



OUR GREATEST NEED, OUR ONLY HOPE

A LENTEN MESSAGE FROM BISHOP DAN SELBO

Dear friends, greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus as we enter this most holy time in the life of the Church.

The season of Lent is a time when we center our thoughts and our attention on the path our Lord walked on our behalf that led Him to the cross. It's a time when we remember the reason He had to die and the suffering He endured in order that you and I might have life.

It's also a season that begins on Ash Wednesday, a day when we remember our mortality and of how, "from dust we came and to dust we shall return." And yet, in spite of our sin and the many reasons why we deserve to die, the hope and the promise we have in Jesus is the security and the assurance of forgiveness and life.

The passage often associated with the beginning of the Lenten season, taken from the 18th chapter of Luke's gospel, is a study in opposites. It's the story of two men who went up to the temple to pray. And what a contrast it was between the two. The one man was a Pharisee, a leader in the religious community. Highly respected and as disciplined as they come. He fasted regularly,



The Pharisee and the Publican by Sir John Everett Millais (1829-1896). (Aberdeen Art Gallery, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons)

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tithed his possessions, and was often found in the temple spending time in prayer with God.

In contrast, the other man was a publican, a tax collector, one who was despised by the people, whose reputation in the community may well have been that of an extortionist and a cheat.

On the surface, the contrast between these two men could not have been greater. Their lives and their actions were as differing as they could possibly be, as were the prayers they offered to God. And yet, it was the tax collector, Jesus said, who went home justified that day. It was the tax collector, our Lord tells us, who was made right with God. It was the tax collector, and not the other, who went home at peace and assured and forgiven of all he had done.

And so, what does that mean for us and how, as we move into and through this season of Lent, can we be at peace and assured and confident of our standing before God? The first verse in our story makes it clear what was happening and what was at stake. Luke says, “Jesus also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and treated others with contempt” (Luke 18:9).

It all begins with the posture we take in our hearts. Not so much with our goodness and righteousness in life in comparison with others, but where we stand in the presence of Jesus and how we all, in comparison with Christ, come up short.

“God, be merciful to me, a sinner.” That was the tax collector’s prayer. It needs to be our prayer as well. Human comparisons mean nothing. To see oneself as better or worse than another is missing the point. When it comes to our standing before God, it is one man, one woman, one youth or child, one person at a time, one on one, alone with God.

The season of Lent is not a time to stand before God and tell Him how good we have been in this life and how much we have done. Rather, it is a time when we are all lined up before God, and He tells us what we need to hear.



Bishop Dan Selbo at the 2024 NALC Clergy Retreat

Our sin causes a separation. That separation leads to death. Our only hope is Jesus. Our greatest need is taken head-on and addressed in the person and the work and the cross of Christ.

As we enter into the Lenten season, let the tax collector’s prayer be ours. Let His words and confession lead us to our only hope. “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.”

NALS JUNE CLASS

“Word and Sacrament Mission in a Post-Christian World” is title of this year’s North American Lutheran Seminary (NALC) June term course June 10-14 at the NALS Seminary Center at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania.

The course is one of the NALC Core Values courses designed for all NALC seminary students, but it is open to all pastors and any interested others.

You can learn more about the course at thenals.org.

NALC DEVOTIONS FOR LENT, HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

An Eternal Kingdom: Prophets, Priests & the Reign of the King is the theme of the 2024 devotions from the NALC for Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

The devotions—written by NALC staff and pastors—are available in a variety of formats. The devotions may be downloaded as a printed booklet or may be received as a daily email or text message. You may sign up for the emails or texts or download the booklet at thenalc.org/lent.

Audio recordings of the devotions are available on the North American Lutheran Church podcast. You may subscribe to the podcast and receive the devotion each day on your mobile device.

Video recordings of the devotions will be distributed on Facebook at facebook.com/thenalc where it will be easy to share them with others.

This year's theme is explained in the introduction to the booklet:

Our theme this year emerges from the collection of passages found throughout daily readings of the church seasons. This devotional provides an opportunity to reflect and meditate on the intimate connection between the Old and New Testaments by way of Jesus Christ, highlighting how our Messiah is present throughout all of Scripture.

How does the Messiah bridge the Testaments, fulfilling ancient prophecies in a new covenant of grace? Through the narratives of Genesis and Exodus, as well as the prophetic writings of Daniel, Zechariah, and others, we encounter humanity in stark truth—flawed yet called for a purpose. However, these sacred histories are not merely records of human failure and sin; they are the backdrop against which God's grace radiantly shines forth, foreshadowing the redemption that is to be fully revealed in Christ.



“Despite these troubles, we glimpse hope into God’s unraveling plan for Israel and all nations—each prophet, priest, and king in Scripture points beyond themselves to a promised Mediator and Advocate, one who will reconcile humanity to God not just for a moment, but for eternity.

In this Lenten season, we are called to a holy sojourn—a path of repentance and deep reflection which culminates in the exultant celebration of Easter. Here we stand in awe of the Passion of Christ, our King, who transforms our transgressions into triumphs through His death and resurrection.

So, as we journey from Ash Wednesday to Resurrection Sunday, and into the jubilant season of Easter, let us repent, reflect deeply, and prepare to greet the risen Christ with renewed spirits. And may we stand secure in this truth: our high priest, our King, is one who is able “to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15 NRSV). We are free to draw near to the throne of grace, to the true king, the one that has established His eternal kingdom and us as His kingdom people, forever and ever. Our story is woven into the eternal tapestry Jesus Christ unfurls—where every thread of prophecy, priesthood, and kingship is fulfilled in Him.



Bishop Dan Selbo preached for a service of Holy Communion which included a renewal of ordination vows. Bishop Selbo also led a gathering of the NALC Ministerium.



The Rev. Brad Hales, pastor of Reformation Lutheran Church in Culpeper, Virginia, and director of church planting and aging ministries for the NALC, addressed "Spiritual health as a grounding for ministry in the community."

2024 NALC CLERGY RETREAT



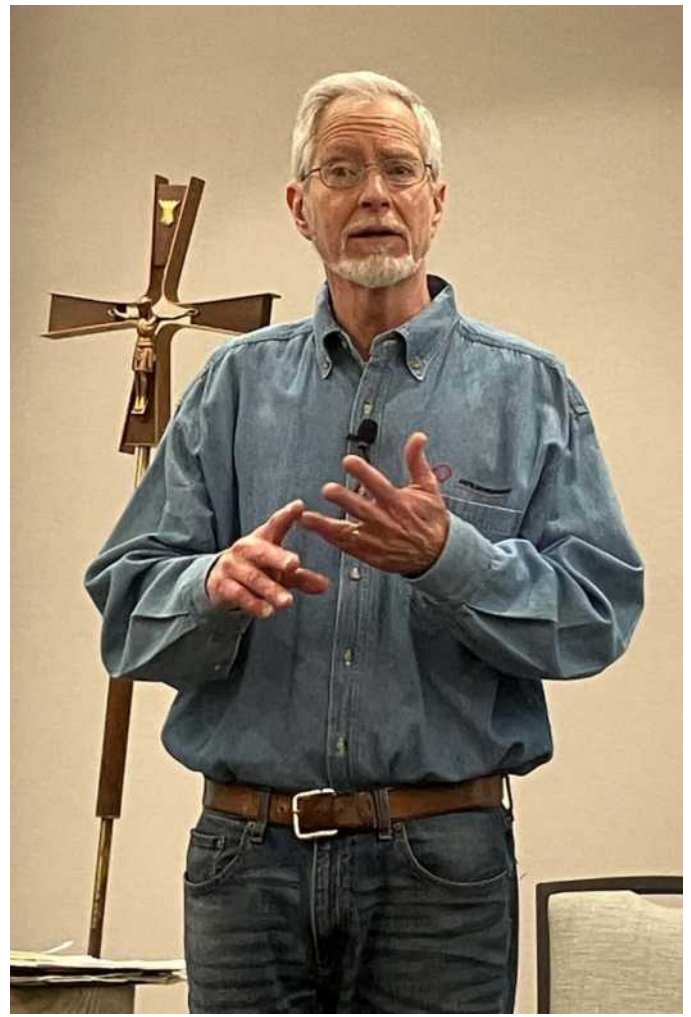
The Rev. Amy Little, NALC general secretary, preached for the closing Communion service.



The Rev. Carol Fryer, NALC missions specialist, coordinated worship for the retreat. Here she presides at one of two services of Holy Communion. Morning prayer, noonday prayer, evening prayer and prayer at the close of the day services were offered throughout the retreat.



The Rev. Dawn Rister, pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Pomaria, South Carolina, spoke about "Spiritual health as a grounding for ministry in times of joy and crisis."



The Rev. Ken Hohag, pastor of Black Forest Lutheran Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado, addressed "Spiritual health as a grounding for ministry in the church."



Nearly 200 people attended the 2024 NALC Clergy Retreat at the Drury Plaza Hotel Orlando - Disney Springs Area Jan. 16-18 in Lake Buena Vista, Florida.

KUWALA CHRISTIAN GIRLS SCHOOL IN MALAWI, AFRICA

Kuwala Christian Girls School, Inc., is a 150-student girls boarding school in Malawi, Africa, providing a secondary school education from Forms 1 through 4 (equivalent to North American Grades 9 through 12). It was built and is operated by a Canadian registered charity.

At Kuwala, our mission is to be an accredited high school in Malawi that operates within a biblically-based learning community. A school where girls receive a quality education, become independent thinkers, discerning decision-makers, and change agents in their communities locally and globally, as faithful followers of Christ.

Our vision is to empower Malawian girls through a Christian-based meaningful education, to equip them for success, and to strengthen their communities for present and future generations.

With half of the 20 million person population under age 18, Malawi is a peaceful, land-locked, democratic nation, sharing borders with Mozambique, Zambia, and Tanzania. Malawi, however, is ranked by the World Bank as the fourth poorest nation in the world, with 70 percent of the population living on less than \$2.15 per day. Most of the people are subsistence farmers, who are devastated by climate change, deforestation, and a staggering economy.



Students from Kuwala Christian Girls School in Malawi celebrating after exams

With overall inflation at an annual rate surpassing 28 percent, food prices alone have grown in the past year by almost 40 percent. Pressure from the International Monetary Fund has moved the government to devalue the local currency, the Kwacha, by 44 percent as an extreme lack of foreign exchange has dramatically limited imports, causing situations such as five-hour lineups for gasoline when it is available. The main export crop representing 70 percent of Malawi's total exports is tobacco, which underlines further challenges for the economy as worldwide demand plummets. The war between Russia and Ukraine has taken a toll as Russian fertilizer imports have been dramatically restricted—a massive challenge for this agriculture-dependent country.

Climate shocks have had a further devastating impact. The Global Climate Risk Index has Malawi ranked as one of the five countries most impacted by extreme weather events worldwide. Tropical Cyclone Freddy, the most powerful tropical storm ever recorded, had winds exceeding 160



Classroom building at Kuwala Christian Girls School in Malawi

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mph and brought 24 inches of rainfall. The storm caused widespread destruction, including damage to the national power grid, resulting in prolonged power outages. The damages caused by the cyclone amounted to over \$500 million.

A record cholera outbreak impacted the country just as it was recovering from the challenges of COVID-19.

So why did a group of Canadians in 2017 partner with concerned Malawians to build what has become a first-class, technologically-leading girls boarding school in one of the poorest parts of Malawi? Why build a school that provides tuition-free education exclusively to girls with no other real option for education and developed a focus on self-sustainability, security, quality education, employment for locals, and a commitment to community service?

The reasons are many.

During a recent visit, Michelle Obama, Amal Clooney, and Melinda Gates brought attention to the issue of child marriage. Malawi has one of the highest rates of child marriage, with 42 percent of girls married before they turn 18. Furthermore, 33 percent of these girls are reported to be pregnant by the age of 18.

The Malawian government cites child marriage, poverty, and early pregnancy as the leading causes for girls not being able to complete high school. Education in a safe environment and the ability to



Graduating class from Kuwala Christian Girls School



Student learning computer technology

live on campus are important factors in addressing this issue.

There is a historical bias favoring boys and not girls with any family resources going to supporting a boy's education within a family. Kuwala exclusively serves girls secondary school, where UNICEF reports graduation rates in poor rural areas range between two and six percent.

There is the need for a boarding school. A safe, on-campus living program is vital in a country with 80 percent of the population living in rural areas, poor roads, extremely limited transportation options, and pressure within families and villages for early marriage.

There is a need to provide a professional, modern education program. Public school classrooms housing 100 students in buildings with dirt floors, no lighting, minimal desks, and no access to technology, immediately establish a disadvantage. At Kuwala, the 30-acre campus is secure, modern, equipped with computers for everyone and internet access—a luxury infrequent in Malawi—with safe, modern dormitories, a quality cafeteria, and a focus on educational success.

There was a goal to create an environment to support self-sustainability while providing a teaching opportunity for students to learn how to build programs to sustain themselves. Biogas on site has eliminated the need to purchase propane for

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cooking and created a natural source of fertilizer. An extensive solar power installation has removed the challenges of the cost and unpredictability of the national power grid.

The recent addition of 70 acres of farmland now compliments our greenhouse and garden operations as we move to provide most of our produce requirements. Our on-site milling operation serves the school and the surrounding communities. The growing orchard and thousands of tree plantings bring life back to what was once devastated land, while the outreach program is helping with reforestation in the surrounding communities.

Kuwala, means “shining” and is “moving the dial.” Our first class of 60 girls had a 94 percent graduation rate, ranking it among the best in the country, with 24 students qualifying for university. Our students return to villages and start to share their knowledge, gain employment, start entrepreneurial activities, and may go on to higher education.

Kuwala is not a handout but rather a hand-up.

The demand for education is overwhelming. Over 600 girls recently showed up for just 20 openings. We have proven our program works and need to expand. With your assistance, we will “move the dial.” As a fully audited, exclusively volunteer-run charity, more than 94 cents of every dollar goes directly to the school. Strict accounting and reporting, outstanding boards in Canada and Malawi, and a track record of success support our goal of making a difference.

What is next? We have three priorities for 2024:



Greenhouse produces food for the students

+ To complete an entire farm irrigation program to maximize crops and be prepared for the pressures coming to the food supply. Combined with this, is a second greenhouse and the introduction of chickens, goats, and pigs.

+ We are building our third dormitory to expand our student body to 200.

+ Building our third staff duplex to have more teachers live on campus.

For more information, please visit our website, kuwala.org, or contact us at info@kuwala.org. On YouTube you can watch [“The Story of Kuwala.”](#) To follow the exciting stories from the field, sign up for our newsletter to receive a vibrant, colorful newsletter every two months.

Kuwala has also become a member of Charities Aid Foundation America (CAF) to facilitate the growing number of donors from the United States with a simple, effective process for donations and the ability to claim a charitable deduction in the United States.



Kuwala Christian Girls School is an NALC recognized ministry. You can learn more about their work or partner with them in ministry at kuwala.org.

NALC YOUTH GATHERING

Get excited because it's almost time for our first NALC Continental Youth Gathering (CYG). Make plans to join us July 1-4 at St. John Lutheran Church in Boerne, Texas. Youth grades 6-12 are invited. You can find all the information at cyg.thenalc.org.



WE BELONG
"I KNOW MY OWN AND MY OWN KNOW ME"

In addition to multiple age-appropriate Bible studies led by NALC pastors, we will be engaging in several mission projects within the Boerne community and packing kits for disaster relief. We're also looking forward to a true Texas rodeo, fun night spots, and all the fellowship of gathering with Lutheran teens from across the continent.

any young adult who may be interested in learning more about this amazing opportunity.

If you have any questions about the CYG or just want to get excited with other leaders contact Pastor Teresa Peters, NALC Youth and Family Ministry director, at tpeters@thenalc.org.

We are also looking for young adults, age 19-24, with a heart for God to serve as leaders in training. The deadline to apply is March 1. Help us by identifying young adults who may be good at this, and would enjoy the experience of leading and learning. Feel free to give our contact information to

We are looking forward to a faith-filled youth gathering. Don't miss out. We belong to Christ, we belong to His Church, we belong to community, and we belong to each other. You belong with us for this gathering! Be sure to register by April 15.

CANADIAN ROCKIES CONFERENCE

"Low Anthropology: The Unlikely Key to a Gracious View of Others and Yourself" is the theme of the Canadian Rockies Theological Conference April 9-11 at the Coast Canmore Hotel and Conference Centre in Canmore, Alberta.

The featured speaker is David Zahl, the director of Mockingbird Ministries and editor-in-chief of the Mockingbird website. Zahl graduated from Georgetown University in 2001, and then worked for several years as a youth minister in New England. In 2007 he founded Mockingbird.

He lives in Charlottesville, Virginia, where he serves on the staff of Christ Episcopal Church.

The theme of the conference comes from the title of Zahl's most recent book in which he explores how our ideas about human nature influence our expectations in friendship, work, marriage, and politics.

The conference is sponsored by the NALC Canadian Mission Region. It is open to everyone —both lay and clergy. For more information or to register go to thenalccanada.ca/events.



David Zahl

NAVIGATING TRANSITION AND EMBRACING THE VISION

By the Rev. Dcn. Andrew Ames Fuller

In the warm, bustling community of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Flatville, Illinois, Judy Rademaker, a dedicated member of the congregation's stewardship team, felt a palpable sense of urgency when their beloved pastor announced his retirement. This moment coincided with the North American Lutheran Church's rollout of its 20/20 Vision, an initiative steeped in the church's Core Values and aimed at ensuring a vibrant future. Judy, tasked with navigating this pivotal transition, dove into the Vision's toolkit with a mixture of determination and faith.



Immanuel Lutheran, with its long history of commitment and service, faced the challenge of communicating the complexities of the 20/20 Vision to its congregation. The stewardship team, under Judy's guidance, understood the need for a comprehensive yet accessible approach. They started by introducing the Vision at their annual meeting in January 2023, using a video featuring Bishop Dan Selbo and Pastor Amy Little, NALC general secretary. This video served as a catalyst for deeper engagement with the Vision's goals and aspirations.

Recognizing the diverse needs and learning styles within their community, the team employed various methods to disseminate information. They distributed carefully crafted bulletin inserts, accompanied by corresponding videos, during

Sunday services. This approach allowed for a more interactive and engaging learning experience. Discussions and Q & A sessions followed each video, providing a platform for community members to voice their questions and insights. To maintain a visible and constant reminder of the Vision, the church utilized a portion of its funds to create a large vinyl poster displayed in the breezeway. This poster not only served as a daily reminder of the church's commitment to the Vision but also sparked curiosity and conversation among members.

As part of their strategy, the team decided to revisit these videos in the fall, modifying their approach based on feedback and observations. This iterative process demonstrated their commitment to keeping the congregation engaged and informed over the three-year duration of the program.



NORTH AMERICAN
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

20/20
VISION

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The retirement of their pastor, a moment of significant change for Immanuel Lutheran, was also an opportunity. It brought into sharp focus the elements of the 20/20 Vision that emphasized support for seminary and pastoral formation. This aspect of the Vision resonated deeply with the congregation, aligning with their desire to nurture and sustain strong church leadership in the face of transition.

Judy and her team's efforts exemplified how a congregation could effectively engage with a denomination-wide initiative like the 20/20 Vision. By utilizing the materials provided in the toolkit, they crafted a comprehensive plan that addressed their unique congregational context. The resources enabled them to highlight the diversity and broader narrative of the NALC, reminding Immanuel Lutheran's members that they were part of a larger, dynamic community of faith.

Looking ahead, Immanuel Lutheran Church plans to continue the conversation around the 20/20 Vision, exploring new ways to engage and inspire their congregation. They recognize the importance of evolving their approach to maintain interest and enthusiasm among their members. The stewardship team's story of impact, led by Judy Rademaker, is a



testament to the power of thoughtful planning, resourceful implementation, and a deep commitment to the mission and vision of the North American Lutheran Church.

You can learn more about the NALC's 20/20 Vision at vision.thenalc.org.



ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

These ordination anniversaries were recognized at the 2024 NALC Clergy Retreat.

65 Years

The Rev. Theodore C. Ager
The Rev. N. Dean Haferman
The Rev. Edwin D. Peterman
The Rev. Brooke J. Walker

55 Years

The Rev. David H. Andreae
The Rev. Gerhardt A. Gosnell
The Rev. Harvey S. Mozolak
The Rev. Thomas A. Nibbe

50 Years

The Rev. Steven L. Dornbusch
The Rev. David Michael McGettigan
The Rev. Gerald A. Miller
The Rev. Douglas Gregg Moffat
The Rev. James E. Reiff

45 Years

The Rev. James C. Bangsund
The Rev. Rolf Olson Bjornstad
The Rev. Erik E. Johnson
The Rev. Paul L. Larson
The Rev. James T. Lehmann
The Rev. Thomas John Lurvey
The Rev. Duane P. Marburger
The Rev. Dennis H. Meyer
The Rev. Daniel M. Powell
The Rev. Jan R. Putnam
The Rev. Carl L. M. Rasmussen
The Rev. Jerry L. Rhea
The Rev. Mark E. Sabin
The Rev. Karl A. Schoch
The Rev. Brian F. Shirey
The Rev. R. Dawson Tornes

40 Years

The Rev. Alan L. Baglien
The Rev. Richard Barnes
The Rev. Mark D. Booster
The Rev. B. A. Christ
The Rev. Stephen P. Cowen
The Rev. Mark J. Daniels
The Rev. Peter DeBartolo Sr.
The Rev. Randall Eisenbeisz
The Rev. Nathan J. Hanson
The Rev. Roger A. Herrig
The Rev. Brian H. Hughes
The Rev. Keith G. Less
The Rev. David M. Phillips
The Rev. Pedro Portillo
The Rev. Amy C. Schifrin
The Rev. William Schmidt
The Rev. David B. Tholstrup

35 Years

The Rev. Gary H. Aicken
The Rev. Paul E. Austin
The Rev. David J. Baer
The Rev. Thomas A. Curry
The Rev. Teshome Tesfaye Deingede
The Rev. Arlyn Howard Eisenbrandt
The Rev. Zeleke Yimer Gesesse
The Rev. Amy Jacqueline Godshall-Miller
The Rev. Jeffray S. Greene
The Rev. Patrick L. Hall
The Rev. Sang-geun Kim
The Rev. Michael M. Knauff
The Rev. Jeffrey A. Morlock
The Rev. Dawn Lee Nelson
The Rev. James Pearson
The Rev. Steven J. Qualben
The Rev. Mary Ann Schave
The Rev. Allen W. Schoonover
The Rev. Michael R. Struck
The Rev. David M. Taylor
The Rev. Barbara M. Wills

30 Years

The Rev. David A. Charlton
The Rev. Norman E. Dew
The Rev. Bradley Joseph Hales
The Rev. Charles C. Jackson
The Rev. Andrew W. Jones
The Rev. Herbert Gene Kitzman
The Rev. Sally M. Meyer
The Rev. Karen Tamorria

25 Years

The Rev. Philip J. Hohulin
The Rev. Kent William Hollis
The Rev. William E. Maki
The Rev. Christian B. Meier
The Rev. Elden Simonson
The Rev. Jeanette M. Thorp
The Rev. Gregory George Wallace

20 Years

The Rev. Judith Ann Bangsund
The Rev. Jason D. Cooper
The Rev. Paul David Hansen
The Rev. Brett I. Jenkins
The Rev. Janice M. Kelly
The Rev. G. William Lundgren
The Rev. Blaine A. MacNeil
The Rev. Lenae C. Rasmussen
The Rev. Richard Tomlinson
The Rev. Stephan Turnbull



ORDINATIONS



Deacon James Clapper was ordained on Dec. 10 at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He is called to serve as an NALC deacon in hospital chaplaincy.



Pastor Bill Morris was ordained on Jan. 6 at St. Matthew Lutheran Church of Sandy Hill in Brenham, Texas, where he serves as pastor.

CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARIES

The anniversaries of the founding of these congregations were recognized at the 2024 NALC Clergy Retreat.

250 Years - 1774

Union Lutheran Church, Salisbury, North Carolina

200 Years - 1824

St. Mark Lutheran Church, Adrian, Pennsylvania
St. John's Lutheran Church, Kittanning, Pennsylvania
St. Mark's Ev. Lutheran Church, Middleburgh, N.Y.

175 Years - 1849

St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church, Grove City, Ohio
Dunmyer Lutheran Church, Johnstown, Pennsylvania
Zion Lutheran Church, Saint Marys, Ohio

150 Years - 1874

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Thomasboro, Illinois
Ascension Lutheran Church, Shiocton, Wisconsin
St. Paul's Lutheran Church, West Falls, New York
Salem Ev. Lutheran Church, Axtell, Kansas
St. John's Lutheran Church, Danforth, Illinois
St. Thomas Lutheran Church, Hooversville, Penn.

125 Years - 1899

Faith Ev. Lutheran Church, Faith, North Carolina
Samhold Lutheran Church, Gonvick, Minnesota
Mayer Memorial Lutheran Church, Newberry, S.C.
First Ev. Lutheran Church, Floresville, Texas
Holy Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Gastonia, N.C.

100 Years - 1924

Holy Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Troutman, N.C.
St. Luke Lutheran Church, Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania

FREEDOM OF LIVING GENEROUSLY

By Pastor Dona Johnson

Living and Giving Stewardship Team

As we step into a new year, the NALC's Living and Giving Stewardship Team invites you on a spiritual journey. RESET is a new interactive workshop that helps congregations sharpen their vision of stewardship, test current assumptions and misconceptions about Christian generosity and giving.

RESET is an all-day spiritual journey designed to promote an intentional space for self-discovery about the biblical truths of generosity and how our own personal stories of faith and giving have been, and still are, being shaped by God's redemptive love through the generations.

RESET will assist pastors and leaders to gain a greater degree of clarity and confidence in nurturing a culture of generosity in the congregations they serve.

There is an urgent need to shift the understanding of stewardship practices from being perceived as a purely transactional activity, asking for money to pay the bills, to a deeply spiritual and transformational one—a place of self-discovery that leads to deep changes in the heart.

When a truth changes your heart, it becomes a part of you. You may even recite this truth to others. Or it may become one of the guiding principles of your life.

People have a deep hunger for truth. As Ted Harro, president of Renovare likes to say, "God wants adult kids in the family business. People who, with surrendered wills and baptized imaginations, partner with Jesus in surprising ways to make their corner of the earth look a little more like heaven." People set free by the truth—Jesus Christ.

In the context of Christian giving and generosity, a temptation exists to grapple with stewardship resources and fundraising attempts at the last



minute in hopes to respond to a financial crisis or funding deficits. This approach is often short-sighted and short-lived. Generosity, giving and gratitude are faith practices entwined, are best learned over time, and are a constant voice woven into the fabric of everyday life and practiced in diverse and creative ways.

For far too long, the word "stewardship" has conjured up all sorts of negative images and feelings. Its perceived definition has been sadly reduced to mean "asking for money," which leads many to feel vulnerable and fearful. Why is this? Why is there such a fear in asking others to give to the mission of Jesus Christ? If our security is totally in Jesus Christ—and it is—then we are free to ask for money. We will explore the fears which are both internal, external and generational.

RESET's focus is to open up the conversation, to share collectively and collaboratively our common joys and our struggles. Remember, stewardship practices encompass every aspect of one's life and intimately touches every facet of ministry. In fact, the intrinsic nature and practices of stewardship—generosity, giving and gratitude—cannot be separated from discipleship. They are inseparable.

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For pastors and congregations who have taken the long view of faith and giving and understand generosity as an invitation to join God's mission, to move the Great Commandment and Great Commission forward, generosity, giving and gratitude become second nature in their congregations and the joy of giving becomes infectious and uncalculating. Generosity then becomes not so much what we do but who we are—generous people.

On this spiritual journey, we will explore the following:

1. *Rethink* faith and giving practices in your congregation to inspire and nurture a culture of generosity for generations to come.
2. *Engage* new biblical understandings to test assumptions, myths and misperceptions about Jesus, money, and possessions.
3. *Synthesize* what you learn to become calmers and

clearer in your preaching, teaching and providing administrative leadership in financial matters.

4. *Envision* your own personal story and your congregation's story within God's greater story of building a legacy of faithful witness.

5. *Transform* hearts through self-discovery by making God's truths your own.

In 2024, we will take RESET into all five of the NALC's regions, but we cannot do this without your help. I invite all assistants to the bishop, deans and congregational leaders to support our ministry by inviting us into your region and mission districts. Help us to help others bring more people into the freedom that comes when we live generously.

Our team, the Rev. John Bradosky, director of area support and development and NALC bishop emeritus; the Rev. Dona Johnson, chair of Living and Giving Stewardship Team; and Mike Johnson, NALC treasurer, will bring RESET and all the resources to you. If God is calling you to host our team for an all-day workshop, email revdonajohnson@gmail.com.




WHY ISN'T MY CHURCH GROWING?

WITH THE REV. BRAD HALES

“Why Isn't My Church Growing?” This question alone can illicit feelings of sadness and frustration. While many congregations struggle with stagnation and decline, are there other ways to reverse these trends? In this course, we will examine both external and internal reasons why churches are not growing. This class will also delve into biblical insights, which will provide direction for renewal in the local parish. There is hope.

The Rev. Brad Hales
Director of Church Planting and Aging Ministries

Register today at www.thenals.org/GrowingChurch



MINISTRY UPDATE FROM STEPHEN AND RACHEL KATTERHENRICH

Around 60 A.D., this guy named Paul (you might have heard of him) was sitting in a Roman prison. There he wrote a letter to his friends in Philippi. In that letter, he kept expressing his joy that the Philippians, people like Epaphroditus, were fellow laborers with him in spreading the good news about Jesus. He compares them to a victor's crown (Philippians 4). To him, they were like an Olympic gold medal showing that all that Paul worked for was not in vain, because they continued to live the life that God had called them to. Their continued service to Christ gave Paul great joy, and helped him endure his own circumstances.



Stephen and Rachel Katterhenrich with their children Hope and Scott

Recently, I was able to spend a few weeks back in Tanzania working with the Bungu translators and several other translation teams. I and the Bungu translation team spent time checking our translation of Paul's letter to the Philippians. Like Paul, my greatest joy on this trip has been meeting up with my fellow workers in Bible translation. People like Safari who was once a translator for the Ndali New Testament project, who has spent the past two months living in another city training new teams (Ruwila and Konongo) to translate in their own

languages. I got the chance to visit them there in the city of Mpanda and spent several days working alongside Safari, teaching them how to use computers and translation software.

Then there's Ahimidiwe who was a translator for the Vwanji New Testament, but now helps coordinate all of the translation work for the language teams working in Mbeya, while also acting as a translation

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The Bungu team together again: Mwasalanje, Stephen, Mbande, and Kawana

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consultant, checking the books translated by other teams. And if you see him, ask him about the delicious bell peppers he grows in his greenhouse. He's a busy guy.

There is still a lot of work to do, and such a variety of different ministries serving the Lord. For my part, I praise God that He has given me so many wonderful people to work with. I pray that you also feel that same sort of joy in your churches and families, as you work together, living the life that God has called you to. Life is a team sport, and so is the work of our Lord. Let's run the race together.

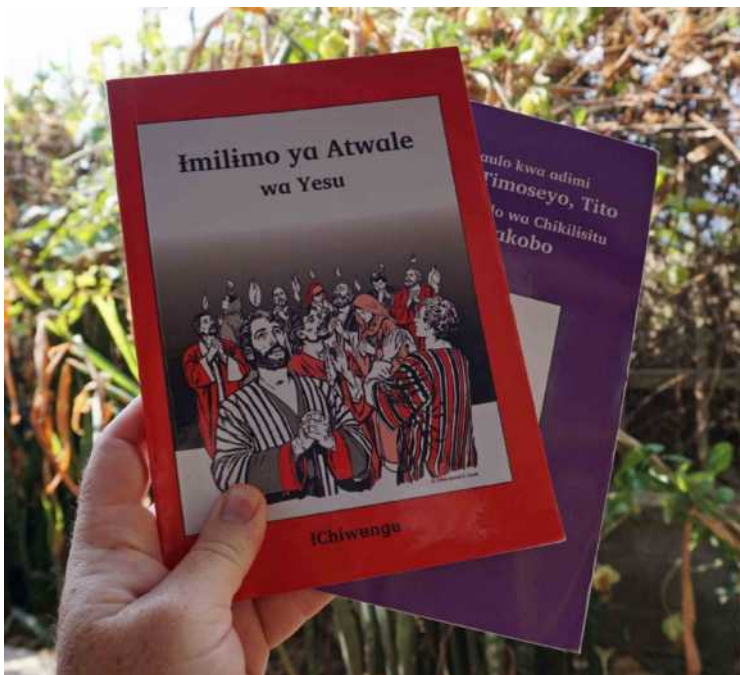
My trip went really well. Most of my time was spent at the Mbeya office with the Bungu team, but I also spent a week in the Katavi region doing computer training with the Ruwill and Konongo translation teams. It required a 12 hour bus ride—twice! But I had a blast doing computer training with them. It's easy to take for granted that using a computer is quite complex. But these new translators were so eager to learn.



I'm very excited to now have my own translated copies of the book of Acts and the Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon and James).

I'm grateful that you're the ones running this race alongside us. A special thanks to everyone who was praying for me as I traveled to Tanzania.

Stephen and Rachel Katterhenrich serve as NALC global workers with Wycliffe Bible Translators.



CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

Annual contribution statements for gifts to the North American Lutheran Church were sent by email to the email address on file for the donor. Those without an email address on file will receive a mailed copy.

If you did not receive a statement, please contact Anne Gleason at agleason@thenalc.org.

NEW NALC OFFICES IN TEXAS

The North American Lutheran Church staff moved into new offices in Bedford, Texas, in January.

The 2021 NALC Mission Convocation approved the establishment of an NALC office near the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. The NALC staff had been working in small cubicles in a shared-office facility in Grapevine, Texas, during the search for more permanent office space.

The office building is owned by a Lutheran layman who is a member of a congregation affiliated with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). A connection leading to the new offices was made between him and an NALC staff member at a worship service at his home congregation.

The office address is 2116 Parkwood Drive Suite A; Bedford, TX 76021. The building includes several offices, a small kitchen, and a larger room which could be used for meetings and as a chapel.

During this time of transition, mail for the NALC office should continue to be sent to PO Box 130455; St. Paul, MN 55113. Monetary donations should be mailed to North American Lutheran Church; PO Box 860565; Minneapolis, MN 55486-0565.



The exterior of the new NALC offices in Bedford, Texas

Changes of address will be announced in the future once the office is fully operational.



Bishop Dan Selbo at his desk in his new office



Pastor Tony D. Ede, communications specialist, (left) and Deacon Andrew Ames Fuller, director of communications, in a space that can be used as a chapel.



Carver Ede, son of Pastor Tony D. Ede, filling holes in the walls of the hallway of the new NALC offices. His brother Liam also helped with the repairs.



An online meeting in the meeting room



Pastor Amy Little, general secretary, at her desk in her new office



Pastor Susan Fox, office manager, at her desk in the reception area of the new NALC office in Bedford, Texas



A small kitchen at the new NALC office

NALC DISASTER RESPONSE TRAINING AND RETREAT CENTER

The new NALC Disaster Response Volunteer Training and Retreat Center is available for use and scheduling events. It is available for youth groups, women's retreats, and men's events. It is on the property with the national disaster warehouse in Caldwell, Ohio.

With a full dormitory, full kitchen, restrooms and showers, and a chapel, it is a multipurpose building which was built for NALC congregations to grow their faith and learn new skills.

Pastor Amy Little, NALC general secretary, will be dedicating the new building on May 2.

NALC congregations are scheduling mission trips through NALC Disaster Response at this time. Potential mission sites include the Clarksville, Tennessee, tornadoes, the Wynne, Arkansas, tornadoes, Forest Hill, California, wildfires, and Hurricane Idalia in Perry, Florida. The families that NALC Disaster Response serves do not know the love of Jesus and need you and your prayers.

For more information on the above items, Stuff the Truck events, and the many other mission opportunities through NALC Disaster Response, contact Mary Bates, NALC Disaster Response



NALC Disaster Response Volunteer Training and Retreat Center in Caldwell, Ohio

coordinator, at 740-509-1132 or disasterresponse@thenalc.org.

CLERGY CARDS

NALC clergy cards have been mailed to all NALC pastors. If you did not receive your card, please contact Anne Gleason at agleason@thenalc.org.

LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

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