

# NALC News



North American Lutheran Church

January 2011

## Pastor John Bradosky accepts call as NALC General Secretary

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Pastor John Bradosky

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# First congregational mission and discipleship event to be in Texas

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# Bradovsky has diverse parish experience

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# Focus on God's control

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First, a disclaimer: If your congregation consists of 50 or fewer active adults, you might not need small groups. Why? Because you might just have something approaching a small-group dynamic on Sunday morning. If that's the case, your best opportunity for a disciple-making emphasis might be the 60 to 90 minutes immediately following your weekly worship service.

However, if you are a congregation of anywhere from about 51 active adults all the way to 1,000 (or more), you need a small groups ministry strategy. I will address this strategy, in detail, in next month's *Pursuing the Great Commission* column. But here is a preview of a **six-step process for establishing a congregational small group ministry**.

1. Recruit one or two (trusted) members to be volunteer coordinators of this ministry.
2. With the help of these volunteers, enlist enough small group leaders (again, trusted) to lead the number of small groups you will be organizing the first year. (You will be organizing one or two additional small groups in each subsequent year.) These new groups, by the way, will formally only require a one "quarter" commitment from participants, but you will be hoping most of them will become on-going. Recruit your leaders for a one-year commitment. Your pastor should be comfortable with any and all of these leaders.
3. If the initial focus of your small groups will be Christian discipleship, be sure you have an appropriate, discussion-oriented small-group print resource already chosen.
4. Using your chosen resource, train your enlisted small group leaders by making them your first small group, and by taking them through your chosen resource. (Perhaps a six-week process for training?) This training should be led by the pastor.
5. With the help of your enlisted and trained small-group leaders, start recruiting participants to join these new small groups. Encourage your leaders to go ahead and personally recruit for their own group. (Remember: No more than fourteen people per group, including the leaders. Otherwise the group will be too large for everyone to participate in discussions.)

6. In addition to this one-on-one recruitment process, have a theme Sunday where everyone has an "in-hand" small group sign-up insert. This will be the Sunday when even the sermon will focus on Christian discipleship and spiritual growth. Note: Members should not be *assigned* to a group; they should be able to *choose* their group based on who is leading it and when it will be meeting. Give worshipers an opportunity to sign up and turn their insert in during the worship hour. List each of the groups on the insert, with the names of the leaders and when they will be meeting. The two best times of the year to have this kind of congregational sign-up opportunity are probably September or January.

One final thought: Multiple small groups in the life of your congregation represent perhaps the single best strategy for fostering the priesthood of all believers. After 33 years in parish ministry I have never found any ministry that is a better and more rewarding experience for lay volunteers than being a small group leader. In fact, leaders typically gain even more from this ministry than their group participants. When I have recruited small group leaders I have tried to make it clear that first, they should be *flattered* that I chose them for this opportunity, and second, that they will probably end up *thanking me* for the experience.

This ministry — in so many incredible ways — can bring spiritual renewal to your congregation's life and ministry. More details next month, including the remarkable story of one congregation's transformation through this dynamic ministry strategy.

## **Pursuing Great Commission Evangelism in your congregation**

"Making Disciples" is part of a series of articles on the theme "Pursuing Great Commission Evangelism in Your Congregation." This monthly column lifts up Great Commission evangelism as one of the top priorities for Lutheran CORE and the North American Lutheran Church.

Pastors and lay leaders are encouraged to contribute articles to this column. Pastor Don Brandt of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Salem, Ore., is coordinating this monthly column. Please send articles to him at [DonB@oursaviorssalem.org](mailto:DonB@oursaviorssalem.org).

# Grace Lutheran Church

## Erskine, Minnesota

Grace Lutheran Church sits in the south central portion of the city of Erskine, Minn., a community nestled at the edge of the hills and lakes country of Northern Minnesota and the vast fertile prairie of the Red River Valley.

Erskine is built at the crossroads of northern Minnesota. U.S. Highways 59 and 2 intersect just to the east of the city.

Two railroads also intersect here: the Canadian Pacific Railroad, formerly the Soo Line, connecting Canada and the United States and the Burlington Northern, formerly the Great Northern, connecting between Duluth, Minn., and all of the western United States.

On April 20, 1891, a preliminary meeting was called to discuss the possibility of organizing an Evangelical Lutheran Church in Erskine, and on May 18, 1891, the record of the minutes shows that United Lutheran Church was formed, comprised of 33 Norwegians and 10 Swedes.

Many of the descendants of those first pioneering members are still members at Grace. Each of the pioneering members was required to contribute



\$1.00 toward the necessities of the church. The first building was constructed in 1894.

There was a merger with the Sannes Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1923. In 1955, a new constitution was adopted that included a name change to Grace Lutheran Church.

Over its years of ministry, Grace has been part of parish agreements, but today is focusing its mission as a solo congregation.

Grace has been a member of Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Synod, The American Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, and today the North American Lutheran Church.

In 1902, the building was in need of repairs and additional space was needed. After investigating the cost for repairs and building, it was decided to build a new church. It took 13 years for supplies and work to be completed, and in September of 1915, the congregation held its first worship service in the new building and sanctuary. At the time of its completion, Grace Lutheran Church was considered the most beautiful church building in northern Minnesota.

***Continued on Page 9***



## Continued from Page 8

On March 18, 1934, Grace Lutheran Church was gutted by a fire that started in an overheated wood furnace. The caretaker had stoked up the fire for the morning service and in a short time the entire building was ablaze. Firefighters from three departments doused the brick walls with water to preserve the framework of the building.

Although the entire inside and roof of the building were destroyed, the building remained intact. By September of 1934, the members of Grace were worshiping in the restored sanctuary that had risen from the ashes.

The stories told by our members who remember that day speak of the fire and smoke rising from their beautiful building, images that are burned into their memories. Today, we still worship in that same building.

Since the fire, we have added an education and office space, a narthex complete with an elevator, a newly renovated pipe organ, and video recording equipment that allows for our worship services to be broadcast on local cable television.

Our congregation has a long history of support for missionaries and outreach ministries. Two of our own members served as missionaries: Clara Jones served in China for many years, and Judy Hyland served in Japan and spent three years in a prison camp in the Philippine Islands.

We continue to support mission work across the globe, including our own mission group that travels into Northern Alaska for a VBS every summer.

Grace women met for Bible study in homes in the early years, calling themselves the Cottage Bible study. Since 1971, our Monday morning women's Bible study has met continuously with 20 to 30 women attending.

Our men have not been outdone by this, as they have met continuously at the Ness Café for Men's Fellowship Breakfast.

Today, both groups are ecumenical and the conversations are still as in depth and just as lively.



Our choir meets weekly, September to May. They bring music for our worship once a month. The Sunday School children bring their music once a month, and gifted musicians from our congregation and community bring music for worship the other Sundays of the year.

The NALCW of Grace meets every month for Bible study, a business meeting and a fellowship supper. There are three circles who meet for Bible study every month. This past week, they started making quilts for their winter serving project — Lutheran World Relief — which they have done for 70 years.

We are blessed with a great Sunday School and youth program. Our Sunday School chooses a mission project every year. This past year, they collected 899 pairs of shoes for Haiti. The youth group is working on a mission project for this summer.

When we affiliated with the NALC as one of the pioneering congregations, many knew we wanted to be a resource in our region for congregations wanting to affiliate with the NALC. April 1-2, we are hosting the first Midwest NALC Conference. We hope to see some of you with us.

*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](mailto:news@thenalc).*

# 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 in Columbus, 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.

Nominations are also welcome for the Executive Council, the

Court of Adjudication, and the 2012 Nominating Committee.

Lutheran CORE's 2010 Convocation elected provisional leaders to guide the NALC through its first year.

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.

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

Pastor Carl Haynes of Christiana Lutheran Church near Salisbury, N.C., is chair of the Nominating Committee. He can be reached at [pastorcarl@windstream.net](mailto:pastorcarl@windstream.net) or 704-279-4655.

## NALC is experiencing rapid growth

*More than 100 congregations have voted to join NALC in first five months*

The North American Lutheran Church has been experiencing rapid growth since it was constituted on Aug. 27. The NALC has formally received nearly 100 congregations during its first five months of existence.

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.

North Carolina is the state with the most NALC congregations at this early point in the life of the church body, with 13. Ohio is second with 11 churches. South Dakota has eight congregations. Texas and Pennsylvania each

have seven congregations, and Illinois has six.

A list of NALC congregations is online at [www.thenalc.org](http://www.thenalc.org). It is updated as new congregations are received by the NALC Executive Committee. 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.

### Colorado

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

### Florida

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church  
Dade City, Fla.

Oasis Church  
Lake Mary, Fla.

San Pedro Lutheran Church  
Miami, 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.

First Lutheran Church  
Pontiac, Ill.

American Lutheran Church  
Rantoul, Ill.

St. John Lutheran Church  
Royal, Ill.

Immanuel Lutheran Church  
Thomasboro, Ill.

**Indiana**

St. Mark Lutheran Church  
Auburn, Ind.

St. John's Lutheran Church  
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Antioch Lutheran Church  
Hoagland, Ind.

**Iowa**

Faith Lutheran Church  
Monona, Iowa

Zion Lutheran Church  
Ruthven, Iowa

Mission in Christ Lutheran  
Church  
Strawberry Point, Iowa

**Kentucky**

House of Prayer Lutheran  
Church  
Elizabethtown, Ky.

**Maryland**

River's Edge Ministries  
Mount Airy, Md.

**Michigan**

Salem Lutheran Church  
Bark River, Mich.

Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Owosso, 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**

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.

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.

**North Dakota**

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

First Lutheran Church  
Washburn, N.D.

**Ohio**

Upper Arlington Lutheran Church  
Columbus, 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

St. Peter Lutheran Church  
Monroeville, Ohio

St. John Lutheran Church  
Montpelier, Ohio

Resurrection Lutheran Church  
Port Clinton, Ohio

Living Water Lutheran Church  
Springboro, Ohio

Grace Lutheran Church  
Springfield, Ohio

Trinity Lutheran Church  
Springfield, Ohio

### **Pennsylvania**

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Abington, Pa.

Dunmyer Lutheran Church  
Johnstown, Pa.

Lutheran Church of the Cross  
Mansfield (Covington), Pa.

One in Christ Lutheran Mission  
Philadelphia (Telford), Pa.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church  
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Zion Lutheran Church  
Pittsburgh (Brentwood), Pa.

St. Paul Lutheran Church  
Sarver, Pa.

### **Puerto Rico**

Iglesia Luterana Resurrección  
Carolina, Puerto Rico

### **South Dakota**

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

Holy Ghost Lutheran Church  
Fredericksburg, Texas

Peace Lutheran Church  
Rockdale, Texas

Peace Lutheran Church  
Rosenberg, 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.

### **Wisconsin**

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

Peace Lutheran Church  
Split Rock, Wis.

Immanuel of Lebanon Lutheran Church  
Watertown, Wis.

### **Wyoming**

Christ the King Lutheran Church  
Newcastle, Wyo.



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

Lutherans from throughout the world will gather in Ethiopia Feb. 15-17 for the International Theological and Mission Conference.

This historic gathering was organized by the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, the third largest Lutheran church body in the world with 5.3 million members.

All of the pastors and seminarians of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus are expected to be among the church leaders from Africa, Europe, and North America who will gather at the Ethiopian National Assembly Hall in Addis Ababa.

The Rev. Dr. Gemechis D. Buba, missions director for the North American Lutheran Church, is one of the keynote speakers for the conference. NALC Bishop Paull Spring is the preacher for the closing worship service.

The Rev. Mark Vander Tuig, National Service Coordinator for Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ will preside at the closing worship.

Other speakers from the United States include the Rev. Dr. James A. Nestingen, professor emeritus at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn.; the Rev. David Glesne, pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Fridley, Minn.; and the Rev. Dr. Alemseged Hagos of Trinity Mekane Yesus Church in Minneapolis.

Speakers from the host Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus include the Rev. Dr. Wakseyoum Idossa, EECMY President; the Rev. Dr. Berhanu Ofgaa, General Secretary; and the Rev. Yonas Yigezu, Mission and Theology Director.

The Rev. Dr. Agne Nordlander, associate professor of systematic theology at Uppsala University in Sweden will address the conference. Nordlander was a missionary in Ethiopia and president of the Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary.

A delegation of more than 40 Lutheran leaders from North America will be attending.

In addition to Dr. Buba and Bishop Spring, the NALC will be represented by the Rev. John Bradosky, General Secretary, and members of the NALC Executive Council.

Lutheran CORE will be represented by its director, the Rev. Mark Chavez, and members of the Lutheran CORE Steering Committee.

LCMC will be represented by Pastor Vander Tuig and by members of its Board of Trustees.

Pastors and members of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Lutheran Church—Canada, and Presbyterian Church USA are also attending.

Significant and intentional bilateral meetings will be held between Ethiopian church leaders and leaders of the NALC, LCMC, and the LCC.

In addition to North American and African attendees, church leaders are also expected from Germany, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland.

“We are increasingly amazed and deeply grateful to God for such an overwhelming response,” Dr. Buba said. “Now we pray and believe that God will bless this gathering with safety, health, resources needed to make it happen, strength for participants and great insights for speakers.”

“In preparation for these encounters and meetings it might be important to ask one question, ‘How can we engage the possibility of mutually sustainable mission partnership?’ The Mekane Yesus church in Ethiopia is wrestling with that question.

“The days of one way mission traffic are over. Now the time has come for a mutually beneficial and sustainable missional model, where both parties are passionately involved in evangelical mission,” Dr. Buba said.

More information on the conference is available online at [www.eecmy.org](http://www.eecmy.org).



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