

# NALC News

North American Lutheran Church

October 2012

## NALC leaders join in celebration of 125 years of Lutheranism in Tanzania

Bishop John Bradosky of the North American Lutheran Church joined other NALC representatives in a significant celebration of the 125th anniversary of Lutheranism in Tanzania.

The Eastern and Coastal Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania celebrated its 125th anniversary in a jubilee celebration Aug. 26 through Sept. 2. Bishop Bradosky was invited to be present for the celebration and was a guest bishop and preacher during the observance.

Also representing the NALC were Pastor David Wendel, Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry and Ecumenism, and Pastor Paul Borg. Pastor Borg was personal secretary to the bishop of the North-Western Diocese of ELCT in the 1960s.

In August of 1887, the Rev. Johann Jacob Greiner, a German Lutheran missionary of the Berlin Mission, offered the first worship service in the coastal region of Tanzania. There are now 5.8 million Lutherans in Tanzania.

In addition to festive opening and closing Sunday services, the celebration included a series of services through the week in which new ministries were recognized as new buildings and facilities were dedicated by Bishop Alex Malasusa, Presiding Bishop of the ELCT. Bishop Malasusa also serves as bishop of the Eastern and Coastal Diocese.



*NALC Bishop John Bradosky (right) and Bishop Esbjörn Hagberg of the Diocese of Karlstad of the Church of Sweden look on as the district pastor speaks at the dedication of a boys school as part of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania's celebrations of the 125th anniversary of the first Lutheran worship service in Tanzania.*

Secondary schools for boys and girls, a center for the developmentally disabled, a women's ministry center, and a college and junior seminary were among the ministries highlighted during the week.

The final Sunday worship service included the ordination of 14 new pastors.

"The joy of the week was the fact that the focus was not only their 125 years of past history, but the growth and development of the ministry of the

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diocese for the future,” Pastor Wendel said. “In a celebration that could have easily been an acknowledgment of past accomplishments, the jubilee was decidedly forward-looking with much excitement and joy.”

A highlight of the week for the NALC participants was their connection with Pastor Herb Hafermann, who will celebrate 50 years of ministry as a missionary to Tanzania next year. Having served for a time as president of the Eastern and Coastal Diocese (then called a “synod”), he also served many years as a missionary to the Maasai in northern Tanzania and southern Kenya. Many of the Maasai are now Lutherans because of his work.

Bishop Bradosky has invited Pastor Hafermann to attend the 2013 NALC Convocation to be recognized for his 50 years of faithful missionary service.

Presiding Bishop Malasusa was also invited to attend the 2013 NALC Convocation, together with professors from the ELCT Makumira Seminary in Arusha, Tanzania.

“The 2013 NALC Convocation looks like it will have an exciting Tanzanian flavor,” Pastor Wendel said.

The NALC delegation met with Presiding Bishop Malasusa, Assistant Bishop Georg Fupe, retired Bishop Hance Mwakabana, and ELCT staff on



***Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and NALC delegation pose after their meeting. Picture are, from left: Presiding Bishop Malasusa, retired Bishop Hance Mwakabana, Bishop John Bradosky, ELCT staff member, Pastor David Wendel, Assistant Bishop Georg Fupe, and Pastor Paul Borg.***



***Procession of pastors for jubilee celebration of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.***

Friday of the jubilee week. Discussions focused on development of the relationship between ELCT and the NALC, the possibility of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two bodies, as well as the possibility of NALC involvement in the Lutheran World Federation.

A result of the visit was Bishop Malasusa’s invitation to Bishop Bradosky to return to Tanzania in December to be keynote speaker at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania’s gathering on the island of Zanzibar.

At the conclusion of the jubilee celebration, the NALC delegation visited the ELCT Makumira Seminary in northern Tanzania, as well as Dr. Steve and Bethany Friberg, Lutheran medical missionaries who live in Kitumbeine and run a series of medical clinics in northern Tanzania.

Dr. Friberg took the NALC delegation to visit a Maasai Boma where they were warmly welcomed with chai, conversation, a tour and various photo opportunities with Maasai villagers.

The delegation also visited the Kitumbeine women’s bead project, as well as the experimental camel project, as Maasai women are raising a herd of camels for the sake of the 3½ gallons of milk camels provide daily, regardless of their intake of water.

The NALC delegation was able to spend one day of the two-week visit on safari in Tarangire National Park, where elephants, lion, wildebeest, zebra, giraffe, baboons and other animals come during the dry season to drink from the Tarangire River.



*Children pose in clothing created from special material created for the anniversary celebration. Note the jubilee logo featuring Martin Luther's seal.*



*Pastor David Wendel, Bishop John Bradosky and Pastor Paul Borg pose in a Maasai Boma.*



*Pastors ordained at jubilee celebration.*



*Celebrating the dedication of a new school.*



*Lutherans in Tanzania at worship.*



*Choir sings for the jubilee celebration.*

# Congregations consider whether to ratify proposal for NALC to join LWF

Congregations of the North American Lutheran Church are now deciding whether the NALC should join the Lutheran World Federation.

The NALC's 2012 Convocation approved a resolution seeking full membership in the LWF. The resolution was approved by a two-thirds majority of the delegates to the Aug. 16-17 Convocation.

The resolution now must be ratified by a two-thirds majority of the 311 congregations that were members of the NALC at the time of the Convocation. If the congregations vote to ratify the resolution, the NALC will forward its application for membership to the LWF for consideration.

The NALC constitution requires all major decisions by a Convocation to be ratified by congregations before going into effect. Congregations have six months to vote on whether to ratify a Convocation action.

Congregations were sent information on the LWF resolution and additional documents to assist them in their deliberation on the proposal. The documents are also available on the NALC website.

The Convocation asked the Joint Commission on Theology and Doctrine to prepare a document to help congregations in their deliberation.

"We support and endorse membership by our church in the LWF. We see no theological or doctrinal impediment in this matter," the Joint Commission on Theology and Doctrine said in a memorandum addressed to congregations.

"We recognize that the LWF is not an absolutely perfect fit for us in the NALC. Some LWF churches differ with us on doctrinal and ethical issues. On balance, however, we feel that the positives outweigh the negatives," the commission said.

The Lutheran World Federation describes itself as "a global communion of Christian churches in the Lutheran tradition." It includes church bodies in 79

countries. Ninety-five percent of the world's 74 million Lutherans are members of the 143 church bodies that are members of the LWF.

In addition to noting the NALC's commitment to ecumenical relationships, the resolution notes that encouragement from church leaders in Africa is a significant reason for the NALC to join the LWF.

"Our Lutheran brothers and sisters in Africa, especially in Ethiopia and Tanzania, desire the full membership of the NALC in the Lutheran World Federation to be an orthodox, confessional North American partner within LWF," the resolution states.

Some NALC members have expressed concerns that because the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada are members of the LWF, the NALC would implicitly be in a formal relationship with those church bodies through the LWF.

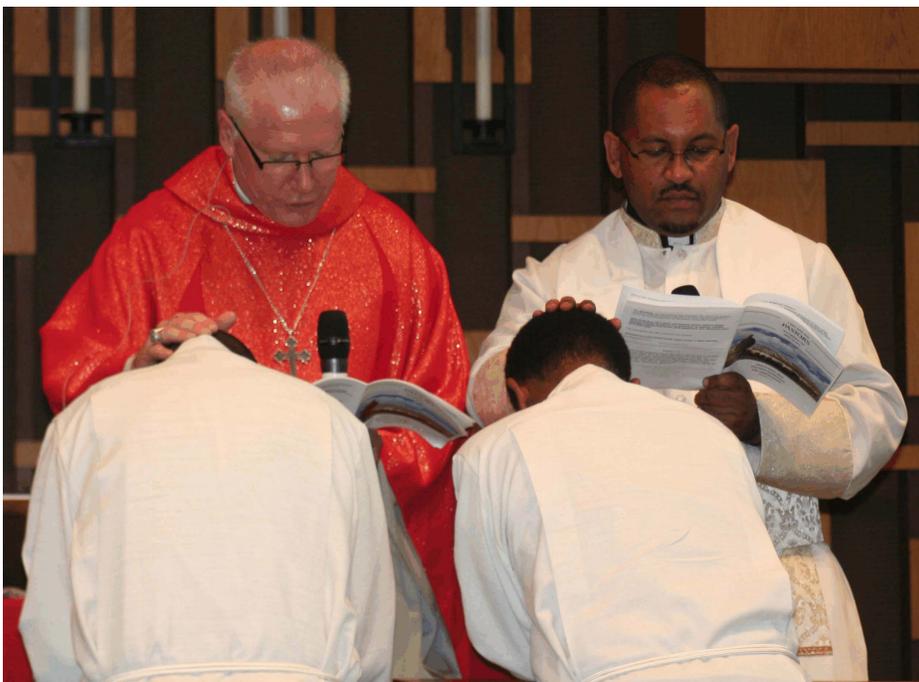
However, the resolution sets forth the understandings on church-to-church fellowship with which the NALC would seek membership in the LWF: "Full membership within the Lutheran World Federation does not require, nor imply, altar and pulpit fellowship with all member Lutheran bodies. ... It is a present reality that certain member Lutheran bodies within the Lutheran World Federation understand themselves to be in impaired communion with certain other member Lutheran bodies" because of doctrinal differences.

"I understand the passion and emotions linked to our past that are also a part of our discussion regarding this issue. However, I have no doubt that you will make your decisions on the basis of prayerful deliberation and not your feelings. I trust the process that we have created, providing our congregations with the final decision. Above all, I trust in the power of the Holy Spirit at work in you, guiding and leading us through this deliberation to an appropriate decision," Bishop Bradosky said in a letter to congregations.

# Oromo Ordinations

Ebenezer Oromo Evangelical Church celebrated the ordination of three of its members on Sunday, Sept. 30, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, where the Oromo congregation meets.

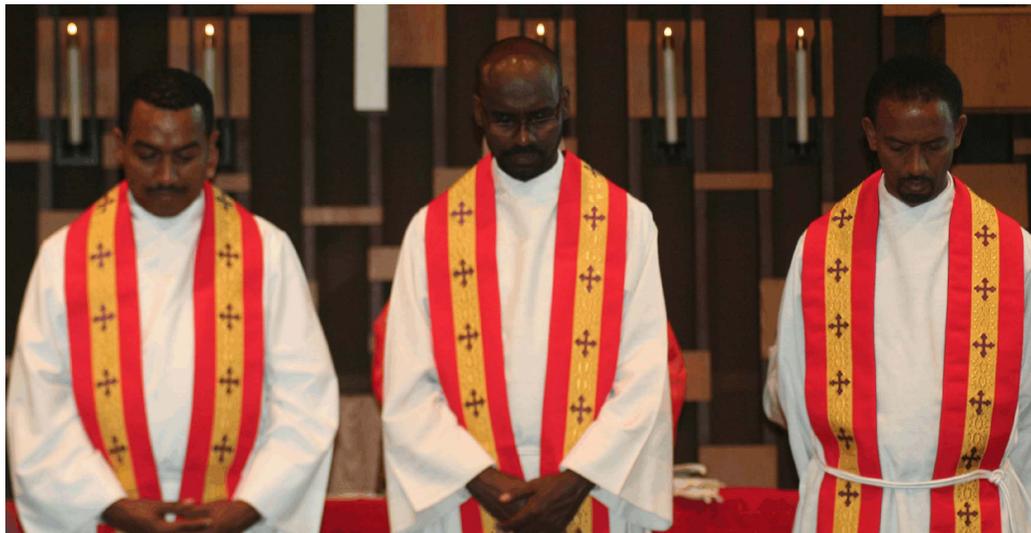
NALC Bishop John Bradosky and Pastor Gemechis D. Buba, Assistant to the Bishop for Missions, presided at the ordinations of Challa Baro and Fikru Eticha. Pastor Paul Spaulding of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ presided at the ordination of Pastor Kafyalew Amente.



*NALC Bishop John Bradosky and Pastor Gemechis Buba preside at the ordinations of Fikru Eticha and Challa Baro.*



*Pastor Gemchu Olana, worldwide president of the United Oromo Evangelical Churches.*



*From left, Pastor Kafyalew Amente, Pastor Fikru Eticha and Pastor Challa Baro.*



*Dr. Debela Birri, president of the Graduate School of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Seminary.*



*Pastor Marshall Hahn and youth from Norway Lutheran Church in St. Olaf, Iowa, attended the ordination and presented a gift to the Oromo congregation.*

# Reflections on visit to Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It was an honor and a privilege to represent you at the 125th anniversary of the Gospel coming to Tanzania. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania celebrated with a variety of events including a closing service that lasted more than six hours.

We spent many hours with ELCT Presiding Bishop Alex Malasusa, discussing our common commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, evangelism, discipleship, mission, the history that led to the inception and development of the NALC, and the pursuit of our future relationship.



*Presiding Bishop Alex Malasusa of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Assistant Bishop Georg Fupe is at his right.*



## *From the Bishop*

**Bishop John Bradosky**

We were warmly received and strongly encouraged by Bishop Malasusa's comments regarding the importance and opportunity to pursue membership in the Lutheran World Federation. Bishop Malasusa is also a vice president of LWF.

I was invited to preach, offer Biblical reflections, and bring greetings to the bishops, pastors, and laity of the ELCT. We received many positive comments and affirmations about our commitment to Jesus Christ, the proclamation of the Gospel, and the authority of Scripture.

The text for one of those reflections was 2 Timothy 4:1-5:

*In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.*

Paul's first admonition to Timothy is to "Preach the Word of God." We are called to proclaim it boldly and not just talk about it. While many try to give

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people what you think they want to hear, we are called to give them what they need most: the life-giving Word, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We depend not on our own strength or understanding but the Holy Spirit who speaks the word through us.

A quote attributed to Luther is: "I live (and preach) as though Christ was crucified yesterday, rose from the dead today, and is coming back tomorrow!"

Next Paul reminds us to be just as willing to proclaim the truth of the Gospel when people are willing to receive it and when they reject it. We proclaim the same message regardless of its popularity. We preach Law and Gospel, always prepared to take a stand on the Word of God.

It is not our job to convict or reprove, but to preach and teach with conviction so that the Word does it all. Instead of turning a blind eye to sin, we let God's Word bring a word of rebuke to sin. The Word makes sin clear and so the Law convicts us.

Then Paul charges Timothy and us to encourage them "with great patience and careful instruction." Once they have heard the Law they must also hear clearly the Gospel that brings them comfort, release, and true freedom. We must be patient with others even as Christ is patient with us. We love others as Christ loves us. We are called to nurture them in the faith through Word and Sacrament, with grace alone through Christ alone!

As we have experienced in our own day and time, people will turn away from the truth and sound doctrine. They will embrace their own fables rather than the truth. However, we must never let that affect our teaching and proclamation of the truth from the Word of God. We must be those who stay the course.

Remember, on the road to Emmaus following the Resurrection, Jesus caught up with two disciples and revealed the truth concerning the Scriptures and Himself. He stayed with them, broke bread with them, and they recognized Him. When Jesus disappeared from their sight they asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32). Immediately they



***NALC Bishop John Bradosky poses beside a tree he planted in Tanzania. He is holding a container of Communion wafers given to him by the women who make the hosts as a part of the women's project that had just been dedicated.***

got up and went to Jerusalem and proclaimed the good news of the resurrection. Jesus is alive! He met us; He spoke to us. He broke bread with us!

This is the ministry of the Church. It is the process of discipleship to take people who have itching ears and turn them into people with burning hearts, people who are passionate about the Gospel of Jesus Christ and willing to proclaim it boldly.

During our time together, Bishop Malasusa invited me to return in December as the keynote speaker for their General Assembly. I am honored to accept his invitation and look forward to representing the NALC again. I have already extended an invitation to Bishop Malasusa to attend our Convocation next year and pray for his acceptance and participation.

It is good to be with you following Christ Jesus.

# We Are the Church — Not a Political Action Committee

One of the greatest frustrations and disappointments in our prior church bodies and synods was the sense, at times, that we were minority members of a political action committee.

My last ELCA synod assembly was in El Paso, Texas, where two speakers spoke about the challenges and tensions along the United States-Mexico border. What was truly disappointing was the fact that both speakers represented the same position with regard to border issues. After being bombarded by these two speakers and their political position, my two congregational voting members told me, “Thanks for inviting us, Pastor, but don’t ask us again.”

The reality of those experiences has given many of us cause to be thankful that we are out of a Lutheran church body where we were an unwelcome minority.

Now, however, I am concerned that some see the NALC as the opposite of our predecessor church bodies — a conservative political action committee. And it is not only that folks outside of the NALC see us in this way, but that many of our congregational members and pastors understand the NALC in this way.

This is especially noticeable in the current build-up to the presidential election in the United States. As I visit our congregations and mission districts, as well as gatherings of clergy and congregations, it seems all too easy for folks to assume that we are all of one mind politically. Some pastors and members seem to think all pastors and members of the NALC will be supporting the same presidential candidate, as well.

In spite of what some might think, this is truly not what we wish the NALC to be. When the church becomes nothing more than a political action committee — whether for the right or the left — the church is co-opted and becomes other than what our Lord Jesus Christ intended and created it to be.



## *Ministry Matters*

**Pastor David Wendel**  
Assistant to the Bishop  
for Ministry and Ecumenism

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The Lord commissioned us to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28). We are not called to go and make Democrats or Republicans or Conservatives or Liberals or Progressives or Libertarians.

To be sure, our faith informs and drives our activity and involvement in nation, culture and society. Without a doubt, Lutherans have always understood themselves as called to be responsible citizens of the kingdom of this world.

Yes, we do agree and speak on behalf of Biblical teaching with regard to marriage and sexuality, as well as the value of all human life from conception to natural death. This does not, however, imply nor require our support for a particular political party or candidate.

Being the Church as the Body of Christ does imply and require that we are *catholic* — often defined as *universal*, but more properly meaning those who believe what has been believed “always, everywhere and by all,” as stated in the so-called Vincentian Rule.

The Church is that body of Christ which welcomes and involves and includes all people who believe and follow the historic, Biblical teachings as revealed in the Word of God incarnate — our Lord

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# Congregational Renewal Conference

## *'Authentic Discipleship for Congregational Renewal and Growth'*

"Authentic Discipleship for Congregational Renewal and Growth" is the theme of the NALC's Congregational Renewal Conference Nov. 7-9 at Upper Arlington Lutheran Church in Hilliard, Ohio.

Speakers and workshop leaders will focus on renewing congregations through raising a culture of discipleship.

NALC Bishop John Bradosky is the keynote speaker. He will address "Authentic Discipleship for Congregational Renewal and Growth."

Professor James Nestingen will address "Lutheran Confessions as the Fundamental Basis for Church Renewal."

Also featured at the conference will be Pastor Gemechis D. Buba, NALC Assistant to the Bishop for Missions, and Pastor Yonas Yigezu, Director of the Mission and Theology Department of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, and other evangelists from the EECMY. The evangelists from Ethiopia will share their renewal experiences.

The conference is balanced among learning, worship, and fellowship. In addition to practical workshops and inspirational speakers, the conference is bathed in daily prayer and worship.

Attendees will be given the opportunity to process their experience in small groups and to create plans for taking the conference experience home to their congregations.

Breakout sessions include:

+ Prayer for Church Renewal and Revival - Pastor Dave Keener.

+ Renewing Family and Youth Ministry: Beginning with the End in Mind - Pastor Scott Ness.

+ Stewardship Grows Disciples - Pastor David Wendel.

+ Moving from Management to Missional - Pastor Todd Kornahrens.

+ Growing Disciples, Not Programs - Pastor Ray Scheck and Valerie Hobbs.

Registration is \$100 for individuals or \$75 per person for teams of three or more. Space is limited to 175 people. You may register online at [www.thenalc.org](http://www.thenalc.org). Online registration is the preferred form of registration.

For more information, contact Rachel Sosebee in the NALC missions office at [rsosebee@thenalc.org](mailto:rsosebee@thenalc.org) or 614-777-5709.

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## Ministry Matters

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Jesus Christ — and the Word of God written, read and preached.

The Church is not defined by a particular political understanding or platform. We need to be reminded of this and to embrace this in the NALC, our congregations, and each of our gatherings. We agree in our confession of Jesus Christ as Lord as proclaimed in the witness of Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions. We may certainly disagree with regard to whom we support for president, which party we belong to, and how we are involved in the public square.

Let us in the NALC be the Body of Christ — the Church — not a particular party or political action committee, especially as things heat up in the current presidential election in the United States.

***Pastor David Wendel is Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry and Ecumenism. He can be reached at [dwendel@thenalc.org](mailto:dwendel@thenalc.org).***

# Ethiopian evangelists to visit NALC

This fall the North American Lutheran Church is blessed to host representatives from our sister church in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus is sending four evangelists to the United States to share their witness to the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the their church body and their experiences in critical areas of mission, evangelism, prayer, and church growth.

The delegation includes Pastor Yonas Yigezu, director of mission and theology department of the EECMY; Alamaw Gari, a successful businessman and lay leader who has planted 20-30 churches and serves as treasurer for the EECMY; Pastor Dereje Jemberu, a seasoned pastor and now EECMY Vice President; and Pastor Dawit Yohannes, senior pastor of Tabor Mekane Yesus Church, a congregation which has planted 75 new mission churches.

The delegation arrives will spend a month in North America. During their stay they will be traveling across the country and speaking at conferences, prayer services, and in local congregations. Each representative will share from his experience and expertise.

Pastor Yigezu will speak on the history and present ministry of the Mekane Yesus church. Mr. Gari will talk about the power of lay leadership and his experience going out on weekends and planting churches. Pastor Jemberu will speak on prayer. Pastor Yohannes will share his experience of the dynamic power of congregations planting other congregations and share the experience of Tabor Mekane Yesus Church in planting over 75 churches.

Speaking stops include Mansfield, Ohio; Minneapolis, Minn.; Columbus, Ohio; Huntington Beach, Calif.; Stroudsburg, Pa.; and several congregations in Texas. In between delegates will visit area congregations.

For more information or to schedule a stop at your congregation, contact Rachel Sosebee at the NALC

Missions Office at 614-777-5709 or by e-mail at [rsosebee@thenalc.org](mailto:rsosebee@thenalc.org).

Here is a preliminary schedule for their visit:

## **October 26-28**

Ohio Mission District Discipleship Conference  
First English Lutheran Church, Mansfield, Ohio

## **October 29-31**

Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Indiana and Kentucky

## **November 1-6**

Minnesota

## **November 7-9**

NALC Renewal Conference, Hilliard, Ohio

## **November 9-11**

Western states

## **November 16-18**

Eastern Pennsylvania Discipleship Conference,  
Stroudsburg, Pa.

## **November 18-21**

East Coast and Texas

## **November 22**

Thanksgiving worship service  
First English Lutheran Church, Mansfield, Ohio

## **Videos of Convocations and Theological Conference are online**

Streaming videos of all sessions of the Convocation of the North American Lutheran Church, the Theological Conference, and the Lutheran CORE Convocation are available at [www.thenalc.org](http://www.thenalc.org).

The NALC Convocation was attended by more than 700 delegates and visitors. The Theological Conference attracted more than 600 people.

# NALC, Anglican representatives hold second ecumenical meeting

A second meeting of representatives of the Anglican Church in North America and the North American Lutheran Church was held Sept. 21 in Columbus, Ohio, the location of the headquarters of the NALC.

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.

A presentation was made by the Rev. Dr. William Rusch, Lutheran ecumenist, who offered an important summary of the history and process of Lutheran-Episcopal dialogues. Dr. Rusch was a regular participant in this work at both the international and national levels.

NALC Bishop John Bradosky affirmed: "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."

Bishop Ray Sutton, chairman of the Ecumenical Relations Task Force for ACNA stated, "It is our commitment to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and salvation by grace through faith alone that forms the basis of strengthening the capacity of both church bodies for mission and ministry; building up pastoral leadership and congregational outreach."

The joint group began with study of both traditions' foundational documents: the Lutheran Augsburg Confession and the Anglican 39 Articles. Other



*Representatives of the North American Lutheran Church and Anglican Church in North America who gathered for Sept. 21 dialog, from left: Pastor Mark Chavez, Pastor Eric Riesen, Bishop Ray Sutton, Bishop John Bradosky, Bishop Paull Spring, Bishop Win Mott, Father Art Going, Canon Daryl Fenton, and Pastor David Wendel.*

topics discussed included possible cooperation in local mission and service, shared involvement in church planting, cooperation in theological education and future work together.

On the basis of the two consultations, it was acknowledged that there is agreement in the authority of the Word of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that we are justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as the only Savior of the world. The participants also acknowledged the already present consensus that has developed between the ACNA and the NALC.

Agreement was reached with regard to future consultations. The next meeting will take place in Pittsburgh, Pa., in the spring of 2013.

In addition to the leaders of both groups, participants included Bishop Ray Sutton and Pastor David Wendel, ecumenical officers of their respective bodies; along with Bishop Win Mott, Bishop Emeritus Paul Spring, Pastor Mark Chavez, Canon Daryl Fenton, Pastor Eric Riesen and Father Art Going.

# ‘Pastor on Bike’ to raise awareness and support for outreach at home and overseas

At the end of October, Pastor Stéphane Kalonji will undertake a 500-mile bicycle ride in North Carolina, to raise awareness about and funds for his mission work at Reformation Lutheran Church, a NALC congregation in New Bern, N.C., and ministry in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly called Zaire).

Reformation Lutheran Church, a mission congregation with 50 members, celebrated its first anniversary in May.

The congregation called Pastor Stéphane Kalonji, a native of Congo, who was living in Chicago, and who had served Zion Lutheran Church on the south side of Chicago for seven years. Pastor Kalonji, his wife Michele and children moved to New Bern in June.

As the only NALC congregation in eastern North Carolina, Reformation is seeking to establish a solid presence in the area with both a faithful and bold proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and a facility for its ministry. The congregation currently worships in the chapel of Cotten Funeral Home in New Bern.

For the past five years, Pastor Kalonji has raised funds through “Pastor on Bike” to travel to his native Congo, and support Lutheran social ministry there — mainly the feeding of children suffering from HIV/AIDS and severe malaria.

During his mission trip, he also provides theological education at the Lutheran seminary and training on evangelism to lay leaders, adults and youth. This support has helped to boost the presence of the young Lutheran Church in Congo, especially in the capital city of Kinshasa, where the Lutheran Church has just begun to be established and where it is experiencing a rapid growth.



*Pastor Stéphane Kalonji*

Checks to support Reformation Lutheran Church’s building fund and mission to Congo may be sent to Reformation Lutheran Church, 507 Craven Street, New Bern, NC 28560.

To learn more, please contact Pastor Kalonji at 252-633-3711 or e-mail him at [kalonjist@aol.com](mailto:kalonjist@aol.com).

## Lutheran Benefits health plan renewal updates period

The annual renewal update period for the Lutheran Benefits health plan is coming soon.

The Lutheran Benefits health and retirement plans serve NALC pastors and the employees of NALC and Lutheran CORE congregations.

Look for the renewal updates e-mail from Hahn Financial Group at the end of October with information and instructions for making changes and updates to your current health enrollment. Please pay special attention to the deadline dates that will be included in the e-mail.

If you have questions about the Lutheran Benefits health or retirement plans, contact Hahn Financial at 800-516-4246 or [LutheranBenefits@HahnFinancialGroup.com](mailto:LutheranBenefits@HahnFinancialGroup.com).

# Preserve Traditional Marriage

**By Pastor Victor C. Langford III**

Traditional marriage — the legal union of a man and a woman as husband and wife — is under attack across America.

On Nov. 6, marriage will be on the ballot in four states — Maine, Maryland, Minnesota and Washington.

In Washington state, the proposed gay marriage law is clearly contrary to the Biblical teaching on marriage as found in Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, and Ephesians 5:31.

Furthermore, the proposed law, known as Referendum 74, would put in place a gender-neutral society. There is no doubt that such a law would not be good for our state — or for any state or country.

Referendum 74 — and similar laws in other states — should be rejected not only because they are contrary to God's will and plan for humanity, but also because of their negative impact on society.

This law could teach children that women can be fathers and husbands and that men can be mothers and wives. No child should be subjected to such confusion and deception. Children are best served by a married dad and mom, not just any two parents.

A gender-neutral society, as set forth in this proposed law, would mean that a man would not be identified as a man, but only as a person; and a woman would not be identified as a woman, but only as a person. Such a gender-neutral society will have a huge impact on society. If Referendum 74 becomes law, the state could mandate that all public restrooms must be gender-neutral. Thus, there could be no "men" or "women" restrooms. In a gender-neutral society, there could be a wide range of negative conditions forced upon society.

Same-sex marriage should not be enacted into law. The Biblical teachings are reason enough. Citizens

## ***Marriage on the 2012 Ballot***

### ***Maine***

*Referendum to overturn 2009 voter initiative that overturned a law authorizing same-sex marriage. Voters will be asked, "Do you want to allow the State of Maine to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples?"*

### ***Maryland***

*Referendum to overturn law authorizing same-sex marriage.*

### ***Minnesota***

*Constitutional Amendment which states, "Only a union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in Minnesota."*

### ***Washington***

*Referendum to overturn law authorizing same-sex marriage.*

should vote to reject gay marriage and preserve traditional marriage because of the negative impact on society.

The objective of gay marriage is to change the definition of marriage from the legal union of a man and a woman as husband and wife to a definition of the union of any two persons. Such a change is not marriage equality, but it is discrimination against traditional marriage. No new discrimination laws based on prejudice should be enacted into law.

Let us pray and work to preserve traditional marriage.

***Pastor Victor C. Langford III is pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Seattle, Wash. He also serves on the NALC Executive Council.***

# St. Andrew by the Sea Lutheran Church

## Atlantic City, New Jersey

*By Pastor Dennis Nelson*

St. Andrew by the Sea Lutheran Church is proud of 123 years of continuous preaching and ministry in Atlantic City, N.J.

At one time it was a premier congregation in the area, but beginning in the 1950s it went into decline along with the city of Atlantic City.

With the advent of casino gambling in the late 1970s, a time of economic revitalization dawned. In 1997, after ministering at the same prime location for 109 years, the congregation decided to sell its property to a casino and re-establish itself, despite the threat of potential decline.

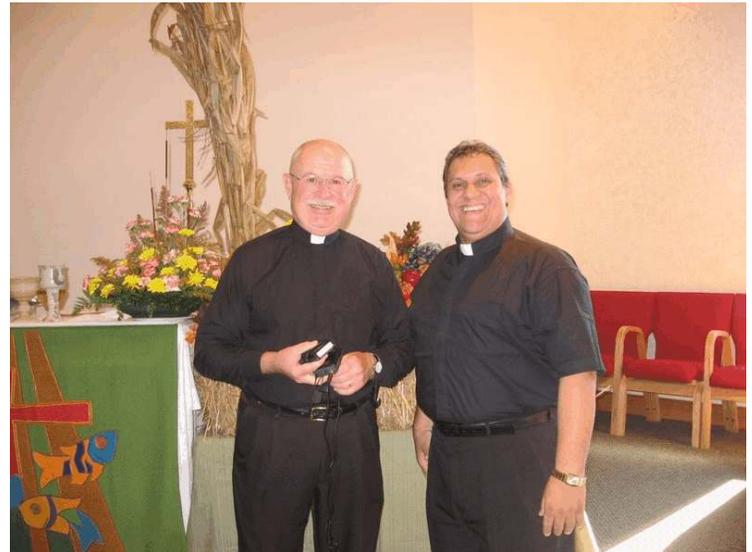
Inspired by the congregation's faithfulness and vision, Pastor David McGettigan accepted a call to serve as their pastor in 2004. Both he and the congregation knew that St. Andrew would need to grow as a multi-ethnic congregation. He told the people, "I may be the last pastor of St. Andrew who looks like me!"

Atlantic City, while predominantly African-American also enjoys an influx of people of other cultural backgrounds, including Hispanic, because of the opportunities to work in the hospitality industry. Noticing that there was already much vibrant African American ministry in the city, St. Andrew identified Hispanic immigrants as the largest new cultural group who may both need and desire a church from which to receive and proclaim the Gospel. So they began to pray, "Lord, show us the way."

The church was already very welcoming to Hispanic people who would visit, but it did not have a plan for ministry to them and with them. Pastor McGettigan relates that, presuming this was God's will for St. Andrew's rebirth, "We were still clueless how to faithfully move forward, so we prayed."

"The answer to our prayers came in November 2006 when I tripped over Pastor Joel (DeSouza)," Pastor McGettigan said.

St. Andrew belonged to the Atlantic City Area Fellowship of Churches. Feeling guilty about missing



*Pastor David McGettigan and Pastor Joel DeSouza*

several of their monthly meetings, and despite a very busy schedule, Pastor David felt a nudging that he ought to go to the November meeting. He did not know why. He sat towards the back of the room so that he would be able to sneak out the door after a "cameo" appearance.

The leader introduced Pastor Joel DeSouza, who had recently returned to Atlantic City from Spain because he felt called by God to do ministry there. Hearing Pastor Joel speak, Pastor David found him articulating a vision for ministry practically identical to his own.

Rushing out but bowing to God's rather strange sense of humor and amazing unfolding purpose "even amid my personal agenda," Pastor David scribbled down his cell phone number and suggested that Pastor Joel call him some day. Pastor Joel called that same afternoon, and God's plan indeed began to take on shape and clarity! It was fun interviewing the two of them and hearing their separate stories of what it was like for each of them when they met.

Even though they owned vacant land on which to build a new church facility — to that point quite unsuccessfully — St. Andrew had been led to purchase an additional property with a partially-completed church building.

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## ***Continued from Page 14***

A year before, when Pastor Joel was in Atlantic City, he noticed that this very property was apparently abandoned with an unfinished building. Knowing none of its history, he began moving around the property, placing his hands on the construction fence, and asking God to bless the building and the congregation, which was then struggling.

After returning to Atlantic City about a year later, Pastor Joel saw that construction had resumed. He did not know that St. Andrew had recently purchased the property or anything about St. Andrew. But he thanked God for the resumption of the work, and he prayed that he might someday have the opportunity to preach there.

When he met Pastor David at the Fellowship of Churches meeting, he had no idea that he was speaking to the pastor of the congregation that was now completing the construction of a new facility on the property that he had been blessing and in whose pulpit he had felt led to proclaim the Gospel.

Pastor Joel began developing a Hispanic ministry at St. Andrew soon after this meeting in November 2006. In May 2007, the Anglo and Hispanic ministries moved together into the new facility. In August 2007, Joel was installed as associate pastor. Pastor Joel is pursuing becoming fluent in English, which will allow him to take the requisite Lutheran theological studies that will lead to certification and a call to St. Andrew.

St. Andrew by the Sea joined the North American Lutheran Church in May 2011 and is now in the process of joining the Augustana District of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.

“We are the only congregation of 190 in the New Jersey Synod that has left the ELCA. In our area NALC and LCMC churches are few and far between, so dual membership (NALC and LCMC) is important to us. Otherwise we would be quite alone,” Pastor McGettigan said. “In our area NALC and LCMC congregations simply need each other.”

At St. Andrew, the Hispanic ministry is not a tenant that pays rent, but a full outreach ministry of the congregation, contributing to its rebirth, growth, and bright future for the Gospel.

The Hispanic ministry goes by the name of *Rios de Agua Viva* (Rivers of Living Water).

Additionally, Resurrection Ministries, a non-denominational predominantly African-American ministry, does rent space and is completely centered at St. Andrew.

“All three pastors feel that God is leading us one day to celebrate as one community on this corner. So we have begun to find ways to do outreach together, care for one another, and periodically have worship together. It will take time, but we are content to wait upon God’s time,” Pastor David said.

Ministering in a tourist area from Memorial Day weekend through Columbus Day weekend, St. Andrew celebrates a less formal and very popular service of Holy Communion on Sunday mornings at 7:30 a.m. on the beach of a nearby island. A weekly traditional Anglo Holy Communion service at 10 a.m. is followed by Resurrection Ministries’ Gospel service at 11:30 a.m. On Sunday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Rios de Agua Viva holds a spirit-filled, Pentecostal-style service in Spanish. Both Resurrection Ministries and *Rios de Agua Viva* hold additional services on Wednesday afternoons and evenings. The size of the facility makes it possible to accommodate all these gatherings and more.

The goal for 2013 is to take additional steps to bring these three communities more closely together while still allowing for distinctive worship styles.

Two things impressed me most during my conversation with Pastors David and Joel.

First, God brought the two pastors together in an amazing way in response to their individual prayers.

Second, St. Andrew’s pastors, leadership, and membership have an amazing attitude about their building. According to Pastor David, St. Andrew by the Sea has always had a heart for outreach. Having been blessed with this new very large facility, while still being a rather small congregation, he senses that God is telling the congregation, “I am giving you this space to steward it for me. It is my house. It is more than you need because it is not just for you. It is for all my people.”

Pastors David McGettigan and Joel DeSouza can be contacted at [standrewbythesea@verizon.net](mailto:standrewbythesea@verizon.net) or 609-344-1333.

***This article is reprinted from CORE Connection, the newsletter of Lutheran CORE.***

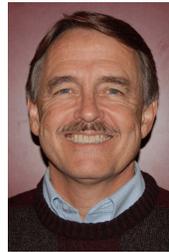
# Five ministries making a difference in effective congregational outreach

*Thrivent* magazine recently included an article about characteristics of effective congregations. It was based on a survey project from the Hartford Institute for Religion Research. The article mentioned these five characteristics and the percentage of surveyed congregations that claimed these were ministry priorities:

**1. Using four or five technologies (Twitter, Facebook, blogs, e-mail and more) to serve existing members and connect with new ones** (57 percent of churches surveyed). Perhaps, like me, you have experienced that condescending look from more tech-savvy young adults, especially when you've exposed yourself as technologically illiterate. This is, in part, a generational issue. And, like it or not, social media ministries are a crucial way to connect with younger generations. Over two-thirds now have a website, and over 40 percent use Facebook. Think of it: Facebook only came into general use four years before this 2010 survey — 2006! Too old or out of touch to know where to begin? Then get help! Sit down with someone younger than you and confess your ignorance. I bet there's someone out there who will be happy to help. A couple of the younger adults in my congregation have dragged me ("kicking and screaming") into the digital age. As a result our congregation has just recently established a Facebook site.

**2. Offering parenting events which they consider a specialty of the congregation was a ministry priority** for 64 percent of the churches surveyed. As I've stated in previous columns, unchurched adults are never more motivated to consider church involvement than when they are raising their children. Can your congregation make a name for itself in your community as a church that has made the needs of nesting-stage families a top ministry priority? This includes supporting parents and ministering to their children and youth.

**3. Holding special events once a month or more to attract people from outside the congregation**



## *In Pursuit of the Great Commission*

**Pastor Don Brandt**

(44 percent of churches surveyed). This is so basic, yet so important. Our default ministry strategy tends to be organizing events based primarily on what our members will enthusiastically support. What about non-members — especially nesting-stage non-members? The type of events offered will vary based on the needs and interests of your local community. But get to work! Make it happen. Publicize it, and tell your members to invite their friends.

**4. Always having children or youth read, speak or perform during worship** (45 percent). At our congregation we are now doing this monthly for children and monthly for our youth. That means, for us, that our "First Sunday Family Worship Celebration" will have children (preschool through 5th grade) as readers, singers, ushers, greeters and communion assistants. On the third Sunday of each month, our middle and high school youth fill similar roles and provide an occasional worship drama skit that ties into the sermon message for that day.

**5. Emphasizing prayer groups which they consider a "specialty" of the congregation** (47 percent). Gather those members who have a particular passion for prayer. Brainstorm ways to encourage and make more public the role of prayer in congregational life. Create a social media prayer network. (Be sure to honor confidentiality concerns.) What about an adult class series on prayer where participants will, at the end of the

*Continued on Page 17*

# Theological conference to feature Braaten and Jensen ‘uncorked’

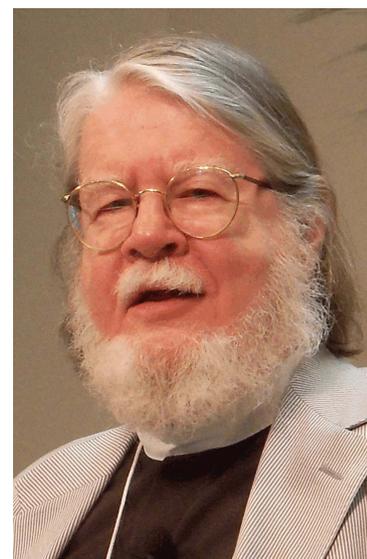
Renowned Lutheran theologians Dr. Carl E. Braaten and Dr. Robert W. Jensen are the featured speakers for the Canadian Rockies Theological Conference April 8-13 in Canmore, Alberta. Canmore is nestled in the beautiful Canadian Rockies near Banff National Park, about 50 miles west of Calgary.

“Noted theologians Carl Braaten and Robert Jensen will share with us their thoughts, concerns and hopes regarding the Church of Christ around the world especially in relation to what it means to be a Lutheran nowadays,” organizers explain.

Dr. Braaten and Dr. Jensen are among the most influential and respected Lutheran theologians of the past 50 years.



*Carl E. Braaten*



*Robert W. Jensen*

The conference will also feature Pastor Greg Musselman, vice president of outreach for Voice of the Martyrs, who will address “the state of affairs in various countries and his heart for the persecuted Church around the world.”

More information on the conference is available on the NALC website — [www.thenalc.org](http://www.thenalc.org) — or by contacting Pastor Phil Gagnon at 780-458-6012 or [pastorphil@me.com](mailto:pastorphil@me.com).

## In Pursuit of Great Commission

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series, help you implement a congregational prayer strategy? Can you encourage current small group leaders to give prayer a more prominent role in their group time? Do you provide an opportunity for individual prayer, during worship, immediately after your members are served communion?

It all sounds so exhausting! So don't do it all. Focus on the one ministry priority which builds on the strengths of your current membership. Then gather a

group of people around you, pray, discuss and plan. Who knows what God might have in store for your congregation?

Read the Hartford Institute study — “Virtually Religious,” by Scott Thumma — and find other resources online at [FaithCommunitiesToday.org](http://FaithCommunitiesToday.org). Check it out.

***Pastor Don Brandt serves as pastor of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Salem, Ore. You may reach him at [DonB@oursaviorssalem.org](mailto:DonB@oursaviorssalem.org).***

### German-speaking pastor sought

Are you a confessional Lutheran pastor who can preach and lead worship in both English and German?

Are you open to being considered for call to a bilingual German-English NALC congregation?

If so, please contact Pastor David Wendel, Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry and Ecumenism [dwendel@thenalc.org](mailto:dwendel@thenalc.org) or 614-777-5709.

# We worship one God in three Persons

We Christians worship one God in three Persons. In the Athanasian Creed we confess, "This is the catholic faith: We worship one God in trinity and the Trinity in unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the divine being." The text of our liturgy of Holy Communion is full of references to the Holy Trinity.

Eucharistic Prayer I in *Lutheran Book of Worship* is addressed to "Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father." The doxology at the end of the prayer reads, "Through Him, with Him, in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen." Jesus Christ is the "Him" in this doxological conclusion to the prayer. We pray to the Father through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit. In his *Commentary on the Lutheran Book of Worship*, Philip Pfatteicher writes, "In Western Trinitarian theology, the Holy Spirit is the bond between the Father and the Son, the guarantee of unity within the godhead."

Eucharistic Prayer III, a slight revision of the one provided by the *Service Book and Hymnal*, begins "You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God." The Proper Prefaces indicate that we are praying to the Lord and holy Father. A Trinitarian doxology concludes the prayer. "All honor and glory are yours, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, now and forever."

All the Eucharistic Prayers are Trinitarian in their structure. The entire Eucharistic liturgy is worship of the Holy Trinity. We Christians worship one God in three Persons, a doctrine derived from the Biblical narrative, defined by the first four Ecumenical Councils and elaborated by theologians, such as Saint Augustine of Hippo, Saint Hilary of Poitiers, and Saint Gregory of Nyssa.

The orthodox teaching is a faithful expression of the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. With ancient Israel, we confess the unity of God. In Deuteronomy we find the *Shema*, a Hebrew word that means *hear*. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4). In faithfulness to the witness of the New Testament, we confess that God is One in Three and Three in One. The Triune God is active in the world, creating and redeeming it. In every act of God, all three persons of the Trinity are involved. At the end of Matthew, the risen Jesus says to His



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## Words on Worship

**Pastor Michael G. Tavella**

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disciples, "Go therefore 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, behold, I am with you always to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-2). In obedience to Christ's command, the Church has baptized in the Trinitarian Name. No other terms, titles, or words should replace the names in the formula, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father is not only active in creation but also in redemption and sanctification. Each of the three persons is active in creation, redemption, and sanctification. Therefore, the use of Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier as the Trinitarian formula is an error. Some recent practice in the naming of the Trinity has not conformed to the Holy Scriptures.

The Prayer of Thanksgiving in the Service of Holy Baptism in *Lutheran Book of Worship* possesses a Trinitarian structure like the Eucharistic Prayer. In this prayer, images from the Bible are narrated as we thank God for the gift of Baptism. The first words of this prayer parallel the first words of Eucharistic Prayer I: "Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father..." The doxology reads, "To you be given praise and honor and worship through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen."

The Apostles' Creed, which originates in the ancient Church, is the baptismal creed assented to by the one to be baptized or by sponsors if the baptismal candidate is too young to respond. The congregation joins in the recital of each of the three articles.

The Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness begins with the Trinitarian invocation, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

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The rubric reads, "The minister leads the congregation in the invocation. The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism." As Luther states, confession is a remembrance of Baptism. In Baptism, our sins are forgiven. In confession, we return to our Baptism for the forgiveness of post-baptismal sins. The flesh and the Spirit are in constant battle. We must, therefore, again and again repent and ask the Lord for forgiveness.

From the beginning to the end of the service of Holy Communion, praise of the Trinity is the theme. After the confession and entrance hymn, the presiding minister greets the people with a Trinitarian text from 2 Corinthians. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you." The people return this greeting with "And also with you."

The Holy Communion ends with an explicitly Trinitarian blessing that uses the Triune formula, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or with the Aaronic blessing from the book of Numbers which is to be understood as a Trinitarian blessing. The Aaronic blessing is "The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace." Lord is repeated three times. The Athanasian Creed reads, "And yet there are not three gods, but one God. Thus the Father is Lord; the Son is Lord; the Holy Spirit is Lord."

If you page through the liturgy, you will find the Trinitarian structure in the Hymn of Praise, the Prayers of the Day, The Prayers, the post-communion Prayers, and other parts of the liturgy. The *Nunc Dimittis*, the Song of Simeon, concludes with the *Gloria Patri*, "Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen." We worship one God in three persons.

The Apostles' Creed is used at both Baptism and in the Eucharist. The Nicene Creed is used in Holy Communion. Also included in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* is the Athanasian Creed which is recommended for use on Holy Trinity Sunday. This creed of unknown authorship is probably of Western origin. Because of its length, its extensive expression of Trinitarian theology and Christology, and the threat of hell fire on those not believing the catholic faith, it may be intimidating to many worshipers. But, with

explanation from the pulpit and with its use at least on Holy Trinity Sunday, it can be a means for greater understanding of the orthodox faith of the Church.

The Nicene Creed, or Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, originated at the Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.), and is believed to have been revised at the Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.). Forged in the heat of controversy, it is a faithful confession of the biblical faith. Admittedly, it uses terms not derived from the Bible. For example, the Greek term, *homoousios*, translated into English as "of one Being" in the LBW version of the Nicene Creed, is not found in the Bible. For that matter, neither is the title, *Trinity*. However, the extra-Biblical terms have been used to defend Biblical teaching.

You will notice that the middle section of the Nicene Creed is the longest of the three articles. This fact shows that of central concern in the formulation and formation of the creed was Christ's relationship to the Father. The third article on the Holy Spirit was of later concern and was expanded at the Council of Constantinople as a result of controversy regarding the divinity of the Spirit.

The Nicene Creed is a defense of the doctrine of the eternally begotten Son. *Eternally* is an important adverb used in the creed, for it makes clear that the Son was not created in time but has been from all eternity. This symbol further states that the Son is "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God." The Son is "begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father."

All three Creeds have been placed at the beginning of the *Book of Concord*. They are the first of the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The first article of the Augsburg Confession is entitled "God." In it the Holy Trinity is confessed. We Lutherans stand firmly in the Great Tradition of the catholic Church.

Next time we will take a closer look at the Nicene Creed. Other topics in the series will be the Athanasian Creed, the Apostles' Creed, writing a sermon, the Daily Office, and a concluding reflection.

***Pastor Michael G. Tavella serves Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Abington, Pa. He writes this monthly column on worship. You may contact him with comments or suggestions at [MGTavella@msn.com](mailto:MGTavella@msn.com).***

# Gathering of NALC Deans

*The Deans of the regional Mission Districts of the North American Lutheran Church met with Bishop John Bradosky and other leaders of the NALC Oct. 1-2 in Columbus, Ohio.*

*The gathering was an opportunity to report on what is happening in the regional Mission Districts of the NALC and to discuss and plan the mission and work of the NALC.*



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