



CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM BISHOP DAN SELBO

Every year, in the weeks leading up to Christmas, my thoughts go back to years ago when, as a child, I shared in the Sunday School program re-enactment of that first Christmas. There were readers, narrators, class recitations, and some of the more familiar Christmas carols. As the program went on, the characters of Mary and Joseph, the baby Jesus, the shepherds, the wise men, and the angels all appeared, playing their parts.

We all had a part to play, whether we liked it or not, even if it was simply singing in the chorus. I remember, one year, wearing a bathrobe as part of the costume. Another Christmas Eve, I remember getting sick and running quickly off stage. Another Christmas, I was one of the sheep. In real life, in relation to Jesus, I still am.



Grace Lutheran Church in Thornville, Ohio

The best part of the Christmas program was when it was over and the teachers handed out cookies. We might have received something healthier, as well. I can't remember. All I remember is that it was fun. We were all there. We all had a part to play. And everyone's part was important.

Have you ever thought about what it might be like to transfer the Christmas story role-playing of childhood into our adult lives? It's not as complicated a transference as you might think. Just as I used to ask, "What part am I going to be given in the Christmas pageant?" I should now ask, "What part am I now playing in the Christmas narrative in



St. John Lutheran Church in Boerne, Texas

Continued on Page 2

Continued from Page 1

real life?" Because, you see, like it or not, all of us have a part in the 21st century Christmas story.

We can no longer be Joseph or Mary, anymore, or one of the wise men or the shepherds or the angels. Not in real life. That first century event is over. It's happened. It's history. The characters in the story have all lived and died. They were individual people with a unique role in a different time and place. But the event of the birth of Christ is such a dynamic and eternal reality that we, all of us, still play a part in it. We cannot avoid it. We are not mere spectators, acting out our pretend part in the play. It's a real, down-to-earth involvement for each of us.

It's a question, I believe, we all should be asking ourselves every year. "In the Christmas cast of characters, who am I? What is my part?" Consider the options:

Maybe God has given you the privilege of, in some way, being like one of those beautiful figures at the Bethlehem scene. Like the shepherds who made haste to see the Christ Child and, as Luke tells us, "...made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child" (Luke 2:17).

Maybe your part is to return to your daily vocation, as they did, "glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen" (Luke 2:20).



Black Forest Lutheran Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado



St. Paul Lutheran Church in Pomaria, South Carolina

Maybe we, like the wise men, realize that our own human wisdom is not enough. It comes up short. As a result, we acknowledge our need for God's wisdom. In so doing, we become wise men and women. It says of them, "Then, opening their treasures, they fell down and worshiped him" (Matthew 2:11). Could that be you? Could that be us?

Go even deeper. Maybe your calling is to be like Joseph, who humbly accepted the announcement that came to him concerning Mary, his betrothed, who was with child, and who did as the angel commanded (Matthew 1:24). Could your role even be like that of Mary, in humble trust, realizing that Jesus continues to be born in us today? (Luke 1:38).

The point is simple. The Christmas narrative continues. You have a part in it, a specific part, a part no one else in this world can play. You are unique, as am I. You have been gifted with certain abilities, a certain part in history to play that is shared by no one else in this world. If you don't play it, it won't happen. If you don't respond to the message of Christmas in your life, that part of the story will be left out.

Just think about what happened as the story of Jesus and His life unfolded. One of the key and central characters in the story was John the Baptist. He was the forerunner, the one who prepared the

Continued on Page 3

way for Jesus. He called people to repentance. He baptized people with water. He also spoke of the One who was to come whose sandals he was not worthy to untie. He's a good real-to-life example for all of us.

Do you think your role could be like John's? Do think that what he was called to do in his life, that God might be calling you to do the same in yours? There are differences, to be sure, in time and place and occasion. There are also similarities, ways in which your life and his might not be that much different. Let me give you three.

One: it says, "There was a man sent from God whose name was John." That's a simple statement, defining the call John received. Could you put your name in that same sentence? "There was a person sent from God, whose name was _____." (In goes your name.)

Again, the transference is not that difficult, because all of us have been called. Our calling is to bear witness to Jesus, just as John was called to point people to Christ. In the broadest sense, it's the mission of the Church. We are called to "go into all the world and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19). It's the purpose for which we, as the Church, exist. In



New Beginnings Lutheran Church in Mahomet Illinois



Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church of Metropolitan in Felch, Michigan

the individual sense, the same is true for you. You have a purpose in life and that purpose is to share the name of Jesus with those you know.

That leads to the second similarity between John and us. It says, John's purpose was to "bear witness to the light." Light is a common biblical symbol for God, It's also a symbol for truth. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." He was God and in Him was found truth.

Jesus also said, "You are the light of the world." Can both of these statements be true? They can, insofar as we reflect the light of God found in Jesus and bear witness to the truth given to us in Christ. We are the ones through whom the true light of God and the truth found in Jesus are be shared.

Life in this world is not without lasting meaning. You are here for a purpose. God has placed you where you are to be His voice, His witness, the one whose responsibility it is to share what you've come to know about Jesus with others. And what a purpose that is, especially in our world today. People are looking for answers and lacking purpose that lasts. We have the answers, and they are found in Jesus. There is lasting purpose to our lives and that purpose is given to us in Christ.

John was not the light but came to bear witness to the light. The same could be said of you. You are not

Continued on Page 4

the light. Jesus is the light. I am not the light, nor are we. But God's light can be reflected in us. It can shine through us. Don't sell yourself short, nor your life. God can use your life. He will use your life, as you allow your life, in your life setting, to be used by Him.

And third: our lives are similar to John's when we respond in humility to the call we have in Jesus. How else can one look at the Bethlehem scene? How else can one look at his or her own purpose in life in response to Christ? When people wanted to exalt John, he told them that he was "not worthy to untie the thong of Jesus' sandals." What a wonderful and right posture that is for all of us.

Humility before the manger. Humility before the throne. Humility as with the Canaanite woman who wanted her daughter healed but who was blessed to be able to eat the crumbs that fell from the Master's table (Matthew 15:27). Humility as with the publican who went into the temple and prayed. "God, be merciful to me, a sinner" (Luke 18:13). Humility as with the Roman officer who said, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but just say the word and my servant will be healed" (Matthew 8:8). Or even humility as with Jesus Himself, of whom it was said, "Though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And



Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Troutman, North Carolina

being found in human form, humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:6-8).

Some claim that this kind of humility is self-abasing, that it destroys a healthy and positive self-image. Not at all. It's the way to fulfill your purpose, to really become who you were created to be; to become yourself.

As with Jesus, His humility led to His exaltation. To bend the knee before the Lord is not to lower or degrade yourself. At Jesus' feet, you become somebody. As with the wise men who fell down before the manger, so in that action do we become wise and begin to understand our true humanity. Because our true humanity is never discovered until we discover our proper and right relationship with the one who created and redeemed us.

We could do worse than to pattern our lives, in response to Jesus, after the example of John the Baptist. He was sent of God. He bore witness to the light. He assumed the proper stance of humility when confronted with what happened on that first Christmas. So it can be with us as we respond to the Christmas message.

Many of us may never again play a part in a pretend reenactment of that first Christmas story. But all of us have been given a part in the real, down-to-earth



St. Peter Lutheran Church in Chapin, South Carolina

Continued on Page 5

Continued from Page 4

story of God's coming to us in Jesus and its meaning in our world and for our lives today.

What is your part? Who, in this story, are you called to be? Who in your life needs to hear what God has done for all of us in Jesus? You may not wear a bathrobe or a scarf or carry a staff or offer gifts. But you have been called. Your part is not pretend. Your purpose is to be the light that points to the True Light.



Bethel Lutheran Church in Lincolnton, North Carolina



St. John's Lutheran Church of Nekimi in Oshkosh, Wisconsin

Don't let this Christmas come and go without responding in humility to your Creator. The one who made you as you are and who has called you and saved you and given your life real and lasting purpose in Jesus.

Bishop Dan Selbo

SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE NALC

As you support the work of the North American Lutheran Church, you are touching and changing lives in real and tangible ways.

As I travel throughout North America, I am encouraged by what I hear. The Holy Spirit is alive and well, working in ways we will never fully know this side of eternity, touching and changing lives for the sake of the Gospel and for the building and growing of Christ's Church.

God is working through the North American Lutheran Church to lead people to a living faith in Jesus Christ. Through the ministries of our congregations, the faithful work of our pastors and

members, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, God is using our collective witness and proclamation of the Gospel to transform lives for the Kingdom.

Would you consider making a financial contribution to our shared efforts?

Visit thenalc.org/wintergiving2024 to give online or mail your gift to: 2113 Harwood Road, Suite 309, PMB 409, Bedford, TX 76021-4703. Please include "Winter Giving" on the memo line of your check.

Thank you for your partnership in the Gospel!

Bishop Dan Selbo

NALC STAFF ADDITIONS AND UPDATES

The North American Lutheran Church has announced several new staff members and new roles for current staff.

Jessica Spohr of Irvine, California, and Emily Clark of Columbus, Ohio, joined the NALC's communications team in November. Both of them will be working remotely from their homes.

Jessica Spohr brings over a decade of experience in ministry and nonprofit communications, specializing in storytelling, project management, and social media strategy. A member of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (LCMC) in Irvine, California, Jessica's passion for connecting people through meaningful narratives aligns beautifully with the NALC's mission.

Emily Clark, a native of Columbus, Ohio, joins the staff as communications specialist and seminary liaison, supporting both the NALC and the North American Lutheran Seminary. She brings a diverse background in digital marketing and content strategy for both corporate and nonprofit organizations. A lifelong member of Upper Arlington Lutheran Church, Emily spent 11 years in elementary education before moving to communications.

"Both Jessica and Emily have already begun supporting the NALC with their expertise and enthusiasm, and we are excited to see their impact unfold," said the Rev. Deacon Andrew Ames Fuller, director of communications for the NALC.

Lindsay McDonald began serving the NALC as a financial specialist in December. She works with Dianne Morton, who began her new role as director of finance in November. Lindsay's strong background

in finance equips her to handle the complexities of the NALC's financial operations with excellence, supporting our ministry's growing needs. Lindsay



Emily Clark



Lindsay McDonald



Jessica Spohr



Robin Harris



Dianne Morton



Steven Neaton



Andrew Ames Fuller



Tony D. Ede



Amy Little

Continued on Page 7

Continued from Page 6

is currently working in a “temp-to-hire” capacity through a human resource consulting firm and is expected to join the NALC staff officially in March. She works in the NALC office in Bedford, Texas.

Steven Neaton of Detroit, Michigan, will begin his new role as relationship management administrator and registrar in January. Steven, who previously served as the communications lead for the North American Lutheran Seminary, will now focus on database management and integration. He will be working on the critical need for streamlining the work of NALC ministries through effective data management, record keeping, process improvement, and analysis.

Steven's dedication and eye for detail have already made a significant difference in his previous roles, and this new position will allow him to serve the NALC in an even greater capacity. He works remotely from his home.

Robin Harris of Jonestown, Pennsylvania, will transition from a part-time position to join the NALC staff full time as operations specialist. She works remotely from her home.

Robin previously served as the office manager for Messiah Lutheran Church in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, and the administrator for the NALC Atlantic Mission Region. She has been an invaluable asset to the NALC, providing support to the general secretary and director of communications. In her expanded role, Robin will oversee event logistics, operations, and communications support. Robin's expertise and dedication will continue to bless the NALC in this new capacity.

Robin's husband, the Rev. W. Bennett Harris, served as pastor of Mt. Zion Lutheran Parish (Zoar Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, and St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Fredericksburg, Pennsylvania) for 22 years until his death in October 2023.

The Rev. Tony D. Ede was named director of equipping ministries in September, but he was unable to begin many of those duties due to Pastor Amy Little's medical leave of absence as general secretary. Pastor Ede previously served the NALC as a communications specialist. This new position will focus on Bishop Dan Selbo's strategy for equipping and renewing NALC congregations with a comprehensive set of practical, discipleship-oriented resources, courses, and coaching opportunities. Pastor Ede serves from the NALC office in Bedford, Texas.

The Rev. Dr. Amy Little, NALC general secretary, rejoined the staff for an in-person meeting in Texas in December, where her presence was a source of joy and encouragement. She had been on a medical leave of absence. Pastor Little has been gradually adding to her work load. She will officially resume her full responsibilities as general secretary on Jan. 1.

The Rev. Deacon Andrew Ames Fuller and the Rev. Tony D. Ede have served as acting general secretary since September. They will return full time to their roles as director of communications and director of equipping Ministries, respectively.

These transitions and additions to the staff position the NALC to continue serving congregations in accordance with its Core Values: Christ Centered, Mission Driven, Traditionally Grounded, and Congregationally Focused.

LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

Rev. Dr. David J. Baer, *editor*
North American Lutheran Church
2113 Harwood Road, Suite 309
PMB 409
Bedford, TX 76021-4703 USA
+1-651-633-6004 | news@thenalc.org



NORTH AMERICAN
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

Please copy and share this newsletter widely.

ALL PRAISE AND THANKS TO GOD

BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS - SCRIPTURE AND THEOLOGY

The church's liturgies are intended to mirror God's cosmic design, so that by receiving His Word, our lives would be shaped by His eternal life. We are continually made to mirror His steadfast love.

Our liturgies are (especially as they open the church year for us) a doxological catechism whereby we are formed to the shape of His love. God's call for us to assemble in His name is a primary way that our lives become cruciform, that is, shaped by the cross of Jesus Christ.

For as St. Paul has taught us, those who die with Lord will live with Him forever (Romans 6:4-5). Through Holy Baptism and our weekly reception of our Lord's body into our hands, our lives are shaped by the cross and resurrection.

With the Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness, we then begin under the sign of the cross, remembering our baptism into Christ's death and resurrection as we hear the name of the One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in whom we live, and move, and have our very being (Acts 17:28).

The pastor then prays the ancient collect for purity, which helps the assembly to remember that God sees not only our actions, but His vision and hearing pierce to the depths of our hearts. Echoing Psalm 51:11, this prayer calls on the Holy Spirit to do such cleansing, so that we can live in the manner to which we were called at our baptisms, "Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16, *Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW)* page 124).

As we prepare for our communal confession, our hearts receive the words of 1 John 1:8-9. Since humanity's primordial sin is one of idolatry, this is a word that all humanity needs to hear. Whenever we



ALL PRAISE AND THANKS TO GOD

REV. DR. AMY C. SCHIFFRIN
NALS PRESIDENT EMERITUS

deceive ourselves putting ourselves in the seat of judge and jury, we forget that there is one God, the author of truth, who is the true judge of this world. This is a time to remember the words of Isaiah as well, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways" (Isaiah 55:8).

Then there is silence.

I feel a need to say this again. Then there is silence. Unfortunately, it is often overlooked or rushed through. Presiders need to take some deep breaths and then silently confess their own sins. Hopefully that will give a little more time for the congregation to confess theirs. Reflection and self-examination take more than few seconds. While this time is not as in depth as when one comes to individual confession and vocalizes their sins to their confessor, if time isn't given, then the corporate confession that follows may not fulfill its purpose.

Without time to remember and contemplate upon our sins, the recitation of the confession may become a mask that is used to cover the everyday actions by which each of us has hurt others, which at their root are sins against God. "Against thee only have I sinned, and done what is evil in thy sight" (Psalm 51:4).

The confession that follows has a lovely ecumenical history. The form of the confession owes much to

Continued on Page 9

Continued from Page 8

Scottish Congregational Minister John Hunter's *Devotional Services for Public Worship* (1866), which was later used in John Doberstein's *Minister's Prayer Book* (1959). The confession was adapted by the Episcopal Church and then published in 1979 in its *Book of Common Prayer*.

Lutherans again adapted this prayer with a distinctively Lutheran opening by which we confess not only sins, but the universal condition of sin as "we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves." The earlier Lutheran text from both the *Church Book* and *The Common Service Book* of 1918 spoke of this condition of sin with language that hearkened back to the Reformation era, "We are by nature sinful and unclean" (*Book of Concord*, Epitome I.1).

The Brief Order closes with either a direct word of absolution or an assurance of pardon. The first is a direct priestly word of absolution which declares forgiveness in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It has its roots in the medieval era and it is tied to the baptismal formula (Matthew 28:19).

The second simply speaks of God's grace as part of His forgiving power and character, and hearkens back to earlier forms of absolution (see John 1:12). It was used by Philip Melancthon in his 1552 *Mecklenburg Order* and later adopted in Wittenberg

as well as in the *Church Book* and the *Common Service Book*. If your congregation is using the Brief Order for the Sundays in Lent, the Assurance of Pardon echoes the "declaration of grace coupled with a plea for mercy" (See *LBW Minister's Desk Edition*, page 22) given in the Ash Wednesday Liturgy, so that during the season of Lent (40 days plus Sundays) you are continually engaged in an act of repentance. In this pattern we are confessing our sins until Maundy Thursday, where in the Corporate Order for Confession we have the opportunity to receive a direct word of absolution along with the laying on of hands (*LBW* page 194).

What's the difference between the assurance and the direct word? Well, that would require a journey into the "Apology of the Augsburg Confession XI," and a discussion into whether or not Confession and Absolution are a third sacrament. Let's save that for a column at a later date.

This is a part of a series of columns on worship and music by the Rev. Dr. Amy C. Schifrin, president emeritus of the North American Lutheran Seminary. Dr. Schifrin is a retired NALC pastor living in Montrose, Colorado. She served as president of the NALS from 2013 to 2019. She has taught music and liturgy on the college and seminary levels in addition to serving as a pastor in both Canada and the United States. She has a Ph.D. in liturgical studies and homiletics from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California.

DAILY PRAYER RESOURCE UPDATED

Devoted to Prayer is a resource designed to help you receive the Lord's gifts through His Word and prayer. This guide invites you to take part in the life of faith by connecting your daily prayers and Scripture reading to the rhythm of the Church year.

This year's edition has been updated based on feedback from people across the NALC. Readings are now in a list format, making it easier to follow and track Scripture readings, and seasonal prayers are integrated directly into the calendar. The font size was increased to provide improved readability for all. Supplemental resources included are a

"Guide for Daily Prayer," psalm prayers, and prayers for festivals and commemorations.

The daily Scripture readings follow the two-year lectionary from the *Lutheran Book of Worship*.

The hope is that this calendar will be a simple yet meaningful way for people throughout the NALC to abide in Christ and be nourished by His Word each day.

Visit thenalc.org to download the Devoted to Prayer calendar or for more information.

NALC CLERGY RETREAT TO FOCUS ON LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

The 2025 NALC Clergy Retreat will focus on the Lutheran Confessions. The retreat will be held Jan. 28-30 at the Holiday Inn San Antonio Riverwalk in San Antonio, Texas.

“This year’s theme, ‘Generous Confessionalism,’ invites us to explore the Lutheran Confessions as a pathway into the riches of our faith, rather than merely a stronghold against challenges,” organizers explained.

“The plenary sessions, led by distinguished theologians and pastors, will delve into how the Confessions guide us in navigating the vast landscape of Scripture, tradition, and culture, fostering a dynamic and living faith that invigorates pastoral ministry, mission, and Christian spirituality.”

Organizers describe the retreat as “a sanctuary for spiritual renewal and pastoral enrichment.” Throughout the retreat, there will be opportunities to engage in theological reflection, daily prayer, solitude, and communal interaction.

Speakers and topics of the lectures for the retreat include:

Confessions as a Way in Riches by Dr. David Luy, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology for the North American Lutheran Seminary and Trinity Anglican Seminary in Ambridge, Pennsylvania. Dr. Luy has a Ph.D. from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; M.Div. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, and a bachelor’s degree from Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois.

Confessions and the Scriptures by the Rev. Dr. Orrey McFarland, pastor of Peace Lutheran Church in Edmond, Oklahoma. Dr. McFarland has a Ph.D. and M.A. from Durham University in Durham, England and a bachelor’s degree from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Oklahoma.

Confessions and the Christian Tradition by Dr. Alex Pierce, Assistant Professor of Historical Theology for the North American Lutheran Seminary and Trinity Anglican Seminary. Dr. Pierce has a Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame; M.Div. and M.A. from Trinity Evangelical



Lara Bhasin



David Luy



Orrey McFarland



Alex Pierce

Divinity School and a bachelor’s degree from Northwestern College (now called the University of Northwestern) in Roseville, Minnesota.

Confessions as Missional Engagement with Culture by the Rev. Lara Bhasin, assistant pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church in New York, New York, and a full-time high school English teacher in Yonkers, New York. Pastor Bhasin has an M.Div. from the North American Lutheran Seminary and Trinity School for Ministry (now called Trinity

Continued on Page 11

Anglican Seminary); and a master's degree in philosophy from Fordham University and a bachelor's degree from Columbia University, both in New York City. Pastor Bhasin was ordained as an NALC pastor in 2023.

A meeting of the NALC ministerium with Bishop Dan Selbo will be held on Wednesday. There will be an opportunity for questions and discussion during the meeting.

The retreat concludes on Thursday with a service of Holy Communion which will include the reaffirmation of ordination vows and the blessing of oil for use in congregations.

There will be breakout sessions on a variety of topics on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Topics include "Retooling Lutheran Basics (Revisiting Lutheran Theology for the Parish Beyond the Seminary Years);" "Discerning Your Call to Ministry (Discernment is an Ongoing Process)" and "Teaching Catechism in the 21st Century."

A retirement seminar also will be offered during one of the breakout times.

There will be two language-specific gatherings for pastors during the clergy retreat. There will be gatherings for Oromo and Amharic-speaking pastors and Spanish-speaking pastors.

There will be an opportunity for feedback from pastors and deacons on proposed amendments to the NALC constitution on Wednesday evening. A task force has been preparing a revision of the NALC constitution which will move a lot of content from the constitution into bylaws. Proposed amendments also include some significant constitutional changes. The input will help the NALC Executive Council address any concerns before proposing the text of bylaws and amendments to the 2025 NALC Mission Convocation.

Separate gatherings for clergy couples and clergy spouses will be held at 7 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 27. These gatherings are designed to be opportunities for support and fellowship.



Generous Confessionalism NALC 2025 CLERGY RETREAT

The retreat will be preceded by Pastoral Development Days and the First Five Pastors' continuing education event Jan. 24-26. The two experiences will be combined this year.

Pastor Development Days is a continuing education experience designed to help newer pastors build relationships and work on their preaching skills. Registration fee is \$75.

The First Five Pastors' Continuing Education is intended for pastors in their first five years of pastoral ministry. All costs of this portion are covered by the NALC for new pastors.

"As we come together to explore the depths of our confessional heritage, we seek not only to deepen our understanding but to cultivate a spirit of openness and enrichment from the broader Christian tradition. This retreat is not just a pause from ministry but a space for encountering the inexhaustible wells of God's grace, enabling us to return to our congregations with renewed vigor and insight," organizers said in promotional materials.

All NALC pastors and deacons are encouraged to attend the clergy retreat each year. Congregations are asked to provide sufficient financial support to enable their pastors and deacons to attend.

The registration fee for the retreat is \$150. To register or for more information go to thenalc.org.

The NALC offers financial aid to help alleviate the costs of attending the retreat. To apply for assistance or for more information, contact Pastor Carol Fryer at cfryer@thenalc.org.

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY UPDATE

By Pastor Teresa Peters

Director of Youth and Family Ministry

BYLD (Building Youth as Leaders who are Disciples of Christ) is a week-long event for high school students that focuses on leadership skills, theological education, and discernment all from the perspective of the NALC's four Core Values.

BYLD will take place July 7-12, 2025, at Geneva College, only 14 miles from the North American Lutheran Seminary Center at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania.

The cost for students is \$100 and the cost of their own transportation to Pennsylvania. A travel subsidy is available for those coming from further away.

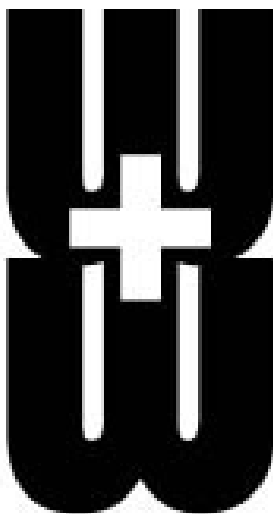
Spaces are limited, so make sure to register soon. We only have 24 spots available. For more information or to register contact Pastor Teresa Peters, director of Youth and Family Ministry for the NALC, at tpeters@thenalc.org.

"The Cross: where Word and Witness meet!" NALC Young Adult Inner City Mission Trip

Come and be a part of something life changing! Young adults ages 18 to 30 are invited to join other young adults from across North America for a week-long gathering to study the Word and witness to some of the most vulnerable, physically, socially and spiritually in Winnipeg, Manitoba, June 1-6, 2025.

Participants will have the opportunity to serve in schools, shelters, food banks, soup kitchens, and on the street.

The cost to take part is only \$50, plus the cost of their own transportation to Winnipeg. All costs for accommodations, food, and transportation at the gathering are covered by the Canadian Mission District. If the cost of travel is prohibitive, check with your mission district about the availability of a possible scholarship to help.



Registration deadline is Feb. 1. To register or for more information, contact Pastor Teresa Peters, director of Youth and Family Ministry for the NALC, at tpeters@thenalc.org.

2026 NALC Continental Youth Gathering

The 2026 NALC Continental Youth Gathering will be July 7-10, 2026, at St. John Lutheran Church in Roanoke, Virginia. Save the date and plan to attend. The gathering is for youth ages 12-18.

