



NALC *News*

North American Lutheran Church

July 2019

NALC CONVOCAATION TO ELECT NEW BISHOP

A new bishop for the North American Lutheran Church will be elected by the 2019 NALC Convocation when it meets Aug. 8-9 at The Westin Indianapolis in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Twelve pastors have been nominated to serve as the next bishop. (See Pages 4-5 for the list of nominees.)

The Rev. John Bradosky, who has served the NALC as bishop since 2011, has announced that he is not available for reelection.

The Convocation, the annual meeting of the NALC, will also elect members of the NALC Executive Council and Court of Adjudication. (See Pages 6-7 for the list of nominees.)

Among the highlights of this year's Convocation is a banquet on Thursday night honoring Bishop Bradosky for his service to the Church. The banquet will also feature entertainment by Canadian musician Steve Bell and English poet Malcolm Guite.



The Convocation will begin at 8 a.m. Thursday with opening devotions by Steve Bell and Malcolm Guite.

The first session will feature a variety of introductions and reports on the life of the church. Bishop Bradosky, the Life-to-Life Discipleship Initiative and the North American Lutheran Seminary will present reports during this session. Milestone ordination anniversaries and anniversaries of the founding of congregations will be recognized. Newly ordained pastors and seminarians will be introduced.

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James Nestingen

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The Nominating Committee will report on nominations for positions to be elected at the Convocation. There will be an opportunity for additional nominees for bishop from the floor at that time. No additional nominations are possible for Executive Council and Court of Adjudication.

The Rev. Dr. James Nestingen, a renowned Martin Luther scholar, will offer a Bible study address on Thursday morning on the Lutheran Week theme: “Walking by the Spirit, with the Fruit of the Spirit” from Galatians 5:16-23.

The first ballot for bishop will take place at the beginning of Session 2 on Thursday afternoon. If no candidate receives a majority on the first ballot, all but the top four candidates by votes received (including ties, if any) will be eliminated. The remaining candidates will address the Convocation and have the opportunity for informal conversation with delegates later during that session.

Ballots for Executive Council and Court of Adjudication will take place following each ballot for bishop until candidates are elected for each position.

Representatives of the Anglican Church in North America, Common Ground Christian Network, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and Roman Catholic Church will bring greetings from their church bodies on Thursday afternoon.

Session 2 will also include the treasurer’s report, introduction of the 2020 budgets, and other reports.

Additional ballots are scheduled for Friday and will continue until a candidate receives a majority vote. The candidate receiving the fewest votes on a ballot will be eliminated from the next ballot. The second and third ballots are scheduled for Session 3 on Friday morning. A fourth ballot, if necessary, is set for Session 4 on Friday afternoon.



Steve Bell and Malcolm Guite

Session 3 on Friday morning will include reports from the NALC Missions Office, NALC Disaster Response and the Women of the NALC.

The Convocation will conclude with a service of Holy Communion including the installation of the newly-elected bishop of the NALC. The closing worship is scheduled to begin at 3 p.m. on Friday. Bishop Bradosky will preach and preside at the service.

The offering from worship at the Convocation has been designated to be split between the NALC Great Commission Fund and the NALC Theological Education Fund.

Delegates and visitors are encouraged to register early. Electronic voting devices will be used for the Convocation because of the election of a new bishop. Registering early will ensure that the proper number of devices can be ordered.

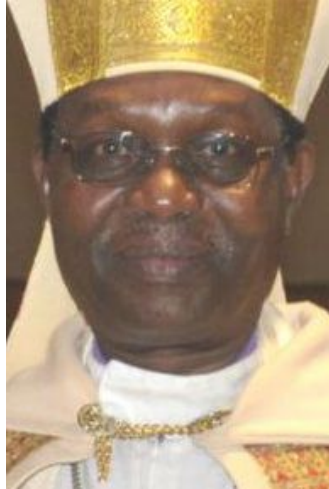
Registration for the Convocation includes the Mission Festival on Wednesday. The \$250 fee includes four meals — dinner on Wednesday and Thursday and lunch on Thursday and Friday.

Lutheran Week is the annual gathering of the North American Lutheran Church and includes five events over five days. To register for any of the events of Lutheran Week or for more information go to lutheranweek.com.

MISSION FESTIVAL TO HIGHLIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH LUTHERANS IN ETHIOPIA AND TANZANIA

The Mission Festival of the North American Lutheran Church on Wednesday, Aug. 7, will highlight the NALC's relationship with Lutherans in Ethiopia and Tanzania.

Leaders from the two largest Lutheran church bodies in the world will be featured speakers for the Mission Festival.



Alex Mkumbo

The Rev. Dr. Alex Mkumbo, bishop of the Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), will preach at the Service of the Word that opens the Mission Festival at 1:30 p.m.

The 8-million-member Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania has a Memorandum of Understanding with the NALC.

The Rev. Yonas Yigezu, president of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), will deliver the keynote address for the Mission Festival.

The 9-million-member Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus has a Full Communion agreement with the NALC.

President Yigezu and Bishop Mkumbo will also take part in the installation of the new bishop.

The church leaders from Africa are taking part in the Mission Festival and Convocation to honor the close relationship their churches have with the NALC.

A panel discussion will feature President Yigezu; Bishop Mkumbo; the Rev. John Bradosky, bishop of



Yonas Yigezu

the NALC; and the Rev. Joel Lehenbauer, executive director of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

The NALC is committed to the renewal of all our congregations, working to develop and deliver resources that challenge and open the NALC to the work of the Holy Spirit in our ministry and mission. The

Mission Festival is designed to inspire and serve as a resource to congregations.

In order to provide practical help to congregations, these breakout sessions on a variety of topics will be offered:

Plant, Grow, Bloom: New Starts in the NALC — The Rev. Brad Hales and the Rev. Tom Hilpert.

Shining in the Darkness: The Word of God at Work Around the World — The Rev. Dr. Paul Gossman, the Rev. Nijhar Minz-Ekka and family, the Rev. Jeff and Mim Neller-moe and Stephen and Rachel Katterhenrich.

Small or Rural Churches: The Hope of the Future — The Rev. Chris Martin and the Rev. Wendy Berthelsen.

The Academy: What I Wish I Would Have Learned in Seminary — The Rev. Tony Ede, the Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, the Rev. Melinda Jones, the Rev. Trina Petersen and the Rev. Bob Quaintance.

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12 NOMINEES FOR BISHOP

A new bishop for the North American Lutheran Church will be elected by the 2019 NALC Convocation when it meets Aug. 8-9 in Indianapolis, Indiana.

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Biographical information on the nominees is published in a report from the Nominating Committee, available online at lutheranweek.com/nominations.

The Rev. John Bradosky, who has served the NALC as bishop since 2011, has announced that he is not available for reelection.

The nominees for bishop are:

The Rev. Dr. Catherine Braasch, intentional interim pastor of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jackson Center, Ohio.

The Rev. B.A. "Tim" Christ, pastor of Joy Lutheran Church in Richmond, Texas.

The Rev. Phillip Gagnon, pastor of St. Albert Evangelical Lutheran Church in St. Albert, Alberta.

The Rev. Dr. Jeffray S. Greene, pastor of Word of God Lutheran Church in Peachtree City, Georgia.



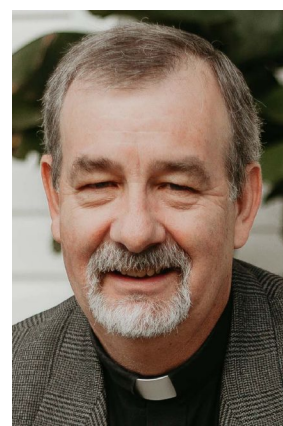
Catherine Braasch



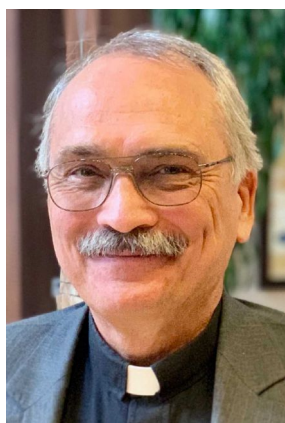
Tim Christ



Phillip Gagnon



Jeffray Greene



Marshall Hahn



Ronald Hoyum



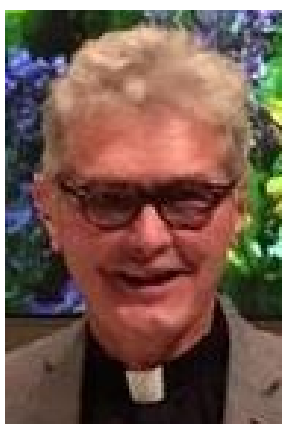
Melinda Jones



Kenneth Kimball



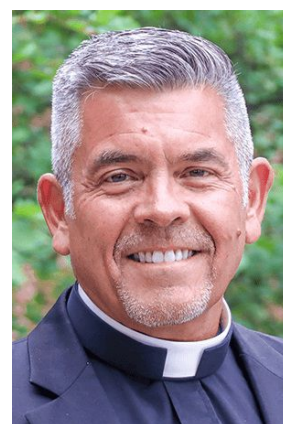
James Lehmann



Eric Riesen



Dan Selbo



David Wendel

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The Rev. Marshall E. Hahn, pastor of Marion Lutheran Church in Elgin, Iowa, and Norway Lutheran Church in St. Olaf, Iowa.

The Rev. Ronald Hoyum, pastor of Port Madison Lutheran Church on Bainbridge Island, Washington.

The Rev. Melinda H. Jones, pastor of Advent Evangelical Lutheran Church in North Charleston, South Carolina.

The Rev. Kenneth C. Kimball, pastor of Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church in Waterville, Iowa, and Old West Paint Creek Lutheran Church in Waukon, Iowa.

The Rev. James T. Lehmann, pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Thomasboro, Illinois.

The Rev. Dr. Eric M. Riesen, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Ashland, Ohio.

The Rev. Dan Selbo, pastor of St. Timothy's Lutheran Church in San Jose, California.

The Rev. Dr. David M. Wendel of Jacksonville, Florida, assistant to the bishop for ministry and ecumenism for the NALC.

Delegates to the 2019 NALC Convocation may nominate additional candidates for bishop from the floor of the Convocation.

To prepare for the election process for bishop, the Executive Council provided a booklet of prayers encouraging NALC members to engage in prayer and discernment leading up to the election. The prayer booklet and information on the election process may be found online at thenalc.org/election.

LUTHERAN WEEK HOTEL, PARKING AND SHUTTLE INFORMATION

Because of the large number of people attending Lutheran Week, a second hotel has been added for delegates and visitors.

Rooms are now available at the Hyatt Regency Indianapolis. The discounted rate of \$149 is the same as the room block at The Westin.

The cut-off date for reservations at the Hyatt Regency is July 25. A link to reservations for the hotel is provided at lutheranweek.com. The reservation phone number is 1-800-233-1234 and the code is North American Lutheran Church.

The NALC room block at The Westin Indianapolis is sold out, but rooms may be available at a higher rate.

Delegates and visitors may also search for other lodging options near The Westin using reservation



search engines such as hotels.com, priceline.com or airbnb.com.

Because parking at the hotels is expensive, alternative parking arrangements have been made with Gate Ten Events and Parking. Gate Ten will provide complimentary shuttle service to and from the hotels and their parking lot. More information is available at lutheranweek.com.

The hotels do not have airport shuttles. The Go Green Airport Shuttle offers regular service to and from the Indiana Convention Center, which is across the street from The Westin, for \$12 one way. More information is available at lutheranweek.com.

Ride-share services (such as Lyft and Uber) and taxis are available at the airport. These may be less expensive options for multiple riders.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL NOMINEES

Five pastors and three lay people have been nominated for positions on the NALC Executive Council.

The 2019 NALC Convocation, Aug. 8-9 in Indianapolis, Indiana, will elect one lay person and one pastor to four-year terms on the NALC Executive Council.

The Executive Council functions as the board of directors for the NALC and oversees the work of the church between Convocations.

Nominees for the lay member position on Executive Council are:

Rebecka V. Andrae, a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

Rosemary Johnson, a member of Hope Lutheran Church in Ladysmith, Wisconsin.

Scott Kramer, a member of St. John Lutheran Church in Boerne, Texas.



Rebecka Andrae



Rosemary Johnson



Scott Kramer



Bassam Abdallah



Rebecca Heber



Keith Less

Nominees for the ordained minister position on Executive Council are:

The Rev. Bassam J. Abdallah of Prospect, Kentucky, a retired pastor and a member of House of Prayer Lutheran Church in Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

The Rev. Rebecca M. M. Heber, pastor of Oasis Church in Lake Mary, Florida.

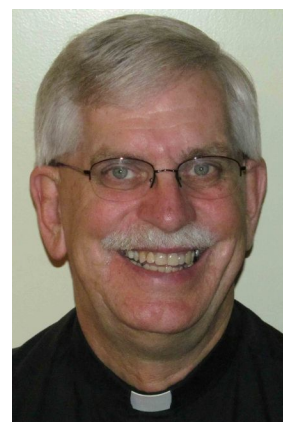
The Rev. Dr. Keith G. Less, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Abilene, Kansas.

The Rev. K. Craig Moorman, pastor and mission developer at River's Edge Ministries, Mount Airy, Maryland, and interim pastor of First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Gray Manor in Dundalk, Maryland.

The Rev. Carl L. M. Rasmussen, pastor of First Lutheran Church in Kirkland, Illinois



K. Craig Moorman



Carl Rasmussen

Biographical information on the nominees is published in a report from the Nominating Committee, available online at lutheranweek.com/nominations.

No additional nominations are possible for Executive Council.

COURT OF ADJUDICATION NOMINEES

Three pastors and a lay person have been nominated for the NALC Court of Adjudication.

The 2019 NALC Convocation, Aug. 8-9 in Indianapolis, Indiana, will elect two members of the Court of Adjudication to four-year terms.



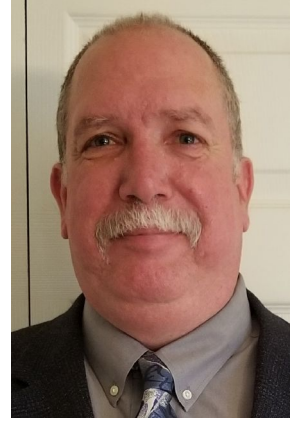
Jennifer Gold



Leslie Haines



Marty Ramey



Allyn Rub

The Court of Adjudication decides appeals from disciplinary decisions and questions regarding interpretation of the NALC's governing documents.

Nominees for the Court of Adjudication are:

The Rev. Jennifer Gold of Helotes, Texas, director of Commission Expeditions and a member of St. John Lutheran Church in Boerne, Texas.

The Rev. Leslie Haines of Fort Wayne, Indiana, chaplain and executive director of Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministry and a member of St. John's Lutheran Church of Lake Township near Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The Rev. Marty Ramey of Dallas, North Carolina, an interim pastor and a member of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Gastonia, North Carolina.

Allyn Ray Rub of Llano, Texas, a retired police officer and a member of St. James Lutheran Church in Llano, Texas.

Biographical information on the nominees is published in a report from the Nominating Committee, available online at lutheranweek.com/nominations.

No additional nominations are possible for Court of Adjudication.

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Fruitful Discipleship: Living the Mission of Jesus in the Church and the World — The Rev. Dr. David Wendel, the Rev. Dr. Alex Mkumbo and the Rev. Yonas Yigezu.

Stewardship: We Are In This Together — Shared Purpose, Shared Struggles, Shared Hope — The Rev. Dona Johnson and the Rev. Eugene Grimm.

Life-to-Life Discipleship — The Rev. Dr. Eric Riesen.

You Can Be An Everyday Ordinary Missionary — Valerie Hobbs.

The Wednesday evening portion of the Mission Festival will be a time for mission districts to meet separately. A Bible study related to President Yigezu's keynote address will be provided. This will be a time for mission districts to consider ideas presented at the Mission Festival and mission work in their geographic areas. It will also be a time for mission district business and for discussion and prayer about the Convocation.

For more information on NALC missions, including regular updates on the Mission Festival, go to missions.nalcnetwork.com. To register for any or all of the events of Lutheran Week go to lutheranweek.com.

BRAATEN-BENNE LECTURES TO FOCUS ON WORK OF HOLY SPIRIT

The 2019 Carl E. Braaten and Robert D. Benne Lectures in Theology will focus on the work of the Holy Spirit under the Lutheran Week theme, “Walking by the Spirit with the Fruit of the Spirit.” The annual theological conference is Aug. 6-7 at The Westin Indianapolis in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Registration fee for the lectures is \$150 and includes lunch on Wednesday, Aug. 7. You may register for the lectures and the other events of Lutheran Week online at lutheranweek.com.

Dr. Robert Benne will address the Holy Spirit and Christian life. Dr. Benne was Jordan-Trexler Professor of Religion and chair of the Religion and Philosophy Department at Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia, for 18 years before he left full-time teaching in 2000. He founded the Roanoke College Center for Religion and Society in 1982 and served as its director until 2012. Upon his retirement, the college renamed the center in his honor. He is the author of several books including *Ordinary Saints: An Introduction to the Christian Life*; and *Good and Bad Ways to Think about Religion and Politics*. The annual lecture series is co-named in his honor.

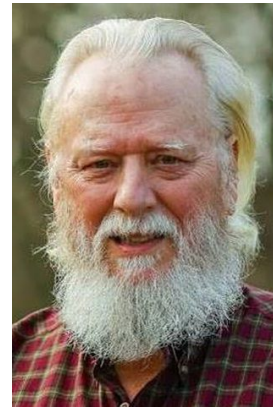
The Rev. Dr. Paul Hinlicky will explain how the Holy Spirit “disappeared in Lutheranism.” Dr. Hinlicky is the Rev. J. Marshall Tise Professor of Lutheran Studies at Roanoke College. He is the author of several books including *Luther for Evangelicals: A Reintroduction*; *Beloved Community: Critical Dogmatics after Christendom* and *Divine Simplicity: Christ the Crisis of Metaphysics*.

The Rev. Dr. Craig Keener will address the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. He is the F. M. and Ada Thompson Professor of Biblical Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. He is the author of 25 books including *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*; *Mind of the Spirit: Paul’s Approach to Transformed Thinking* and *Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost*.

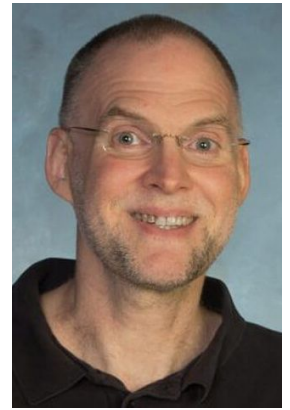
Dr. Matthew Levering will focus on the Holy Spirit and salvation. Dr. Levering holds the James N. and Mary D. Perry, Jr. Chair of Theology at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake in



Robert Benne



Paul Hinlicky



Craig Keener



Matthew Levering



Derek Nelson

Mundelein, Illinois. He is the author of more than 20 books including *Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*; *Engaging the Doctrine of Revelation* and *Was the Reformation a Mistake?*

The Rev. Dr. Derek Nelson will speak about the Holy Spirit and the stuff of life. He is Professor of Religion and Stephen S. Bowen Professor of the Liberal Arts, at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana. He is the author or editor of 10 books including *A History of Christian Theology*; *Resilient Reformer: The Life and Thought of Martin Luther* and *Sin: A Guide for the Perplexed*. Dr. Nelson and Dr. Hinlicky co-edited *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Martin Luther*.

WOMEN OF THE NALC GATHERING

The Women of the NALC (WNALC) Annual Gathering is on Tuesday, Aug. 6, at The Westin Indianapolis in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Join women gathered from across North America for a day of fellowship, Bible study and business.

The Rev. Leslie Haines, executive director of the Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries (LMVFM) will lead a study of the theme verse: "Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us" (Hebrews 12:1 NIV).

There will be time to engage and share ideas with women from other congregations and mission districts.

The gathering will also include selection of the Mission Bank recipients for 2019-2020, selection of new members for the WNALC Council and approval of the WNALC budget.

The Rev. John Bradosky, NALC bishop, will also be speaking.

Join in this day-long annual gathering to be filled with strength and hope to bring back to your congregation and women's groups.

Registration fee of \$100 includes lunch on Tuesday.

You may register for the annual gathering at lutheranweek.com.



Leslie Haines

For more information on the WNALC Annual Gathering or the Women of the NALC, please visit wnalc.org.

VENTURES IN YOUTH MINISTRY

The Ventures in Youth Ministry Symposium will be Aug. 5-6 at The Westin Indianapolis in Indianapolis, Indiana. This is a time of gathering youth ministry leaders together for learning, sharing and renewal.

The symposium will meet Monday, Aug. 5, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Tuesday, Aug. 6, from 9 a.m. to noon. There will be presentations and discussions on developing spiritual disciplines and ministry skills in young people and adult volunteers.

Registrants will be encouraged to bring and share best practices. They will also meet in affinity groups so they can meet peers from around the country who work in similar situations.

Registration fee of \$80 includes lunch on Monday.

To register, or for more information on the Ventures in Youth Ministry Symposium, please visit lutheranweek.com.

Let's keep in touch

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NALC
North American Lutheran Church

Please copy and share this newsletter widely.

IT HAS BEEN A JOY TO SERVE WITH YOU AS YOUR BISHOP

Dear faithful followers of Jesus from across the North American Lutheran Church:

This is my final newsletter message while serving as your bishop. The joys and sorrows of life are never far apart. For this reason, we can cry at weddings and laugh at funerals. It has been a joy to serve with you in this office of Word and Sacrament ministry.

I will forever treasure the relationships formed and the experiences shared over these past nine years. However, every change in life brings with it the grief that accompanies such loss. I would be less than truthful to deny those feelings.

Those feelings are a part of what it means to love and care deeply for our staff, our deans, Executive Council, boards, commissions, committees, pastors and laity throughout the NALC with whom I have been privileged to serve.

I am thankful for your faithful support and your prayers. I have been sustained and encouraged by our Lord's faithful answers to your prayers for me. I am certain there will be tears of both joy and sorrow as I conclude my service in this office.

Together we have shared in numerous accomplishments, faced disappointments and struggled to embrace a clear direction for our future while living out our Core Values, rooted in the Word and faithful to our confessional heritage. We have been learning all along the way what it means to heed Christ's call, "Follow me" — to equip others to boldly share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and become disciple-makers.

Now we are praying for the Holy Spirit to guide us in the process of selecting the next person to assume the office of bishop. With the exception of nominations from the floor, you have been able to read the biographical information and the candidates' answers to the questions on the



FROM THE BISHOP

REV. JOHN BRADOSKY
BISHOP

nomination form. I ask that all of you pray, read and discern carefully. We remain confident that our new bishop will be a person of Christ's own choosing.

To that end, I am including my job description as another way to assist you in that process of discernment. I encourage you to reread the information from the candidates in light of this job description that comes primarily from our constitution.

Among the priesthood of all believers, God has instituted the office of Word and Sacrament ministry. Within the office of ordained ministry is a ministry of oversight in the Church. This includes the bishop and others in leadership who serve together in a collegial manner.

The Bishop:

- 1. Supports congregations of the NALC by visiting among them, teaching the faith, forgiving sins, preaching the Gospel, administering the sacraments, defending the faith in accordance with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.*
- 2. Provides support for pastors including the ongoing development of an annual meeting of the ministerium and theological conference providing continuing education, fellowship, and time for personal interaction.*
- 3. Participates in the process of doctrinal discernment — judging right doctrine (Augsburg Confession, Article 28).*

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4. *Ordains or authorizes ordinations on behalf of the Church. In its structures, the Church equips and supports its members for their ministries in the world and in the Church.*

5. *Reviews and decides on the endorsement of all teaching statements prior to their submission to the Convocation for adoption.*

6. *Preside over all Convocations.*

7. *In consultation with the staff, set the agenda and preside at all meetings of the Executive Council of the NALC.*

8. As the Chief Pastor and Evangelist of the NALC the Bishop is responsible for insuring that the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) is a priority in the life of this Church.

9. *The Bishop is the chief ecumenical officer of the NALC and will participate in inter-Lutheran, ecumenical and inter-religious relationships. The nature and purpose of those meetings will be reported to the Executive Council and Convocation.*

10. *The Bishop is also the chief executive officer of the NALC, serving in a collegial manner with other leaders of the NALC, having both voice and vote in all committees, boards, commissions, task forces and other similarly bodies within the NALC.*

11. *With the Executive Council, develop and implement a clearly developed strategic plan and provide for the creation of appropriate staff positions to effectively lead the NALC in its mission and ministry of support for local congregations.*

12. *Provide oversight for the executive staff, including regular staff meetings, updating job descriptions, analysis of annual goals, and developing strategic objectives.*

13. *Provide oversight and instructions to the Deans of each Mission District through monthly conversations (shared with executive staff) and annual meetings (traditionally during the fall and at the Convocation).*

14. *Provide for the leadership and composition of the Commission of Theology and Doctrine attending its meetings and providing appropriate input.*

I made number eight bold to remind you that our focus on discipleship was never something I invented or a program I decided to institute. It is fundamental to our identity — not because we included it in our constitution but because Christ commanded it. It is not one among many priorities but the central priority for fulfilling Christ's mission.

More than an organization, we are an organism — the living presence of Jesus Christ, loving others in His name and sharing His Gospel in word and deed. More than an institution, we are a movement guided by the Word of God, working for renewal and reform focused on this one central mission, making disciple-makers. To that end, I encourage you to press on!

May the Lord continue to bless and strengthen the entire NALC as together we move forward following Him!

With a heart filled with gratitude and joy, I look forward to all the future holds.

BISHOP JOHN BRADOSKY FUND FOR LIFE-TO-LIFE DISCIPLESHIP

The NALC Executive Council has established the John Bradosky Fund for Life-to-Life Discipleship as a way to recognize and give thanks for the ministry of Bishop Bradosky.

The Executive Council intends to create an ongoing scholarship fund that will assist pastors and congregations interested in becoming involved in Life-to-Life Discipleship.

Gifts may be given online at thenalc.org/donate or sent to the NALC, P.O. Box 860565, Minneapolis, MN 55486-0565, clearly marked "Bishop Bradosky Discipleship Fund."

CANADIAN MISSION DISTRICT YOUTH GATHERING

By Krystal LeBlanc

What a great weekend! The NALC Canadian Mission District Youth Gathering, May 17-20 at LCBI High School and Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Outlook, Saskatchewan, was a fantastic experience with over 100 people in attendance, including more than 70 youth, as well as chaperones, pastors, musicians and camp/school representatives coming from Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Gathered around the theme, "Love Large," this event was filled with great music, an inspiring speaker, mission work, delicious food and crazy fun games.

Worship music was led by Murray and Kirstin Sutcliffe, Kenny Olson and Curtis Akre. Their music was such a blessing to everyone. We also had Doug Rawling and his band join us on Saturday night for a concert. This concert also highlighted Wilderness Ranch Camp in southern Alberta. The Bethlehem Lutheran Church youth band did an amazing job of leading the worship on Sunday morning as well.



Our main speaker, Gary Pecuch, and his wife, Laurie, were a blessing to us throughout the weekend. Gary shared about the skills and tools we need as Christians to effectively live our lives as disciples of Christ. This includes having biblical self-esteem,

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processing our daily job description, choosing standards to live by, being thankful and having a personal ministry plan.

Amidst all of this, he emphasized the importance of intergenerational learning and growing in faith. This is part of his Faith Webbing concept, which connects people of all ages allowing us to grow stronger as a church and as believers.

On Saturday afternoon the youth were split into groups and were sent out to “Love Large” in the community of Outlook. There were groups that visited retirement homes and long-term care at the hospital. There were groups that picked up garbage in town, picked weeds and planted flowers at Bethlehem. One group got to try out quilting with our ladies as well as packing “We Care kits” for Canadian Lutheran World Relief.

The meals over the weekend were prepared by Julianna Friggstad and her staff. She did a fantastic job and we are so thankful for her work!

We also want to say a huge thank you to everyone at Bethlehem Lutheran that set up, cleaned up and provided food for the snacks that were enjoyed in the afternoons and evenings.



Another highlight of the weekend was the larger-than-life games. These games included life-sized Hungry Hippo, Dutch Blitz, Jenga, Kerplunk, Snakes and Ladders, and Human Foosball. There was also a pool noodle war, Epic Ball, glow-in-the-dark capture the flag and more. Sunday also included a giant inflatable obstacle course and a huge inflatable Velcro soccer dart board.

Some of the best parts of a weekend like this are the relationships and connections that are made. When the Church is united in His love, we are able to build one another up and encourage each other in faith.

We hope that many of our youth and adults will plan to attend next year’s youth gathering on the May long weekend at Mulhurst Camp in Mulhurst, Alberta. The theme is “Be Thou My Vision 2020!”



PATH TO U.S. CITIZENSHIP LED PASTORS' FAMILY FROM SOUTH AFRICA TO NORTH CAROLINA

By Karen Kistler
Mooresville Tribune

The journey from South Africa to citizenship brought a mixture of excitement and soul-searching for Pastors Dieter and Heidi Punt and their daughter Nadia.

Now, the three are new citizens of the United States.

They spent months filling out paperwork, answering questions in interviews and preparing for and taking the U.S. Naturalization Test.

Pastor Dieter of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Troutman, North Carolina, became a U.S. citizen on June 25. Heidi, who serves as pastor of Christ United Lutheran Church in Granite Falls, North Carolina, and Nadia, who is a junior at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, made it official Thursday, July 11.

The Punts have two other children, Angelique, who lives in Botswana, and Michael, who was born in the United States. Additional family, including parents and siblings and aunts and uncles, remain in South Africa.

But the Punts wanted to come to America.

Their journey to citizenship began in November.

"It's a tedious process and not a walk in the park," Dieter said. And while "it's not a quick thing and it comes at a great cost financially," he said it is a "great investment both in time and effort. We feel very blessed that (it has) gone through smoothly."



Michael, Nadia, Heidi and Dieter Punt pose after the naturalization ceremony for Nadia and Heidi.

A common thread ran through the comments of what becoming a citizen meant to each one: They can now vote — something that folks with Green Cards could not do.

"I have missed voting. If I wanted to say something, I didn't have that privilege," Dieter said. "I wanted to have a voice in the process of our country."

The swearing-in ceremony took place for each one in Charlotte.

"I'm very passionate about where you are a citizen, you need to be aware of what's going on and make faithful decisions and need to vote. It has been a soul-searching, spiritual journey," Heidi said.

It is "exciting to officially be a part of something bigger than myself," Nadia said. She is "also excited to be able to vote and have a say in the government."

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Dieter and Heidi grew up on opposite sides of South Africa. He's from Cape Town near the ocean and she's from a rural village in Paul Pietersburg, near the foothills of the mountains.

Dieter said he received the call to become a pastor at 16 while living in South Africa. After finishing school, he started his first parish in 1995, serving the church in South Africa several years. He was ordained in 1998.

Heidi's call came on a day when the pastor decided to veer from the usual order of service and instead read the Ten Commandments before confession.

"I remember the painting of Jesus with the children around him," she noted. It was as if "Jesus walked out to me and let me know He loved me. I had to tell others that Jesus loved them." She didn't feel a woman should be a lead pastor, so she struggled with what she felt she was being called to do. She tried to bargain with God and remembers the last time she confirmed her call to go into the ministry she said, "I will go to seminary, but I don't want to be married and I don't want to be the lead pastor."

Heidi said God had different plans. Hers changed when she met Dieter in seminary.

Dieter first came to the United States in 1997 when he participated in an internship at the First Lutheran Church in Pontiac, Illinois, after which he returned back to South Africa to be ordained.

"I didn't think about returning" (to the U.S.), he said.

Soon, though, he was doing just that.

The church in Illinois was seeking a second pastor. At the time he said the synod was having a shortage of pastors and didn't have enough to provide second pastors for churches. Therefore, they contacted him to return, a move which the synod said they would support.

So, he and his family moved to the United States in November 2000.

In 2013, he received a new call, this time to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Troutman.

Heidi said that "when the call was extended to us (to come to the U.S.), my first initial thought was, 'is this the mission field God has called us to?' The whole idea of what would I be giving up really didn't enter my mind at all."

Dieter held a Green Card (officially known as a Permanent Resident Card) for 18 years. When it was time to renew, he and Heidi discussed whether to "go the next step." After many conversations, "We came to realize that we see our future in the U.S., and therefore, it was time to make the step to become a citizen."

While preparing for that big step, all three noticed how much support they had received from those around them.

Three members of Dieter's congregation were in attendance at his swearing-in ceremony. On the Sunday following the event, he received a "big round of applause during the service. People were very supportive of 'my change in my status.'"

There has "been a great sense of support doing this step," he said. Congratulations are still being expressed and he also was presented with a flag which had flown over the capital.

Heidi likewise said that the members of her church are "very excited. I don't think they really realized I wasn't American except I sounded different. They have been very supportive."

Friends and co-workers of Nadia's have also been "extremely supportive," she said. They have "helped me study and been helpful in covering shifts if I need to go" take care of responsibilities concerning the process.

"They have been my rock," she said.

Now, she said she is "excited to see what is to come and what's in the future."

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PASTOR'S BOOTH IN NEW YORK

By Pastor Gregory P. Fryer

New Yorkers are endlessly fascinating to me. Indeed, humanity is endlessly fascinating to me. I was young once, and now I am old. So I have experienced many of the stages of life that those passing by are going through. I like each one of the passersby. I try to imagine what they are going through. I love to see children skipping by. I love elderly folks pushing their walkers, hurrying to get across the street before the light changes. I remember being fit and strong, like many of the people I see. I remember my times in the hospital, recovering, trying to regain strength, like many of the people I see. I wonder about the jobs of the passersby. Do they have a good boss? Do they feel up to their responsibilities or do they feel overmatched? I wonder about their homes and families. I wonder about those who have lost their heart to somebody, or would like to because they are lonely. Even if the passersby do not sit down at my booth, still I am grateful for each one and softly say, "God bless you" to them.

It is quite a responsibility to sit at the Pastor's Booth. As I walk toward church in the morning, I often say a prayer for the Pastor's Booth that day, asking our heavenly Father for grace, faith and truth to minister to people that day. I ask to listen well and then to answer well. I ask to win souls to Jesus.

Pastor Caleb Douglas and I sit at the Pastor's Booth on Tuesday and Saturday mornings, from 10:30 a.m. to noon. We have learned not to sit together at the booth because we tend to talk theology and passersby then pass on by, too polite to interrupt us. So, I sit there for half the time and then Caleb takes over. He is very good at the Pastor's Booth. I have complete confidence in his ministry to the people at the booth.

Caleb is set to leave us soon here at Immanuel to head off for doctoral studies at Marquette University. I count this a blessing for the NALC and for the wider church, that Caleb should serve as a theologian. But we are going to miss him. The people at the Pastor's Booth are going to miss him. Glad to



Pastor Gregory Fryer sits at the Pastor's Booth outside of Immanuel Lutheran Church in New York City. The booth is styled after the "Peanuts" comic strip.

say, Pastor Carol Fryer, my wife, will be joining the staff of our church, carrying on for Caleb. Carol is going to be great at the booth too.

New Yorkers walk by with a sense of strength and confidence, but some of them sit down at my booth and burst into tears. That is why I have a box of tissues for them. City people are like all of humanity — we have hopes and dreams, sorrows and setbacks and fears.

Pastor Caleb and I wear clerical collars. People know what to expect from us. They know that our job is to give encouragement and guidance to people by speaking of Jesus. That is what we try to do, as helpfully as we can.

And I figure I can pray for anyone. Christians, atheists, Jews, Muslims, all kinds of people sit down

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at my booth. I have learned to welcome each one and to take delight in them. That is one important transformation coming from this ministry: I have learned not to be intimidated by atheists and folks who are not Lutheran.

Somehow, the Pastor's Booth helps clarify things: I am making myself available to people so that they can tell me what is on their hearts, so that I can speak of Jesus to them and pray for them.

I have been pastor of this congregation for 27 years now. But, it is easier to meet people if I simply sit on the sidewalk. This booth is about availability.

I have been sitting at the Pastor's Booth for two years now. The longer I sit at the booth, the more I find my answers to be scaling themselves down so that I only want to talk of Jesus. "Jesus is everything," I say to people. "Fill your heart with Jesus," I urge people. "Fill your heart with Jesus and then calmly face the events of the day."

It is a solemn thing to sit at the booth. There have been times when I have been haunted by conversations at the booth. I have wondered whether I said the right thing. I have prayed most earnestly that the Lord would accept these conversations and bring good out of them — good for the people involved and good for His kingdom.

Well, that is a good prayer for each of us. At the end of the day, we can offer what we've done to the Lord, in the name of Jesus. We can ask that our heavenly Father repair our mistakes, turn them around, and use them for the upbuilding of His kingdom. No matter what our work, we can work with confidence knowing that with our God nothing is impossible, and ever our humble work can be useful to Him, to whom belongs the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Pastor Gregory Fryer serves Immanuel Lutheran Church in New York City. You can learn more about the congregation at immanuelnyc.org.



NALC DISASTER RESPONSE UPDATE

Our Savior Lutheran Church in Auburn, California, is reaching out to Grace Lutheran Church in Ridgecrest, California after the earthquakes and the multiple aftershocks that have devastated Ridgecrest and the surrounding communities.

Through our partnership with Grace Lutheran Church, a Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) congregation, hundreds of families will be served. Pastor Kris Madsen, who serves Grace, is an NALC pastor.

Since store shelves were completely empty, volunteers from Our Savior delivered the first truck load of emergency relief supplies the week of July 8. Baby and adult diapers, non-perishable food items, Bibles, first aid kits, and personal care items are needed. Your support and prayers are needed.

Financial gifts to support disaster relief efforts may be given online at thenalc.org/donate or sent to the NALC, P.O. Box 860565, Minneapolis, MN 55486-0565, clearly marked "NALC Disaster Response."

You can learn more about NALC Disaster Response and see updates on current disasters at thenalc.org/nalc-disaster-response.

PANZOS TO EXPAND THEIR WORK TO INCLUDE EYE CARE

By Pastor Didi Panzo

We are excited to announce a future partnership with our mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

After visiting cities and small towns in the Kongo Central Province, we found that eye diseases are becoming a serious issue. One of the small towns called Kuakua may have more than 50 blind individuals and that number continues to increase. The cities of Boma and Tshela are facing the same problem.

After last year's visit from the Rev. Dr. Paul Gossman, World Mission Prayer League (WMPL) general director, and our colleague Gloria, in Kenya, we planned to conduct eye camps in September. These camps will help assess and treat at least 6,000 people in three cities (Boma, Kuakua and Tshela).

Sister Gloria will bring another colleague from Kenya and we will use DRC ophthalmologists, medical doctors, nurses and members of the church to form the team that will run the eye camps.

Around the same time, we will have a visit from Dr. William Obaga, WMPL's associate director for Africa. He will be teaching for about two weeks in September at the Lutheran Theological College and will hold a seminar for pastors. Please pray that visas will be granted to William, Gloria and her colleague from Kenya. Pray for the three-week-long eye camps, for logistics and God's provision.

Place for Students

The Community of Confessional Lutheran Church in Congo (CELCCO) vowed to train its own pastors theologically to fulfill God's calling for local, regional and international renewal. To make that possible, both quality instruction and a good living environment are required. Now a dormitory is being built that will house over 50 students, males and

females. Please hold the financial needs for this project in your prayers. Pray also for the volunteers from the church who will be building the facility, that they may have strength and courage and will not retreat from their commitment.

CELCCO Regional Gathering

In preparation for the CELCCO Assembly and the election of a new bishop and president of the church, the Kongo Central Region gathered in Boma to reflect on procedures and regulations for the next head of the church. I was invited to serve as a guest speaker to talk about the Church being led by the Holy Spirit and the unity of the saints.

We highlighted four principles: the Meaning of the Church, the Meaning of the People of God, the Meaning of the Body of Christ and the Meaning of the Temple of the Holy Spirit. The church must walk through the four principles to progress as a church guided by the Holy Spirit. The teaching was well accepted by all participants and they vowed to lead the church through these principles. May we all bless the Lord.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28 NIV).

Jonathan is a father of five children and supports his household only through farming. He provides an income for his family and his children go to school. Jonathan shared that farming is no longer beneficial because the land has become too dry and will not produce good crops. The only alternative is to climb palms trees to produce palm oil for income. Many farmers, especially young people, leave the village and settle in the urban city to search for a better life but, for Jonathan, God is in control. As it is written in the Bible "come to me," Jonathan believes that God will continue to provide for his needs and his family will not starve. Support Jonathan in your prayers.

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ANXIETY AND FEAR IN THE MIDST OF TRANSITION

And in the fourth watch of the night (Jesus) came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out for fear. But immediately he spoke to them, saying, "Take heart, it is I; have no fear."
— Matthew 14:25-27 RSV

Life is full of transitions, as is life in the Body of Christ. Congregations in the NALC are working through transitions — transitions during the call process, transitions when there is conflict and difficulty and transitions when leaving one church body to join the NALC.

Congregations also experience transitions when finding new church locations, building new buildings and remodeling old ones. Now, in the NALC, we are in the midst of a significant transition with the election of a new bishop after eight years of faithful leadership under the oversight of Bishop Bradosky.

This Ministry Matters article is not about any one of those transitions, specifically, but about the nature of transition and how we may best live through such transitions in the Church in a positive, healthy manner.

When facing transitions in the Church at large or the local congregation what is often noticed first is anxiety. The New Oxford American Dictionary defines anxiety as "worry, nervousness or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome."

This clearly describes how transition often affects a congregation. For example, when a pastor retires or leaves a long-time ministry, some congregational members will experience worry, nervousness or unease about the future. What will happen to our congregation? Can we survive without our beloved, long-term pastor shepherding us? Is there a process? Are there people to assist us in the call and transition



MINISTRY MATTERS

REV. DR. DAVID WENDEL
ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP
FOR MINISTRY AND ECUMENISM

process? Does the NALC have sufficient pastors to meet the vacancies?

As time goes on, anxiety within vacant congregations may increase as the prospect of finding the right pastor seems to dim. And then, when a new pastor is called, there is a certain kind of anxiety which may arise when it seems the pastor may make changes, not "doing things the way we've always done them."

Anxiety may also arise when a congregation seeks to add or reduce staff, make major changes to budgets, consider building or remodeling facilities.

And one of the greatest anxiety-producing transitions in the NALC: making the shift from being focused on the church as an institutional organization to being a community of followers of Jesus committed to being disciples and making disciples! This usually means a transition within the culture of the congregation as every aspect of ministry begins to focus on the Great Commission, rather than mere survival and maintenance.

I believe most within the NALC would agree that Jesus never intended to create a not-for-profit corporation or "Church, Inc." Most of us realize when Jesus said, "Go, make disciples, baptize, teach ..." He was commissioning us to reach others with the good news of His death and resurrection to give us hope for the future.

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Sadly, when it comes to making that a reality within our denomination or local congregation, we can experience worry, nervousness and unease, as we are being challenged to move from the familiar and the comfortable, to the exciting, uncharted waters of following Jesus as His disciples, walking alongside others as we invite them into a relationship with the Lord and Savior.

Being an institutional church member — showing up when it's convenient, paying our fair share of "dues" — that's not too challenging. Transitioning from that to being a follower of Jesus? It can be frightening! And many congregations become anxious over that transition. And how does anxiety affect ministry?

As with anxiety in one's own life, within a congregation (or church body for that matter), the stress and focus on irrational fears can cause restlessness and difficulty focusing or concentrating. It can also create problems in decision-making, causing conflict to arise over issues that would not normally cause tension.

This is why a time of transition is not the time to make major decisions or changes, other than those absolutely essential to the transition. During a transition, clear out the clutter that distracts so that you can concentrate on important issues. Leave other considerations aside for the moment.

At the same time, do all that you can to dismiss or discredit irrational fears. In a time of transition, it is a human response to imagine all kinds of wild, frightening possibilities, few of which are grounded in reality. Most transitions will not lead to the end of the world as we know it! Transitions most often lead to positive, helpful changes that are renewing, energizing and revitalizing!

How does one manage anxiety, stress and irrational fears within a congregation or household during transition? Talk about it! Certainly, talk about it with God in prayer! Talk about it, as well, with friends, family, and others in your congregation. Perhaps a council will want to schedule a congregational gathering for open sharing. Discuss honestly what this transition will mean and why it may be anxiety

producing. Share what frightens you about the transition and the future you are facing. Support and encourage one another as you seek to see the future as full of possibility, in God's sight and providence. Finally, place your faith, hope and trust in the presence and power of our Almighty God.

As with the disciples, terrified, crying out for fear on the stormy sea, in times of difficulty, tension and transition, cling to the words of the Lord Jesus, "Take heart! It is I! Have no fear!" The Risen Lord is with us on the stormy seas of life. The Risen Lord is with us as we move forward into new and uncharted territory as disciples, as congregations and as the NALC. The Lord is with us and the Holy Spirit will guide and direct us. Let us be reassured and encouraged by the presence of the Lord where two or three are gathered in His name, even as He has promised, "I am with you always!"

May the Lord bless us in our times of transition, change and new direction. Amen.

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Prayer Requests

- Pray for our orphan children who are taking exams to finish high school.
- Pray for the church assembly that will be held July 22-28.
- Pray for the new government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), especially that they might help improve the lives of those in the DRC.
- Pray also for those afflicted by disease — that peace may prevail and healthcare workers may be allowed to do their work.
- Pray for Didi and Serafina — for strength and provision and that they may be kept safe from sickness.
- Pray for the training in September, visas, logistics, and God's provision.

Pastor Didi Panzo is an NALC Global Worker in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. To learn more about the Panzo family or to partner with them in ministry, please visit thenalc.org/pastor-didi-panzo.