

NALC News

North American Lutheran Church

April 2012

Registration opens for Theological Conference and NALC Convocation

Registration opens soon for the 2012 Convocation of the North American Lutheran Church to be held Aug. 16-17 in suburban Minneapolis.

The NALC Convocation will be preceded by Lutheran CORE's Convocation on Aug. 14 and by the annual Theological Conference sponsored by Lutheran CORE and the NALC on Aug. 15-16.

The Convocation is the annual meeting of the NALC. All NALC congregations are entitled to at least one voting delegate at the Convocation. All NALC pastors are also voting delegates.

You can register online for all three events. Online registration is the preferred method of registration. The Convocations and Theological Conference are open to visitors as well as voting delegates.

All three events will be held at Calvary Lutheran Church in Golden Valley, Minn. Lodging information is available on the NALC website.

2012 Theological Conference

"Preaching and Teaching the Law and Gospel of God" is the theme for the 2012 Theological Conference sponsored by Lutheran CORE and the NALC.

The annual Theological Conference — which is held between the Convocations of Lutheran CORE and the NALC — will be Aug. 15-16 at Calvary Lutheran Church in Golden Valley, Minn.

"This theological conference will focus on the chief hermeneutical principle of Biblical exegesis in the Lutheran confessional tradition — the art of

properly distinguishing between Law and Gospel," conference organizers explain.

"These two words of Scripture, the word of God's judgment (Law) and the word of God's justification (Gospel), must be properly distinguished in every effort to reform and renew the church. . . . Confounding Law and Gospel is the principal source of confusion in the life of the church and its ministerial practices. It was so in Luther's day and it is so today."

Presentations for the theological conference include:

Law and Gospel:

The Hallmark of Classical Lutheranism

The Rev. Dr. Carl E. Braaten

The Law/Gospel Debate Revisited

A Reformed View – The Rev. Dr. Michael S. Horton

A Lutheran View – The Rev. Dr. Steven D. Paulson

A Catholic View – The Rev. Dr. Jared Wicks, S.J.

Did Luther Get Paul Right

on the Doctrine of Justification?

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Westerholm

Law, Gospel, and the Beloved Community

The Rev. Dr. Paul R. Hinlicky

Third Use of the Law:

Freedom and Obedience in Christian Life

The Rev. Dr. Piotr Malysz

Applying the Law/Gospel Distinction in Preaching and Worship

The Rev. Dr. Larry J. Yoder

The Rev. Dr. Amy Schifrin

‘All In’ to ‘All Out!’

A Message from Bishop John Bradosky

The journey from Good Friday to Easter Sunday is a journey from being “all in” to “all out!”

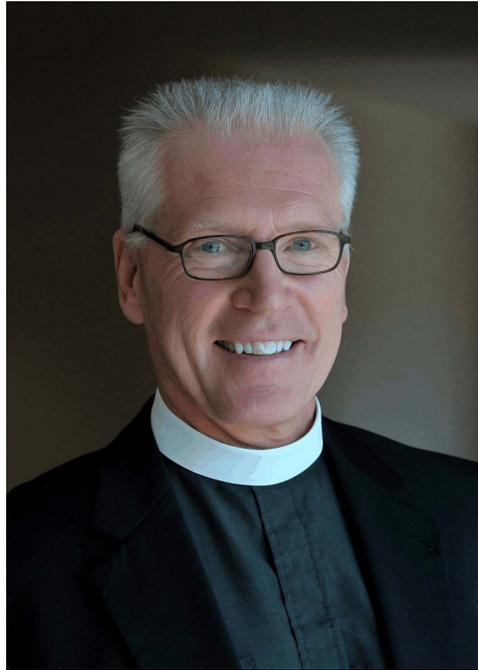
Following the first playoff victory of the New York Giants this year, I heard an interview with one of the players on ESPN. The interviewer asked to what or to whom did he credit their win? After a brief pause he answered, “The team chaplain!”

It was obvious the person from ESPN had no follow-up questions for that response. I investigated further and discovered that the team chaplain invited a guest speaker to address the team. His name was Jean Paul Gonzales.

Later that week I listened to an interview with Gonzales who was asked about his message to the team. He said his message was one about commitment.

He said we live in a world where so many people want to play it safe and are content to stay on the sidelines, so if it doesn’t work out the way they hoped, they can always say it didn’t matter that much.

Gonzales handed out poker chips and asked the team to put their name on one side and what they bring to the team on the other. Then he reminded them that they have been dealt a certain hand as individuals and as a team and they don’t know exactly how it will all turn out.



Bishop John Bradosky

He said, “Some may be experiencing pain and injury, exhaustion at the end of a long season, personal struggles, relational issues, but you all have three choices: you can fold, wager a little, or go all in!”

He went on to talk about the example of Jesus as Savior who struggled in the Garden of Gethsemane with this decision and accepted the will of His Father to be “all in” for us.

Through His complete love for us in His death on the cross and His glorious resurrection from the tomb, He has secured our redemption and salvation.

Faith in Jesus frees us to live, not by protecting ourselves and avoiding commitment but by

giving ourselves through complete commitment in fully utilizing all we have and are.

This is the way to live our lives trusting God’s love for us in Jesus. It is the way to live loving others that will make a profound difference in the world. It is the only way to experience the abundant life Jesus proclaims.

Following his presentation the Giants adopted their slogan for the rest of the year — “all in.”

Perhaps you noticed those words on the towels their fans waved all the way to the Super Bowl.

The far greater symbol for “all in” commitment is the cross. There is no more powerful symbol of the complete sacrificial gift of grace that Jesus offers for our redemption and salvation.

His invitation to take up our cross is nothing less than His call to discipleship. Hold nothing back, go “all in” — not for the sake of football — but for your spouse, your children, your family, your friends, your neighbor, for the unreached in this world, and above all for Christ and His body, the Church.

The “all in” of the cross leads us to the “all out” of the empty tomb.

Take a few moments and read the Easter story in the Gospel of

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Book from 2011 Theological Conference

No Other Name: Salvation in Christ Alone

No Other Name: Salvation in Christ Alone is a new book featuring the papers presented at the 2011 Theological Conference sponsored by Lutheran CORE and the North American Lutheran Church last August in Hilliard, Ohio.

The book was edited by the Rev. Dr. Carl E. Braaten, who also provided leadership for the Theological Conference. The preface was written by NALC Bishop John Bradosky. The book is published by the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau.

Here are the papers included in the book:

Introduction: Salvation Today

The Rev. Dr. Carl E. Braaten

The Uniqueness and Universality of Jesus Christ

The Rev. Dr. Gerald McDermott

Calling Lutherans Back to the Evangelistic Task

The Rev. Dr. Berhanu Ofga'a

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

Dr. Robert Benne

The Lutheran Legacy in the World-wide Church

The Rev. Dr. Sarah Hinlicky Wilson

***Orthodoxy at Stake: An Ecumenical Symposium
Anglican, Reformed and Lutheran Perspectives***

The Rt. Rev. Ray Sutton

The Rev. Dr. Joseph Small

The Rev. Dr. James Nestingen

Seeking New Directions for Lutheranism: Biblical, Theological, and Churchly Perspectives, the book containing the papers from the 2010 Theological Conference, is also available.

The books may be ordered from the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau online at alpb.org or by phone at 607-746-7511. The 2010 book is \$18. The 2011 book is \$14.

Bishop Bradosky: 'All In' to 'All Out!'

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Matthew, chapter 28. The celebration of the Resurrection ends with Jesus setting the direction for the future of His disciples and for His Church, the "Great Commission."

In the NALC, we embrace His mission as our only mission, and being "Mission-Driven" is a value that shapes our life together.

Easter is the pinnacle of the Church year. It is the highest holiday, but it is not an end in itself. Easter is the power for mission!

We worship a living Lord, Jesus. We have Good News to share about the power of His redemptive love that cannot be stopped or contained even by death.

In fact, this love moves us from death to life. It takes away our fear, fills us with joy, and keeps us moving in the direction of Jesus, worshipping Him even in our doubts, and serving him with all we have and are.

This is not news we are called to keep to ourselves but Good News we are to share. The empty tomb of Easter is the symbol for going "all out" in mission!

Nothing can stop the risen Christ and nothing can stop His people from sharing that Good News from where we are to the ends of the earth. The power for our mission and direction for our ministry is unleashed for all eternity in this one event! Christ is risen!

May the "all in" commitment of Christ on the cross lead us to the "all out" commitment to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth until the whole world can join us in proclaiming, "Christ is risen indeed!"

Bishop John Bradosky

Anglican, NALC representatives hold initial ecumenical meeting

A first meeting of representatives of the Anglican Church in North America and the North American Lutheran Church was held on March 27 at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pa.

This gathering included representatives from the two church bodies, including leaders of both groups: ACNA Archbishop Robert Duncan and NALC Bishop John Bradosky.

The ACNA was formed in 2009 as a new Anglican Province in North America. The NALC was formed in 2010 as a reconfiguration of Lutheranism in North America.

Both bodies represent a Biblical, confessional expression of their respective historic traditions.

The group was hosted by Trinity School for Ministry, a Biblical and orthodox Christian seminary which trains men and women for lay and ordained ministry.

A presentation was made by Anglican Bishop John Rodgers on historical Lutheran-Anglican dialogue. Bishop Rodgers was a regular participant in this work at both international and national levels from 1969 to 1990.



Participants in the Anglican-NALC meeting were, from left: Canon Jack Lumanog, Bishop Win Mott, Bishop John Rodgers, Bishop Ray Sutton, Dean Justyn Terry, Bishop John Bradosky, Pastor David Wendel, Archbishop Robert Duncan, Archdeacon Mark Stevenson, Pastor Mark Chavez, Bishop Paull Spring, the Rev. Dr. Leander Harding, the Rev. Dr. Travis Boline, and Dr. Theresa Newell. (Photo courtesy of Trinity School for Ministry)

In a statement, Bishop Bradosky and Archbishop Duncan affirmed that “it is our mutual commitment to pursue the development of ecumenical relationships between the ACNA and the NALC on the basis of Holy Scripture.

“Jesus’ prayer ‘that they all may be one . . . so that the world may believe’ (John 17:21) calls us to give expression to our unity in Him as a vital part of our witness to the world and an expression of the power of the Gospel. It is further our commitment to pursue this relationship on the basis of strengthening the capacity of both church bodies for mission and ministry; strengthening both pastoral leadership and congregational outreach.”

The joint group agreed to meet again for reflection on prior Lutheran-Anglican ecumenical work and the study of both groups’ foundational documents: the Lutheran Augsburg Confession and the Anglican 39 Articles. They will also explore opportunities for joint mission and service work through Lutheran and Anglican relief agencies.

In addition to the leaders of both groups, participants included Bishop Ray Sutton and Pastor David Wendel, ecumenical officers of the ACNA and NALC, respectively; Bishop Win Mott, Canon Jack Lumanog and the Rev. Dr. Travis Boline of the ACNA and Bishop Paull Spring and Pastor Mark Chavez of the NALC.

NALC Candidacy Committee works with gifted and faithful candidates for ministry

The Candidacy Committee of the North American Lutheran Church met March 22-24 at the NALC offices in Hilliard, Ohio, for interviews with candidates for ordained ministry. Of the 50-plus total ministry candidates more than a dozen were interviewed at this meeting.

Interviews normally occur at three points in the process:

1. Entrance — beginning of theological studies;
2. Endorsement — prior to internship; and
3. Approval — for ordination and service.

The Candidacy Committee also interviews already ordained ministers who are coming into the NALC from non-Lutheran churches or who had previously served in Lutheran churches.

At the March meeting, four candidates were approved for entrance; one person was approved for endorsement; six candidates were approved for ordination; and one already-ordained pastor was approved for reception into the NALC.

“This was my second opportunity to meet some of our candidates and, just as the first time, I was very impressed with the people who want to serve as ordained pastors in the NALC. They are exceptionally gifted for ministry,” said Pastor Mark Chavez, NALC General Secretary.

Pastor Chavez reported that candidates range from younger persons in their 20s to second career

candidates with much experience in other vocations. They come from several different cultural backgrounds.

“Most impressive are the candidates’ deep faith and strong level of commitment to serve the body of Christ,” Pastor Chavez said. “They are eager to proclaim the Gospel and administer the sacraments in service to our Lord and His Great Commission and embody our Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven core values.”

Pastor Ken Reed chairs the Candidacy Committee and serves with Pastor Rafe Allison, Pastor Jody Becker, Pastor Beverly DeBord, Pastor Patti Morlock, Pastor Scott Ness, Frank Polkowski, Pastor Kevin Powers, Pastor Donna Hacker Smith and Pastor Norm Sulaica. Bishop John Bradosky and General Secretary Chavez also serve on the committee.

“I am equally impressed with Pastor Ken Reed and his team. We are deeply indebted to the committee members for the care with which they advise and counsel our candidates,” Pastor Chavez said.

The NALC continues to have a steady stream of pastors from other church bodies seeking approval as NALC pastors.

Individuals who are interested in becoming a NALC pastor are encouraged to contact Pastor Chavez at mchavez@thenalc.org.

Carolinas Mission District to meet May 4-5

The Carolinas Mission District will meet for its annual Convocation May 4-5 at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Gastonia, N.C.

Speakers for the Convocation include NALC Bishop John Bradosky; Pastor Gemechis Buba, NALC Missions Director; and Pastor Carl Haynes, Dean of the Carolinas Mission District.

Lutheran CORE North Carolina will meet on May 4, prior to the Convocation. Pastor Steve Shipman, director of Lutheran CORE, will be the featured speaker.

The Carolinas Mission District is one of the largest Mission Districts in the NALC. More information on the Convocation is available at carolinasnalc.org.

Nominations requested for NALC leaders

Congregations of the North American Lutheran Church are encouraged to nominate individuals to serve on the NALC's Executive Council, Court of Adjudication, and 2013 Nominating Committee.

The 2012 NALC Convocation Aug. 16-17 at Calvary Lutheran Church in Golden Valley, Minn., will elect one lay person and one pastor to four-year terms on the NALC Executive Council and one member of the Court of Adjudication to a four-year term.

The Convocation will also elect the members of the 2013 Nominating Committee. Names of those

recommended for the Nominating Committee will be forwarded to the NALC Executive Council which nominates individuals to be elected to the Nominating Committee by the Convocation.

All nominees must be members of a NALC congregation. All ordained nominees must be NALC pastors.

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

Mission Planters Conference is May 10-12

"Developing Characteristics of a Church Planter" is the theme of the North American Lutheran Church's Mission Planters Conference May 10-12 at First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Houston, Texas.

The conference will include major presentations and small group discussions. Presentations include:

+ "What does it mean to plant a Lutheran congregation in the 21st century?" by Pastor Gemechis Buba, NALC Missions Director.

+ "Thinking with an outreach perspective: basic outline for effective church planting" by Pastor Buba.

+ "What does it take to be an effective discipleship congregation?" by NALC Bishop John Bradosky.

+ "Biblical principles for church planting" by Pastor Scott Grorud of Faith Lutheran Church in Hutchinson, Minn.

+ "Christ model of evangelism and discipling: framework for missional, relational and incarnation ministry" by Bishop Bradosky.

+ "From a traditionally grounded Lutheran perspective, what does it take to be an effective church-planting Church?" by Pastor David Wendel, NALC Ministry Coordinator.

Registration information is available on the NALC website — thenalc.org — or from Rachel Sosebee at the NALC missions office — 614-777-5709 or rrosebee@thenalc.org.

Rocky Mountain Mission District to meet

The NALC's Rocky Mountain Mission District will have its organizational meeting Saturday, April 21, at Lord of the Hills Lutheran Church in Centennial, Colo.

This small Mission District covers a large geographic area (Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and the portion of Texas below New Mexico).

The meeting will consider a proposed simple charter and provisional structure that will serve until the district has more congregations.

All interested persons and congregations are welcome to attend. For more information please contact Pastor David Wendel at dwendel@thenalc.org.

Mission-Driven – Let’s Make an Impact!

Ministry Coordinator’s Corner

Jesus said, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

— John 12:32

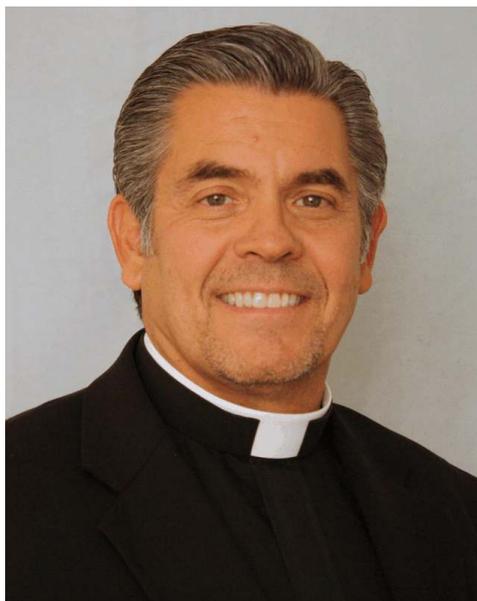
I’m sad to confess that after 30 years as a parish pastor, I don’t think I ever really understood “mission.”

Oh, we talked a lot about mission and believed we were “doing” the Great Commission in the Church. But now, from a different vantage point, I see things differently. How is that? Often in the parish, we are not focusing on making a mission impact!

As a parish pastor, it seemed most congregations wanted to spread their mission offerings around — locally, regionally and globally — addressing many needs. This amounted to a rather small portion going to a number of social ministry agencies, mission congregations, or overseas ministry programs.

In many ways, this allowed pastors and congregations to believe we were touching many lives in many places. Especially with regard to local benevolences, congregational members had the sense that they were meeting needs and participating in valuable programs throughout the local community. From my perspective as a parish pastor, this was a fairly common mindset.

Looking at missions from a broader view, however, what is clear is that when we divide up



Pastor David Wendel

our mission offerings among several (or many) different ministries, we are actually reducing the impact of our gifts!

Giving 10 different ministries \$100 dollars each, for example, doesn’t have the impact of one \$1,000 gift. Similarly, \$500 gifts to 10 varied ministries will never have the impact that one gift of \$5,000 will have. With regard to missions today and the great costs involved in mission work, the larger the gift the greater the impact!

I am writing this in my “Ministry Coordinator’s Corner” this month because, in working with Pastor Gemechis Buba, Rachel Sosebee, and our mission congregations, what I have come to realize is that we need established, financially-blessed congregations of the NALC to step up to make an impact in our

mission congregations! A real impact, and a powerful impact!

This is why we are encouraging our congregations to support one mission internationally, and one mission congregation in North America, if possible. We are not encouraging our congregations to financially support 10 mission congregations to the tune of \$1,000 each, but to give one gift of \$10,000 to make a real difference in the life and ministry of one NALC mission congregation!

With 50 mission congregations in the NALC, and just over 300 established congregations, it will take all of us to support these valuable, exciting missions. Our mission congregations are worthy of our support and often live day-to-day with limited financial resources. Some do not have a space of their own for worship and fellowship and many have supply pastors instead of regular pastoral support.

A gift of \$5,000 or \$10,000 or more to one congregation will significantly impact their day-to-day ministry and the long-range future of the mission, enabling them to further their ministry impact as well!

The story of St. Timothy’s Lutheran Church in San Jose, Calif., and Faith Community Lutheran Church in Longmont, Colo., are wonderful examples of former mission congregations

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Bishop Bradosky and Missions Director Buba to speak at theological conference in Ethiopia

Bishop John Bradosky and Missions Director Gemechis Desta Buba of the North American Lutheran Church will be among the keynote speakers for the International Mission and Theological Conference hosted by the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus April 21-26 in Addis Ababa.

Other speakers from North America include Pastor Kip A. Tyler of Lutheran Church of the Master in Omaha, Neb., and Pastor Michael Bradley, president of The Master's Institute in St. Paul, Minn., and director of the Alliance of Renewal Churches.

Pastor Tyler will represent Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ. He is chair of the LCMC Board of Trustees.

President Wakseyoum Idossa and General Secretary Berhanu Ofga'a of the Mekane Yesus Church will also speak at the gathering.

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus is one of the largest Lutheran church bodies in the world with 5.6 million members.

The mission conference is expected to attract more than 20,000 people. It will be followed by the church's leadership conference attended by more than 2,000 people.

For more information contact Rachel Sosebee at the NALC missions office — rsosebee@thenalc.org or 614-777-5709.

Ministry Coordinator Corner

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making a HUGE impact by “paying it forward.” Both congregations have made significant gifts on their congregational anniversaries, giving tens of thousands of dollars to mission congregations in thanksgiving for their own mission starts and their growth and outreach through the years.

Instead of giving small gifts to many missions or agencies, they have made large gifts to greatly impact the lives of mission congregations and those they serve. Perhaps your congregation can make such an impactful gift on the occasion of an anniversary or special event!

If your congregation would like to partner with one of our NALC mission congregations, you can easily e-mail me at dwendel@thenalc.org. I will very quickly talk with Pastor Buba and Rachel to find a mission congregation that is in need of a mission partner and get you connected.

We have mission congregations in need, as they seek to provide a church home for those whom our Lord is drawing to Himself! He has been lifted up

on the cross and seeks to draw all people to Himself. Let's make an impact as we seek to be mission-driven!

Mid-Northeast Mission District youth event

The NALC Mid-Northeast Mission District will host a youth event on Saturday, April 21, at Brighton Heights Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh, Pa.

The day will include service projects, lunch, devotions, games, fun, and friends. Youth are encouraged to bring work gloves and clothes that can get dirty.

Several churches are opening their doors for overnight lodging for youth and adult leaders.

For more information, contact Julie Smith at 724-548-2051 or smithjulie33@yahoo.com.

NALC pastor is missionary in Ecuador

Pastor Didi Panzo, a NALC pastor, is serving as a missionary in Ecuador through the World Mission Prayer League. He introduces himself to us:

I was born into a Christian family in Angola and spent two-thirds of my 52 years as a refugee. At a young age I received Jesus as my personal Savior. While living in the Congo as a refugee I served God as a missionary and received my first Biblical training.

God has blessed me with many gifts, especially with a passion to witness His Name to those who don't yet believe and a wonderful family: my wife of 31 years, Serafina, and six children, aged 31 to 10. All our children are doing well. Two of my children are married and four have finished college.

My call has been to serve the people of God physically, socially and spiritually. I have also served God in the medical field by teaching and developing programs after being trained as a physician assistant. These have included programs related to HIV/AIDS and providing community health care through the Christian Council Churches of Angola and more recently as founder of Christian Prison Ministry in Angola.

Because of conflicts and persecution, I moved with my family to the United States. As an ordained ELCA pastor and mission developer, I was used to empower African communities. After leaving the ELCA, I joined the NALC and felt called to use my gifts as evangelist, preacher, medical personnel and community developer, along with my ability to speak four languages, to serve the church globally.

I am serving in Ecuador through the World Mission Prayer League in partnership with an Ecuadorian Christian organization, Paz y Esperanza (Peace and Hope). The organization works with inter-family conflict, domestic violence, victims of sexual and child abuse and sex trafficking. My ministry here has five primary areas of responsibility: 1) pastoral counseling — praying with victims and helping them to discover Christ in their lives; 2) evangelism and community empowerment, including sharing Christ and helping to develop a Biblically-based strategic plan to support those living with HIV/AIDS; 3) to help churches be a voice to the marginalized; 4) to connect the Ecuadorian Lutheran Church with the



program; and 5) to serve as a bridge between the Lutheran congregations here and NALC congregations in the United States.

My vision for this ministry is for people to discover Christ through their suffering, as written in Acts 14:22, and to support the church in caring for the people of God through evangelism and making disciples.

May God's will be fulfilled!

You can learn more about the World Mission Prayer League at www.wmpl.org. Gifts to support the Panzos' ministry may be sent to: World Mission Prayer League; 232 Clifton Avenue; Minneapolis, MN 55403. Please note on your check that your gift is to support the ministry of Didi Panzo.

Baptism: A Journey of a Lifetime

By Pastor John Hopper

Gift. Grace. Covenant. Vow.
“Precious Jewel.” Baptism is a
journey of a lifetime.

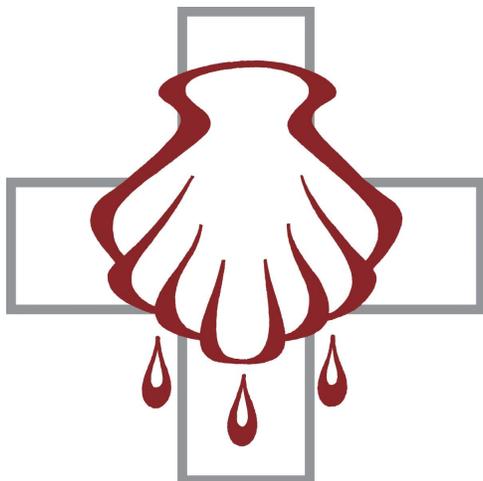
*“In Baptism, therefore, every
Christian has enough to study and
to practice all his life.”*

— Martin Luther

It is clear that, for Luther, there is no greater gift, nor covenant, nor precious jewel, nor vow. There is no greater grace than Baptism. As a journey of a lifetime, Baptism shapes our journey. Embraced by God’s mercy and grace we live in the salvation promised to us in this Means of Grace. So we are to take great care of the way in which we administer this covenant of promise. We do so because our *practice* can and will teach *theology*. My hope is that we who are called to the Office of Ministry will administer Baptism so that God’s children will *learn* and *experience* the wondrous theology of grace that gives hope in a troubled world.

Luther literally used the “language of the day.” He translated the Roman rite of Baptism into German so that all could understand God’s grace at work in their lives in Baptism. He writes in *The Order of Baptism - 1523*:

“As I daily see and hear the carelessness and disrespect — not to say frivolity — with which the high, holy, and comforting sacrament of Baptism is being administered to little children (partly due to the Latin), I have come to the conclusion that it would not only be profitable, but also necessary to administer this sacrament in the German language.”



Yes, Luther literally translated the order of Baptism into the language of the people. How could parents — indeed anyone — comprehend the wondrous mercy and grace of God in Baptism if it is not in a form, a “language,” they can understand?

So, what is the “language” of our day? How can we assist people in their understanding of God’s work in Baptism now? Luther translated the text. But, just a few years later, in 1526, he went further. He revised the Roman rite. He presented a simple service of the Word and prayer, including the “flood prayer.” This simple service in the “language of the day” was his gift to the people of God.

How do we do that?

Ordained to the Office of Ministry in 1973, my worship book was and remains (for baptisms), the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. It is interesting that the Holy Baptism service in LBW is very close to Luther’s 1526 revision of the Roman rite, including the “flood prayer.” The biggest difference is that Luther did not include any “extras,” such things as candles

and anointing. Luther did not want the “extras” to detract from the power of God’s grace at work in claiming us as His children.

So, how shall we administer this sacrament rightly in our day? I would like to suggest that the “language of the day” for us means that we claim the heart of our understanding of a sacrament. Sacraments for us are earthly elements plus God’s Word and command containing a powerful promise. The result is, I think, that we shall use as many senses as possible to administer the sacrament of Baptism.

We have become a much more *visual* society. We see differently. I think we also *experience* things differently. One thing I have discovered over the years is that words often are not enough. There are times when words cannot convey meaning in and of themselves. For me, symbols and music carry meaning in ways that I cannot fully explain. So, at the risk of ruffling Luther’s feathers, I think we can build on our gracious Lutheran theology of Baptism and assist God’s people as they grow in their understanding of its power at work in our journey of a lifetime.

Developing a baptismal ministry in the parish is very important. The process begins even as families await the birth of a child. As Christians, the new birth in Baptism is more significant than the physical birth. As I have already shared, for us as for Luther, we seek to demonstrate the importance of this journey of a lifetime as it impacts our life

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together in the congregation and community. But, a couple of general comments before we explore some “extras.”

First of all, the community of faith is strengthened when God's people witness the sacrament of Baptism. If at all possible, Baptism is to be administered in the public worship life of the congregation. “Private baptisms” should be a rare occurrence. Baptized into the life, death and resurrection of our Lord, our children are adopted into the Body of Christ. As witnesses of this grace-filled event, the members of the community of faith embrace with love and prayer a responsibility to assist parents in the nurture of their child in the Christian faith.

Secondly, if Baptism is the greatest vow anyone, including God, can make, we are to administer this sacrament with the importance it deserves in our worship life. In the parishes I have served, the sacrament of Baptism is first and foremost in worship that particular morning. We don't “stuff” it in at a later time in worship and hurry our way through it so that we can be dismissed on time. This journey of a lifetime is the heart of our daily existence as Christians. It is so honored as the focus of our worship both in placement in the service and of time to administer Baptism well.

The following “symbols” are those which I have used in the service of Holy Baptism. They have been very helpful to families who bring their children to the font to be washed in God's grace. The use of these symbols is also integrated into the whole life of the parish. A baptismal symbol by itself will have little meaning.

Baptismal Banner: We are “named” in our Baptism. Baptized into Christ we have our name written in the Book of Life. So this banner is also used at a funeral. Our baptismal journey is complete only when we die. In both instances the name of the person is on the banner.

Stole: Once the parents have made the vow to be stewards of the child who is baptized, a stole is placed around their necks. Those of us who are ordained into the Office of Ministry wear the various colored stoles of the church year as a sign of our office. Luther believed that there was no greater “calling” than parent. Neither pope, nor prince, nor priest has a higher calling than parent, he said. Many of my colleagues use the stole on the day of affirmation of Baptism. It seems to me that practice has little meaning if the stole has not been in place before confirmation. Placed on the parents in Baptism, the stole is now “transferred” from parent to child.

Robe: In Baptism we are “covered” in Christ. A baptismal “bib” (with name embroidered on it) is placed on the child. Our teenagers on the day of affirmation wear a white robe. We cover caskets and urns with white palls. From the beginning of our new life in Christ until the completion of our baptismal journey we are covered in Christ. We have “put on Christ.”

Mark of the Cross: I use scented oil because it not only remains on the child's forehead until it is washed off, it also appeals to our sense of smell. The anointing with oil is also used to mark our sick with the cross. And, at least once a quarter, we practice prayer and anointing of oil for healing in our worship service. And, finally, during the commendation of the

dead in the funeral service the sign of the cross is also made over the casket or urn. The cross that marks us is also the cross which promises salvation.

Candle: The symbol of light is already in the LBW. The light of Christ shines through us from Baptism until death. The paschal candle is lit and stands next to the font for the sacrament of Baptism, and it stands next to the casket or urn in a funeral.

I have experienced a renewal of the wonder of God's grace given in the gift of Baptism. Many have commented on how meaningful these various symbols — and this practice — have been in their lives.

A brief final comment: this practice in our congregation also takes seriously the power of the devil. Instead of one question about rejecting the reality and power of Satan, we have returned to three so that we might “spit in the eye of the devil” (as Luther called it). It also matches the threefold confession of the creed.

As we live and move as God's baptized people may our lives bear witness to our gracious God who has claimed all of us as His own. Our baptismal journey is a journey of hope and salvation. It is a wondrous journey that promises forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation. Our gracious God stands with us! We are children of God, baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Satan cannot have us!

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Not Forgetting the Essentials

In Pursuit of the Great Commission

By Pastor Don Brandt

The setting was a hotel dining room with a view of beautiful Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. There were a dozen of us having dinner together, all ELCA pastors of larger Northwest congregations gathered for a retreat.

We were discussing why Lutheran congregations seemed to struggle when it came to reaching and evangelizing the unchurched. I made the following comment: "I think one problem is that a significant minority of ELCA pastors no longer believe in the concept of personal salvation."

Silence. It probably just *seemed* like the silence lasted a full couple of minutes before conversation resumed, the next comment not really addressing or acknowledging what I had just said.

When I returned home to Salem, I wrote of this experience for our congregational newsletter. In describing this, I made the comment that I had, based on that awkward silence, obviously "put my foot in it."

That's when things got interesting. Salem's only daily newspaper has a weekly religion column on Saturdays. Every week the editor of that column pulls topics and quotes from what one or more local pastors have written in their congregational newsletters. (This editor makes sure he's on just about every local congregation's mailing list.)

What's interesting — and in this case unnerving — is that he never contacts the pastor before deciding to quote from a particular newsletter. Instead, he simply proceeds to share the pastor's observations with the entire Salem community.

And that's what happened in this case. Now I'm as desperate for affirmation as the next pastor, and it normally "made my day" on those rare occasions when I'd open up the Saturday paper and see myself quoted in this column. But on this particular Saturday I instead had this sinking feeling in the pit

of my stomach. The title of that week's religion column was, "Pastor Puts His Foot in It for the Sake of the Gospel." I immediately thought to myself, "This could be trouble."

Sure enough, two local pastors immediately complained to my bishop. And yes, I received a phone call from the synod office. To the bishop's credit, once I explained that my quotations were essentially "stolen" from my congregational newsletter (slight exaggeration on my part), he told me not to worry about the local fallout.

I share this with you for an important reason. This column errs on the side of almost always focusing on the more *practical* issues related to congregational evangelism. And that emphasis *is* intentional on my part.

However, it's important to also be vigilant when it comes to our personal faith and theology as pastors and lay leaders. We must do all we can to insure that we are not drifting toward a watered-down and *conversionless* presentation of the Gospel.

All the creative and innovative outreach strategies we can dream up will prove inadequate and ultimately meaningless if we no longer advocate for the necessity of a personal, saving relationship with the God revealed and incarnated in Jesus Christ.

This is an issue which is absolutely central to our faith and life as the Body of Christ. And it needs — at least periodically — to be a subject we raise with our members.

A couple of years ago, I approached this subject of conversion and salvation by conducting a Sunday-morning survey the week before a message on the topic. (This is my one practical suggestion this month: Occasional congregational surveys to give you the raw data for your sermon the following Sunday. At least a few extra worshipers will show up to hear the survey results.)

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This brief survey was inserted into the worship bulletin. The surveys were anonymous (no names), and involved the following questions:

+ On a scale of one to ten — one being the belief that only Christians are saved and all others will be punished for eternity and ten being universalism, i.e., that everyone is saved without exception — put your number here. (But not “five”; that’s too easy.)

+ Briefly describe heaven, and/or salvation after death in your own words.

+ Briefly describe in your own words what happens to non-believers after death.

Obviously, your survey would probably be very different than this. Your questions need to reflect your personal theology and use language you feel is appropriate for your congregation.

I gave worshipers three to four minutes (during announcements) to fill out their surveys. They were then asked to fold their (half-sheet) surveys and drop them in the offering plate later in the service. You could also have them collected separately by your ushers.

What were the results in my congregation?

A majority were between two and four on the first question. However, a sizeable minority leaned very strongly toward universalism; between eight and ten. So this survey gave me an opportunity to preach a timely message (characterized, I might add, by grace) on the subject of what Scripture teaches regarding our salvation in Jesus Christ.

This subject is extremely relevant in our current culture for two reasons:

+ Many *within* the Christian church (especially among mainline Protestants) are drifting toward blatant universalism. And this needs to be said outright: At some point the Gospel message can become so watered down and misrepresented that the label “Christian” becomes meaningless in any historical and traditional sense of the *Word*. (Pun intended.)

+ Second, our secular culture has become increasingly antagonistic toward any religious groups — especially Christian groups — that actually seek conversions. The one thing our secular culture will no longer tolerate is intolerance. And our culture sees Christian evangelism as a classic example of religious intolerance. Many of our members are being swayed by this particular worldview.

The message of salvation needs to be foundational to everything we do as a community of faith. Otherwise all our efforts will be compromised — both in terms of their effectiveness and their rationale.

The Apostle Paul put it well: “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love” (1 Corinthians 16:13-14).

In the next column I will have some specific suggestions as to how *your* congregation can address this particular ministry challenge.

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Congregation provides NALC scholarship at Trinity Lutheran College

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Everett, Wash., will provide a \$1,000 scholarship to members of North American Lutheran Church congregations who attend Trinity Lutheran College.

Trinity Lutheran College is a small independent Lutheran college in Everett, Wash., born out of the former Lutheran Bible Institute. You can learn more about TLC at tlc.edu.

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‘In peace, let us pray to the Lord . . .’

By Pastor Michael Tavella

“In peace, let us pray to the Lord . . .”

These words begin a litany prayer found in the Entrance Rite of the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. The word, *litany*, is a Greek word borrowed into Latin and through Latin into English. We find the verbal form in Saint Ignatius’ *Letter to the Romans*, where he asks the Roman Christians to beseech (*litaneusate*) Christ that he may be a sacrifice. He wishes to be God’s wheat so that he can be ground by the teeth of animals to be pure bread of Christ (*Ignatius to the Romans* 4:1-2). He wrote this letter as he was being escorted to Rome to be executed for his Christian faith.

The word, *litany*, is a term referring to prayers that consist of a series of petitions after each of which the congregation repeats a set response. In the litany in the Entrance Rite of Holy Communion, the congregational response is “Lord, have mercy.” Hence, the prayer is known as the *Kyrie* (Lord) or *Kyrie eleison* (Lord, have mercy). This prayer comes from *The Divine Liturgy* of the Greek Orthodox Church, where it is found after the greeting at the beginning of the service. The *Kyrie* in Holy Communion is a shorter form of the prayer found in the Orthodox liturgy. The longer form with revisions is found in *Evening Prayer*.

In the *Common Service Book with Hymnal* of 1917, the *Kyrie* consisted of three petitions, “Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.” The rubrics of this book permit the minister and congregation to recite or sing the *Kyrie* responsively; or, the minister may lead with the first petition. The choir and congregation respond with all three petitions. Christ replaces Lord in the second petition and “upon us” is added to all the petitions. This latter change was introduced into the *First Prayer Book of Edward VI*.

Luther recommends the continued use of the *Kyrie*, taken from the Latin Mass, in the *Formula Missae* (Luther’s revision of the Latin Mass) and in the *Deutsche Messe* (*The German Mass*). In *The German Mass* Luther suggests that a threefold rather than a ninefold *Kyrie*, as found in the Latin Mass, be used.



The *Kyrie* litany was first included in the *Service Book and Hymnal* of 1958. SBH provides both the *Kyrie* (“Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us”) and the *Kyrie* litany. The *Lutheran Book of Worship* includes only the *Kyrie* litany.

In the shorter form of the *Kyrie* litany, we pray for peace and salvation, for the peace of the world, for the well-being of the Church, and for those gathered for worship. In the last petition we pray that the Lord will “Help, save, comfort, and defend us . . .”

In the longer form, found in *Evening Prayer*, we also pray for pastors and bishops, the government, Christian disciples, good weather and a good harvest, peace, and deliverance from adversity. We give thanks for faithful Christians who have died. The litany ends with a beautiful ancient collect of the Western Church whose theme is a request for “that peace that the world cannot give.” Jesus says to His disciples in John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” The theme of peace that is found in the first three petitions of the litany also concludes the prayer in the final collect.

The Litany, also called *The Great Litany* and found in LBW, is a medieval prayer of the Western Church that Martin Luther revised and commended. It begins with a sixfold *Kyrie* and continues with an address to the Holy Trinity. We then ask God for deliverance from sundry evils followed by petitions that God may help us by virtue of our redemption in Christ. In this petition, a brief account is given of Christ’s life-giving

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acts. We then ask that we may be saved in all tribulation and prosperity, in the hour of death and in the Day of Judgment. *The Litany* continues with prayers for the Church and its mission, for the nations, and for all “sorts and conditions” of us human beings (See *A Prayer for All Conditions of Men, Morning Prayer, Book of Common Prayer, 1928, p.18*). The *Agnus Dei* is sung, divided between leader and congregation. *The Litany* ends with a sixfold Kyrie, just as it began.

The Litany combines powerful music and text. It should not be neglected in the worship of the Church. It may be used, for example, in Lent, and certainly at other times, as the Entrance Rite with the Prayer of the Day. The rubrics in LBW suggest its use as a separate service with the inclusion of a psalm; lesson; Prayer of the Day, or other prayer; the Lord’s Prayer; and a blessing. *The Litany* may serve as the prayers in the Daily Offices of *Morning Prayer* and *Evening Prayer*.

The Prayers (Prayers of Intercession, Prayers of the Church) that follow the Creed in Holy Communion also take the form of a litany prayer. These prayers are written by the pastor or are provided by others. Lutheran CORE has commenced a ministry of providing such prayers for every Sunday in the Church year. A prayer for each week is located on its website. As the rubrics point out, this prayer is to include petitions for the Church, ministers, the government, the nations, the sick, others in need, and special concerns. The faithful departed are remembered. Prayers of confession may also be included if the *Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness* is not used at the beginning of the service.

The Prayers are an ancient part of the liturgy. The practice of saying such prayers goes back to the early days of the Church. St. Justin Martyr mentions them when he describes the Eucharist in his *First Apology*. St. Clement in his *Letter to the Corinthians* rehearses a beautiful prayer with several petitions. Clement’s prayers can be revised for use on Sunday morning as *The Prayers*.

The Prayers are typically addressed to God the Father. They end “through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.” If the prayers are addressed to the Father, it is not good style to switch the address to another person of the Trinity later in the prayer and then conclude “through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Proper Trinitarian structure should go into the writing of this prayer.

Each petition should not be equivalent to the length of an entire prayer. We do not want to ramble on like the pagans. Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount that the pagans believe that they will be heard if they use many words (Matthew 6:7ff). Jesus teaches that God knows our need before we ask. Then he teaches the disciples the Lord’s Prayer, which is simple, short, and straightforward (Matthew 6).

Prayer is central to the services of the Church. In *On the Councils and the Church*, Luther lists prayer, praise, and thanksgiving as one of Seven Marks of the Church, which also include the Word of God, Holy Baptism, Holy Communion, the Office of the Keys, the Holy Ministry, and the possession of the Holy Cross.

In Matthew 15 a Canaanite woman approaches Jesus to beseech him, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon” (Matthew 15:22b). The woman persists until Jesus grants her request. In our liturgical practice, we too are to persist in our petitions to the Lord. In *The Large Catechism*, Luther writes that we pray because we are commanded to (Second Commandment) and because our prayer will be answered. We can pray with the right words, because Christ has told us how to pray in the Lord’s Prayer.

Corporate prayer is essential to the Christian life. As in the Lord’s Prayer, we use the plural first person, “we, our, us” in the other prayers we say together. Christians do not live in isolation from the Body of Christ, the Church. The post-Communion prayer of the *Book of Common Prayer* states, “we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people” (*Book of Common Prayer, 1928, p. 83*). Our private prayers are also connected to the Body of Christ, the Church. Even when we pray alone, we pray as “a member incorporate” in Christ’s holy catholic Church. We bear the Church in our person. The communion of saints is a reality wherever we go.

The Eucharistic Prayer will be our theme over the next several issues.

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