convocation were introduced.*



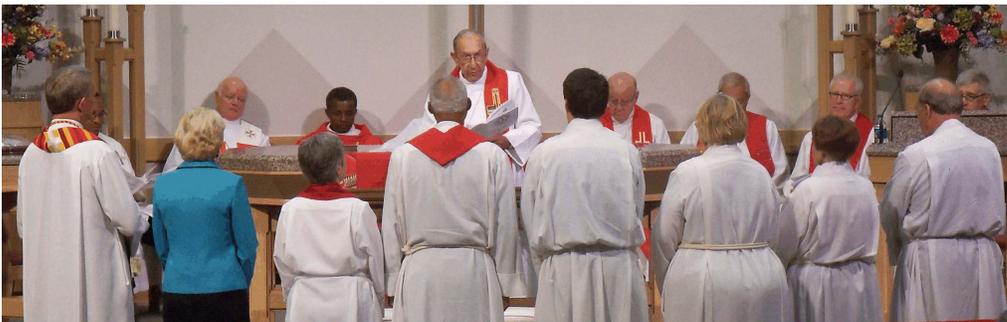
*Bishop Paull Spring preached for the closing worship service of installation.*



*Bishop Ron Warren; the Rev. Dr. Berhanu Ofga'a, General Secretary of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus; Bishop Paull Spring; Bishop Henry Schulte; and Bishop Ralph Kempksi join in the laying-on-of-hands and prayer for John Bradosky during his installation as Bishop of the NALC. (Photo by Pastor Carter Askren, Lutheran CORE Connection)*



*Pastors Michael Tavella and N. Amanda Grimmer of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Abington, Pa., coordinated worship for the Convocation and Theological Conference.*



*Bishop Spring installed newly-elected members of the NALC Executive Council.*



*Some Convocation attendees joined to form a choir for the worship services.*



*The Rev. Larry Lindstrom, pastor of St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Farmersville, Ohio, brought greetings to the Convocation from Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). Pastor Lindstrom is former chair of the LCMC Board of Trustees.*

# Theologians address ‘Salvation Today’

About 600 pastors and lay leaders gathered Aug. 10-11 at Upper Arlington Church at Mill Run in Hilliard, Ohio, for the NALC-Lutheran CORE Theological Conference under the theme, “Salvation Today.”

“In 50 years of serving in the Lutheran church, I’ve never seen anything like this . . . so much commitment to and interest in theology,” said the Rev. Dr. Carl E. Braaten, a world-renowned Lutheran theologian. He serves on the joint NALC-Lutheran CORE Commission on Theology and Doctrine which planned the conference.

“God has created the Church to be about the salvation of the world,” Dr. Braaten said. He noted the importance of theology for helping the church to be clear about its mission.

“If anyone thinks theology doesn’t matter, we should remember that we would not be here without the theological failure of the ELCA,” he said.

“Bad theology, like poisonous food, always makes the body sick and that also goes for Christ’s Body, the Church,” Dr. Braaten said. He added that bad theology leads to the end of Christian ministry.

“No other institution cares about how the Gospel is doing in the world,” he said.



*The Rev. Dr. Carl E. Braaten*

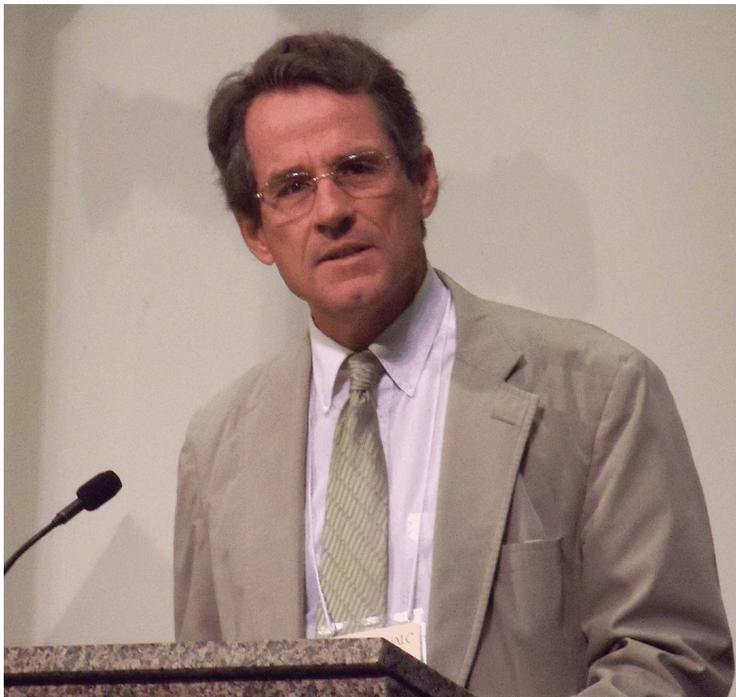
## The Uniqueness and Universality of Jesus Christ

The Rev. Dr. Gerald McDermott of Roanoke College in Salem, Va., addressed the “uniqueness and universality of Christ.”

Professor McDermott began by noting the cultural influence of “religious pluralism” — the claim that there is a basic sameness to all religions and that all religions are equally valid ways to God. Pluralism argues that mission work is immoral because it asks others to convert to our understanding of God.

“Pluralists claim that all religions are wrong because all claim to be the right way to God,” he said. “Pluralism is intolerant and narrow minded. It rejects all claims of absolute truth. When it comes to religion, there are no absolutes — except that one,” he said. “If pluralism is right, no one can know God.”

Dr. McDermott said that world religions are not doing the same thing. Each has a very different understanding of God. He said that Christianity is unique among religions. “No other religious leaders claimed to be God in the flesh,” he said. “There is nothing in other religions close to the death and resurrection of Jesus.”



*The Rev. Dr. Gerald McDermott*

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**Dr. Robert Benne**

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“Jesus Himself teaches that he is the Savior for all,” he said. “The Bible makes clear that Jesus is for all.”

Professor McDermott noted the “implications of the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ.”

“We must reject universalism — that is, universal salvation — because our Lord rejected it,” he said. “We should engage in mission — sharing the good news of Christ with those who don’t have it.”

“Some religions might have some truth, but they still don’t know the Savior,” he said. “Personal evangelism is essential to the growth of the Christian Church.”

“As church leaders, we must teach how to share the faith and to support Christian missions,” he said. “Never again, as Lutherans, will we ignore our Lord’s call to bring His name to all nations. No more will we be embarrassed to say Jesus is the way and the truth and the life.”

“Orthodox Christians should not be afraid to say that there are truths in other religions. . . . But at the same

time, we should not be bashful in proclaiming the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ.”

“Jesus is universal — for every culture — precisely because He is unique,” he said.

### **Calling Lutherans Back to the Evangelistic Task**

The Rev. Dr. Berhanu Ofga’a, General Secretary of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, told the theological conference about the growth of his church body.

He said that there were four reasons for the growth of the EECMY: 1. Respect for the authority of the Scriptures; 2. Addressing human needs with a holistic approach; 3. Charismatic experience; and 4. The role of the laity in mission.

“Mission is possible. Salvation still works,” he said. “Evangelism is the main purpose why the Father sent His Son. Evangelism is the reason for the existence of the Church. Evangelism is not an option but a command given by Christ.”

Dr. Ofga’a noted the problems in some western churches. “Let us join hands and rescue our brothers and sisters deceived by strange teachings on sexuality and reclaim our Scriptures,” he said. “Let us snatch the Bible out of the hands of liberal scholars and reclaim its authority.”

### **Engaging in Politics, Yes! Politicizing the Church, No!**

Dr. Robert Benne of Roanoke College addressed two ways that some Christians have politicized the church: 1. Politicizing the *nature* of the church and 2. Politicizing the *mission* of the church.

Professor Benne detailed ways that both the Nazi government and ELCA leaders had politicized the *nature* of the church.

“The ELCA is a church without a theological rudder. Where would you go to get an authoritative teaching?” Dr. Benne noted that the ELCA operates with a “hermeneutic of suspicion which is applied to all Christian tradition.”

“The politicizing of the ELCA . . . shocked the church’s guidance system,” he said.

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Dr. Benne suggested that the NALC and other confessional Lutherans need to “reestablish Biblically-grounded Biblical theology as the guidance system for our churches.”

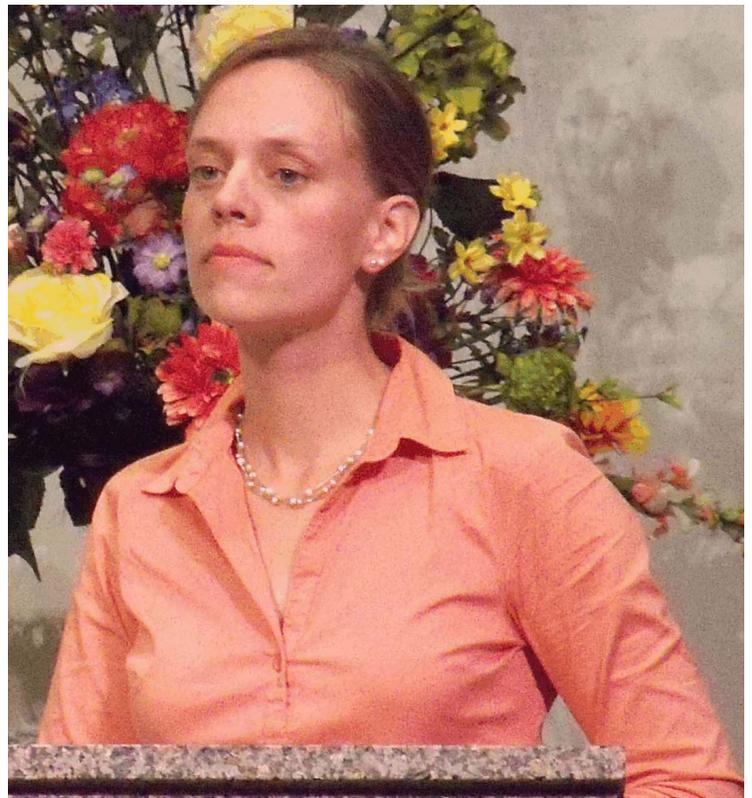
“Lutheran CORE should be an organization which thinks theologically for Lutherans,” he said. Dr. Benne also suggested ways that the NALC should “maintain its theological guidance system.”

Dr. Benne also noted the problem of politicizing the *mission* of the church — where the mission of the church becomes politics.

He said that churches should generally not engage in politics directly. Instead, churches should nurture their members in the Christian faith so that they apply their faith to political life. “Engagement of politics by the church should be mostly indirect,” he said. “On most issues, religious values have an indirect relationship with policy. . . . We come from the same core values to different decisions on policy.

“Conservatives and liberals both engage in too much straight-line thinking” — that there is only one Christian position on political matters — Dr. Benne said. He added that there are limits to the indirect idea and that, on some issues, direct connections between faith and policy are more clear. He said that the current fight regarding marriage is an area where the church should act as church.

“The church, as institution, best engages politics indirectly through its laity. When the church is church, it forms people deeply and they bring their deep beliefs into life,” he said.



*The Rev. Dr. Sarah Hinlicky Wilson*

### **The Lutheran Legacy in the Worldwide Church**

The Rev. Dr. Sarah Hinlicky Wilson of the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France, addressed “the Lutheran Legacy in the Worldwide Church.” She highlighted Lutheran insights resulting from dialog with other Christian traditions. She focused on three dialogs.

Dr. Hinlicky Wilson noted the Lutheran-Pentecostal relationship and how the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus has come to understand Pentecostal

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*About 600 people at the NALC-Lutheran CORE Theological Conference sing a hymn before one of the presentations.*

experiences through a Lutheran theological framework.

She also discussed the Lutheran-Reformed dialog which resulted in the Leuenberg Agreement in Europe and a formal change in Reformed teaching on predestination.

Dr. Hinlicky Wilson also highlighted recent experiences in the relationship between Lutherans and Mennonites. The Lutheran World Federation apologized for statements in the Lutheran Confessions which condemn Anabaptists and the way those writings were used historically against them.

Dr. Hinlicky Wilson said that she believes the most significant thing the Lutheran tradition offers the whole Christian Church is the doctrine of the real presence of Christ — not just in Holy Communion, but in all of life.

### **Orthodoxy at Stake**

Thursday morning, Aug. 11, was devoted to presentations from three Christian traditions — Anglican, Reformed and Lutheran — on the theme of “Orthodoxy at stake.”

“Orthodoxy is at stake because the catholic faith once delivered has been undermined,” said the Rt. Rev. Ray Sutton of the Anglican Church in North America. “Truth itself — Biblical, historical, classical truth — is under assault. . . . Agenda, not theology, has taken over the church.

“Sometimes proper separation is necessary to maintain unity with larger Christendom,” he said.

“What is happening is a greater realignment of orthodoxy than any of us can imagine,” he said. “Orthodoxy is not going away.”

The Rev. Dr. Joseph Small, former director of worship for the Presbyterian Church (USA) noted the significance of faithful worship and the preservation of truth.



*The members of the panel on “Orthodoxy at Stake” were, from left, the Rev. Dr. Joseph Small, the Rev. Dr. James Nestingen, and the Rt. Rev. Ray Sutton.*

“Orthodoxy is at stake every Lord’s Day in every congregation,” he said.

“The task of orthodoxy is not to defend itself,” he said. “It is to proclaim the good news that it is all for us and our salvation.

“The basic problem is a lack of clarity about what it means to be saved,” he said.

The Rev. Dr. James Nestingen noted the history of Lutherans coming to America where orthodoxy became a matter of “persuasion” rather than the “enforcement” model of Europe.

He explained that some early American Lutherans — such as Samuel Schmucker of Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary — were tempted to betray orthodox Lutheran teaching to fit in with other Protestants on the American continent in the mid 1800s.

“In many ways, we face the same situation as the immigrants — Schmucker and others eager to give Lutheranism away,” he said.

Dr. Nestingen suggested three ways of working to recapture orthodox teaching: 1. “Take back our Sacred Texts”; 2. Use traditional Lutheran hymns; 3. Provide a “creative minority” — “holding together in ways to support one another.”

“Hymns have carried our faith. Orthodoxy for Lutherans was, above all, sung,” he said. “These hymns are one source of orthodoxy for the future.”

# Rev. Bradosky's statement to Convocation

*Following is the text of the remarks made by the Rev. John Bradosky as a part of the election process for Bishop of the NALC.*

I am deeply honored and humbled to speak to you today. It has been a privilege to serve as your General Secretary this past year and to interface with our pastors, congregations, committees, Executive Council, deans, staff and Bishop Spring. Thank you for the opportunity to use my gifts for ministry and pastoral care in these new ways.

Together, we enter this process praying boldly for wisdom and discernment, trusting completely that the Holy Spirit will guide and direct our decisions.

Two weeks ago, I preached on the Gospel text, the feeding of the 5,000, that begins with the death of John the Baptist. John upheld the authority of the Word and refused to conform to the culture and Herod's immoral lifestyle. My sermon was titled "This is no picnic." As Jesus must have experienced grief, pain and loss at John's death, so too, pastors and congregations in the NALC are also experiencing grief. Relationships have been broken, families divided, marriages stressed, and some congregations ripped in two.

I understand that grief. It has been a constant companion since the death of our son. I know of grief's debilitating effects, but I also know that our grief can help us connect with other grieving people. In many ways, our capacity for compassion is equal to the size of our grief.

While grief can overwhelm us, the Gospel is a far more powerful force — God's love for us in Christ Jesus, a cross and an empty tomb. The cross assures us that God is with us in the midst of our grief and pain. The empty tomb assures us of the resurrection, giving us the freedom to choose as Jesus did, to turn our attention away from ourselves and focus on mission and ministry.

It is no picnic because faithfulness to Christ is not the easiest path but the most costly. We affirm that the Church cannot be normed by cultural, political or institutional authority. Rather, the Scriptures are



*The Rev. John Bradosky responds to applause from the Convocation after his election as Bishop of the North American Lutheran Church was announced.*

the inspired Word of God and the authoritative norm for all matters of life and faith and our Lutheran Confessions are a true witness to the Gospel.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was one of the leaders of the Confessing Church movement that opposed and separated itself from the German church because it was conscripted by the culture and political agendas, willing to compromise the truth for the sake of its own survival, willing to offer cheap grace while turning a blind eye to a culture that opposed the truth of the Gospel.

Bonhoeffer wrote, "When Christ calls a person, He bids him come and die." Bonhoeffer gave his life for the sake of boldly confessing Jesus Christ. The need for the confessing church has never been greater. The NALC is rooted in the confessing movement.

***Continued on Page 15***



*Bishop Paull Spring greets the Rev. John Bradosky, NALC General Secretary, just after Pastor Bradosky's election as Bishop of the NALC was announced.*

**Continued from Page 14**

The foundation of that movement is reflected in what I refer to as our four key values:

**Christ-Centered:** Luther connected the authority of the Word with the proper understanding of Christ. He wrote, "Let the Bible cease to be heard and soon the remembered Christ becomes an imagined Christ, shaped by the religiosity and the unconscious desires of his worshippers."

We cannot design Jesus to fit our agendas. The Word reveals only one Savior. Jesus is unique, exclusive, definitive, normative and absolute. There is no other Savior or means of salvation apart from Him. This is counter-cultural in a pluralistic world, yet it is the truth.

I am reminded of the story of a thirsty cowboy who walked into a saloon. The bartender said, "Care for a drink, stranger?" The cowboy responded: "What are my choices?" The bartender answered: "Yes, or

no." In a world that demands choices, we have a singular focus on Jesus because there are no other choices. So, we boldly confess Christ alone.

**Mission-Driven:** This church must stand firm in its assertion that the Gospel is true — universally true. We must stand over and against the rampant relativism espoused by those who claim to be the church yet reject the Gospel in favor of the cheap manmade substitutes of universalism, arbitrary acceptance, and inclusivity. Because the Gospel is true, then mission must follow, and we must make the Gospel known — sharing it universally. We are called to embody that Gospel in our life, our deeds and announce it with our words. His Great Commission is our mission: "Now go and make disciples of all nations! Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you and I am with you always, even to the close of the age."

**Traditionally-Grounded:** We are not trying to reinvent the Church, but remain faithful to the heritage that has made Lutherans a blessing to the entire body of Christ. The Word describes the Body of Christ as interdependent, not independent. So we affirm the ecumenical creeds and the faithful witness of the Church across time and space. We endorse the form and practices of the universal Church that are consistent with the Scriptures, connecting with other faithful Christians and passing on the legacy of the saints who came before us through Word and Sacrament ministry.

**Congregationally-Focused:** The local congregation is the front line for mission and ministry. Our work is to support, facilitate and encourage the ministry and mission work of local congregations. This is where people come to faith in Jesus Christ, where disciples grow and mature in their faith, where people experience Christian community and where the church reaches out to touch the lives of others with the love of Christ. Our structure must keep pastors and congregations connected for learning, growing, offering support and care.

It is my passionate desire that we move forward focused on discipleship — strengthening our sense of community, living out our values. May the Holy Spirit empower us to boldly confess Christ!

# Bishop Spring to retire . . . again

Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The end of August marks the conclusion of my ministry as Bishop of the North American Lutheran Church. It is likely, however, that I will continue to facilitate the calling process for a couple months, to provide transition for our new Bishop. And I am certainly available to provide additional assistance in the transition process as may be needed.

This will be my fifth retirement!

In 2002, I retired from the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In 2004, I retired from the active ministry of the ELCA and from serving as pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in State College, Pa. In 2006, I retired, again, this time from serving as interim pastor for St. James Lutheran Church in Huntingdon, Pa. In the same year, I also retired, again, from the active ministry of the ELCA and from its Allegheny Synod. Now comes my fifth and last retirement.

I have enjoyed all five of my retirements and have learned that they love you when you come, and they love you when you leave.

I have also experienced strong support during this first year of the North American Lutheran Church. I have been upheld and uplifted at every point. Our staff, deans, the Executive Council, committee members, pastors and lay leaders in our congregations — all have sustained and supported me throughout the year. Your prayers, your words of encouragement, and your willingness to serve beyond your congregation have made this past year rewarding indeed.

Some have asked what I plan to do now.

Barbara and I live in State College, Pa., which is an academic community. I plan to go back to auditing courses at Penn State on a regular basis and to take advantage of the concerts, lectures and libraries that the university offers in abundance.

I expect to resume my participation in several community activities — the Affordable Housing Coalition, Habitat for Humanity, and the local Kiwanis Club.



*Bishop Paull Spring and his wife, Barbara, receive applause from the NALC Convocation after it approved a resolution in thanksgiving for his faithful leadership of the church and naming him as Bishop Emeritus.*

It is likely that I will seek to nurture a group of people in the community through a Bible study group. State College has no local NALC congregation, but there are many people in the congregations who share our values and intentions. I want to do what I can to encourage them in the faith through Bible study, prayer and Christian fellowship.

It is possible that I will write a short history of our renewal and reform movement. I have been privileged to be a part of Solid Rock Lutherans, Lutheran CORE, and the North American Lutheran Church. An account of these past 10 years may be helpful in recalling and celebrating what we have accomplished with God's help.

Last but not least, I expect to find some quality time to re-connect with my faithful wife, Barbara, who has borne the last several years with her strong faith and with her loving support for me.

I thank you all from the bottom of my heart for giving this ministry to me. It has been a challenging and demanding year but also a deeply rewarding one. God bless you all.

In Christ,

Bishop Paull E. Spring

# Bishop's Report to the NALC Convocation

Sisters and Brothers in Christ!

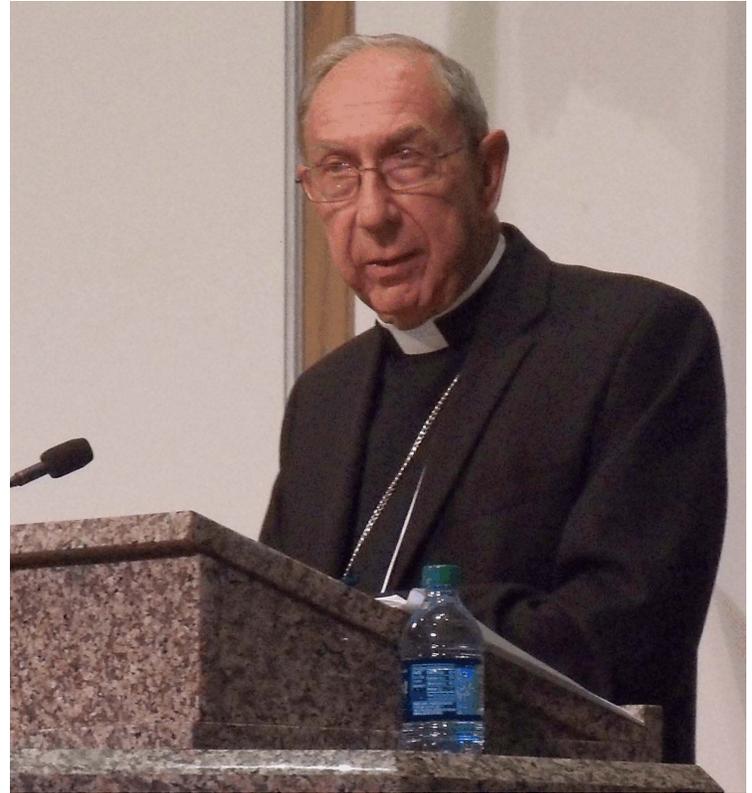
In my letters of welcome to pastors, I have regularly quoted a verse from the Psalms, "Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes in the morning." Those words reflect my own feelings as I have become an ordained minister in the North American Lutheran Church.

From my conversations with both pastors and lay people, I know that the words of the Psalmist reflect the feelings of many others. Even in those cases where the transition into the North American Lutheran Church has been relatively smooth, there is a deep sense of sorrow and pain.

At the same time, joining the North American Lutheran Church carries with it a great promise and an abiding hope. It is a promise and hope that are grounded in Christ, who is himself God's promise and hope. His resurrection from the dead, attested in Holy Scripture, sustains us all as we continue our life in this new day for our church. "Joy comes in the morning."

I defer to the other units of our church for an account of what we have been about this past year. As you will understand, much of my ministry has been occupied with facilitating the organization of our church and assisting congregations and pastors in the certification process.

I thank God that I have been supported by the prayers that so many of you have offered on my behalf. I also thank God that I have been so ably supported by so many colleagues in our church — our Executive Council, our provisional deans, and those who have served on the different committees and task forces. I give particular thanks to the capable members of our small and hardworking staff: Pastor John Bradosky, General Secretary; Pastor Gemechis Buba, Missions Director; Rachel Sosebee, Administrative Assistant; and Anne Gleason, Financial Administrator. While the burdens of this past year have been considerable, the task would not have been possible without the contribution of so many committed servants and friends.



*Bishop Paull E. Spring*

I leave the leadership of the North American Lutheran Church in the firm confidence that God will continue to raise up leaders, both lay and ordained, who will faithfully bear the Word of God in ministry and mission.

I leave in the hope that we will always keep before ourselves the four attributes we have used to identify who we are as God's people and as Lutheran Christians. With the Spirit's help we seek to be Christ-Centered, Mission-Driven, Congregationally-Focused, and Traditionally-Grounded. To maintain these four attributes will require diligence and a focused attention to prayer by all of us.

I have mentioned elsewhere that members of the North American Lutheran Church express a genuine sense of excitement for our church. Many tell me that they are absolutely thrilled to be with us in the North American Lutheran Church. A pastor of

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# General Secretary's Report to Convocation

Dear disciples of Jesus who share in the ministry of the North American Lutheran Church:

The struggle of this past year for many has given way to a renewed sense of peace and gratitude. I am reminded of Paul's words in Colossians 3:16-17: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

I am thankful to God and grateful to you for the opportunity to serve as your General Secretary during this year. After 32 years in parish ministry, this new opportunity for serving the North American Lutheran Church has been filled with excitement, learning, growing and using my gifts for ministry in new ways.

I have had the wonderful opportunity and great privilege to serve with Bishop Paull Spring, to be inspired by his faith, guided by his wisdom and refreshed by his sense of humor. I have also been blessed laboring with our Missions Director, Pastor Gemechis Buba, whose passion for mission and prayer has been a tremendous source of spiritual renewal. Our Administrative Assistant, Rachel Sosebee, and our Financial Administrator, Anne Gleason, have offered their gifts and provided a wealth of expertise without which fulfilling the responsibilities as General Secretary would not be possible.

I have also been honored to work with a wise, discerning and highly-committed Executive Council who lead and serve by their faithful example. I would be remiss not to mention my deep gratitude for the gracious hospitality of Upper Arlington Lutheran Church and every member of their staff. From the Senior Pastor, Paul Urling, to the occasional office volunteer, they have provided expertise and generous support beyond measure.

My responsibilities have been divided into two major categories. The first is to provide the



*Bishop Paull Spring and Bishop John Bradosky, former General Secretary, listen to an ecumenical greeting during the Convocation.*

infrastructure for the North American Lutheran Church to accomplish its mission, consistent with its values: Christ-Centered, Mission-Driven, Traditionally-Grounded and Congregationally-Focused.

In this first year, that included providing for the following: office space, office furniture, computers, networking, printer, copier, phone system, database, recordkeeping, forms, certificates, call documents, logo, signage, calendar platform, phone conferencing, certification for pastors including the background check process and provider, system for providing compensation guidelines, securing data for 501(c)(3) application, budget process, pastoral and congregational reports, mapping potential geographic boundaries for regional expressions of this church and, most recently, working with a team to develop an alternative plan for pension and healthcare.

In addition to coordinating the details for meetings of the Executive Council, I have provided support or expertise for each of our committees including: Court of Adjudication, Constitution, Ministry, Nominating, Candidacy, Ecumenical Relations, Commission on Theology and Doctrine, Missions,

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## ***Continued from Page 18***

Communication, and Convocation. I have also interfaced with and supported our Deans as needed.

The second category of my work has been to provide a personal and public presence representing the North American Lutheran Church. These contacts have given me the opportunity to offer pastoral support to other pastors and lay leaders of our congregations, through countless telephone calls, e-mails and face-to-face conversations. It has meant travel almost every weekend to preach, celebrate and offer presentations regarding our ministry. I have been asked to speak about what created the necessity for our inception, discipleship, missions and our hopes for the future. Those events included our own Mission Conference, several Lutheran CORE events, the Carolinas Chapter Convocation, open forums in congregations as well as Sunday morning worship.

Developing relationships with ministry partners — including Sola Publishing, World Mission Prayer League and Youth Encounter — has also been a part of my portfolio. We have also worked to advance our relationship with LCMC. However, the most exciting work has been the creation of partnership agreements between the North American Lutheran Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church Mekane Yesus in Ethiopia as well as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Uganda. The first resulted from our participation in the International Theological and Mission Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where we were able to develop personal relationships that will continue to influence and shape our life together, realizing that perhaps we have more to receive than to give.

Relating to the Candidacy Committee, I am encouraged by the large group (nearly 50) of candidates who are in the most vulnerable of situations, yet have decided to sacrifice security for the sake of faithfulness, making the bold step to join us. Our staff has been working hard to create new partnership agreements with seminaries and other academic institutions where our students can receive faithful training in orthodox Christian theology.

Throughout the year, our commitment has been to offer the best quality of faithful care in the shortest

amount of time. In all we do we have attempted to keep the needs of our pastors and congregations our first priority as a way of encouraging and strengthening them for mission and ministry.

While we do not forget those who are still immersed in the struggle, the greatest hope we can offer others as a confessing church is to continue to press on, boldly confessing Christ.

Let me close with two additional verses from Paul's letter to the Philippians that I pray will bring you as much encouragement as they do me: "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead" (3:12-13). The best is yet to be!

With you following Christ Jesus,

John F. Bradosky  
General Secretary

## **Bishop Spring's Report**

### ***Continued from Page 17***

Ethiopian background related to our mission planters conference that he and his people had now found a true "home" in the North American Lutheran Church. Those are marvelous sentiments, and we will want to keep them in our hearts as the future opens before us.

Mercifully we do not go into the future by ourselves. We are a community of faith, dedicated to the Holy Scriptures and to the Lutheran Confessions. God goes with us with His Word, and His Spirit goes by our side. We are His church and the sheep of His pasture. He cares for us in grace, far beyond our merits. God is gracious, and His presence acts for us as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

In Christ's name,

Paull E. Spring  
Bishop

# L-CORE sets course to unite confessing Lutherans regardless of church body

Lutheran CORE is charting its course as a renewal movement for Lutherans regardless of their church body affiliation.

About 400 people gathered for Lutheran CORE's 2011 Convocation Aug. 9 at Upper Arlington Lutheran Church at Mill Run in Hilliard, Ohio.

Lutheran CORE has adopted a new mission statement that is shaping its future ministries: "Mobilizing Confessing Lutherans for Evangelical Renewal."

The Rev. Paul Ullring, Moderator of Lutheran CORE, noted the mission of Lutheran CORE to unite both those who choose to remain in the ELCA to provide a faithful witness and those who have left the ELCA for other church bodies like the NALC and LCMC.

"The ground keeps shifting. It is the best and often the hardest of times," said Pastor Ullring, senior pastor of Upper Arlington Lutheran Church.

"These gatherings are people who agree with God and with God's Word," he said. "We disagree in lots of ways that matter less than truth.

"Relationships keep realigning. . . . There is a lot of grief that continues," he said. "For all the struggles these are really good days. . . . Has truth ever been so clear?

"Many remain in the ELCA for good and faithful reasons. They need help and encouragement," Pastor Ullring said. "This is not over at all.

"I hope and pray that you will continue to support CORE even though you don't need CORE anymore," he said. "Others need CORE a lot.



*Pastor Paul Ullring, Moderator of Lutheran CORE, installs new members of the Lutheran CORE Steering Committee. They are, from left, Lynn Kickingbird, Pastor Steve Dornbusch, Pastor Cori Johnson, and Pastor Dennis Nelson.*

"There are thousands out there who need what we are and what we have to offer. We want them to discover that they are not alone," Pastor Ullring said.

"Who knows what Lutheran CORE will be in one, three or five years. It will be what God intends it to be," he said. "This organization has a role and a place for a season at least."

The Rev. Mark Chavez, director of Lutheran CORE, echoed the importance of connecting all confessing Lutherans. Pastor Chavez also reported that Lutheran CORE would have a presence at the 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Orlando, Fla.

"We will continue to be a witness for the truth of God's Word in the ELCA and in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada," Pastor Chavez said.

Lutheran CORE has launched a Committee on ELCA-specific Matters to continue to engage those in that church body.

The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Desta Buba, Missions Director for the NALC, was the keynote speaker for the Lutheran CORE Convocation.

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Pastor Buba used the story of the Resurrection of Jesus from the Gospel of Matthew to contrast the “Great Deception” — those who conspired to cover up the truth of the Resurrection — with the “Great Commission” of Jesus.

Pastor Buba noted the seven powers that came together to destroy Jesus. But he also noted the reality that Jesus says that “all authority in heaven and on earth” has been given to him.

“All the Church depends on . . . all the Church needs is . . . Christ Jesus and His authority,” he said. “We are called now to face our own ‘Great Deception’ in our age,” Pastor Buba said. “We are called to be counter cultural.”

He noted that “the ‘Great Deception’ is merciless. It is mighty.” He said that even though the struggle may be difficult, Christians now stand up to the “Great Deception” with confidence in the truth of Jesus Christ. “In the name of Christ Jesus — that is our counter-cultural statement.”

Four new members of the Lutheran CORE Steering Committee were elected to two-year terms:

**The Rev. Steve Dornbusch** of Plymouth, Minn., pastor of Calvary Lutheran Church in Golden Valley, Minn.

**The Rev. Cori Johnson** of Wallace, Mich., pastor of Gethsemane Lutheran Church and St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church. She served on the ELCA’s Sexuality Task Force and was one of the faithful dissenters. She also is a member of Northwoods Lutheran CORE in Michigan and Lutheran CORE’s ELCA-specific Task Force.

**Lynn Kickingbird** of Edmond, Okla. She is vice president of Kickingbird Associates, a firm that provides consulting and training services for non-profit organizations and government. She is the chair of the Lutheran CORE Steering Committee.

**The Rev. Dennis D. Nelson** of Walnut, Calif., pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in West Covina, Calif., which is affiliated with both ELCA and LCMC. He is a leader in the Evangelical Renewal Movement.



*The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, Missions Director for the NALC, delivered the keynote address for the Lutheran CORE Convocation. Dr. Buba drew a contrast between the Great Commission and the “Great Deception.”*



*Gemechis Buba, NALC Missions Director, was one of several speakers who challenged the youth.*



*Echelon was one of four bands that led youth from throughout the country in singing at Youth Encounter's Impact National Youth Event July 7-10 in Chicago.*

*The next Impact National Youth Event is July 5-8, 2012, in Nashville, Tenn. For information go to [www.youthencounter.org/impact](http://www.youthencounter.org/impact).*



# IMPACT

National Youth Event

**July 7-10, 2011**

**Chicago, Illinois**



*Daniel's Window was one of the four bands who entertained the youth and led them in singing.*



*Some of the youth enjoyed small-group games as one of the late night activity options.*



*Youth participated in a service project preparing food for Feed My Starving Children. The Impact youth prepared 292 cases of food — more than 63,000 meals, enough to feed 175 children for a year.*



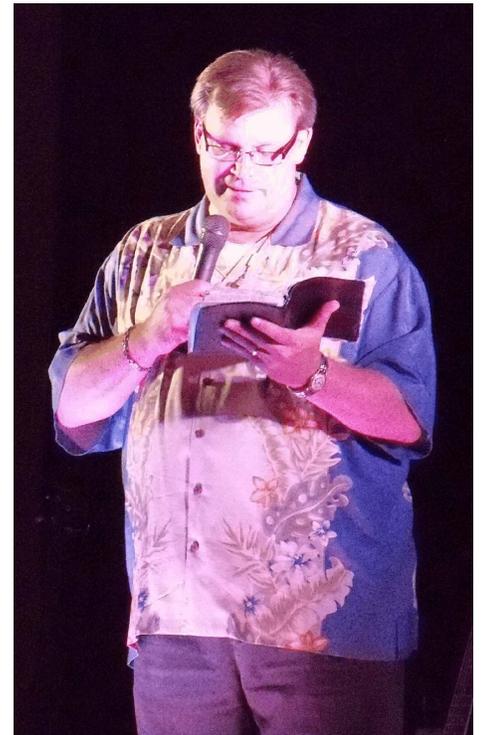
*Youth from First English Lutheran Church in Mansfield, Ohio, a NALC congregation, pose after packing food for Feed My Starving Children.*



*Youth from Immanuel Lutheran Church in Whitewood, S.D., a NALC congregation, were among those who enjoyed sightseeing in Chicago before and after Impact.*



*Jay Gamelin, pastor at Jacob's Porch, Lutheran Campus Ministry at Ohio State University, was one of several dynamic speakers for Impact.*



*Pastor Bill Yonker served as the event pastor, leading the gathering in worship each day.*

# St. Mark's Lutheran Church Middleburgh, New York

Pentecost Sunday, June 12, was a day of celebration for the whole church, but especially so for St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Middleburgh, New York.

On that day, St. Mark's dedicated a new Parish Hall and Ministry Center for all the ministries and community outreach services the congregation provides. NALC General Secretary John Bradosky and Interim Pastor Mike Tamorria led the dedication ceremonies.

This project originated as a vision in 2001 for the congregation to replace a parish hall in need of much repair with a new building for its ministry, especially for a Christian school they were operating at that time. Unfortunately, the school closed in 2008 due to low enrollment. However, the vision and the construction continued with the focus of providing a home for the other ministries in which the church engages.



As with most projects, obstacles occasionally arose. Each time God provided a way to overcome them. Among the obstacles was a transition in pastoral leadership. During the time of transition, the

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congregation's members came together to finish the new Center, and the NALC Executive Council called Pastor Tamorria to serve as interim pastor to help lead the congregation.

St. Mark's is a congregation with about 115 baptized members. Although the number of active members is small, God has led them to carry on many ministries in addition to regular and lively worship and a growing Sunday school. For example, the Phobes Women's Group makes quilts (most recently for Haiti as well as victims of tornados and floods), encouragement baskets for those who are ill or experiencing life crises, and other sewing projects. St. Mark's operates a busy community food pantry and clothing closet from the new ministry center. They host the Friendship Club, a ministry for special needs people.

An added blessing is found on weekday afternoons when one can't miss the voices of lively children participating in the After School Program. The Ministry Center is always a busy place!

The people of St. Mark's are happy to be part of the NALC and have found great encouragement and support from Bishop Spring and Pastor Bradosky. They look forward to what new vision and ministries God has in store for them in the next ten years!

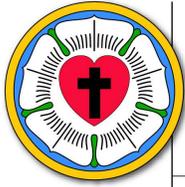
To God be the Glory!



***Please introduce your congregation to others in the NALC***

*This article is a 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](mailto:news@thenalc).*





# NALC

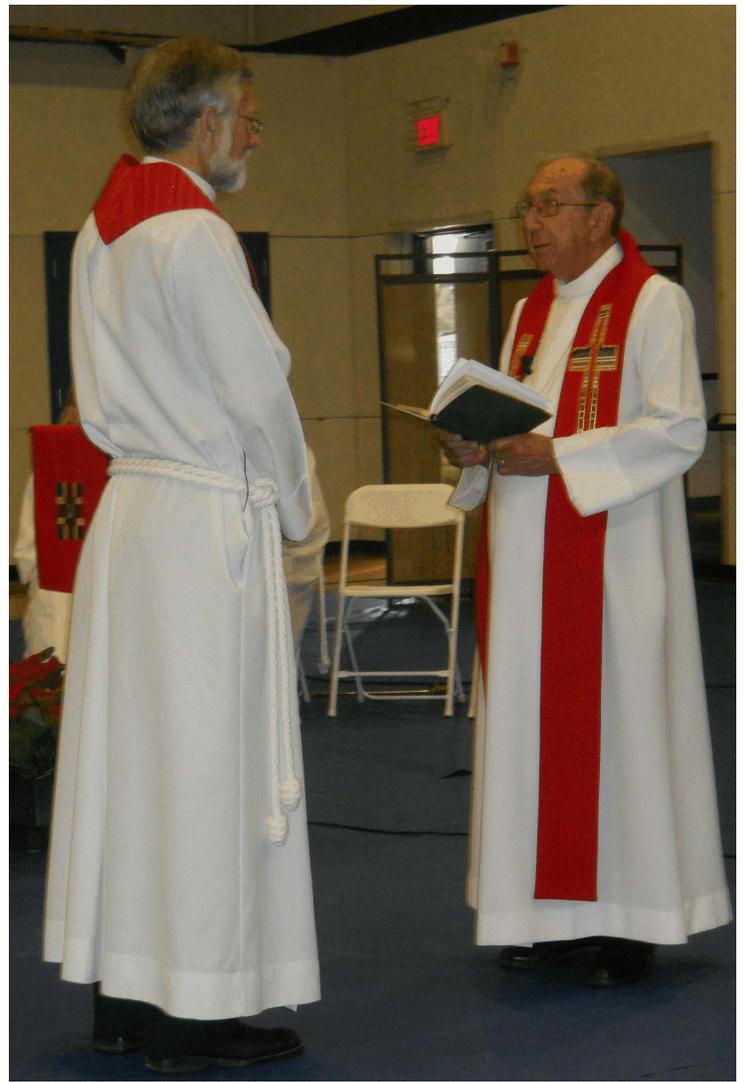
North American Lutheran Church



## Ordination in Minnesota

The Rev. Michael Lee Sletto, center, was ordained July 31 at Faith Lutheran Church in Mentor, Minn. Pastor Sletto lives in Crookston, Minn., and commutes the 25 miles to Faith three days a week.

Pictured, from left, are the Rev. Bill Reck of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Crookston, Minn.; Pastor Sletto; and the Rev. Timothy Lundeen, of Grace Lutheran Church in Erskine, Minn., the NALC's provisional Dean for northern Minnesota.



## Installation in Maryland

NALC Bishop Paull Spring installed Pastor Gerald A. Miller as pastor of Annapolis Evangelical Lutheran Church in Annapolis, Md., home of the United States Naval Academy, on June 12. The occasion also formally welcomed Annapolis as a new NALC congregation.

The NALC mission congregation was formed in March after St. Martin's Evangelical Lutheran Church — where Pastor Miller had been the senior pastor for 17 years — fell three votes short of a two-thirds majority out of 381 votes cast to change its church-body affiliation on Jan. 31. Annapolis Lutheran has been worshiping in the gymnasium of a local Christian middle school. The new congregation already has more than 300 members.

# Lutheran World Relief responding to crisis in drought-stricken Africa

The worst drought in 60 years is creating severe food and water shortages for millions of impoverished people in the Horn of Africa. Combined with ongoing conflict in many countries, the region is facing an urgent, life-threatening humanitarian crisis.

More than 12 million people in Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti are affected by drought conditions which have led to widespread food shortages. The United Nations has declared a famine in parts of southern Somalia as hundreds of thousands flee their homes in search of humanitarian assistance.

“Rains have largely failed for the past two seasons, and without water there is no food, no livestock and no way for people to protect themselves against famine,” says Tim McCully, LWR’s Vice President for International Programs.

Left with few resources to provide food for themselves and their families, and displaced by ongoing conflict and fighting, people are fleeing their home lands in Somalia for camps in Ethiopia and Kenya.

The camps, built to hold 90,000 refugees, are currently hosting over 400,000 people and receiving more than 1,300 new arrivals each day. Many of the new arrivals have walked long distances and arrive malnourished and in poor physical condition.

Malnutrition and mortality rates are rising rapidly — especially among children. Reports indicate that 30 to 40 percent of children arriving to the camps are acutely malnourished.

Lutheran World Relief has worked in partnership with the Lutheran World Federation in the Dadaab camps since 2008, with support from the United States government. These ongoing programs link vulnerable refugees to social services, provide shelter and promote security within the camps. In addition, LWR and LWF address the needs of neighboring communities through sanitation programs.

With the danger of widespread famine increasing daily, LWR has committed an initial \$500,000 to the its partner, the Lutheran World Federation, to expand



Lutheran World Relief  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. LASTING PROMISE.

its work in the Dadaab camps to ensure reception of new arrivals and the provision of food, water, shelter items, locally-sourced baby care supplies and other critical services to vulnerable refugees. In addition, LWR is providing water to drought-affected communities surrounding the Dadaab camps.

LWR will also support the LWF response in Ethiopia, where it will carry out food distributions in drought affected communities, provide supplementary food for young children and pregnant and nursing mothers, training to help farmers improve their management of natural resources and agriculture and distribute farming tools to begin recovery efforts.

While urgent humanitarian assistance is required today, strategies to safeguard and build up livelihoods — sustainable development — will help save even more lives in the long term. LWR will continue to build the capacity of its local partners and communities to help them become less vulnerable when future droughts occur.

“This humanitarian support is absolutely critical but is only the first step in what will be a long-term solution” said John Nunes, LWR president.

“While a lack of rain is the immediate cause for the current drought and food shortage, the region remains chronically vulnerable. The only sustainable solution is to promote and protect the livelihoods of the millions of rural farmers and pastoralists who depend on the water and natural resources for their food and income,” he said.

Individuals and congregations may support LWR’s immediate and long-term relief efforts by making a gift online at [www.lwr.org](http://www.lwr.org) or by phone at 800-597-5972. Donations may be mailed to: Lutheran World Relief, PO Box 17061, Baltimore, MD 21298-9832.

# Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society

The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Desta Buba, Missions Director of the NALC, announced the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society at the 2011 NALC Convocation.

“The Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society (ELMS) is being launched to advance the commitment and dedication to the work of evangelical mission in partnership with one another. Through this partnership in the Gospel, our Lord, who began this good work among us, will carry it on to completion,” Dr. Buba said in his report to the Convocation.

ELMS is a membership organization. Individuals, congregations and mission agencies can join the ELMS. Individuals commit to support the society with a gift of \$20 per month — \$240 per year. Congregations commit to a gift of \$1,200 a year.

Dr. Buba explained that the ELMS strives and aims to engage and transform individual members of churches into active disciples and congregations into vital mission agents. ELMS works towards these goals through these four specific approaches:

1. Organizing and mobilizing congregations, leaders and the laity for the sake of reaching the unreached with the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. Whatever we are unable to accomplish alone, we can do together.

2. Mobilizing the financial and human resources of the people



*The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Desta Buba, NALC Missions Director, presents his report to the 2012 NALC Convocation.*

of God for the sake of doing mission together.

3. Involving congregations, leaders and laity in the actual work of evangelism and world mission through first-hand experience and direct involvement.

4. Creating a platform and central space where Lutherans of similar mission conviction, confessions and doctrinal stand can work together across denominational boundaries for the sake of doing evangelical mission.

“Now join us in this fertile and mission-driven space called the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society. Together we can cross borders and carry out the Great Commission of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” he said.

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