

NALC News

North American Lutheran Church

September 2018

NALC Disaster Response working in Carolinas after Hurricane Florence

NALC Disaster Response has begun efforts to respond to Hurricane Florence, which hit North Carolina and South Carolina on Sept. 13 and continues to cause flooding throughout the area.

NALC Disaster Response has shipped two truckloads of flood buckets, health kits, bottled water, Bibles and other emergency supplies to North Carolina.

Client distribution and donation centers have been established at Reformation Lutheran Church in New Bern, N.C. and St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Wilmington, N.C.

Staging areas have been established at St. John's Lutheran Church in Statesville, N.C., Advent Lutheran Church in Kings Mountain, N.C., and Joy Lutheran Church in Little Mountain, S.C.

"Your help is needed. It is bad. I am in New Bern, N.C., at Reformation Lutheran Church, and it's been seven days since Hurricane Florence made landfall. Homes are flooded, water is standing everywhere — in homes, on the streets, in churches. Rivers are rising — not receding — causing so much more flooding. I have never seen this much water seven days after a hurricane," said Mary Bates, NALC Disaster Response Coordinator. "The Carolinas Mission District needs you!"



Members from St. John's Lutheran Church in Statesville, N.C., and Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Troutman, N.C., delivered disaster relief supplies to Reformation Lutheran Church in New Bern, N.C., where Hurricane Florence hit very hard with a lot of flooding and damage.

"Prayers are needed for our survivors, our pastors and our volunteers," she said. "Every road is closed due to water, every family needs prayer and the love of Jesus — will you help?"

Volunteers are needed to help unload trucks, remove debris and provide Christian spiritual care. More flood buckets and kits of all types are needed. Congregations are encouraged to make these kits. Information on how to prepare flood buckets, health

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kits, school kits and baby care kits is available at www.thenalc.org/nalc-disaster-response.

Flood buckets, disaster response kits and Bibles are being collected at several sites. Sites are listed on the NALC website and include the NALC Disaster Warehouse in Caldwell, Ohio, special locations through a Women of the NALC effort, and upcoming Mission District Convocations.

Disaster Response leaders have held regular teleconferences with those in the Carolinas Mission District to discuss needs and ways to respond. Mary Bates, the NALC's Disaster Response Coordinator, is posting regular updates on the NALC website.

To volunteer or for more information, contact Mary at disasterresponse@thenalc.org or 740-509-1132.

NALC Disaster Response has been helping in Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico for over a year now. Hundreds of our volunteers have restored homes and hope. There continue to be many homes that need rebuilding, especially in Texas. Situations like this are expected to be common throughout the Carolinas in the wake of Hurricane Florence.

Florence is being called a record-breaker, with widespread destruction anticipated. Much like Hurricane Harvey that struck the Houston area last year, Florence lingered in the area for days, bringing record rainfall and producing historic floods



NALC Disaster Response has flood buckets ready for families as they return to their homes following Hurricane Florence.



Rod Paulson and son Brandon, volunteers from Advent Lutheran Church in Kings Mountain, N.C., remove trees from a Wilmington, N.C., home. Trees fell into the house, and they are tarping the home until FEMA assistance is determined.

that are likely to destroy and damage homes for hundreds of square miles.

NALC Disaster Response is also responding to flooding in Michigan and Pennsylvania, and wildfires in California and Colorado. NALC Disaster Response is coordinating long-term recovery in Texas for Hurricane Harvey, Florida for Hurricane Irma and Puerto Rico for Hurricane Maria. Recovery in Puerto Rico is expected to take three to five years.

The Women of the NALC hosted an ingathering of gift cards during Lutheran Week 2018. They collected more than \$11,500 in gift cards for NALC Disaster Response. Volunteer teams from all over the United States will use these gift cards to purchase building materials for families who have lost everything.

Gifts to support NALC Disaster Response may be given online at www.thenalc.org or sent to NALC Disaster Response; 2299 Palmer Drive, Suite 220; New Brighton, MN 55112-2202.

Congregations may nominate candidates for NALC Bishop

Congregations of the North American Lutheran Church have the opportunity to nominate pastors for the office of Bishop of the NALC.

According to the NALC Constitution, congregations are the primary source of nominees for Bishop. Congregations are encouraged to begin the process of discernment of who they might nominate for Bishop. Any NALC pastor may be nominated.

Congregations decide how they will nominate candidates, but some formal action by the congregation or its council should be taken. A congregational meeting, such as an annual meeting, would be a good place to formalize any nominations coming from a congregation as it would involve as many members as possible.

To prepare for the nomination and election process for Bishop, the Executive Council provided a packet of information to congregations. The packet includes a booklet of prayers encouraging NALC members to engage in a year of prayer and discernment leading up to the election at the 2019 NALC Convocation Aug. 7-9 in Indianapolis, Ind.

Prayer in a Time of Discernment: A Resource for the Election of the Bishop of the North American Lutheran Church is available for download at www.thenalc.org. Other information about the election process is also available online.

Bishop John Bradosky has announced that he will not accept nomination to a third term as Bishop when his term expires in 2019.

NALC Senior Ministry Conference

The second annual NALC Senior Ministry Conference will be held Oct. 30-31 at Reformation Lutheran Church in Culpeper, Va. It will begin at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 30, and conclude at noon on Wednesday.

Topics to be covered include renewing a congregation through older adults, developing a discipleship-centered senior adult ministry, compelling mature adults to follow the call to service and incorporating an inter-generational ministry into the life of the local church. Workshops and breakout sessions will also be offered.

Featured presenter will be Dr. Charles Arn, visiting professor of church ministry and outreach at Wesley Seminary in Marion, Ind. He is a pioneer of senior adult ministry in the United States, having written several books in this field including, *Catching the Age Wave* and *White Unto Harvest*.



Charles Arn

Dr. Arn is a popular speaker known for his creative communication. He is considered one of the leading authorities and spokespersons in the field of congregational health and growth. He is past president of the American Society of Church Growth, an association of professors, executives, pastors and consultants dedicated to the study of evangelism and congregational outreach.

Dr. Arn has more than 30 years of experience and leadership in the field of congregational life, health and growth. He has authored 15 books, edited five others and is a regular contributor to several well known pastoral websites. He is a popular speaker nationally and overseas.

Registration fee for the conference is \$25 and includes conference materials and lunch. For more information visit www.thenalc.org or contact Pastor Brad Hales, NALC Director of Domestic Mission, at bhales@thenalc.org.

Passing the baton of discipleship

Dear Disciples of Jesus,

During my oral report at our Convocation, I compared our journey as followers of Christ Jesus to a relay race in which the runners are required to both receive the baton from one teammate and pass it on to the next runner.

St. Paul uses the image of an athlete to describe the discipline of faithfully following Jesus several times in his letters. He describes the relay of faith being passed on from one generation to the next as he encourages Timothy. Paul reminds Timothy that the faith he received started with his grandmother, Lois. She passed this faith on to his mother, Eunice. Eunice passed it on to her son. Now it was Timothy's turn to run the next leg of this race.

What was true for Timothy is also true for us. The task of Christian parenting is to pass on this faith — to invest the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the lives of our children. They need to see this faith in our lives even as Paul demonstrated it for Timothy. It must be apparent in our teaching, way of life, sense of purpose, faith, patience, love and endurance, even in the midst of facing suffering, pain and grief.

Beyond our immediate family, we are also called to invest our lives in the lives of many others Christ has given us to love and care for as we encourage them to join us in following Jesus as his faithful disciples.

We understand investing when it comes to our finances. We either spend it or we invest it. Investing it wisely will ensure that it multiplies. As disciples of Christ Jesus, we do the same thing with our lives. A life that is spent selfishly is gone, but a life of investing in others will bear fruit that will multiply.

While Paul acknowledges the faith passed on to Timothy through his family, Paul invests his life in Timothy and encourages him to begin to run the next leg of this race, to invest his life in the next generation of disciples, to pass on what he has learned from both Paul's words and Paul's way of living. Paul writes:



From the Bishop

Bishop John Bradosky

The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. (2 Timothy 2:2-5)

You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings — what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. (2 Timothy 3:10-11)

The baton is a symbol of what we are doing in the pursuit of Jesus' mission to make disciples. Passing on the baton of discipleship is our commitment to every relationship in our life. In any relay race we must depend on others. We trust in the gifts of others. We watch those who ran the race before us and are assured that others will follow us. This is life in the Body of Christ.

A good relay team develops a strategy to make it effective in competing and winning the race. When we are running we remember that others are watching us. They may be rooting us on or criticizing our form, but they are watching and learning. They care less about our perfection and more about our faith, authenticity, commitment and perseverance. Do you really love? Really worship? Really believe and trust in Jesus Christ?

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Many teens and parents with young children admit they have no role models in their lives, according to recent reports from George Barna. The pursuit of discipleship helps us to take seriously our responsibility to become role models for teens, young families and all those searching for guidance and direction for living.

We are called to show them how the race is run. We can give them a head start on their spiritual journey simply by taking an interest in them, by sharing some of our time and energy with them, by living a vibrant faith in front of them, by opening the Word of God and discussing it with them, and by connecting them with a community of faith — the Body of Christ, the Church — where they can be nurtured and grow in their relationships with Jesus Christ. They need more than information and advice. They need to see us living the faith, running the race alongside of them.

People will experience the power of the Gospel as they see faith both articulated and demonstrated in word and deed. We offer Christlike love that is not trying to take something from them but puts their best interest ahead of our own lives, love that is an investment in their lives. We offer this love simply because we want them to know Jesus and his sacrificial and life-giving love for them. He is the way, the truth and the life. There is no life apart from him. We are called to run this race, setting the pace for those who follow.

Running the race and passing on this baton of discipleship is not easy. The American women's 4x100-meter relay race during the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, is a classic example. The American team, favored to win the event, featured Marion Jones, a sprinter who had won four gold medals at the previous games in Sydney, Australia. The American team was already off to a strong start when Jones took the baton for the second leg of the race. She gained ground as she ran her 100 and approached Lauryn Williams, a young speedster who would run the third leg.

Williams began running as Jones drew near, but when she reached back to receive the baton, they couldn't seem to complete the handoff. Once,

twice, three times Jones thrust the baton forward, but each time it missed William's hand, or she couldn't seem to wrap her fingers around it. Finally, on the fourth try, they made the connection, but by that time they had crossed out of the 20-meter exchange zone and were disqualified. Everyone knew they were the fastest team on the track. The night before, they'd had the fastest qualifying time. But when they couldn't complete the handoff, their race was over.

As important as it is for the previous generation to set the pace by living authentically as disciples of Jesus Christ, at a certain point a handoff must be made in which the next generation of disciples receives the baton of discipleship and begins to run with it. That handoff isn't as easy as it looks. It isn't automatic. It's the result of thousands and thousands of practice runs.

Truth is, there will likely be several exchanges made before the baton is fully passed. But whenever it happens, it will be the result of hours and hours of practice, years and years of teaching the faith, living the faith and engaging in healthy accountable and responsible relationships within the Body of Christ.

There will be times when you wonder if it's worth all the effort and times when there seem to be no remarkable insights or deep conversations. There will be times when it feels like you are just going through the motions. And that's exactly what you are doing — you're going through the motions. That is what practice is all about. You go through the motions so that when it's time for the real handoff to take place, those motions will come naturally. You talk about faith and learn about spiritual things, so, when an important conversation needs to happen, it can happen and will happen.

Investing in another person's life, you are imparting values so that when a decision needs to be made, it will be made quickly and correctly. That person you are investing in is getting used to the feel of the baton in his or her hand, so that at some later point in life, when they reach for it, their fingers will easily grasp it. At the same time, they are learning how important it is to practice passing it on to others.

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Bishop John Bradosky at the 2018 NALC Convocation.

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In watching relay races, one thing you will not see is a runner, after completing their leg of the race and passing off the baton, simply pick up their sweats and head to the locker room without watching the end of the race. What you will see is every runner watching, cheering, encouraging and continuing to invest themselves for the sake of the others in the race. The race isn't over after the baton is passed; there is still important work to be done.

In his letter to the church in Thessalonica, Paul writes, "For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory" (*1 Thessalonians 2:11-12*).

As I reach this last year in my term serving as your Bishop, I see myself passing the baton of discipleship.

Our relay team is growing. It started with our staff. We picked up many of our Deans. We recruited a Life-to-Life Discipleship Team. Many other pastors and members of the Executive Council are on board. Theologians and seminarians alike are on the team. We are talking with ecumenical partners, as well as international partners, about starting their own teams. Laity are now asking for opportunities to be involved even if their pastor is resistant or the congregation is in transition. We have not only developed many new Discipleship Guides but now we have our own group of Discipleship Trainers who can train others to become Discipleship Guides. Mission District newsletters are teeming with articles about the difference the pursuit of discipleship has made in their lives and in the lives of others with whom they are sharing their faith, investing in their lives.

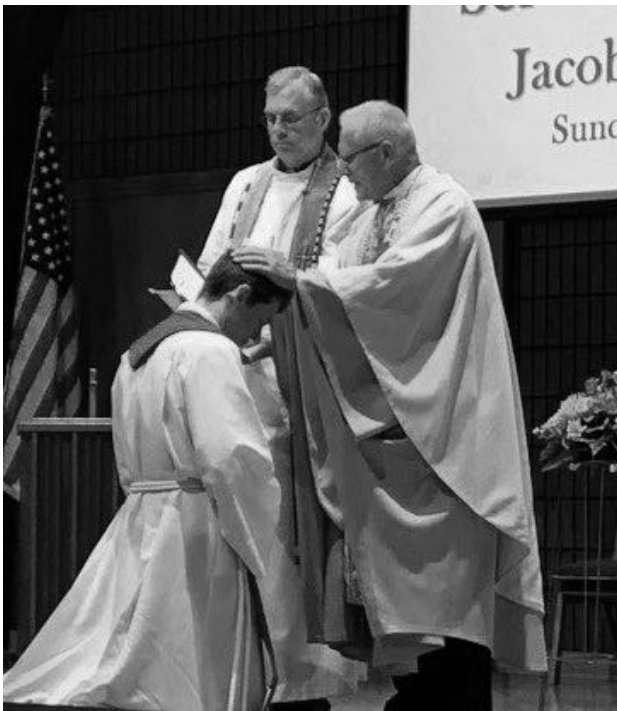
In increasing numbers people are coming to introductory events like the one we had at this year's Lutheran Week, experiencing what it might be like to be in the race — learning what it might be like to have someone invest in their life and how they could be equipped to invest their lives in the lives of others. They are discovering the critical nature of Jesus' mission, to run this race and to pass on this baton to others.

We are in this together and I take great delight in watching how others are picking up the baton and running with it.

While my ministry will change in a year, my focus will never change. I will keep cheering you on, encouraging you and passing on the baton to others who will lead the way in running this race, following Christ Jesus — "entrusting to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others." I will continue to invest my life in the lives of others, passing on the faith we share. For me this is all that matters and all there is in life, to be a laborer for the sake of Christ's mission to "make disciples of all nations."

Even as this chapter in my ministry draws to a close, it will always be an honor to be with you following Christ Jesus.

Bishop John Bradosky



Jacob M. Taxis was ordained on June 10 at Calvary Lutheran Church in Brookfield, Wis. He serves as Palliative Care Chaplain at Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee, Wis., and Hospice Chaplain for Serenity Hospice Care in Germantown, Wis.



Alan P. Aley was ordained on June 27 at St. John's Lutheran Church in Montpelier, Ohio. He serves as pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Everest, Kan.

Celebrating Ordinations



Matthew D. Vatalare was ordained on July 9 at St. John's Lutheran Church in Kittanning, Pa. He serves as Associate Pastor of the Resurrection Lutheran Cooperative Ministry, which consists of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Adrian, Pa.; Christ Rupp Lutheran Church in Kittanning, Pa.; Christ Lutheran Church in Shelocta, Pa.; Mt. Union Lutheran Church in Shelocta, Pa.; and Salem Lutheran Church in Smicksburg, Pa.



Hans J. Tolpingrud was ordained on March 18 at First English Evangelical Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh, Pa. He serves as pastor of Salem Lutheran Church in Bark River, Mich.



North American Lutheran Seminary faculty and students posed for a group photo. They are, from left, the Rev. Dr. Amy Schiffrin, Dr. David Yeago, Ke “Ray” Zhu, Colin Neill, Andrew Fuller (NALS Student/NALC Director of Communications), Justin Baker, George Schrader, Deanna Edwards, Taylor Rister, Justin Fisk, Brittany Jones, Janessa Fisk, Matt Knuppel, Marisa Crofts (NALS Student/NALS Administrative Assistant), Ben Blobaum and Ryan Henkel (NALS Student/NALS Administrative Assistant).

North American Lutheran Seminary - Fall 2018

*“For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.”
— Psalm 100:5*

As you can see from the smiling faces in our NALS annual photo, we begin this academic year with joyful hearts. As a faculty member and administrator, I have always found orientation week to be among my favorite times of the year. No matter where students and staff have been during the summer, or even the past year, we are brought together to begin this annual adventure in a spirit of hope. We join together in anticipation of new friendships, new learning and new growth.

Each year I look at a new picture and I am filled with delight, because, in it, I see the future, the future of the Church. I see a picture of God’s steadfast love, a vision of his faithfulness to all

generations, for these students will be going out to established parishes and mission outposts. They will be instruments of mercy in a hurting and broken world as they speak God’s goodness through their preaching, teaching, and administration of the Sacraments, as well as in their care for those in need, their ability to listen, and their ever-growing humility to speak tenderly to those who do not yet know of Christ’s great love for them.

Please keep our students, faculty, and staff in your daily prayers. We are so thankful for our partnership in the Gospel. May God continue to bless your congregations as we continue to prepare pastors and church leaders to serve you.

The Rev. Dr. Amy C. Schiffrin, President
North American Lutheran Seminary

Translating the Bible in Tanzania

By Stephen Katterhenrich
NALC Global Worker

“And you will have a father’s farm in heaven” —
Mark 10:21

At our recent reviewers meeting, while testing Mark 1-12, we were discussing how we would translate the word for *treasure* — meaning great wealth that you keep safe.

To translate this, the translators have used the word *chipa*. Literally it means “the father’s farm.”

In each Bungu family, the father will have a plot of land that he and the family farm on. When the harvest comes, the father will keep the crops or money that come from this plot. Only the father decides how to use this portion, but, if great needs arise, he will always have this saved so that he can help his family or neighbors. This will become like a savings account for the family. Over time, the word has come to be used for any sort of savings that is stored up.

When we give to those in need, we trade in what we have already been given for a greater treasure that only our Father can provide.

One of the greatest challenges in our translation work is finding suitable words. Every language has different vocabulary, and things don’t match up 1:1. Since we’re working on our first book of the New Testament, there are so many key terms to check. For example:

+ The name of *Satan*: Can we use the name of one of the Bungu evil spirits? They share similar qualities, but whether we use the Bungu word or borrow from Swahili, there will be some confusion.

+ In Bungu, *to believe* = *to agree*. This is understood in most verses, but we have to be careful that we don’t confuse the readers and create difficult ambiguities.

+ *Worker, servant, slave*. Bungu only has words for worker and slave, so we have to carefully check



every use of servant to see which word fits the context.

... and much more ...

Reading, Writing and Typing

That’s Dafrosa (*pictured below*). For some time she has been our unofficial spell checker, but now she is officially the new Bungu literacy and Scripture engagement coordinator. She will help teach people to read and write Bungu and to engage the community in using the Scriptures in their churches and daily lives. Pray for her as she adjusts to her new role and to using a computer, and that she would have the confidence she needs to jump into her new role.

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Fixer Upper

We have been spending a lot of time with handymen recently, fixing up things around our house which is very old. Niko the handyman is fixing the boards which hold the water tank for our house. They had been completely destroyed by termites and water damage.

Big Little Kids

Scott is now 18 months old. He's running, climbing. If you come to visit, be careful, because he will definitely try on your shoes and wear them around the house. If you ask him a question, he'll always reply with "Yeah!" Hope is 4½ and starting to read. She made *Letter People* to practice the letter sounds, and she practices sight words on the computer with her mama each day. She's starting to sound out words and is becoming a sweet teacher for her little brother.

They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love

Every Thursday night, we have dinner and Bible study with some of our friends and colleagues. We've been reading through the book of Acts. One of the most interesting parts has been to see what those first Christians did with this Good News with which they had been entrusted. What would they do differently? How would people respond to the message?

Some reacted with hostility. Others responded with open hearts, like Lydia in Philippi (Acts 16) and the

believers in Berea (Acts 17). One particular story that stood out to me was in Acts 11. The Good News was initially preached to the Jews, but many Greeks / Gentiles began accepting the message too, and each time God confirmed to the disciples that these were true followers of Christ. When word arrived that there would be a famine, the believers in Antioch, many of whom were non-Jews, took up a collection to help their fellow believers in Jerusalem. Their generosity, fueled by their newfound faith, crossed over ethnic and geographic boundaries to help those who were in need.

In our work here in Tanzania, we have not experienced famine; we have been well provided for. But we witness daily the struggles of Tanzanians and the local Church. It is difficult for us to express the joy we have in knowing that so many people are supporting this work to help Tanzanians to understand the Good News in their mother-tongue. We thank God for you.

For more information on Stephen and Rachel Katterhenrich's work as NALC Global Workers with Wycliffe Bible Translators, or for anyone who would like to help us serve the people of Tanzania through Bible translation, please visit: thenalc.org/GCS. Thank you again to everyone who has given so that we can serve your brothers and sisters.



Centennial celebration at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Rosenberg, Texas

On Sunday, Aug. 5, St. Paul Lutheran Church in Rosenberg, Texas, celebrated its 100th anniversary under the theme, "Now Thank We All Our God."

In its early years, the congregation provided worship services in English and German, in Beasley and Rosenberg, Texas. Over the years the church has undergone several changes but what has never changed is its commitment to being faithful to God's unchangeable Word.

Pastor Stéphane Kalonji presided over and preached at the service of Holy Communion. Pastor Harvey Bongers and Pastor John Onda, former pastors of the congregation, also participated in the worship service.

Current and former members attended the day-long celebration that featured a dinner following the worship service, an afternoon program filled with testimonies, PowerPoint presentations on church and community history, and much more.

Pastor Tim Christ, Dean of the Southeast Texas Mission District, offered greetings from the district and the NALC. The congregation also received a proclamation certificate from William Benton, mayor of Rosenberg and a member of the congregation.



NALC strategy for planting churches

By Pastor Gemechis Buba

Assistant to the Bishop for Missions

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we have been asked by many people about the NALC's strategy for mission, specifically our strategy for planting churches.

They have heard us say that the NALC does not plant churches at the national level. This is a new strategy and vision for many people.

The formation of this strategy began several years ago after I read an analysis and study done on the topic of mission in different denominations.

A comparison of Lutheran denominations found that most of them (and other mainline denominations) established mission departments at the national level in the 1970s. They began to encourage congregations, synods and regional associations to collect mission money and send it to the national office. The purpose was to centralize the mission fund in one pot.

The national office would then be responsible for planting churches, sending out missionaries and supporting global projects. The role of the local congregation shifted from being engaged in mission to writing a check every month. This money was sent to a regional office, which often took a percentage, and then sent on to the missions office in the national headquarters.

What happened with that money? What was the result of that strategy?

Because the national church was responsible for mission, most congregations made themselves responsible only for worship. This killed their capacity to multiply and plant other churches. And now we can see the outcome. Each of the mainline denominations (whether more conservative or liberal in theology) that employed that vision and strategy has dwindled. And they continue to dwindle. There is clearly something wrong with that mission strategy.



Pastor Gemechis Buba, Assistant to the Bishop for Missions, speaks at the 2018 NALC Mission Festival in Denver, Colo.

In the NALC, we are embracing a different strategy for mission. Rather than the national church being responsible for planting congregations, it is critical to put mission in the hands of congregations. Mission funds need to be in the hands of congregations. Mission projects and strategy need to be in the hands of congregations. That is why we emphasize that the NALC is Mission Driven and Congregationally Focused.

Congregations are in the driver's seat when it comes to planting churches. Rather than making one office responsible for mission, we make thousands of congregations in the mission field responsible for the propagation of the Gospel — and for the planting of churches. That is why we say the NALC does not plant churches from the national office. If planting churches is not done by congregations — and specifically your congregation — it is not going to be done.

That's why responsible pastors and mission congregations work individually or collectively within

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their Mission Districts to make pastors, lay leaders and members responsible for the work of mission. To assist in this endeavor, we are mobilizing critical resources and systems:

1. An introductory packet and access to current resources are available to assist. Please contact Jenny Brockman in the NALC Mission Office at jbrockman@thenalc.org.
2. Pastor Brad Hales, Director of Domestic Mission, will lead a monthly webinar as an introduction and review of our resources and to answer questions. These webinars will be held on the last Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. ET. To register, contact Pastor Brad Hales at bhales@thenalc.org.
3. After connecting through the introductory webinar, you can engage in monthly coaching

through our New Starts Team. For more information, contact Pastor Trina Petersen at beholdanewthing@gmail.com.

4. We are continuing to develop strategic partnerships and pathways, as well as updating our website. More information will be forthcoming. As we engage in this work of mission together, it is my joy to remind you of the words of Jesus: “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (*Matthew 16:18*).

As we engage in mission — whether church planting, evangelization or discipleship — we can be certain we will be attacked right and left. Our relationship with God and relationships with each other will be attacked. But the good news is that nothing will overcome the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ!

NALC News moving to electronic delivery

Readers are encouraged to sign up to receive email notice of NALC News

The North American Lutheran Church is moving to all-electronic distribution of the *NALC News*.

The *NALC News* is currently published online as a PDF document which may be downloaded from the NALC website and read online or printed.

Congregations are encouraged to print copies of the *NALC News* and make them available for their members.

A limited number of copies are printed and mailed to church members and supporters by the NALC. The delivery of the *NALC News* by postal mail will be eliminated by the end of 2018.

“As a church dedicated to a lean structure and faithful stewardship of finances, leaders of the NALC regularly look for opportunities to adjust the budget in order to better support our mission. One of the ways we can reduce expenses is by shifting to an all-electronic delivery of the *NALC News*,” explained Andrew Fuller, NALC Director of Communications.

The 2018 NALC Convocation approved a budget for 2019 that calls for phasing out the printing and mailing of the *NALC News*.

All those on the NALC’s email list receive an email when each issue of the *NALC News* is posted to the NALC website. Please contact the NALC office if you would like to be added to the email list.

There are three options for anyone receiving the *NALC News* by postal mail:

1. Email your name and email address to nalc.mnoffice@thenalc.org to be moved to the electronic mailing list.
2. Contact your pastor or church office to see if they could provide you with a printed copy of the newsletter. Please have the pastor or church notify the NALC office if they will provide this service.
3. If you do not have access to email, please call 651-633-6004 or 888-551-7254 (U.S. toll free) to discuss alternatives.

Born anew in the NALC

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren, love one another earnestly from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God. ... "The word of the Lord abides for ever."

— 1 Peter 1:22-23, 25a RSV

Having just concluded Lutheran Week 2018, it is worth spending a little time reflecting upon the experience. Although Peter is speaking of our new life in Christ, through the "living and abiding word of God," I can't ignore the sense that we, too, have been born anew in the North American Lutheran Church, by our shared commitment to "the word of the Lord" which "abides for ever!"

This is not to say that the NALC is "heaven on earth" or fully the Kingdom of God in our midst. Far from it! The reality is that the Church of Jesus Christ is intentionally and sometimes frustratingly "human." We are the same sinners in the NALC that we were in previous church bodies. There is no expression of the Body of Christ on earth that is exactly what we wish it would be. Still, the day I became a member of the NALC I experienced relief, joy and a sense that I was "born anew." Perhaps you experienced something of that as well.

I did not enter the NALC, however, expecting that I would now be a member of a "perfect" denomination, fulfilling my every wish, hope and desire for the Church of Jesus Christ. That would be, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer terms it, "a wish dream." This would be unrealistic, proud and pretentious, leading ultimately to disappointment and disillusionment. It would mean I was coming into the community with my own demands, setting up my own laws, judging the brethren and God accordingly. (*Life Together*, pp. 26-27) Rather, Bonhoeffer writes,

Because God has already laid the foundation of our fellowship, because God has bound us together in one body with other Christians in Jesus Christ ... we enter into that common life not as demanders but as thankful recipients. We thank God for giving



Ministry Matters

Pastor David Wendel

Assistant to the Bishop
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us brethren who live by His call, by His forgiveness, and His promise. We do not complain of what God does not give us; we rather thank God for what He does give us daily. (Life Together, p. 28)

Reflecting upon our Lutheran Week, what was expressed most often was thankfulness to God for giving us sisters and brothers who live by his call, by his forgiveness and by his promise. We give thanks that we are building upon the foundation of our fellowship as we are bound together in Jesus Christ, the living and abiding Word of God. After sessions, gathering around coffee, chatting in elevators, again and again we heard participants sharing gratitude and appreciation to God for the gift of this community — the North American Lutheran Church. And this, not with a sense of glory or arrogance, but with humility and heartfelt joy, that after so many years in the wilderness, we have been led into this new fellowship, founded on Jesus Christ and centered on God's Word. Considering this imperfect, yet redeemed church community, a few thoughts might be appropriate.

First, we are learning to trust one another. After years of what may be described as "betrayal" by unfaithful bishops, pastors and church leadership, it has taken some time to learn to trust again. Some of us in the NALC react negatively to anything and everything. We were conditioned to do so, sadly. We all realize it takes time to rebuild trust, as is the case when trust is broken in any human relationship. Slowly but surely, it does seem that we are daring to trust one another. It is important for us to put the best construction on our neighbors' actions, as Martin Luther encourages in his

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explanation of the Eighth Commandment in the Small Catechism.

Second, please, just call us. It's interesting how the default action of many pastors and congregations to anything happening is to want to introduce resolutions to the Convocation. Although this didn't happen this year, we had several calls from pastors concerned about things like the structure proposals and the election process for Bishop, thinking the only way to impact the direction of the NALC is through resolutions at the Convocation.

That may have been the case in previous church bodies, but in the NALC, simply call the Bishop, or General Secretary, or members of the Executive Council. We do not have a bulky, institutional hierarchy. You can actually call Bishop Bradosky and have a conversation and he will listen and take your thoughts and concerns into consideration. Often, the push for a reactionary Convocation resolution is based on faulty or partial information. Better to ask for clarification before expending time and energy on constitutional processes.

Third, it will be healthy and helpful for us to resist the temptation to be hypercritical. Because the Body of Christ consists of a variety of persons, everything will not always suit my tastes, my preferences, my wishes, wants and desires. Whether it's contemporary or traditional, vestments or no vestments, the structure of the NALC or the lack of structure, each individual will have differing opinions. Most of us have come to appreciate and value the width and breadth of Lutheranism within the NALC even though we may have our personal preferences. Rather than being caught up in hypercritical attitudes that cause us to complain, criticize and critique negatively everyone and everything, it will be helpful and healthy for us to give thanks to God for the many gifts we have received in the NALC, while we stand, together, for the truth of God's Word and the saving Gospel.

Finally, it was a blessing to hear repeatedly that Lutheran Week is uplifting, encouraging and life-giving. Many of us have experienced church meetings at all levels of the judicatory as "life-draining," leaving us disheartened and disappointed. Regardless of your personal

preferences, wishes, desires, it is clear that the NALC is built upon the one foundation which is Jesus Christ the Lord, worships the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and is committed to holding fast to the living, abiding Word of God which lasts forever! Let us give thanks to God for this all-too-human church, which is still the Church of Jesus Christ.



Youth and Family Ministry

By Gary and Laurie Pecuch

Autumn is soon upon us. With it comes all of the good stuff related to our regular routines.

This school year we will be offering monthly webinars and monthly online courses. In addition, we are currently organizing online clusters and will offer another session of the year-long youth ministry coaching opportunity.

Earlier this month, we sent out a Children's and Youth Ministry Update with a survey to all NALC congregations. If you did not receive it, you can find it online at thenalc.org/youthandfamilyministry. The purpose of the survey is to help congregations become involved with current faithwebbing.com offerings while giving an opportunity to have a voice in future NALC ministry to young people. Multiple members from a congregation are welcome to submit a survey. We will be collecting survey information through November 30, 2018.

Need any of the above? Contact us at families@thenalc.org.

Thank you for all you do for the young people of your congregation.

Gary and Laurie Pecuch serve the NALC as youth ministry coaches. They provide a variety of resources for NALC congregations free of charge through faithwebbing.com. You may contact them at families@thenalc.org.



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