

ברא אלהים

GOD THE FATHER CREATES

Lutheran Week 2021

Schedule & Program

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over
the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over
the face of the waters.*

—Genesis 1:1-2



NALC

North American Lutheran Church

AMERICAN BANK CENTER
GROUND LEVEL
1901 N. Shoreline Blvd | Corpus Christi, TX 78401

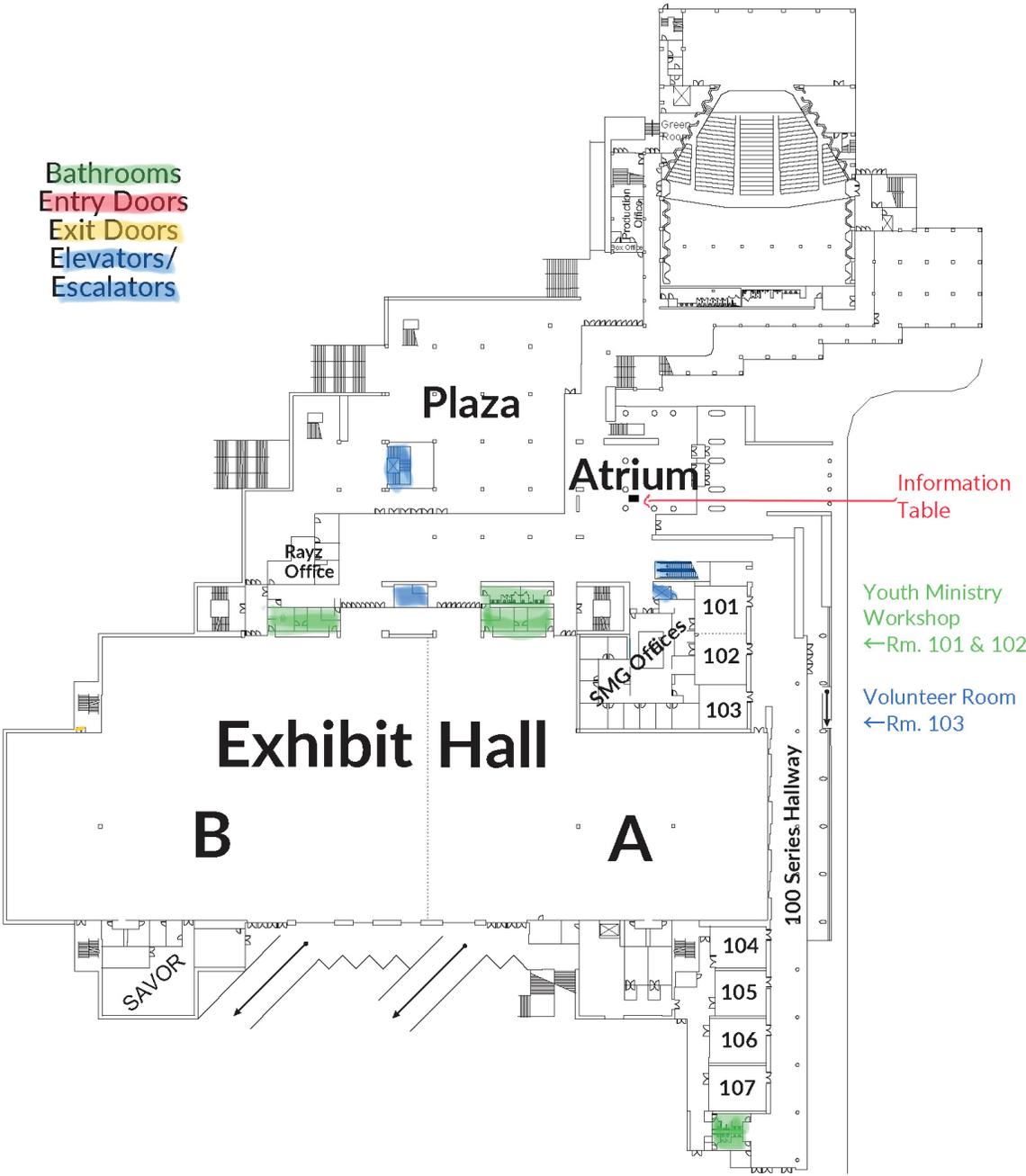


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A WELCOME FROM BISHOP DAN SELBO



The North American Lutheran Church (NALC) Lutheran Week is a time for pastors and lay leaders throughout North America to come together as members of a church body that is united in the commission and commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ and grounded in the authority of the Scriptures. We gather for the purpose of deepening our fellowship, strengthening our mission and ministry connections and growing in our faith in Jesus and our love for each other.

Opportunities during the week range from learning more about our NALC Life-to-Life Discipleship, a gathering for those in youth ministry, an event for our women, a chance to be encouraged and challenged in our stewardship, and a theological conference, all culminating with our Mission Convocation.

The theme for this year's gathering is "God the Father Creates." Our time together will center around the creating power and activity of God, made clear and certain in the life, death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. God is continually creating – life out of death, joy out of suffering and pain, a chance to start anew for those who have lost hope.

We are glad you are here, and we look forward to the time we will share. My prayer is that our creating God will be creating new life in each of us, as we fix our eyes on the One who gave His life on the cross and who was raised from the dead, and who has now drawn us together, through the power of His Holy Spirit, in the Body of His Church.

It is a joy to serve together in the North American Lutheran Church!

Welcome to Lutheran Week in Corpus Christi!

Bishop Dan Selbo

Bishop Dan

A WELCOME FROM THE SOUTHWEST TEXAS MISSION DISTRICT



The Southwest Texas Mission District of the NALC welcomes you to South Texas and the Coastal Bend. Our mission district stretches 259 miles from St. James Lutheran (Llano) to St. Stephen Lutheran (Portland). We are blessed with churches on the outskirts of San Antonio such as Immanuel Lutheran (La Vernia), First Evangelical Lutheran (Floresville) and St. John Lutheran (Boerne). The hill country, north of the Alamo city, is filled with a rich German Lutheran presence with St. Paul Lutheran (Cave Creek), Holy Ghost Lutheran (Fredericksburg), and St. Peter Lutheran (Doss). We are also blessed with rural and coastal ministries with St. Paul Lutheran (Yorktown), St. John Lutheran (Meyersville), St. Paul Lutheran (Runge), St. John's Lutheran (Goliad) and Our Savior Lutheran (Three Rivers). The Southwest Texas Mission District welcomes you and prays you enjoy this special event of the NALC.

Our churches are providing the Hospitality Team. Each team member will be wearing a red NALC vest. Their role is to answer questions or get you answers, help with directions (where are the rest rooms? the shuttle? a certain room? etc.), assist in registering participants, serve as ushers for worship and main meetings, assist with displays and operate the video cameras.

There are Hospitality Team members who serve in the area of First Aid/Medical Response. These hosts will be wearing a red vest with a red hat. They are trained in first aid medical response especially for these facilities. Should you need medical attention find one of these volunteers. You may also go to a volunteer with a red vest. They will get you to our First Aid responders.

Please enjoy your visit here in Corpus Christi. Enjoy the beaches and fine foods. If you have a moment, cross over the Harbor Bridge, and visit the USS Lexington, where part of the movie "Pearl Harbor" was filmed.

In ministry together,

The Rev. Norm Sulaica
Dean, Southwest Texas Mission District

GOD THE FATHER CREATES

Every year, the North American Lutheran Church gathers (either virtually or in person) for Lutheran Week! The week is more than a conference, more than a church festival and much more than a business meeting. The NALC Lutheran Week is all of that and more! This year's theme is **God the Father Creates**. The 2021 Lutheran Week of the North American Lutheran Church will draw our attention to the person of God, the Father. Continuing the six-year cycle focusing on the persons and work of the Holy Trinity, the Braaten-Benne Lecture series and the NALC Mission Convocation will each aspire to point to the nature and being of God, the Father, who is creator of heaven and earth! Lutherans will necessarily remember Martin Luther's Small Catechism, affirming the first article of the Apostle's Creed: *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth*. And the subsequent question: *What does this mean?* The Catechism explains:

I believe that God has made me and all that exists. He has given me and still preserves my body and soul with all their powers. He provides me with food and clothing, home and family, daily work, and all I need from day to day. God also protects me in time of danger and guards me from every evil. All this he does out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, though I do not deserve it. Therefore I surely ought to thank and praise, serve and obey him. This is most certainly true (*The Small Catechism*, Martin Luther, Augsburg/Fortress, 1979).

At first glance, Luther's explanation of this article appears to focus attention on the "work" of God the Father, that He has made me and all creatures, providing for us richly and daily with all that we need! The Father does all this, however, because of who He is – because it is His nature not only to create, but also to provide, and all this, He does, *"out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, though I do not deserve it."*

Dr. Luther was always careful to emphasize that all we have and are, indeed, our justification and eternal salvation are not because of us and our words or deeds, but solely the proper work of God, growing out of the heart and being of God. For God the Father not only creates, but also redeems and sanctifies us, through the gift of His Son and Holy Spirit. Luther writes in the Large Catechism:

He has created us for this very purpose, to redeem and sanctify us. Moreover, having bestowed upon us everything in heaven and on earth, he has given us his Son and his Holy Spirit, through whom he brings us to himself. As we explained

before, we could never come to recognize the Father's favor and grace were it not for the Lord Christ, who is a mirror of the Father's heart. Apart from him we see nothing but an angry and terrible judge (Apostle's Creed, Article III, *Book of Concord*, Tappert, Fortress Press, 1959).

As we focus on the person, nature and being of God the Father, we understand Him fully through the Lord Jesus Christ, mirror of the Father's heart, revealed by the Holy Spirit, because of the Father's divine goodness and mercy!

CORE VALUES

Christ Centered

We confess the apostolic faith in Jesus Christ according to the Holy Scriptures. We affirm the authority of the Scriptures as the authoritative source and norm, “according to which all doctrines should and must be judged” (Formula of Concord). We accept the ecumenical creeds and the Lutheran Confessions as true witnesses to the Word of God.

Mission Driven

We believe that the mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel and to make disciples for Christ. We believe that making disciples – in our congregations, in our communities and nations, and around the world – must be a priority of the Church in the present age.

Traditionally Grounded

We affirm the ecumenical creeds and the faithful witness of the Church across time and space. We endorse the form and practices of the universal Church that are consistent with Scripture, particularly the office of the ministry and the tradition of worship under Word and Sacrament. We seek dialogue and fellowship with other Lutheran churches and with faithful Christians of other confessions.

Congregationally Focused

We strive to be a church that is organized to facilitate the ministries of local congregations in a posture of servant-hood and a spirit of partnership, through the provision of resources, connections and information.

LEADERSHIP

BISHOP & STAFF

Executive Staff

The Rev. Dr. Daniel W. Selbo	<i>Bishop</i>
*The Rev. Dr. Amy C. Little	<i>General Secretary</i>
The Rev. Andrew S. Ames Fuller	<i>Director of Communications</i>
The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba	<i>Assistant to the Bishop for Missions</i>
The Rev. Phillip Gagnon <small>STS</small>	<i>Assistant to the Bishop for Domestic Mission & Discipleship</i>
The Rev. Dr. Eric M. Riesen	<i>President, North American Lutheran Seminary</i>
The Rev. Dr. David Wendel	<i>Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry & Ecumenism</i>

**Beginning in September 2021*

Program Staff

The Rev. Dr. David Baer	<i>Newsletter Editor</i>
Mary Bates	<i>Disaster Response Coordinator</i>
The Rev. Brad Hales	<i>Director of Renewal Ministries</i>

Administrative Staff

Joan Corniea	<i>Financial Assistant</i>
Patty Forrest	<i>Administrative Assistant to the NALS President</i>
Anne Gleason	<i>Financial Administrator</i>
Becky Seifert	<i>Assistant to the Executive Staff</i>
Ariel Wicker	<i>Communications Specialist</i>

CHURCH GOVERNANCE

Executive Council

The Rev. Bassam Abdallah

The Rev. Mark Braaten

Richard Jansak

The Rev. Melinda H. Jones, *Recording Secretary*

Lynn Kickingbird

Scott Kramer

The Rev. Carl Rasmussen

Brian Sutton

Michael Johnson, *Treasurer*

Court of Adjudication

Samuel Duncomb

James Gale

The Rev. Jennifer Gold

The Rev. Jeffray S. Greene

The Rev. Leslie Haines

Lyle Hollander

The Rev. John Moffett

Inquiry Panel

The Rev. Jim Bangsund

The Rev. Tom Lurvey

The Rev. Lisa Peterson

Dan Reynolds

MISSION DISTRICT DEANS

Convener of the Deans

The Rev. Mark Daniels

Centerville, Ohio

ATLANTIC MISSION REGION

Regional Dean

The Rev. David McGettigan
Atlantic City, New Jersey

Central Mission District

The Rev. Daniel Schaefer, Sr.
Green Lane, Pennsylvania

Northeast Mission District

The Rev. Brett Jenkins
Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania

Southern Mission District

The Rev. John Kulczycki
Middle River, Maryland

Western Mission District

The Rev. W. Stevens Shipman, Jr.
Dillsburg, Pennsylvania

Canadian Mission District

The Rev. Malcolm (Mac) de Waal
Outlook, Saskatchewan

CAROLINAS MISSION REGION
Catawba Valley Mission District
The Rev. Dr. Nathan Howard Yoder
Maiden, North Carolina

Piedmont-East Mission District
The Rev. Kenneth W. Reed, Jr.
China Grove, North Carolina

South Carolina Mission District
The Rev. David B. Tholstrup
Chapin, South Carolina

Southern Piedmont Mission District
The Rev. Steven Paul King
Lincolnton, North Carolina

Central Pacific Mission District
The Rev. John Saethre
Fresno, California

Eastern South Dakota Mission District
The Rev. Thomas Jacobson
Menno, South Dakota

GREAT PLAINS MISSION REGION

Regional Dean

The Rev. Dennis Beckmann

Mankato, Kansas

Great Plains Mission District East

The Rev. Fritz Brandenburg

Westboro, Missouri

Great Plains Mission District South

The Rev. Richard Solberg

Bella Vista, Arkansas

Great Plains Mission District West

The Rev. Keith Less

Abilene, Kansas

Great Rivers Mission District

The Rev. James T. Lehmann

Thomasboro, Illinois

Heartland Mission District

The Rev. Pamela Thorson

Elizabethtown, Kentucky

Iowa Mission District
The Rev. Christopher Staley
Saint Ansgar, Iowa

Michigan Mission District
The Rev. Steve Hartten
Stevensville, Michigan

Mid-Northeast Mission District
The Rev. Nila Cogan
Friedens, Pennsylvania

Mid-South Mission District
The Rev. Trina Petersen
Lithonia, Georgia

Minkota Mission District
The Rev. Steve Bliss
Wannaska, Minnesota

Northwest Mission District
The Rev. Jack Richards
Everett, Washington

OHIO MISSION REGION

North Central Ohio Mission District

The Rev. Diana Seaman

Crestline, Ohio

North Eastern Ohio Mission District

The Rev. Michael Koch

Medina, Ohio

North West Ohio Mission District

The Rev. Hilbert (Bert) Schultz

Jackson Center, Ohio

Southeastern Ohio Mission District

The Rev. Jeffrey Morlock

Galloway, Ohio

Southwest Ohio Mission District

The Rev. Paul Schultz

Cincinnati, Ohio

Rocky Mountain Mission District

The Rev. Ken Hohag

Colorado Springs, Colorado

Sonshine Mission District of Florida

The Rev. Alan Peacock

Jacksonville, Florida

Southwest Pacific Mission District

The Rev. Randy Ouimette

Arroyo Grande, California

TEXAS MISSION REGION

North Texas Mission District

The Rev. Tim Christ

Fulshear, Texas

Southeast Texas Mission District

The Rev. Kris Brower

Brenham, Texas

Southwest Texas Mission District

The Rev. Norm Sulaica

Three Rivers, Texas

Western Dakotas, Montana & Wyoming Mission District

The Rev. Dr. David Baer

Whitewood, South Dakota

Wisconsin & Upper Michigan Mission District

The Rev. Craig Nehring

Caroline, Wisconsin

CHAPLAIN

THE REV. NILA COGAN

Dean, Mid-Northeast Mission District; Pastor, St. Thomas Evangelical Lutheran Church (Somerset, Pennsylvania)



Pastor Nila Cogan serves at St. Thomas Evangelical Lutheran Church in Somerset County, Southwestern Pennsylvania. She is also the dean for the Mid-Northeast Mission District. Before becoming the dean, she served the mission district as treasurer and secretary. She also steered the formation of In-Tents Lutheran Camp, NALC. In her personal life, before starting her seminary studies, she, along with her husband, owned and operated a large greenhouse and floral operation. They now have a small farm where they raise pigs and sheep, as well as make hay. She has four children and seven grandchildren. The most important priorities of her life are faith, family and farming.

LUTHERAN WEEK PLANNING TEAM

THE REV. WILL HARTFELDER

Chair, Lutheran Week Planning Team



The Rev. Will Hartfelder retired in June 2018 after 31 years of parish ministry. In retirement, he continues to serve as a law enforcement chaplain with the Columbus, Ohio, Division of Police. Prior to the pandemic, he and Julie, his wife of 46 years, enjoyed traveling through Europe, the Holy Land and Southeast Asia. They look forward to opportunities for more travel as well as visits with their four grandchildren and their families.

Many thanks to the individuals who give generously of their time to plan for this gathering of our church: Jacqui El Torro, the Rev. Nila Cogan, the Rev. Dr. Nathan Yoder, the Rev. Orrey McFarland, Gary and Laurie Pecuch, Jill Nesheim, the Rev. Dona Johnson, the Rev. Tony Ede, Dawn Hahm, the Rev. Norm Sulaica, Michael Kennedy, the Rev. Mark Chavez, and Jenny Brockman, and the NALC Staffers: Anne Gleason, Ariel Wicker, the Rev. Andrew Ames Fuller, and Becky Seifert.

MINISTRY EXPO

Each year, many parachurch ministries, seminaries, publishers and mission organizations attend Lutheran Week to provide a wealth of resources and partnership opportunities for our churches and leaders. Here is a list of some of our partners in attendance this year.

American Lutheran Publicity Bureau (ALPB)

Baker Academic and Brazos Press Call, Inc.

China Service Ventures

ChurchTech

Commission Expeditions

Concordia Publishing House

Congo Ministries

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch

faithwebbing

Friends of Madagascar Mission (FOMM)

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

Great Commission Society/Life-to-Life Discipleship

Hahn Financial Group, Inc./NALC Lutheran Benefits

India Transformed!

Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT)

Life Together Churches

Lutheran CORE

Lutheran Lay Renewal

Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries, Inc.

Lutherans for Life

Malawi Orphan Care

MOTIF

NALC Chaplains

NALC Disaster Response

NALC Life Ministries

NALC Living and Giving Stewardship Team

North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS) Network

Sola Publishing

Spiritual Orphans Network (SON)

St. Paul Lutheran Seminary

Sundouloi Ministries (SMI Haiti)

Touchstone Magazine

Word and World

World Mission Prayer League (WMPL)

Women of the NALC

SHUTTLE SCHEDULE

Monday, August 2

No shuttle service available on Monday, August 2

Tuesday, August 3

7:30 a.m.–6:30 p.m. (*every 15 minutes*)

Wednesday, August 4

7:30 a.m.–9:30 p.m. (*every 15 minutes*)

Thursday, August 5

7:30 a.m.–9:30 p.m. (*every 15 minutes*)

Friday, August 6

7:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. (*every 15 minutes*)

Please note that federal law requires masks be worn on the shuttles

WOMEN OF THE NALC GATHERING

WOMEN OF THE NALC GATHERING SCHEDULE

Tuesday, August 3

8:30 a.m.	Registration and Sisterhood	<i>Harborview 225 A & B</i>
9:00 a.m.	Welcome	
9:15 a.m.	Holy Communion Presider: The Rev. Dawn Rister	
9:30 a.m.	Business Meeting	
9:50 a.m.	Nominations & Ministry Reports	
10:30 a.m.	Break/Stretch & Sing	
10:55 a.m.	Keynote Speaker: The Rev. Amy Carpenter	
11:40 a.m.	Bible Study	
12:20 p.m.	Song & Table Prayer	
12:30 p.m.	Lunch	<i>Harborview 225 C</i>
1:30 p.m.	New Business	
2:00 p.m.	Elections	
2:10 p.m.	Group Photo	
2:30 p.m.	Missions The Great Commission Society NALC Disaster Response	
3:00 p.m.	Break	
3:15 p.m.	Mission Districts Time	
4:00 p.m.	Election Results	
4:05 p.m.	Bishop Selbo Address & Installation of New Council	
4:30 p.m.	10th Anniversary Celebration	

GUEST SPEAKER

THE REV. AMY CARPENTER

Pastor, Christ the King Lutheran Church (Evans, Georgia)



Pastor Amy Carpenter serves as an NALC pastor in the Augusta, Georgia area. She was ordained in 2019 after many years of lay leadership in the church, primarily focusing on women's, single adult, and small group ministries. In her first career, she worked in the communications industry as a writer, editor, and radio broadcaster. Now, as co-pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church (Evans, Georgia) she preaches, teaches, and serves as the primary point of contact for pastoral care and counseling needs.

Pastor Amy especially enjoys walking alongside God's people through the seasons of their lives and nurturing them in their faith along the way. She looks forward to sharing Holy Communion and bringing us encouragement from God's word at the WNALC Gathering. "No matter what is happening in our world, God calls us to be people of hope – and entrusts us with the message of our only hope," she said. "So, we rejoice that we always have good news to share." Pastor Amy will guide us in looking forward with hope and joy to what God has next for the Women of the NALC – both individually and as a body.

BRAATEN-BENNE
LECTURES IN THEOLOGY

ABOUT THE BRAATEN-BENNE LECTURES IN THEOLOGY

The Carl E. Braaten and Robert D. Benne Lectures in Theology have been an integral part of Lutheran Week since 2009. The event originated as the Lutheran CORE Theological Conference, and came under additional sponsorship from the North American Lutheran Church in 2010. In 2015, it was renamed in honor of Carl E. Braaten and Robert D. Benne, prominent Lutheran theologians who organized and conducted the theological lectures for the first five years (2010-2014). The Lectures reflect a commitment on the part of the North American Lutheran Church, the organizers of Lutheran Week, and the series steering committee to the significance of theology for the future of North American Lutheranism.

Each year the series brings together leading theologians, biblical scholars and ethicists from across confessional and ecumenical boundaries to address key issues of Christian faith and practice. While the papers are scholarly in nature, presenters are asked to keep the local church in mind. Each paper is followed by a question and answer session, with audience members determining the course of the discussion. One of the highlights of the annual event is the roundtable panel session at the close of the lectures. This yearly event gathers an audience composed of laypersons, students, pastors, professional scholars and denominational leaders.

BRAATEN-BENNE CHAIR

THE REV. DR. NATHAN HOWARD YODER STS

Dean, Catawba Valley Mission District of the Carolinas Mission Region; Chair, NALC Braaten-Benne Lectures in Theology; Pastor, St. Martin's Lutheran Church (Maiden, North Carolina)



Pastor Nathan Yoder will introduce and frame the theme of this year's Braaten-Benne Lectures in Theology, giving a history of the doctrine of God the Father. Yoder is the dean of the Catawba Valley Mission District of the Carolinas Mission Region, serves on the NALC Commission for Theology & Doctrine, and chairs the NALC Braaten-Benne Lectures in Theology.

BRAATEN-BENNE LECTURERS

DR. PAIGE HOCHSCHILD

Chair of Theology; Mount St. Mary's University (Emmitsburg, Maryland)



Dr. Paige Hochschild will be discussing the current trend in religious studies to curtail masculine language in speech about God, as well as the apostolic response to this movement and the need for faithful persistence in addressing God as Father and using complementary language. Hochschild is a Roman Catholic who serves as the Chair of Theology at Mount St. Mary's University.

THE VERY REV. PATRICK HENRY REARDON

Archpriest of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese; Senior Editor of Touchstone Magazine: A Journal of Mere Christianity



Fr. Patrick Henry Reardon will be speaking on how the gnostic heresy (back then, and right now) is linked implicitly to a rejection of the God of the Old Testament and an apostolic understanding of God the Father. Archpriest Reardon, a retired pastor of the Orthodox Church, is a Senior Editor of *Touchstone Magazine: A Journal of Mere Christianity* and lives in Chicago. Educated at Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville and the Collegio di Sant' Anselmo and the Pontificio Instituto Biblico, both in Rome, he is the author of eleven books and hundreds of articles, editorials, and reviews in a dozen or so journals. He is a weekly preacher on Ancient Faith Radio.

THE REV. DR. ERIC M. RIESEN

President, North American Lutheran Seminary



Pastor Eric Riesen will be speaking on our address of God as Father as commanded by Jesus in the Lord's Prayer. Dr. Riesen is the President of the North American Lutheran Seminary and author of *The Christian Faith: A Catechism for the Curious*. Pastor Riesen is a graduate of Indiana University (B.S.), Fuller Theological Seminary (M.A.), Luther Theological Seminary (M.Div.), and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (D. Min). He also studied at St. Vincent's Theological Seminary (Benedictine). Pastor Riesen chaired the NALC Life-to-Life Discipleship Team for six years.

THE REV. DR. AMY C. SCHIFRIN STS

President Emeritus, North American Lutheran Seminary; Associate Professor of Liturgy & Homiletics, Trinity School for Ministry (Ambridge, Pennsylvania) & the North American Lutheran Seminary



Pastor Amy Schifrin will be speaking on how the divine name of YHWH revealed in the Old Testament relates to our understanding of God the Father revealed in Christ – as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – while at the same time speaking in Trinitarian terms. Dr. Schifrin is President Emeritus and Associate Professor of Liturgy and Homiletics for the North American Lutheran Seminary.

THE MOST REV. DR. RAY R. SUTTON

Presiding Bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church (REC) and the Ordinary of the Diocese of Mid America; Dean of the Province and Ecumenical Affairs of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA)



Bishop Ray Sutton will be speaking on the significance of the title “Abba” in the New Testament to our Trinitarian theology. Sutton serves as the Presiding Bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church (REC) and the Ordinary of the Diocese of Mid America. He is also the Dean of the Province and Ecumenical Affairs of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), of which the Reformed Episcopal Church is a founding member and special jurisdiction.

LECTURE I NOTES
Amy C. Schifrin

**Of One Being With the Father:
How Christ Leads Us to Rejoice in God's Love**

LECTURE II NOTES

Patrick Henry Reardon

Patriarchy in God and Creation, the Root of Reality

- Jesus' identification of God – Matthew 11
- History of the First Article of the Creed – The Apologists
- Patriarchy – The Council of Nicaea
 1. Patriarchy in God: I believe in one God, the almighty Father
 2. Patriarchy in Creation: Creator of heaven and earth
- Modern Gnostic Challenges to the first article of the Creed
 1. The Overthrow of Biblical Authority
 2. The Theory of Evolution
 3. Feminism
 4. Gender Replaces Sex

LECTURE III NOTES

Ray R. Sutton

The Father Like No Other: Abba Father

- I. Introductory Comments
 - A. The Importance of God as Father
 - B. The Uniqueness of Abba Father
 1. Hammerton-Kelly
 2. Joachim Jeremias
 - C. Challenges to God as Abba Father
 1. James Barr et al
 2. Feminist scholars
 - D. Conclusions: C. S. Lewis: God as Father and Mother are two different religions
 - E. Summary and purpose of this lecture
- II. The Reality of God the Father
 - A. The Reality of God as Father
 1. Scripture does not primarily use metaphor in referring to God as Father
 - a. General references
 - b. Masculine terminology
 - c. Progressive revelation of God as a twice Father in the Old Testament: Creation and Redemption
 - d. Jesus Christ's references to God as Father and Abba Father
 - e. The use of metaphor in reference to activities of God the Father
 2. The difference between reality of person and metaphor about the essential person
 - B. Patristic and Creedal Definition of Person:
 1. Problems with defining Person based on qualities: Incipient modalism
 2. To define God as other than Father alters the historic Patristic and Creedal definition of Person
 3. Relational understanding of Person among the church fathers
 - a. Cappadocian Fathers and the Eastern View of God the Father as Source
 - b. St. Augustine's Relational Understanding of Person
 4. The Catholic Creeds' Reflect God as Father
 - a. Nicaea and Chalcedon
 - b. Conclusions regarding definition of Person in terms of Relation
 - C. Contemporary problems defining human person in terms of qualities
- III. The Unveiling of God as Abba Father through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ
 - A. Scriptural references

- B. Significant of the Abba Father Relationship
- IV. The Uniqueness of Biblical Adoption: God as Abba twice Father
 - A. The New Testament Doctrine of Abba Father
 - B. Aspects of Biblical Adoption as kinship
 - 1. Adoption by Justitia Dei
 - 2. Adoption by the work of the Spirit
 - 3. Adoption by means of the sacrament: Baptism and Eucharist
- V. Conclusion

LECTURE IV NOTES
Paige Hochschild

St. Augustine on the Fatherhood of God

LECTURE V NOTES

Eric M. Riesen

“Our Father who art in heaven”

The Language of Prayer: the *analogia entis* and the *analogia fidei*

Synopsis: The feminist critique of language shows no signs of stopping. Increasingly people are subtly (and not so subtly) pushed to alter traditional forms of speech in order to meet the demands of inclusivity. Nowhere is this more obvious than in religious discourse and liturgy. The naming of God as “He” or “Father” is increasingly thought to be sexist and insulting to half the human race. Christians who share the catholic faith would do well to listen and try to understand this critique. Feminists have a point. God is not the “Big Guy in the Sky.”

It is very important for all of us to recognize the limits of human language when speaking of God. God cannot be captured by language. God is an iconoclast and smashes every human attempt to define the divine. The best we can do is to use language that is analogical. We call God good, and are right to do so. We can use an analogy to understand something of God’s goodness. God is good and we know “something” of what goodness is. However, divine goodness surpasses “fallen” human reason. Theological language about God is like throwing stones at a star. We can climb a little higher, throw a little harder, but never hit the target. However, things change when the star falls to earth.

The Incarnation changes everything. The hidden, incomprehensible God who is inscrutable, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient is revealed. Or rather, he hides in Jesus of Nazareth in order supremely to reveal Himself.

Christian prayer is communication with God in union with Christ Jesus. We call God “Father” solely because Jesus is “Son of the Father” from all eternity. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit we are united with Christ by faith alone. To call God “Father” is a Christological confession of who Jesus is, and who we are “in Christ.”

The pastoral concerns related to abusive fathers needs addressed. However, every human relationship is marred by sin. We do not call God “Father” because fathers are analogically more like God than mothers. We call God “Father” only because of our union with Christ.

MISSION CONVOCATION

MISSION CONVOCATION PROPOSED AGENDA

Wednesday, August 4

1:30 p.m.	Holy Communion & Opening of Convocation	<i>Henry Garrett A & B</i>
3:00 p.m.	Session I <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Call to Order- Welcome by Norm Sulaica, Dean of Southwest Texas- Adoption of Rules of Procedure- Approval of Agenda- Introduction of Lutheran Week Planning Team- Introduction of Reference and Counsel- Introduction of Staff- Introduction of Executive Council- Introduction of NALS Board of Regents- Introduction of Deans- Introduction of Ministry Partners- Introduction of General Secretary	<i>Henry Garrett A & B</i>
3:45 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Bishop's Report and 2020 Vision Overview<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Vision Point #1 Report- Vision Point #2 Report- Vision Point #3 Report- Vision Point #4 Report- Q & A	
5:45 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Constitutional Changes	
6:05 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ecumenical Guest Greeting: Bishop Ray Sutton (ACNA)	
6:10 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Announcements and Prayer	
6:15 p.m.	Dinner	<i>On Your Own</i>
7:30 p.m.	Free Evening or Workshops (concurrent) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- NALC Living and Giving Stewardship- Youth Ministry- NALC Life-to-Life Discipleship	<i>Henry Garrett D Rooms 101 & 102 Henry Garrett C</i>
9:00 pm	Compline	<i>Omni Hotel - Bayview Room</i>

Thursday, August 5

6:30 a.m.	Morning Prayer	<i>Omni Hotel – Bayview Room</i>
8:30 a.m.	Session II	<i>Henry Garrett A & B</i>
	- Prayer	
	- “God the Father Creates!”	
	<i>Speaker: Dr. Steven Paulson</i>	
10:00 a.m.	- Break	
10:15 a.m.	- Vision Report (Continued)	
	- Vision Point #5 Report	
	- Votes	
	- Resolution Regarding Four Regional Assistants to the Bishop	
	- Resolution Regarding NALC Central Office	
11:50 a.m.	- Announcements and Prayer	
12:00 p.m.	Lunch (<i>included in registration fee</i>)	<i>Watergarden A & B</i>
1:00 p.m.	Session III	<i>Henry Garrett A & B</i>
	- Prayer	
	- Report of Resolution Votes	
	- Vision Report (Continued)	
	- Vision Point #6 Report	
	- Vision Point #7 Report	
	- Q & A	
2:00 p.m.	- Report of Nominating Committee	
	- First Ballot	
	- Youth Ministry Report: Gary & Laurie Pecuch, faithwebbing.com	
	- Report on Lutheran Benefits Plan	
	- Greetings from Ecumenical and Inter-Lutheran Guests	
3:00 p.m.	Break	
3:15 p.m.	Session III (Continued)	<i>Henry Garrett A & B</i>
	- Report of the First Ballot	
	- Recognitions of Ordination Anniversaries	
	- Recognition of Military Chaplains and Personnel and Their Families	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition of Chaplains Serving in Other Contexts - Introduction of Seminarians - Introduction of Newly Ordained Pastors - Congregational Anniversaries - Remembrance of Pastors Who Have Died Since Last Convocation - Second Ballot (if needed) - Vision Report (Continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vision Point #8 Report - Vision Point #9 Report - Q & A 	
4:00 p.m.			
4:50 p.m.		- Announcements and Prayer	
5:30 p.m.	Dinner		<i>Watergarden A & B</i>
7:00 p.m.	Mission District Meetings		<i>To Be Announced</i>
9:00 p.m.	Compline		<i>Henry Garrett A & B</i>

Friday, August 6

6:30 a.m.	Holy Communion		<i>Omni Hotel – Bayview Room</i>
7:00 a.m.	Deans’ Breakfast		<i>American Bank Center – Lower Foyer</i>
8:30 a.m.	Session IV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Devotion - Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel - “You Carried Me” <i>Speaker: Melissa Ohden</i> - Table Talk 		<i>Henry Garrett A & B</i>
10:15 a.m.	Break		
10:30 a.m.	Session IV (Continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vision Report (Continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vision Point #10 Report - Q & A on 2020 Vision 		<i>Henry Garrett A & B</i>

11:00 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report of the Second Ballot - Third Ballot - Treasurer's Report - 2022 Budget Proposal - Vote on 2022 Budget 	
12:00 p.m.	Lunch	<i>Watergarden A & B</i>
1:30 p.m.	Session V <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prayer - Report of NALC Living and Giving Stewardship Task Force - NALC Life Ministries - WNALC Report - NALC Disaster Response - Report of the Third Ballot - Announcement of Future Events 	<i>Henry Garrett A & B</i>
3:30 p.m.	Close of Convocation	<i>Henry Garrett A & B</i>

PLENARY SESSION SPEAKERS & PREACHERS

THE REV. DR. GEMECHIS BUBA

Assistant to the Bishop for Missions, North American Lutheran Church



The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba is originally from Ethiopia and now lives in Atlanta, Georgia, with his wife and three children. In addition to academic study and ordained ministry, Dr. Buba participates in multiple international ministries through speaking, leading revivals, leadership development conventions and evangelical mission events.

MELISSA OHDEN

Founder & Director, The Abortion Survivors Network



Melissa Ohden is the survivor of a failed saline infusion abortion. Despite the initial concerns regarding Ohden's future after surviving the attempt to end her life at approximately seven months gestation, she has not only survived but thrived. Ohden is a Master's-level prepared social worker and the author of *You Carried Me: A Daughter's Memoir*. Her second book, which will focus on other abortion survivors breaking their silence, will be published in 2021. She is the founder and director of The Abortion Survivors Network, the only healing and advocacy organization for abortion survivors. Ohden and her team have connected with 356 survivors as of 2020.

DR. STEVEN PAULSON

Professor of Lutheran Theology, Sioux Falls Seminary (Sioux Falls, South Dakota)



Dr. Steven Paulson is professor of Lutheran Theology at Sioux Falls Seminary in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and is the featured speaker on Thursday morning. He is the chair of Lutheran Theology for the Luther House of Study at Sioux Falls Seminary. Sioux Falls Seminary is one of the houses of study of the North American Lutheran Seminary.

Paulson has earned doctorate and master's degrees from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. He has degrees from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. Prior to coming to Sioux Falls, Paulson taught at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, and Luther Seminary.

Paulson is the author of many books and articles. His books include *Luther for Armchair Theologians* and *Lutheran Theology*. His most recent books are three volumes in a series called *Luther's Outlaw God*. Dr. Paulson is featured on the weekly podcast "Outlaw God." He is also one of the featured theologians on the "Scripture First" podcast from Luther House of Study which is a review of the lectionary Gospel reading for each Sunday.

THE REV. DR. DANIEL W. SELBO

Bishop, North American Lutheran Church



Bishop Dan Selbo has been married for 33 years. He and his wife, Mary, have been blessed with four children and just recently with two grandchildren. Bishop Selbo graduated from San Jose State University in 1982 with a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. He received a Master of Divinity degree in 1986 and earned a Doctorate of Ministry in Biblical Preaching in 2013, both from Luther Seminary. He enjoys golfing, fishing, working in the yard and spending time with family and friends.

WORKSHOP LEADERS

THE REV. PHILLIP GAGNON STS

Assistant to the Bishop for Domestic Mission & Discipleship, North American Lutheran Church



The Rev. Phillip Gagnon lives in St. Albert, Alberta, Canada, and was pastor of the St. Albert Evangelical Lutheran Church of the NALC for nearly 18 years. He is happily married to his wife, Patricia, and has three children Elise, Elias and Sophie, each in their twenties. He has been involved in teaching and training at several institutions on the topic of exorcism and the occult, and has taught seminars on various new religious groups (cults). Phil's hobbies include art and reading, and once upon a time he earned two black belts in Judo and Yoshin Ryu-Jujutsu. He has always been involved in art from an early age –from pencil drawings to pen and ink (pointillism), and has in the last few years especially enjoyed oil painting, watercolor and acrylics. He was dean of the Canada Mission District for four years, involved in the creation of the constitution of the NALC –Canada Section and on the Board of Regents for six years ago. Phil was appointed as assistant to the bishop for domestic mission and discipleship in February 2020.

THE REV. DONA JOHNSON

Chair, NALC Living & Giving Stewardship Team; Pastor, GracePointe (Sedona, Arizona)



The Rev. Dona Johnson chairs the NALC Living & Giving Stewardship Team. She is the pastor of GracePointe of Sedona, located in Sedona, Arizona, a new mission start. Through her work with the Lilly School of Philanthropy's Lake Institute on Faith & Giving, she authored RESET, and also holds an Executive Certificate of Religious Fundraising (ECRF). She has chaired synodical stewardship ministries, participated in the Macedonia Project – Visioning for Congregational Stewardship and Leadership Institute.

In the non-profit sector, she chaired the board of directors for a day program for those who live with mental illness, and has led several non-profit and congregational fundraising campaigns. Johnson holds the Master of Divinity degree from both United Theological Seminary (Dayton, Ohio) and Trinity Lutheran Seminary

(Columbus, Ohio), the Master of Science in Architecture degree from the University of Cincinnati, and a national fellowship from the American Institute of Architects (Washington, D.C.).

GARY & LAURIE PECUCH

Youth Ministry Coaches, faithwebbing.com



Gary and Laurie Pecuch have been in congregational youth ministry at St. John's Lutheran Church in Grove City, Ohio, since the early 1980s. After authoring two books, *Faith Webbing* (Intergenerational Faith Formation) and *What's In Your Bag?* (Outcome-Based Ministry), there was a need to develop a web-based youth ministry coaching service. They call it faithwebbing.com. Their mission is "to train and equip God's people with the necessary faith skills to live out their personal calling in life."

2021 CONVOCAATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH PROPOSED RULES OF PROCEDURE

1. The business of this Convocation shall be as outlined in the official agenda distributed to the Convocation.
2. The rules set forth in the current edition of "Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised," shall govern this Convocation in all applicable cases and to the extent consistent with the rules and agenda adopted by this Convocation, and according to the constitution of the North American Lutheran Church.
3. Once adopted, the rules shall not be amended or suspended except by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at this Convocation.
4. The voting body for this Convocation will include all ordained ministers of the North American Lutheran Church, who are properly registered to attend; and those laypersons who have been elected as delegates by congregations of the North American Lutheran Church, who are properly registered to attend. The quorum for conducting business shall be such registered delegates who are in attendance.
5. If not a delegate, each NALC officer and each person serving in a position subject to election by a Convocation will have the right of voice but not vote at this Convocation.
6. Unless otherwise determined by a majority of the Convocation, all speeches during discussion shall be limited to three minutes. A signal shall be given one minute before the speaker's time ends.
7. All elections shall follow the procedures outlined in the Constitution. The Constitution specifies that except for the office of Bishop, nominations must be submitted to the Nominating Committee no later than 45 days prior to the Convocation.
8. A majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. Should a first ballot not result in an election, a second ballot shall be cast. The nominees for a second ballot shall include the names of the two persons who have received the highest vote on the first ballot, plus ties.

9. A Committee on Reference and Counsel will serve during this Convocation. On this Committee will be the Committee Chair, a member of the Court of Adjudication, a member of the Executive Council, and two additional delegates to the Convocation, one clergy and one lay, appointed by the Bishop. All suggested items for consideration by the Convocation outside the adopted agenda, including amendments to the constitution, shall be presented to the Committee no later than 6:30 p.m. on the first day of the Convocation. The Committee will review all proposed items in consultation with the person(s) presenting proposals. The committee will present a report to the Convocation in which the Committee will recommend a time for the Convocation to consider the proposals.

Approved by NALC Executive Council on July 7, 2021

2021 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 11

The 2020 Convocation voted to postpone proposed amendments to Article 11, Regional Subdivisions, of the NALC Constitution. The amendments proposed last year would have named Mission Districts as the regional subdivisions.

There was support for naming them as Mission Districts. The reason for postponing consideration of the amendments was to revise the amendments so the Constitution clearly allows for Mission Districts to form mission regions. Several mission regions have already been formed in the NALC.

In light of the reasons for postponing the amendments to Article 11, the Executive Council proposes the following constitutional amendments to the 2021 Convocation:

11.01 Congregations shall join in collaboration as Mission Districts to fulfill most effectively the ministry and mission of the NALC, normally based on common geographic boundaries. Mission Districts may form Mission Regions for more effective ministry and mission as needed. Mission Regions shall have such organizational form and functions as shall be determined by the constituting Mission Districts. Such organization shall be done in consultation with the Bishop and subject to the approval of the Executive Council.

11.02 Each ~~regional group~~ Mission District ~~of congregations~~ shall adopt appropriate governing documents that are consistent with the governing documents and practice of the NALC and shall include election of a Dean, adoption of a budget, and provision for supervision, mutual support of member congregations, and procedures necessary for carrying out its mission and ministry.

11.03 The Deans, who shall be ordained ministers of the NALC, shall be accountable to the Bishop and work with the Bishop by conducting similar functions in their ~~respective areas~~ Mission Districts. Deans shall serve as pastor to ordained ministers, their families, and congregations, and will conduct a ministry of teaching and visitation with ordained ministers and congregations. Deans may continue to serve under the call of a congregation.

Sent by NALC Executive Council on May 7, 2021

2021 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Our theme for this year's Lutheran Week, "God the Father Creates," is a clear reminder of who God is as the Creator, who we are as creatures, and how life is given true purpose and meaning only as it is lived in a right relationship with Him.

From the opening verse of the Scriptures (Genesis 1:1) and throughout the entire biblical witness, there is no question that God is the One who brings all things into being. He was there from the beginning of time, and even before time. From before the foundations of the world were laid, God was present and was all-powerful. He was the One who formed and fashioned all that exists, including us. And when this world comes to a close and a new world is created in its place (Revelation 21:1-4), it will be His creating power that will bring it about.

God is the Creator. He brought into existence everything that exists. He is also the One who created us in His image (Genesis 1:27). In the image of God, we were created; male and female, we were designed to reflect His creative and life-giving nature. In His image, we were brought, by design, into relationship with Him. In relationship with Him, we naturally and inherently have a relationship with each other.

Such was the case when the world and its first people were created. Until Adam and Eve gave into the temptation to become like the Creator and to live life on their own terms, the relationship they had with God and each other was intact and secure. But it all changed when sin became real, and when sin became real, so did the reality of death and the need for a Savior.

Nonetheless, God's creative work continued. In the opening chapters of the Bible, we see His desire and ability to restore and to recreate in clear focus. Again, the Scriptures point consistently to this truth. When sin first entered the world through the disobedience of the first created people (Genesis 3:6-7), God's promise of life was not far behind (Genesis 3:15). When death appeared to have the final say, even in the crucifixion and death of Jesus (Luke 23:46), the assurance of new life, brought about by God's creative power, was only a few days away (Luke 24:6).

The same pattern has continued throughout history, including for us today. Out of death, God brings life. From suffering and pain, God provides assurance and hope. The old is made new. The forgotten and forsaken are remembered and restored. All things become new when placed in the hands of the Living and Creating God. And it all becomes real and is offered to us in the person and work of God's One and only Son, Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul speaks of the preeminence and supremacy of Jesus over all things and of how, in Jesus, we as the Church find our purpose.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

— Colossians 1:15-20 ESV

As I look back on the events of this past year, the way in which our world was caught by surprise and off-guard by the global pandemic, I find assurance and comfort in the truth that God is never surprised or caught off-guard by anything. He created and He creates. He transforms and He renews. He remembers what has been. He knows what lies ahead. He is fully aware of what is needed now. And He works, at all times and in all things — past, present, and future — to carry out and fulfill His saving purposes.

As a result, we can move forward with the assurance that we, as His created beings, and we, together, as the Church, belong to Him. In Jesus, all things work for God's glory. In Christ, all things have lasting meaning and purpose when done and lived in accordance with His will. Thus, we can be confident that our work is being blessed, as we remain focused on the calling and commission given and entrusted to us by Jesus.

Despite the many challenges we have faced in the past 12 months, I am proud of our pastors, lay leaders and congregations who have made the most of the situations they have faced, and who have adjusted their ministries to ensure that the witness and proclamation of the Gospel remained central. I have heard countless stories and witnessed many positive signs indicating that God has used their efforts to bear fruit.

Through an increase in technology, we are now reaching people and people groups that we were not reaching one year ago. Through the expanded use of small gatherings and groups, we are now seeing an increase in the number of people being discipled. We are also now making better use of the resources available to us online, knowing that God works in many ways to call and lead people to faith.

Since our online Convocation last year, as of the writing of this report, 12 congregations have joined our church body and 27 pastors have been brought into our fellowship. Many of these have come to us from predecessor church bodies. Many have also come as a result of the faithful witness to the authority of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions found in the North American Lutheran Church (NALC). Our outreach strategy is not focused on the reception of new congregations and members who have become unhappy in their previous church homes, although we want and need to be ready when those situations arise. Rather, the work we do together, and the foundation of our outreach is rooted in the calling and commission of our Lord Jesus to reach out to all people with the saving and life-giving message found only in Him. This is the passion that drives our shared mission efforts and that keeps us centered and focused on that which unites us within the Church.

I continue to be encouraged by how we are, now in our 11th year, soon to be our 12th, remaining true to the Core Values that have been foundational for us since the time we first formed. We are Christ Centered. Jesus is at the heart of everything we do. We are Mission Driven. It is the mission of our Lord and His Great Commission to us that drives the priorities we set and the work we do. We are Traditionally Grounded. The Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions and the apostolic creeds serve to keep us firmly planted in the central truths of the Christian faith that will never change. And we are Congregationally Focused. We are committed to supporting our more than 450 congregations in the ministry of Word and Sacrament, because we believe and trust that is where and how the Holy Spirit works, through the preaching and teaching and living out of the Gospel, to call people to faith and to change and transform lives.

I am also encouraged by the progress we have made this past year in implementing the 2020 Vision we adopted at our 2020 Mission Convocation. The reports from our staff, along with the presentations during this year's Mission Convocation, will call attention to the work being done in each of the 10 areas of focus. I encourage you to read the reports in this booklet, listen to what is offered in the reports, and pray about how and where and in what ways you and your congregation might become supportive and involved.

I would also encourage you to view the ten 2020 Vision components not as separate pieces to a disjointed and unrelated strategic plan, but as integral parts to a larger and more all-encompassing approach to our shared ministry. The ten components are each important in themselves. They each address one or more of the varying needs and opportunities we face. At the same time, they are not intended to be separate and unrelated pieces to a visionary puzzle, but unified and dependent parts of a visionary strategy to ensure that our work in the NALC remains as consistent and cohesive, and as effective and efficient as possible. The call we share in the Church and the Lord we serve deserve nothing less.

In my second year as bishop, in spite of the challenges we have faced, I remain confident that the future that lies ahead of us in the North American Lutheran Church is one that will be blessed by our ever-creating God. Evidence to the reasons for that confidence, along with the promise of God's Holy Spirit, is the simple fact that I have seen God at work through the efforts of our staff, our elected leaders, our NALS president and staff, as well as in the congregations and mission districts throughout the NALC. Our work, this past year, needed to adjust to meet the changes and challenges we faced. But God never slowed down. His creating and life-giving hand and work never stopped.

I would be remiss in this report if I failed to mention the transition that has taken place in the role of our NALC general secretary. After 10 years of faithful and fruitful ministry, Pastor Mark Chavez has accepted a call and is now serving as pastor to the congregation at Reformation Lutheran in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Having sensed a call back into parish ministry, his transition was not a complete surprise. It was consistent with the desire God laid on his heart, long ago, to serve the Church for which our Lord Jesus gave his life.

On a personal note, I must confess that this transition carried an element of sadness. Having been blessed by Pastor Mark and his friendship and partnership, it was sad for me to see him go. His gifts, his passions, and his heart will be missed. I thank God for his faithful service.

At the same time, I am equally excited about working with Pastor Amy Little. Her appointment as our next General Secretary was unanimously confirmed by our Executive Council and her work will begin within a month of our convocation. I know she has the gifts and the heart for the tasks, as well as a deep and abiding love for our Lord Jesus and His Church. Her gifts and the relationship she has with Christ, and Christ with her, will enable her work to be fruitful for the Kingdom and beneficial to

all within the NALC. Her calling and appointment are truly an answer to many prayers.

I would also be remiss if I failed to thank our staff and our elected leaders, our deans and our pastors, for the way in which they have offered their time and energy and talents in service of the Gospel and for the sake of our church body. I also wish to thank those who have given and volunteered their services in support of our shared ministry in the NALC, in response to the calling they have received in Christ Jesus. It is a long list of people, with an even longer list of impactful ministry efforts, that God has called and chosen to use in His creative and saving work. Thank you for your faithful service.

Finally, thank you to each of you, my sisters and brothers in Christ, for the opportunity you have given me to serve as your bishop. As I shared when I was first elected and will continue to share until the day my tenure in this role comes to a close, this is not about me or about us. It is about the calling we have in Jesus, the commission we have been given in Christ, the ministry and work we share, and the service we offer to the world for which our Lord Jesus died. He is our message. He has given us our mandate. He is our source of salvation and our reason for hope.

It remains an honor for me to serve as your bishop. May God continue to bless each of you, as together we serve, and together we are used by the God who continues to create and give new life.

In Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bishop Dan Selbo". The signature is written in black ink and has a fluid, personal style.

The Rev. Dr. Daniel W. Selbo
Bishop

2020 VISION REPORTS

The following represents a 2020 Vision for the North American Lutheran Church (NALC). The development of this vision included input from NALC staff, Executive Council, mission district deans, the North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS) president and Board of Regents. The vision has been endorsed by the Executive Council, was shared with the Ministerium in February 2020 and presented at the NALC Mission Convocation in August 2020.

The 2020 Mission Convocation endorsed the direction this vision sets for the NALC for the following three years. The convocation committed to fervent daily prayer and action for the 2020 Vision to come to life in and among us; to encourage collaboration of all disciples, congregations and entities of the NALC in implementing the vision; and finally, to call for annual reports and frequent updates on the progress of the 2020 Vision.

For each vision point, a goal has been set. Under that goal are possibilities of what may be done to reach that goal. This document will be reviewed annually by a strategic planning team. Therefore, this is a working document and will continue to change as we move forward together.

10-POINT VISION

In the North American Lutheran Church, by the year 2023, we see...



Disciple-Making Cultures

A church body committed to developing disciple-making congregations and cultures



Congregational Multiplication

A body of believers committed to increasing our mission outreach and congregational multiplication efforts



Pastoral Support

A denomination in which every congregation receives regular and consistent pastoral support



Continuing Education

A continuing education emphasis that supports the ongoing development of all NALC pastors and lay leaders



Continental Restructuring

A strategy for continental restructuring able to expand with denominational growth



Seminary System

A denomination with the strongest and most highly respected Lutheran seminary training system in North America



Technology & Communication

A communications strategy focused on forming identity, unity and testimony across our church body



Ecumenical Relationships

A denomination in which our international and ecumenical relationships strengthen our shared commitment to the Great Commission, the Great Commandments and the Church catholic, and which enhance our partnership on the congregational level



Financial Strength

A church body with the financial strength to support its God-given vision



Strategic Planning

A Strategic Planning Team (SPT) that continually prays for and works to develop the next steps for our God-given vision and future



1. DISCIPLE-MAKING CULTURES

**A church body committed to developing
disciple-making congregations and cultures**

GOAL

More than 200 congregations intentionally developing disciple-making cultures by 2023

The goal is to produce disciples who are, themselves, able to disciple others. The disciples will be active in leading people to faith in Jesus, until *they* are able to lead others to faith in Jesus. Discipleship includes (*is*) following Jesus and helping others follow Jesus.

We will use the CREDO (Confessional Renewal Engaging Discipleship & Outreach) Initiative as the framework. This is not a one-size-fits-all approach, but a framework for developing disciple-making cultures.

We are planning for the expansion of trained guides for congregational support and will hold annual guide leadership training beginning in winter 2021.

Disciple-making will be incorporated into training for seminarians, interns and first-call pastors effective fall 2021.

We will also provide disciple-making models and resources for training youth and families/parents. We will work with Gary and Laurie Pecuch and the Life-to-Life Discipleship Team to support this emphasis.

COMPONENT LEAD



The Rev. Phillip Gagnon STS
Assistant to the Bishop for
Domestic Mission & Discipleship
St. Alberta, Alberta, Canada
pgagnon@thenalc.org

Supported by:
The Rev. Dr. David Wendel and the
NALC Life-to-Life Discipleship Team



2. CONGREGATIONAL MULTIPLICATION

A body of believers committed to increasing our mission outreach and congregational multiplication efforts

GOAL

Engagement of every NALC congregation in active and proactive outreach efforts by 2022

Every congregation is challenged to be in relationship with at least one local, global and domestic mission effort.

We will have 45 new mission starts by 2022, and this is included in challenges to deans for each mission district. Congregations are encouraged to consider a new mission start in their area.

We are planning a provision of resources for mission district deans and/or congregations to assist them in achieving this goal.

We will raise awareness, train and intentionally equip our congregations for international mission. This includes: (1) assisting our pastors and congregations in their aspiration of global outreach, learning and relationship building, (2) working with ministry partners to raise up global workers and partner with those already in the field, (3) working through our relationships and partners – assisting and providing teaching and preaching ministries in international settings, and (4) facilitating a relationship with the NALC, NALS and Leadstar to train 25,000 leaders for the sake of the Gospel in the next 10 years.

COMPONENT LEAD



The Rev. Gemechis Buba

Assistant to the Bishop for Missions

Atlanta, Georgia, United States

gbuba@thenalc.org

Supported by:

The Rev. Phillip Gagnon STS
and the Rev. Brad Hales

2021 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH 2020 VISION #1 – DISCIPLE-MAKING CULTURES & #2 – CONGREGATIONAL MULTIPLICATION

Greetings in the Name of Jesus!

As we enter the 2021 Lutheran Week, we are celebrating God's goodness and faithfulness. In 1 Peter 2:6 ESV we read:

For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

There are many discouraging things that we face today in this world: a continuing global pandemic, civil unrest, political instability throughout the world and natural disasters. But these things should not come as a surprise to us since the fall in Genesis 3. We do not ignore the challenges, but rather, we proclaim the faithfulness and goodness of our God. We proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ which does not change, even in the midst of a changing world. And we know that other things may be shaken and fall away, that we rest securely because of the unshakable cornerstone. We rejoice in the privilege that God has called us into mission together as living stones, built upon the rock that is Jesus Christ.

To that end, our strategy for 2021-2022 continues:

A Paradigm for Revival – In Psalm 85, we have a paradigm or blueprint for revival. The practical nature of what the renewal and revival of the church looks like practically speaking.

vv. 1-4: Remember God's Faithfulness – The same God who has called us His own through the death and resurrection of his Son, who has claimed us in baptism, sealed us by His Holy Spirit, and continues to feed us at his table is faithful. He who began a good work in us will bring it to completion in the day of Jesus Christ.

vv. 5-6: Acknowledge The Present – It is critical not to dismiss our current reality. Not dismissing the difficult things that stand before us or in our midst, the struggles, and our own need for repentance.

vv. 7-9: The Word – Renewal and revival only come by the Word of God. It is critical that we listen and submit to the Word of God and be sustained by His Word.

vv. 10-13: Look to God's Promises – Looking to the future as we are called to be ambassadors, living agents of God's grace. Living into our call of the Great Commission to: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

The NALC is Mission Driven. We believe that the mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel and to make disciples for Christ. We believe that making disciples – in our congregations, in our communities and nations, and around the world – must be a priority of the Church in the present age. The NALC Mission Office has a primary focus of mobilizing congregations, leaders, and mission districts for mission. To achieve this, systematic organization for mission is critically important. It is vital that we continue to work in these five categories in order to mobilize the whole denomination: **New Mission Starts, Congregational Renewal, International Mission, The Great Commission Society, and Multi-National Mission.** A plethora of information regarding our work in 2020-2021 is available on our website in each focus area. Some key areas and projects we would like to emphasize are:

- **Congregational Renewal** – Throughout 2020-2021, our Renewal Team has worked hard to meet the articulated needs of our mission districts, congregations, and leaders. Through The Academy, we have found a light-weight and effective vehicle to deliver some of these much needed resources, including both video and podcast options. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been able to assist in providing resources, such as: a listing of congregations that host worship services and sermons online, hosting a special Bible study series with Dr. Gemechis Buba, and establishing a digital bulletin board to help share grass-roots resources. We are hard at work to continue development of resources in 3 other key areas under the direction of Pastor Brad Hales and the Renewal Team: prayer, senior ministry and the launch of an online course for small and rural church ministry.
- **New Starts: Plant, Grow, Bloom** – Continued resource development for church planting in the NALC as well as welcoming Pastor Phil Gagnon to the team. This year we have focused on: care of current mission starts, a monthly onboarding opportunity for those interested in learning more about New Starts in the NALC, monthly coaching for new mission start leaders, additional coaching opportunities

for those who have already been engaged in church planting, and a strategy to assist congregations and mission districts in planting churches. The New Starts Team is working on a dual certification process to provide more in-depth training in the future. They have recently been certified by City to City, as well as in NALC Life-to-Life Discipleship so life-to-life culture is engrained in the DNA of all new mission starts in the NALC.

- **The Great Commission Society** – The purpose of the Great Commission Society of the NALC is to mobilize disciples for the work of the Great Commission. Our mission is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a world that is in desperate need of the Good News. We propose to do this by networking congregations and individuals who have a passion for the proclamation of the Gospel and a commitment to the calling of the Great Commission. In 2020 and 2021 GCS has continued to connect with mission districts and leaders as the Mission Connections team called every mission district dean or district mission team leader. These calls are a wonderful way to not only hear of God’s faithfulness but also become more aware and see the present joys and challenges happening in the field.
- **Multi-National Mission** – Continuing to providing individual consultations, a training opportunity, and working to find more effective ways to maximize opportunities for our current missions as they thrive in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. We have also begun to provide additional online training opportunities.

Additionally, Ordination Under Special Circumstances – Diaconate (OUSC-D) is under development. This concerns the training of those under special circumstances in smaller communities of Canada and United States that cannot afford to call a regular M.Div. pastor. Those in this program might be later career individuals, mature in faith and longing to serve Christ but cannot do an M.Div. These individuals would go through a two year program online and some intensive training, with mentoring to follow and ongoing education, so that these communities in want or on the front lines of ministry such as in Mexico/Latin America might find themselves able to be receive pastors from amongst their communities to serve. These persons are likely to be those already serving in some capacity or seen as being the community’s pastor in practice already.

- **International Mission** – Focusing on the care of our current Global Workers,

launching several new global workers, and working on a pan-African youth initiative together with EECMY . We have also been working to form critical relationships for the sake of the Good News of Jesus Christ, as well as partner with ministry partners to maximize critical networks.

- **NALC Life-to-Life Discipleship** – An online training course for Discipleship Guides has been developed. This training will be grounded in Scripture and focus on various areas of personal development for those wishing training to disciple others in their walk with Christ.

Below are a few of the tangible resources produced by our five national mission teams, as we continue to equip and resource our congregations for mission:

- **The Academy** – 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. Each month we are hosting a free webinar based on expressed needs by NALC Leaders, for NALC Leaders. For details: <https://missions.nalcnetwork.com/tag/academy/>
- **Small and Rural Church Ministry** – It's not about the size, but the relationships. And the small, rural church is truly vital today because of these relationships. For resources on this topic, including access to the new online course, please visit: <https://missions.nalcnetwork.com/tag/smallandruralchurch/>
- **Mission District Mission Team Resources** – The extended version of resources compiled from various trainings and conferences in the last four years: <https://goo.gl/uFPmfU>
- **CROSS Talk** – CROSS Talk is a weekly online lectionary study led by Dr. James Nestingen in conjunction with St. Paul Seminary. Join each Tuesday at 4 pm EST. For more information or to register – please visit: <http://www.semlc.org/contact-us>
- **GoodNews Media! Resources** – Throughout the pandemic, we worked to compile a list of congregations hosting online worship services or sermons, a digital bulletin board, and other resources: <https://missions.nalcnetwork.com/goodnews-media-resources/>
- **NALC Life-to-Life Discipleship** – If you are interested in receiving more information or joining future online cohorts for training, please visit: <https://airtable.com/shrUFNBtQWDVhHJIF>
- **Multi-National Leader Training** – Joining together in 2020 with DiscipleLife 2020, this training was critical to help equip our multi-national leaders and provide

access to a variety of resources designed to assist in their unique situations with a focus on discipleship and mission. We also hosted individual consultations.

- **Mission Finder** – Mission cannot be done in isolation. It is about relationship and building strategic mission networks. Find information about other hands-on mission and ministry projects in the NALC (including short-term mission trips): <https://missions.nalcnetwork.com>
- **Mission Grants** – The NALC continues to offer short-term grants for mission starts, global worker support, international mission projects, congregational renewal, and emergency aid. This support comes from the NALC Great Commission Fund.
- **GCS Mission Partners** – Short Term Grants are only one piece of the puzzle. We invite mission starts, international projects, renewal projects, those seeking emergency aid, and others to apply for our GCS Vetting Process. Approval of an application places the ministry on a special portion of the NALC's website, comes with assistance in forming long sustaining relationships, and provides partners with an assurance that the ministry is supportive of the NALC's Core Values, meets fiscal standards & ministry standards, etc. For an application, to see the newly designed website, and approved ministries as we live into the GCS's 1 x 1 x 1 Vision, please visit: www.thenalc.org/GCS
- **Quarterly Book Study** – Last spring the GCS Mission Connectors Team heard the expressed felt need for connection, so the development and offering of six week digital book study was created, as a time to gather and find community with other leaders. The studies have grown each time: in number of participants, in depth of discussion, and in community. They have been a blessing and we will continue to explore this ministry offering as long as participants are hungry for a virtual community that is grounded in God's word, prayer, learning, and exploring how to lead and live as ambassadors and agents of God's grace.
- **Unveiled** – The other new project the Great Commission Society accepted in 2020 was offering a digital missions conference, UNVEILED. Again, led by input the Mission Connections team received from their calls, we designed a three day online conference experience that offered daily worship and biblical teaching, mission stories, mission engagement tools, prayer, and even a time to gather virtually with people in live-time during post-conference coffee hours hosted by different NALC leaders and mission partners. UNVEILED had two goals- raise money for the Great Commission Society grant fund and offer community for mission driven leaders. By the power of the Holy Spirit and a team of 60 experts and volunteers the goals were met. We had more than 120 participants and raised over \$5000 to give to mission leaders in grants.
- **Mission Resources on NALC Website** – Designed specifically to connect pastors,

leaders and congregations to requested resources. Includes video teaching, “how to” and other administrative documents, past training events and more. We are grateful to the NALC Communications Office for their assistance in updating this portion of the NALC website: <https://thenalc.org/missiondriven/>

We have had a very fruitful year, and we would like to personally express our gratitude to Pastor Brad Hales, serving as the Director of Renewal Ministries, for his passion for the Gospel. Together with our national mission teams, we are blessed with an abundant amount of gifts, talents, and resources. It is truly a pleasure to serve together.

As always, we would like to give thanks for our national mission teams who serve so faithfully and the countless number of those who volunteer their time, gifts, and treasures for the sake of the Gospel. Thank you for your continued prayers and service. May God continue to richly bless you.

Peace,

The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba
Assistant to the Bishop for Missions

The Rev. Phil Gagnon STS
Assistant to the Bishop for Domestic Mission & Discipleship



3. PASTORAL SUPPORT

A denomination in which every congregation receives regular and consistent pastoral support

GOAL

Pastoral support for every congregation by the end of 2021

The goal includes having active ordained pastors serving in multiple parishes, as well as retired pastors serving in part-time and shorter-term roles.

We will investigate and encourage partnerships with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) and Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) congregations when possible.

We will request a theological framework from the Commission on Theology & Doctrine by spring 2021 that allows us to: (1) provide models for alternative worship and training of lay leaders (identified by congregations) to serve in Word and Sacrament ministry, (2) consider a diaconal ministry and/or licensed lay ministry to support this vision component, and (3) train for both preaching and administering of the Sacraments as equally important.

We will explore options to provide additional employment for pastors serving in new starts and/or tent-making ministries.

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Supported by:

The Rev. Phillip Gagnon STS, Mission District Deans
and the Commission on Theology & Doctrine

2021 CONVOCAATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH 2020 VISION #3 – PASTORAL SUPPORT

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” A second time he said to him, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

— John 21:15-17 RSV

2020 Vision, point three affirms that the NALC will be: “A denomination in which every congregation receives regular and consistent pastoral support.”

Although the NALC has been committed, from the start, to loving, tending and feeding the sheep of God in and through every congregation of the NALC, the 2020 vision strategy has allowed us to focus on several areas with clarity and a renewed sense of urgency.

What can be shared at the outset is that thankfully, congregations are receiving regular and consistent pastoral support! Requesting information from congregations in the recent congregational report form, of the 237 congregations which had reported as of this writing, five indicated no called or otherwise formally engaged pastor in place. Of these, four are actively in the call process, one of the four has a retiring pastor still in place, and one indicated they are being served by Sunday pulpit supply pastors. Granted, smaller congregations without pastoral support may be congregations that do not submit annual congregational reports, but overall, we can say that across the NALC, congregations are receiving pastoral support – whether through regularly called pastors, pastors serving on a contract/term call basis, pastors serving in retirement and pastors serving multiple congregations! At the same time, we are actively working to provide pastoral support for congregations in the future, especially as the number of retiring pastors is projected to increase, while congregational participation in many places is decreasing, making it more difficult for congregations to afford full-time pastoral support.

In this regard, growing out of the work of the Church and Ministry Task Force, which

is finalizing its report, two proposals are currently before the Commission on Theology and Doctrine (CTD) for review. The two proposals, for “Ordination Under Special Circumstances” and a NALC Diaconate have been mentioned in NALC newsletters and were presented at meetings of the NALC deans as well as at the 2021 NALC Pastors’ Conference. While not yet finalized, they present biblically and historically grounded means of pastoral support, especially for smaller congregations, house churches and mission congregations. If approved by the CTD, the proposals will then move to the NALC Executive Council for approval.

Consideration is also being given to increased possibilities for shared ministries, two-point parishes, bi-vocational ministry and other means which maximize pastoral support in local contexts. We are strongly encouraging congregations in close proximity to consider sharing pastoral support as it provides for sufficient pastoral compensation while freeing up congregational income for additional mission and ministry. The basic full-time pastoral compensation of \$75,000-\$80,000 may be unattainable for most congregations of 50-100 average worship attendance, considering average congregational income in the U.S in 2012 was \$85,000. Sharing pastoral support between two or more congregations makes calling a full-time pastor attainable while also encouraging greater cooperation between smaller to mid-size congregations, for the benefit of all!

As we consider the reality of pastoral support for all congregations and ministries, in light of the realities mentioned above, some data may be helpful for congregations, mission districts and leaders.

* 9% of congregations average over 200 worshippers
* 24% of congregations average between 100 and 200 worshippers
* 67% of congregations average under 100 worshippers (32% average under 50) (35% average 50-100)

* 34% of congregations averaged at or increased worship attendance 2016 vs. 2019
* 66% of congregations decreased in average worship attendance 2016 vs. 2019

Consider these figures in light of the fact that according to Sam Rainer, founder and CEO of *Church Answers*, in 2018, the median size of all congregations in the U.S. was 75 people, while most congregations are less than 100 average worshipping attendance.

At the same time, the median age of church members was 73 years old. It is also challenging to note that he estimates there will be a 20% drop in attendance after COVID-19! He suggests a large part of the decline in worship attendance reflects a drop in the frequency of worship attendance. A congregation may have the same number of participants, but they are worshipping less frequently, which lowers the average worship attendance (<https://lifewayresearch.com/2018/12/17/the-number-1-reason-for-the-decline-in-church-attendance/>). A congregation may have the same number of participants, but they are worshipping less frequently, which lowers the average worship attendance (<https://samrainer.com/2018/01/what-two-simple-statistics-reveal-about-the-american-church/>).

A new study by LifeWay Research, reported in *Christianity Today* in March 2019 that six in 10 Protestant congregations (non-Roman Catholic or Orthodox) are “plateaued or declining in attendance and more than half saw fewer than 10 people become new Christians in the past 12 months” (<https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2019/march/lifeway-research-church-growth-attendance-size.html>). The article continues, “The research provides a clear picture of the state of these churches in America today. Most have fewer than 100 people attending services each Sunday (57%), including 21% who average fewer than 50. Around one in 10 churches (11%) average 250 or more” in average worship attendance.

This study also reports “Three in five pastors (61%) say their churches faced a decline in worship attendance or growth of 5% or less in the last three years. Almost half (46%) say their giving decreased or stayed the same from 2017 to 2018.”

These summaries certainly are a call to mission and ministry! In a church body that is decidedly “Christ Centered, Mission Driven, Traditionally Grounded and Congregationally Focused,” our work is clear with regard to outreach, sharing the Gospel, growing our congregations through renewal and re-formation and cooperation and coordination of ministries! Let us never accept stagnation and decline as inevitable! For congregations wishing to address such issues, consider engaging in our new “Fresh Eyes for Mission” summits. Email dwendel@thenalc.org to find out more.

CALL PROCESS: How did call processes fare during an unprecedented worldwide pandemic and shutdown? Oddly enough, while the number of pastors interviewing was drastically reduced, more vacancies were filled in 2020 than in the previous year.

In 2019, 24 congregational vacancies were filled, and 32 new vacancies were added.

In 2020, 47 vacancies were filled, and 42 new vacancies were added. In the time of pandemic from the beginning until the vacancy list was updated on April 12, 2021 – 61 vacancies were filled, and 64 new vacancies were added. As of the May 27, 2021 vacancy list update, we have 44 full-time vacancies and 15 part-time, with three of those listed as willing to consider either full or part-time.

As the virus is considered to be under control, there have been more pastors retiring. It seems there were a number who planned to retire earlier but delayed not wanting to leave their beloved congregation during the shut-down. Now, pastors are moving forward with retirement plans.

As a result of fewer pastors being actively interviewing, several new strategies have been added to increase activity in the NALC: monthly online conversations with deans and call committee chairpersons have been instituted specifically related to the call process. In addition, online meetings with pastors interested in the call process have been initiated.

For those who aren't aware, we have also been encouraging call committees to prepare 3-5-minute video introductions to be posted on the NALC website, together with their profiles! In our age of YouTube and Vimeo, pastors find it very helpful to see more than just electronic profile forms from congregations. Of the full-time congregational profiles on the NALC website, 12 have prepared video introductions. We continue to encourage all our call committees to prepare these videos as an important way to introduce their congregation to pastors and to stimulate interest!

Finally, we are continually seeking retired, semi-retired and other pastors who can serve our vacant congregations as supply pastors, vice-pastors and interims. Most deans are in need of pastors who may be able to fill-in, assist and serve as interims where there are vacancies!

PASTORAL CARE AND TRANSITION TEAMS: Please remember that most NALC mission districts or mission regions have formed Pastoral Care and Transition teams (PCAT team) to assist with the Congregational Workshop in Preparation for the Call Process, as well as to serve as “first responders” when congregations and pastors may be in the first stages of miscommunication and misunderstanding. A PCAT teams online webinar took place November 17, 2020, serving as an orientation for new deans and PCAT team members as well as an opportunity for PCAT teams to share with one another best practices and procedures. Although not every mission district/mission region have

formed a PCAT team, the strategy is bearing fruit and assisting in situations of conflict and tension before reaching a crisis point. We have developed a useful and effective Congregational Conflict Intervention template to be facilitated by PCAT teams, deans or NALC staff. We cannot stress strongly enough that the key to assisting pastors, councils and congregations to avoid reaching a crisis stage in tension and conflict is intervention as early as possible. When strains begin to arise, please contact me or your local mission district dean for assistance. For those interested in the PCAT team model, the webinar video is available at <https://vimeo.com/519125393/3f51057659>

INTERIM MINISTRY: Regarding interim ministry in the NALC, we do not have a large number of trained interims ready to step into congregations with a vacancy, but we are currently developing a list of pastors already trained, those serving who do not have formal interim training and those retired/retiring pastors interested and willing to serve as interims. An online interim ministry gathering is being scheduled for Thursday, September 9, 2021, 1-4 p.m. Eastern to assess current interim ministry needs and the direction of the NALC interim ministry network. All interested in interim ministry are invited to participate by sending an email to dwendel@thenalc.org. The webinar will be recorded for those who are not able to join at that time.

VETTING AND CERTIFICATION OF PASTORS AND LAY MINISTERS: Although I do not have primary responsibility for vetting and certification, it is important to mention our process under the umbrella of “pastoral support for every NALC congregation.” We are blessed by the number of pastors and lay ministers interested in ministry in the North American Lutheran Church! We always have such persons applying for certification and currently, the Rev. Mark Braaten, member of the NALC Executive Council is handling vetting and certification until a new general secretary is in place. The NALC process was expanded in 2016 to include a vetting panel, more questions of a biblical, confessional and theological nature and more information requested related to personal/professional history. In general, it may be said our vetting and certification process is aimed at certifying pastors and lay ministers who are faithful, confessional Lutheran servants who are effective and committed to the NALC

For your information, in 2019, 22 pastors were certified as NALC ordained ministers (this does not include newly ordained seminarians). In 2020, 33 pastors were certified and so far in 2021, 10 have been vetted and certified. According to Pastor Mark Braaten, regarding vetting and certification, “It is a steady flow of pastors, which is great. I’m noticing that we have some excellent pastors looking to join.”

All in all, we are focused on all of the above to be able to provide pastoral support for every congregation, house church and mission-in-formation in the NALC! We are encouraging local conversation, cooperation and creativity as we face a new and challenging reality in North America in the twenty-first century.

Respectfully submitted in Christ,

The Rev. Dr. David M. Wendel
Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry & Ecumenism



4. CONTINUING EDUCATION

A continuing education emphasis that supports the ongoing development of all NALC pastors and lay leaders

GOAL

Expansion, coordination and promotion of NALC continuing education opportunities, beginning in 2021

We will encourage every pastor to take part in at least one continuing education opportunity per year.

We will offer learning opportunities in various disciplines (preaching, discipleship, stewardship, church-planting, etc.), including continued education for first-call pastors and experienced pastors, along with a long-term strategy for ongoing development.

We will coordinate efforts to broadcast courses and training seminars throughout the NALC, and consider using the annual Pastors' Conference and Lutheran Week as venues for continuing education offerings.

We will consider offerings to encourage pastoral self-care, including emotional, spiritual and physical well-being, along with resources for maintaining a healthy family-life.

We will include encouragement for salary, vacation, continuing education and sabbatical funding in the call process/pastoral call guidelines.

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2021 CONVOCAATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH 2020 VISION #4 – CONTINUING EDUCATION

But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel; for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.

— Romans 10:14-17 RSV

2020 Vision point four: “A continuing education emphasis that supports the ongoing development of all NALC pastors and lay leaders.”

From the formation of the North American Lutheran Church, preaching Christ faithfully and with renewed fervor and commitment has been at the heart of our mission and ministry. It is also at the heart of our NALS network, the formation of pastors and is to be at the center of our continuing education efforts at every level of the NALC – for clergy and laity alike! 2020 Vision point four supports and develops that formation and re-formation!

CONTINUING EDUCATION EMPHASIS: The immediate goal of this 2020 Vision component is the expansion and promotion of continuing education opportunities available within the NALC for all leaders, whether clergy or lay persons. This strategy will include, but not be limited to encouraging all NALC pastors to participate in at least one continuing education opportunity each year; offering varied courses including preaching, discipleship, stewardship, etc. to all pastors; coordinate in offering online courses and training to all our Lutheran and ecumenical partners in North American and internationally; continue to develop the annual NALC Pastors’ Conference and Lutheran Week for continuing education; encourage pastoral self-care; develop ongoing support for first-call and experienced pastors, and encourage greater awareness and support for clergy compensation, benefits and continuing education, including sabbaticals.

Because addressing this vision component involves the NALS, Board of Regents, candidacy, call process, clergy compensation, Life-to-Life Discipleship, deans, ongoing continuing education, ecumenical and inter-Lutheran relations here and abroad, as well as newly forming plans for Ordination Under Special Circumstances and NALC Diaconate, there is a need for a representative group to be formed. This working group

will facilitate communication and cooperation regarding continuing education and re-formation of pastors and laity in the NALC to develop processes and procedures that are consistent, faithful and contribute to the Biblical, theological and confessional integrity of the NALC. To that end, the Task Force for Continuing Education and Re-Formation (TFCER) will be formed this fall and will meet quarterly. The ongoing meetings of the TFCER group will facilitate communication, coordination and cooperation between the various subgroups, addressing and fulfilling the several aspects of the 2020 Vision point four.

The TFCER will assist in developing and coordinating the many continuing education and re-formation activities of the NALC with these goals:

- A. Ensuring consistency with regard to expectations appropriate to form of ministry and educational offering.
- B. Assessing and developing educational and formative courses and experiences that meet the needs of the NALC – larger church, mission districts and congregations, especially with regard to the Pastors’ Conference and Lutheran Week offerings.
- C. Receiving and providing input regarding courses, degrees and programs offered through NALS.
- D. Providing input regarding the development of international and global theological education opportunities and networks.
- E. Providing communication throughout the NALC regarding courses, seminars and workshops being offered in person or online.
- F. Cooperation between the various theological education and formation subgroups.

In the near future, we anticipate the development of a comprehensive online listing of NALC educational opportunities and experiences, readily accessible and available to all who may be interested. At this time, those who would like to suggest possible topics, courses or needs which might be addressed as NALC continuing education are encouraged to send them to Pastor David Wendel, dwendel@thenalc.org.

Although not specifically included in the 2020 Vision point four continuing education emphasis – integrally related to it is the work of the Commission on Theology and Doctrine as well as that of the annual Braaten/Benne Lectures in Theology. Below are brief reports from the chairmen of those groups.

NALC COMMISSION ON THEOLOGY AND DOCTRINE

From the Rev. Dr. Maurice Lee, chair of the Commission on Theology and Doctrine

The members of the Commission on Theology and Doctrine (CTD) are Bob Benne, Carol Fryer, David Hahm, Roy Harrisville, Maurice Lee, Orrey McFarland, Jim Nestingen, Eric Riesen, Amy Schifrin, Steve Turnbull, David Yeago and Nathan Yoder, with David Wendel as liaison to the Executive Council and Bishop Dan Selbo as a member *ex officio*.

In the 14 months from April 2020 to June 2021, the commission held seven meetings, all, of course, remote. A major result of that flurry of meetings was a draft of a document providing theological background and proposing recommendations for our church's sacramental practices. This draft was presented to the NALC Ministerium for questions and comments by its principal author, Nathan Yoder, at the 2021 Pastors' Conference in San Antonio, Texas.

In accordance with the bishop's vision that every congregation receive "regular and consistent pastoral support," the CTD worked with NALC staff to draft and discuss proposals concerning the establishment of a formal diaconate and options for ordination under special circumstances. These recommendations drew on extensive and careful prior work done by the Task Force on Church and Ministry, of which the members are David Hahm, Marianne Howard Yoder (chair), Ryan Schwarz, David Yeago and Nathan Yoder, with David Wendel as NALC staff liaison.

The commission is planning to meet in person once again, *Deo volente*, in November 2021, and to continue with assignments and projects – including several having to do with the church's public role – that have been patiently awaiting attention.

BRAATEN/BENNE LECTURES IN THEOLOGY

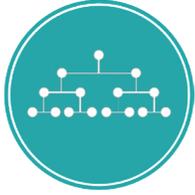
From the Rev. Dr. Nathan Yoder, chair of the Steering Team

The Braaten-Benne Lecture Series resumed this year with the theme "God the Father Creates," emphasizing the trinitarian theology of the person of God the Father. Our speakers comprised an ecumenical lineup of Archpriest Patrick Henry Reardon (Orthodox), Paige Hochschild (Roman Catholic), Bishop Ray Sutton (Anglican), NALS Presidents Eric Riesen (current), Amy Schifrin (emeritus) and Braaten-Benne chair Nathan Yoder. Special thanks to the current members of the steering committee for planning this year's conference: Orrey McFarland, David Nelson, Paul Hinlicky, Maurice Lee, and David Yeago.

Moving forward, the conference will be held biennially in tandem with the NALC Mission Convocation. 2023 will complete our six-part focus on the Holy Trinity, and our work will concern the work of God the Father. Our continuing effort is to present engaging topics and accessible lectures that will benefit the ministry and mission of our pastors and laity – simply put, to do theology for the sake of the church.

Respectfully submitted in Christ,

The Rev. Dr. David M. Wendel
Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry & Ecumenism



5. CONTINENTAL RESTRUCTURING

A strategy for continental restructuring able to expand with denominational growth

GOAL

Review recommended restructuring strategy and commit to a comprehensive restructuring effort by no later than the 2021 Convocation

Before committing to the addition of regional staff and/or bishops, we will consider an expanded, limited and authorized use of mission district deans for similar purposes.

Our restructuring approach will include clear responsibilities and limitations, and authority will be well-defined and well-communicated.

Consideration will be given to larger geographic regions, including multiple mission districts, in which one of the deans, selected by the bishop, in consultation with the regional pastors and deans, would serve in a more expanded role as a direct extension of the bishop's office.

If restructuring includes additional regional staff and/or a dean-at-large for a region, the title for the position(s) will be consistent with the actual responsibilities assigned. Nominees for each region will be offered by the mission districts in those regions. Final selection of additional staffing support, if needed, will be determined by the NALC bishop and Executive Council and/or by the regions. We will begin with part-time responsibilities and, as appropriate, limited compensation, expanding the structure as needed. One size may not fit every mission district and/or region.

COMPONENT LEAD

Supported by:

The NALC Staff, the Executive Council Sub-Team
and Mission District Deans

2021 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH 2020 VISION #5 – CONTINENTAL RESTRUCTURING

REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON STRUCTURE

Created as part of 2020 Vision, approved at the 2020 NALC Mission Convocation, this task force was constituted very rapidly in the weeks thereafter. Initially convened by the former general secretary the Rev. Mark Chavez, our task force included the Rev. Pamela Thorson (mission district dean), the Rev. Mark Daniels (former mission district dean and present convener of the deans), Mr. Scott Kramer (Executive Council member and chair of the Long Range Planning Team), and myself (former mission district dean and former convener of the deans). I served as Convener of the Task Force, beginning in March 2021, upon the resignation of Pastor Mark Chavez as our NALC General Secretary. Mark remained faithfully on our task force. We met virtually, beginning in October 2020, more than a dozen times, building upon the previous work accomplished by a NALC Dean's Task Force in 2019 and the NALC Executive Council. Bishop Selbo and the Executive Council have been helpful contributors in our work. Along the way our work, to that time, was shared with a gathering of the deans and, also, at the Pastors' Conference.

The title of Vision #5 states our responsibility and primary goal:

A Strategy for Continental Restructuring Able to Expand with Denominational Growth

More details are further provided in the 2020 Vision document and we have been prayerfully, humbly, creatively and actively working to fulfill our task. You will see the "fruits of our labors" elsewhere and through a presentation at the 2021 NALC Mission Convocation.

Consistent with the conclusion of the earlier task forces and sub-team, our task force was unanimous in concluding that our current NALC structure, designed for a smaller church body, is no longer adequate to care for, promote and further develop all aspects of the church's mission. We have created, distributed, and continue to distribute a variety of documents for our denomination's information and informed support. These documents include:

- A comprehensive list of frequently asked questions
- A proposal designed to assist the bishop and mission district deans in providing discipling relationships of pastoral care, teaching, administration and accountability. The proposal organizes the NALC into four geographic areas, each with a part-time assistant to the bishop, responsible and accountable to the Bishop and Executive Council to fulfill this purpose
- A comparative chart of job descriptions for our mission district deans and the assistants to the bishop
- A preamble
- A map of our denomination, indicating the four geographic regions, each with a similar number of congregations and mission district deans
- An implementation strategy, with assistant to the bishop nominations submitted to our bishop from our mission districts promptly following the 2021 Mission Convocation. The selection of the four assistants to the bishop will be made by our bishop by no later than October 31, 2021, with their work to begin in January 2022
- Details of proposed hours and compensation for our assistants to the bishop and the accompanying administrative staff
- An evaluative document related to the assistants to the bishop, to be implemented and analyzed annually, and ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of our denominational structure
- Several PowerPoint presentations

It has been a joy, not an assumed experience with each committee and task force in my 40+ years of ministry, to work with these task force members. God has led us, we have endeavored to be faithful followers, and we respectfully submit our guided work to you.

The Rev. Daniel M. Powell
Convener of the Task Force

REPORT OF THE LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE (LRP) OF THE NALC EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The Long-Range Planning Committee (LRP) is a standing committee of the Executive Council (EC), appointed each year at the first EC meeting following the convocation. In October 2020, the following Executive Council members were appointed to the LRP Committee: Pastor Mark Braaten, Mr. Richard Jansak, Mrs. Lynn Kickingbird and Mr. Scott Kramer. Bishop Dan Selbo is an *ex officio* member.

The LRP Committee was tasked by the Executive Council to assess the viability of a central office for NALC staff, synchronize with the Task Force on Structure, collaborate with the Finance Committee for financial analysis, and provide timely recommendations to the Executive Council. The work product is in support of the 2020 Vision point five – *A Strategy for Continental Restructuring Able to Expand with Denominational Growth*. The work began immediately following the October 2020 Executive Council meeting and proceeded through many online meetings.

In the next six months, all working groups were synchronized in their respective analysis. A total of 26 meetings were held. Careful, thorough, deliberative analysis was conducted while holding discussions with stakeholders across the NALC. Analysis and decision-making were faithful to what is best for the church.

The Executive Council concluded that the NALC has outgrown the decentralized approach it has been using since early in its first 10 years. A centralized office would support and enable a more efficient and effective use of the collective gifts and resources of the NALC and its staff. Staff cohesion, creativity, communications, backup coverage and collaborative problem solving will all be enhanced by working from a centralized location. Further, a central office will allow for uniform management and processes, along with a unified and coordinated database infrastructure.

A detailed, comprehensive financial analysis was performed. Startup costs and recurring costs were studied; included were staff relocation, office setup, office rent, materials and supplies. Cost savings included reduced staff travel and reduced broadband internet and telephone expenses. The net annual recurring costs are forecast to be \$68,000 annually, above the current budget.

The final location decision came after a long and detailed process that began with more than 15 sites being considered, before narrowing the selection to the final six. From there, the LRP Committee considered and applied 22 factors to each location (cost of living, airline connections, cost of office space, climate, number of NALC congregations, etc.). The Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, location was selected because of its airline accessibility from anywhere in the NALC, the Central Time Zone, and affordable office space and housing.

The work culminated at an Executive Council meeting in April 2021. The Executive Council carefully considered the options, sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit and ultimately made a unanimous decision: to establish a central NALC office in the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area, to begin operations when startup funds have been raised. The startup costs are forecast to be \$126,000. Leadership is confident that date will occur in the first quarter of 2022, perhaps as early as January 1.

Located at the central office will be the bishop, general secretary and support staff. All current staff impacted by this decision will have the option to relocate. Transition plans will be managed in order to meet the needs of the church and allow for individual circumstances.

The central office, along with the results of the Task Force on Structure, will enable the NALC to move forward in implementing the vision we have been given by our Lord, and the work with which we have been entrusted. We are unanimous in our support, and are excited about these plans, trusting in our Lord's promises, and moving forward in faith.

The 2020 Vision point five plans were presented at the NALC Pastors Conference in May 2021 and will be presented at the 2021 NALC Mission Convocation, followed by a vote on motions of support.

Mr. Scott S. Kramer

Chairman, Long-Range Planning Committee of the NALC Executive Council



6. SEMINARY SYSTEM

A denomination with the strongest and most highly respected Lutheran seminary training system in North America

GOAL

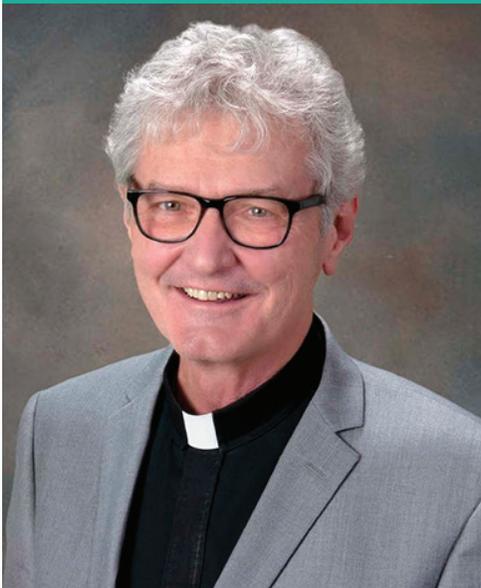
Upgrade the structure, program and recruitment of our seminary over the next three years

Structure: We will solidify the center in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, with learning hubs/extension centers in other locations, and clarify the relationship between, and the authority and responsibilities of, the Candidacy Committee, Board of Regents, seminary president, Executive Council and NALS. The NALS “banner” will represent all NALC-approved pastoral training options. We will build relationships with other confessional Lutheran seminaries and undergraduate institutions, exploring ways to cooperate in theological education. We will also join with our ecumenical partners to foster orthodox theological education. We will work with visiting faculty to expand both residential- and distance-learning opportunities. Internship sites will be identified in each mission district.

Program: A disciple-making emphasis will be incorporated into seminary training and first-call support, with consideration given to an outcome-based approach to seminary training. We will increase distance-learning options while maintaining confessional, orthodox teaching. We will incorporate theological education with pastoral training in congregations, and work with undergraduate institutions to develop bachelor’s degrees in which seminary level courses are offered and qualify for seminary requirements, also considering ministry experience in lieu of internship requirement.

Recruitment: We will add NALS staff for the recruitment of new seminarians by 2021. We will increase scholarship support for all NALC candidacy-approved seminary students and challenge each mission district/congregation to raise up/plant seeds for potential seminary candidates (students, young adults, second career). We will work with NEXUS to encourage students to consider a pastoral ministry vocation. Overall, we will work to double the number of seminary students by 2023, prepare 300 pastors for the ordained ministry in the next 10 years, and provide funding to train seminary professors to serve at the NALS.

COMPONENT LEAD



The Rev. Dr. Eric M. Riesen
President, North American Lutheran Seminary

*Ashland, Ohio and
Ambridge, Pennsylvania, United States*

eriesen@thenals.org

Supported by:
The NALS Board of Regents,
the NALC Executive Council and
the Rev. Dr. Daniel W. Selbo

2021 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
2020 VISION #6 – SEMINARY SYSTEM

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE
NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

Dear co-workers in Christ,

I want to take this time to thank all of you for your support of theological education and pastoral formation through the NALS. A special thanks to the Board of Regents for their dedicated work on behalf of the NALS. Also, I want to thank the staff and faculty for all they do for the seminary.

This year we said goodbye and happy retirement to the Rev. Dr. Amy Schiffrin, president emeritus of the NALS. Amy has been a dear friend and has helped me in many ways to make the adjustment from the parish to the seminary. Also, Dr. David Yeago has announced his retirement at the end of 2022. Every student was blessed to have either of these distinguished scholars as teachers. We greatly appreciate their labor. Thank you!

With these retirements, the Board of Regents is thinking carefully and prayerfully about replacing faculty. In the short term, we will rely more on adjunct professors. I will teach homiletics this fall and we are incredibly blessed to have a cadre of capable scholars upon whom we can rely. Moving forward, we will be both strategic and fiscally responsible. However, we will not sacrifice excellence at the altar of convenience. The NALS continues to pursue the goal of being the premiere Lutheran seminary “network” for the formation of pastors and lay leaders in North America.

Currently, we have five ATS accredited seminaries in the NALS Network. We have a memorandum of understanding with each of these seminaries. It is recommended that all students seeking ordination in the NALC attend one of these network seminaries. However, we will continue to work with students who, for a variety of reasons, attend seminaries which are not currently in the NALS Network. The five network seminaries are:

- Trinity School for Ministry (Administrative Center), Ambridge, Pennsylvania
- Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, Alabama
- Sioux Falls Seminary, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
- Concordia Theological Seminary, Edmonton, Canada
- Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California and Houston, Texas

This seminary network provides a wide range of educational opportunities for every student. There are residential and distance learning options. It is important to understand that while our seminarians attend different seminaries, *they are all students in the North American Seminary Network*. This means two things:

1. First, we are working to coordinate an admissions policy for all students of the NALS Network. This would be a simple application which would help us both administratively and pastorally to make initial contact with possible students.
2. Second, one part of the application will be a short Zoom meeting. We want all incoming students to understand the standards of theological education and pastoral formation adopted by the Board of Regents and approved by the Executive Council. One of these requirements is that all students, no matter where they receive their primary theological education, must attend two residential classes. Currently, these residentially required courses takes place at Trinity School for Ministry during the one-week June Interterm (more about this below).
3. Third, this will be an initial way for us to help the applicant discern a call. Are they called to Word and Sacrament ministry? Or the diaconate? Or, are students applying because they simply want to gain a solid theological education? Perhaps they want to earn a diploma in Lutheran studies or a certificate in Lutheran studies?
4. Third, all NALS students who successfully complete a M.Div. receive a diploma from the seminary they attend. They will also receive an M.Div. diploma from the NALS. We are one seminary existing on five campuses.

I should also note that Pastor Tim Loerke, chair of the Candidacy Committee, and I have been working together to make certain that the NALS and the Candidacy Committee work “hand in glove” for the sake of theological and pastoral formation.

We held our first residentially required class on June 7-11. Dr. David Luy was our teaching theologian. It was a course in systematic theology on the topic of Christology (the doctrine of Christ). I wanted the course to emphasize one of the core values of the NALC. We are Christ centered. The question with which the students wrestled was,

“What does it mean to be Christ centered in the 21st Century?” There were fifteen students (11 residential and four online). The NALC students came from five different seminaries (TSM, Sioux Falls, ILT, Fuller, and Gordon Conwell). It was an excellent week. Dr. Luy was very well received. We also had Anglican students who took the course. And, of course, there was good fellowship and friendships established between students.

Next year the course will focus on a second core value: congregationally focused. This does not mean that we are Congregationalists. It means that we recognize that the frontlines of ministry take place in and through congregations. Therefore, the course will deal with a Lutheran understanding(s) of ecclesiology (the doctrine of the Church), and also with congregational renewal. What are some “best practices” for congregational renewal? We will share more about this later, but the dates for this course are June 6-10, 2022. Pastors and lay leaders are encouraged to attend. It will be an excellent continuing education opportunity.

There are many great things happening in the NALS. We have dedicated and gifted faculty, staff and volunteer leadership. The two greatest current challenges are financial stability and recruitment. I encourage every congregation to include the NALS in their regular annual budgets. Also, the need for pastors is great. Recruitment is absolutely essential. However, we must recruit women and men who are truly called by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, I’m asking that every congregation and mission district make prayerful recruitment a regular part of their ministries.

Again, I thank you for the support given to the NALS. I covet your prayers, and I thank you for the privilege of serving the Church as the NALS “Network” president.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Dr. Eric M. Riesen
President, North American Lutheran Seminary

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

As part of the NALC 2020 Vision, our denomination aspires to offer the strongest and most highly respected seminary training network in North America. Within this vision is the goal to upgrade the seminary's structure, program and recruitment over the next three years. This report summarizes progress and key achievements made at the NALS toward this goal over 2020-2021.

- A three-year strategic plan was developed by the Board of Regents and has already fostered fruit. Main organizational goals center around four areas: 1) A developed structure, process and learning opportunities/experiences to equip seminarians and clergy/leadership, 2) Establish and strengthen relationships necessary for an accomplished and respected seminary network, 3) Identify and train 300 well-qualified clergy within the next decade, and 4) A solid and sustainable financial structure for the seminary network.
- We have attained the “hub and spoke” seminary model through the interdependent network of five seminaries throughout North America. This is a flexible model that can meet the needs of our denomination and students for years to come. Along with the administrative hub at Trinity School for Ministry (Ambridge, Pennsylvania), we welcome Beeson Divinity School (Birmingham, Alabama), Concordia Theological Seminary (Edmonton, Alberta), Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena, California and Houston, Texas), and Sioux Falls Seminary (Sioux Falls, South Dakota). We can be confident that students attending these institutions will receive the classic, orthodox, and biblical theological education so necessary today.
- Together with the NALC Executive Council, the *Overview Standards for Theological Education and Pastoral Formation* policy was developed to clarify requirements for all those pursuing Word and Sacrament ministry in the NALC.
- United as we all are in vision to raise up candidates called by the Holy Spirit to ministry, processes and denominational collaborations toward ordination would benefit from streamlining. To that end, the Board of Regents and Candidacy Committee are working together to make the administrative and pastoral processes more efficient and meaningful for candidates.

- Through enormous effort by the BOR Development/Finance Committee, NALS President and NALC Finance, a streamlined budget and accounting of theological education has been established. Continued strategic planning around current and future resources (financial and human) remains paramount.

The Board of Regents remains acutely aware of why the seminary was initially chartered by the NALC and is committed to faithful stewardship of the confessional formation of Word and Sacrament ministers. Accountability in academics and formation will keep the NALC within the theological center of Lutheranism in North America. However, the NALS cannot achieve the above vision in a vacuum. Each and every member of the NALC must take on the responsibility of identifying and guiding candidates through ministry discernment. The pledge of the Board of Regents will be to guide the development of the resources and educational models necessary to that end.

To God be the glory!

Submitted by,

Donna W. Evans

Chair, North American Lutheran Seminary Board of Regents

REPORT OF THE CANDIDACY COMMITTEE

The members of the Candidacy Committee are:

- The Rev. Gib Botten (Everett, Washington)
- The Rev. Joyce Dix-Weiers (Elderton, Pennsylvania)
- The Rev. Brad Everett (Strathmore, Alberta)
- The Rev. Jennifer Gold (Helotes, Texas)
- The Rev. Carol Johnson (Paducah, Kentucky)
- The Rev. Stephane Kalonji (Rosenberg, Texas)
- The Rev. Tim Loehrke, *chair* (Warren, Ohio)
- The Rev. Evan McClanahan, (Houston, Texas)
- The Rev. Jerry Merkouris (Sioux Falls, South Dakota)
- The Rev. Dr. Eric Riesen, *president of the North American Lutheran Seminary* (Ambridge, Pennsylvania)
- The Rev. Dr. Dan Selbo, *bishop* (San Jose, California)
- The Rev. Garrett Siemsen (Valencia, California)
- The Rev. Dr. David Wendel, *assistant to the bishop for ministry & ecumenism* (Jacksonville, Florida)

Together, we work to support future leaders of the NALC. In partnership with the bishop, his staff, mission district deans, the NALS, and internship supervisors, we seek to prayerfully guide qualified candidates as they move through the educational process and discern God's call to ministry. The committee oversees internship site development and placement. We also review applications to the NALC Theological Education Scholarship Fund, giving our recommendations to the NALC executive staff. In addition to our work with seminarians, the committee also works in the colloquy process for ordained pastors seeking to enter into the NALC from non-Lutheran traditions.

The Candidacy Committee meets each year in March, June and October to conduct interview panels for candidates at various stages in the candidacy process. Whether coming to us for an entrance, endorsement or approval decision, or perhaps a developmental interview for additional guidance, the committee seeks to aid the candidate's discernment process and theological development while at the same time bearing in mind the requirements and expectations of the NALC. Through the three milestones of the candidacy process, candidates are reviewed to determine their progress using seminary transcripts, candidacy essays, internship evaluations and individual conversations with members of the committee that contain biblical, theological and confessional questions. Personal and pastoral references, as well as full

criminal background checks and a psychological evaluation, are required of all NALC ministry candidates.

The number of candidates within the NALC candidacy process are:

Expressed interest	13
Entranced	20
Endorsed	6
Approved	9
Total	47

We continue to give praise and thanks to God for His faithfulness in calling men and women to serve in Word and Sacrament within the NALC, as well as commissioned lay ministry. We continue to pray for those who are discerning God's call.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Candidacy Committee,

The Rev. Tim Loehrke
Chair, Candidacy Committee



7. TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATION

A communications strategy focused on forming identity, unity and testimony across our church body

GOAL

Identify, train and resource communication specialists in every mission district, ministry, committee and vision component of the NALC by August 2023

Identity: We see a continued emphasis on developing and communicating our unique identity and values as a confessional Lutheran church in 21st century North America. To that end, we will create an identity document and brand guidelines to encourage consistent messaging about the NALC and its Core Values by January 2022.

Unity: We see an increased level of unity and affinity between our ministries, mission districts, congregations and parishioners across the continent. To that end, we will build a communications hub to ensure unity and streamlined communications processes by August 2022.

Testimony: We see an increased flow of the testimony and proclamation of God at work and congregations engaging in mission in their communities. To that end, we will use current best practices to upgrade our primary communications streams (NALC News, website, emails, social media), making them more expansive and participative across the continent by August 2023.

COMPONENT LEAD



The Rev. Andrew S. Ames Fuller

Director of Communications

State College, Pennsylvania, United States

aamesfuller@thenalc.org

Supported by:

Ariel Wicker and the
NALC Communications Team

2021 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
2020 VISION #7
TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATION

In April, I completed my third year in this position working to strengthen communication efforts through a focus on developing shared identity, unity and testimony within the North American Lutheran Church. While we are continuing to work towards the goals of the 2020 Vision, much of the last year and half was dedicated towards adjusting to needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also had several staff changes that affected our ministry, including primary communications work in our missions office, as well as at the North American Lutheran Seminary.

Communications Staff Transitions

In January, Maddie Benson moved to part time, and in March, she resigned to start an outdoor/adventure media company with her husband. She continues to serve the NALC as a contractor on various projects. At the same time, my wife, Shannon Ames Fuller, left her position at the NALS to prepare for the birth of our first child. Among many other areas, Shannon was responsible for NALS communications. To replace them both, Ariel Wicker started as our communications specialist in March, managing much of our internal communications efforts through daily maintenance of our website and administrative tasks, as well as by providing assistance to many of our committees and task forces. Ariel's job also provides support to the NALS, and she serves as the seminary's communications lead, regularly working in person at the seminary's administrative center in Ambridge, Pennsylvania. In her first few months, Ariel learned her role quickly and effectively, and was able to run the day-to-day operations while I was on paternity leave. I could not do my work without her!

As many of you are aware, the Rev. Dr. David Baer continues to do excellent work sharing news and highlights within the church through the NALC News. David's journalistic background has been so valuable to the NALC and its ability to share stories and updates of how the Lord is moving across the continent.

David Hahn continues to support the church by providing technological and web support to our congregations. Our church's technological arm, the NALC Network, has now aided in the creation and maintenance of websites for over fifty NALC congregations and entities, with nearly a dozen more in process. This incredible resource to get our congregations on the web has been wonderful!

Coronavirus Response

Following the advent of COVID-19 in North America, we have dedicated much of our time to aiding NALC pastors and congregations during the pandemic. Early on, we created a page to compile resources which included: a number of resources for congregations to use through the pandemic. Since then, our team ran webinars, attended various congregational meetings, and consulted extensively on best practices through the pandemic, working directly with many congregations.

Our team also ran last year's virtual mission convocation and its extensive voting sessions in the midst of the pandemic. As the NALC shifts to biennial convocations, we are eager to take what we learned from our first event of this kind in order to improve future virtual convocations.

Vision Goals

While we have made considerable progress toward each of our vision goals, major adjustments due to the pandemic and resource allocation forced a slower start than I had hoped. Our **identity** and branding documents are still in the works, but have been greatly aided by third-party consultation and preparation for a financial appeal across the denomination. We are looking forward to releasing work on this in the coming months.

While staff transitions are hard, the many adjustments these past two years have given new opportunities to think creatively about our staff structure, as well as different roles, teams, and how they interact. Not surprisingly, these opportunities have helped us work towards greater **unity** and affinity between many of our ministries and programs. With a new general secretary, seminary president, communications and missions staff, we are looking forward to a centralized communications hub for better streamlined processes over the next year.

Even a pandemic could not stop the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ, and the ways our Lord continues to move and work in the world. On the contrary, with increased use a digital platforms, our work as a communications team to share in the **testimony** of the Gospel has only become even more important. We have helped numerous congregations improve their technological systems for communication this past year; now, as a denomination, it is our turn to upgrade our streams as well (website, newsletter, emails, social media, etc.).

Our big vision goal, however, is to *identify, train and resource communication specialists in every mission district, ministry, committee and vision component of the NALC*. Looking at the 2020 Vision, it is easy to see how much work will be required to get to the place we believe the Lord is taking us. We need your help. I need your help. If you are passionate about communicating what is happening in your church, your mission district, a ministry you are involved with in the NALC, or want to help the NALC as a whole as we lift each other up in the areas of communications and technology, please reach out to me. We're building our teams right now! As we prepare for further adjustments with a central office in Dallas, Texas, we need your help all the more!

2020-2021 has been a busy year, and it doesn't look like it will be slowing down any time soon, but we are encouraged by the way our congregations have adapted, and we're looking forward to continuing our part in the 2020 Vision.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Andrew S. Ames Fuller (ACNA)
Director of Communications



8. ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS

A denomination in which our international and ecumenical relationships strengthen our shared commitment to the Great Commission, the Great Commandments and the Church catholic, and which enhance our partnership on the congregational level

GOAL

Review our current international and ecumenical relationships and clarify the goals for each of our partnership commitments by the end of 2021

We will review and evaluate the purpose and goals for each of our international and ecumenical partnerships.

We will identify specific strategies to strengthen our international and ecumenical partnerships as they relate to this vision component.

We will remain committed to international and ecumenical partnerships that lead to jointly committed and Christ-honoring action steps, consistent with this vision component.

We will evaluate and continue to develop our role as a leader in the international and ecumenical community in ways consistent with this vision component.

COMPONENT LEAD



The Rev. Dr. David Wendel

Assistant to the Bishop for
Ministry & Ecumenism

Jacksonville, Florida, United States

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Supported by:

The Rev. Dr. Daniel W. Selbo and
the Rev. Mark C. Chavez

2021 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH 2020 VISION #8 – ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.

– Ephesians 4:1-6 RSV

The immediate goal of this 2020 Vision component is the expansion and promotion of continuing education opportunities available within the NALC for all leaders, whether clergy o2020 Vision point eight affirms that the North American Lutheran Church is to be “a denomination whose international and ecumenical relationships strengthen our shared commitment to the Great Commission, the Great Commandments, and the Church catholic, and which enhance our partnership on the congregational level.”

The immediate goal is stated as: “to review our current international and ecumenical relationships and clarify the goals for each of our partnership commitments” in light of this vision component.

From its founding, the North American Lutheran Church has been committed to that work for which the Lord Jesus Christ prayed in His prayer on the night of the His betrayal in the upper room. In the introduction to *An Initial statement on the Ecumenical and Inter-Lutheran Commitment of the North American Lutheran Church*, approved in 2011, we call to mind,

The Lord Jesus Christ prayed for his church, “that they may be one, even as you, Father, are in me and I in you.” (John 17:21a) For the apostle Paul the oneness of the church as the body of Christ is founded on the confession of “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.” (Eph. 4:5-6) Such a vision commits Lutherans to work and pray for cooperation and unity among Christians and churches both within and beyond world Lutheranism.

The initial statement affirms “We intend to engage in ecumenical and inter-Lutheran endeavors at the international, national, and local levels, in accordance with our commitment to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.” The statement continues,

“The NALC will explore ecumenical relationships with those churches and communities whose teachings are compatible with its confessional beliefs...” Similarly, the statement affirms, “For the sake of mission and ministry and out of fidelity to our scriptural and confessional principles, we encourage and support participation in national, regional and local ecumenical activities that are consistent with our confessional commitment, such as organized councils of ministers, informal collegial gatherings, or services such as those during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, as well as fellowships and agencies to reach the lost, feed the hungry, house the homeless, and serve our neighbors in need, spiritually and physically.” Finally, the initial statement concludes, “Through our ecumenical and inter-Lutheran relationships, the NALC wishes to be an expression of our oneness in Christ, the uniqueness of Christ as the Savior of the world, and the apostolic mission we share in his name.”

Under the oversight of the NALC Commission on Theology and Doctrine, the ecumenical and international relationships of the NALC have focused on the Great Commission and our unwavering commitment to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. As we are now 10 years old as an expression of the Lutheran reforming tradition, the 2020 Vision point eight calls us to an appropriate and timely reflection upon all our current and potential relationships in light of our initial statement and the aim of the vision point to keep us focused on the Great Commission, the Great Commandments and the Church catholic, with particular attention to impacting the relationships of local congregations and mission districts.

In short, this vision point is about alignment/realignment. How are we doing with regard to current relationships, in light of our initial statement? How are we doing with regard to alignment of goals for each of our existing ecumenical and international relationships? What other relationships might be established or deepened to more fully live out our initial commitments and vision point eight? Ultimately, we will be asking how these relationships and activities may impact and involve Mission Districts and congregations locally. Let’s review each of the ecumenical and inter-Lutheran relationships as they have developed in the NALC, from our inception.

Evangelical Ethiopian Church-Mekane Yesus (EECMY): Our one full-communion partnership exists between the NALC and EECMY, which is the largest Lutheran church body in the world. From the beginning EECMY leaders have been supportive and encouraging with regard to the formation of the NALC as a witness to world Lutheranism and a biblical, confessional alternative within North America and the global north. The full communion agreement was approved by the NALC Convocation

in 2011, but in accordance with the NALC Constitution, required ratification by 2/3 of NALC congregations. Congregational ratification of this agreement was completed in 2012, signaling a new model for such relationships based on mutuality, exchange of support, prayer and gifts. The agreement states,

We acknowledge a relationship that has already begun, a relationship bound by our mutual understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the orthodox understanding of our faith shaped by the authority of the Word of God, the historic interpretation of the Scriptures, our common Lutheran confessional heritage and the mission of the Church.

The proposal also clarifies this relationship under the heading, “Understanding of Full Communion”, which includes:

The recognition that each church is an authentic church body within the one Church of Christ according to the Lutheran confession; the admission of members in the one church body to the Lord’s Table in the other church body; the permission of pastors in the one church to preach and preside at worship services in the other church; the interchangeability of pastors in one church to serve as pastors in the other church.

The NALC has been blessed by visits of EECMY leaders to our Lutheran Week activities, participation in the installation of our bishops, a mission trip by evangelists from EECMY to the NALC, visiting professors, visits by NALC representatives to Ethiopia for mission conferences, preaching and discipleship training and numerous other sharing opportunities. Most recently, a group within the NALC has been assisting with the building of a new facility for the Mekane Yesus seminary and offices.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania: It was significant that our first NALC bishop was installed by Bishop Benson Bagonza, of the Karagwe Diocese of the ELCT, August 2010. The Lutheran Church in Tanzania has a long history having been founded by missionaries of the Church of Sweden. An agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and the North American Lutheran Church was signed during the NALC Convocation, August 2013. The Memorandum of Understanding is a step toward an official Full Communion relationship. The agreement was signed on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania by Bishop Israel-Peter Mwakyolile, of the Konde Diocese of the ELCT and by NALC Bishop John Bradosky.

The agreement states: “Recognizing that relationship and the unity that already exists in Jesus Christ, we now seek to nurture that relationship and strengthen our partnership in mission and ministry by establishing a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ that initiates a time of learning about one another, sharing in on-going conversation and exploring ways that we might develop our relationship further in the future. To that end, we will initiate this time by acknowledging that any relationship is mutual, with the goal of listening to each other, as well as speaking with each other. We acknowledge our mutual needs as well as the gifts each partner has to share for the sake of building up and strengthening the Church, for the sake of our witness to the world.”

Representatives of the NALC have visited Tanzania several times, with official church meetings in Arusha and Dar es Salaam, as well as visits to Makumira University and Seminary. Representatives to NALC convocations have included Bishop Fredrick Shoo, Presiding Bishop of ELCT in 2017 and Bishop Alex Mkumbo, present in 2019 in Indianapolis.

Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod/Lutheran Church—Canada: At the invitation of LCMS President Matthew Harrison, we have participated in a tri-lateral consultation since December 2011. Although, by mutual agreement, this consultation has not been oriented toward altar and pulpit fellowship, there has been a shared commitment to communication, cooperation and in-depth Biblical and confessional dialogue. Significant accomplishments of this consultation include a joint statement, *An Affirmation of Marriage*, May, 2013, developed with LCMS, LCC, the Anglican Church in North America and the NALC; *God’s Word Forever Shall Abide; A Guiding Statement on the Character and Proper Use of the Sacred Scriptures*, published July 28, 2016 by LCMS, LCC and NALC and *Reading the Word of God; A Daily Reading Guide for Three Years*, made available Dec. 20, 2017, together with weekly readings from Johann Michael Reu’s *Luther on the Scriptures*. Also, the work of the consultation resulted in the publication of the book, *The Necessary Distinction; A Continuing Conversation on Law and Gospel*, Concordia Publishing House, 2017, a valuable addition to our shared biblical and confessional commitment as Lutherans. Although we are addressing the Great Commission and discipleship from different perspectives, the consultation engaged in a Bible study on I Peter and the priesthood of all believers in November 2019 and is considering a Bible study on that epistle, geared toward congregational, small group and individual study. In addition, we have welcomed representatives to our convocations bringing public greetings and have been welcome to conventions of LCMS and LCC, with official greetings offered whether in print or public. We have also participated, together, in gatherings of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops addressing marriage

and religious liberty, as Lutheran representatives. A highlight worth mentioning was the invitation by LCMS leaders for our consultation to meet in Wittenberg for the observance of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, October 31, 2017.

International Lutheran Council: Representatives of the NALC have been invited to major conferences of the ILC, in Wittenberg, Germany; Antwerp, Belgium and Atlanta. As a result of LCMS-LCC-NALC consultations, as well as those with other Lutheran church bodies, ILC made changes to their bylaws, allowing for participation of those Lutheran bodies not in formal partnership with LCMS, establishing ILC as an entity separate from LCMS. The NALC could now choose to affiliate with ILC as a member in the “other” category, as observers. Although considerable discussion has taken place regarding such involvement, no action has been taken within the NALC in this regard, at this time.

Global Confessional and Missional Lutheran Forum: We continue as founders and conveners of the Global Confessional and Missional Lutheran Forum, currently with representatives of Lutheran church bodies and reform movements from 15 nations, including the two largest Lutheran church bodies in the world, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (8.3 million members) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (6.5-7 million members.) At the gathering of 43 participants in Bishoftu, Ethiopia, the *Bishoftu Letter to the Lutheran Churches* was prepared and signed as “a call for faithfulness to the Triune God, commitment to God’s Word which is trustworthy and true, a call to obedience to Jesus Christ.” The letter has subsequently been translated into a number of languages. A significant next meeting was scheduled for Wittenberg, Germany in September 2020 and then rescheduled for 2021, but has been rescheduled for September, 2022, Lord willing, in Wittenberg. The forum will focus on the Great Commission and discipleship from a European perspective, with a discipleship conference offered following for German participants.

Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ: Although church-to-church ecumenical/inter-Lutheran consultation is not possible, as LCMC is an association of independent Lutheran congregations, we have been blessed by the reality of our similar backgrounds. An initial meeting took place between leaders of LCMC and NALC in 2012. As part of 2020 Vision point eight, we are committed to developing relationships between LCMC and NALC. An initial conversation took place online May 2021 and a second will be scheduled late summer or early fall, 2021. Leaders do communicate when necessary for the sake of mission and ministry and some conversation has focused on the possibility of cooperation in interim ministry, etc.

Lutheran World Federation: In accordance with the NALC initial statement on Ecumenism and Inter-Lutheran Commitments, application was made to LWF for full membership. After serious and responsible attempts at resolving LWF questions, our application for full membership in the Lutheran World Federation was declared “pending” since May 7, 2014, indicating we are to engage in conversation with ELCA and ELCiC leaders within our geographical boundaries. NALC leaders have met with representatives of ELCA and ELCiC in February 2012, March 2016 and February 2018. We have continued to request annual meetings with ELCA and ELCiC and are currently working to schedule a next consultation. However, regarding application to LWF, the Executive Council has instructed staff not to continue to pursue such membership, unless responding to requests aimed at furthering our application.

Anglican Church in North America: From the formation of the NALC, leaders of ACNA and NALC have been meeting in ecumenical consultation at least bi-annually. In November 2013 an informal “Working Agreement” was developed which has shaped this relationship. The preamble states,

The ACNA and the NALC are Christian denominations existing in the one Church of Jesus Christ. Our similar histories have developed in us common commitments to the authority of God’s Word and a renewal of mission and ministry. Because we share these commitments, we intend to engage in serious Bible study and devotion, dialogue and discussion, theological and confessional reflection. Our hope is that through this consultation, opportunities will arise for greater shared unity and cooperation in the name of our one Lord, Jesus Christ. The name for this dialogue is “ACNA/NALC Consultation”.

The agreement continues:

The goal of the consultation is to consider ways by which our churches may work together to make Christ known, to pray for one another and to strengthen our common witness by word and deed in the Church and community. This work will begin with intentional discussion and reflection on Scripture, Creed and Confessions, focusing on Justification, the Gospel, Eucharistic Presence, the Authority of Scripture and Apostolicity. It is intended that this study will result in a Joint Doctrinal Statement of Consensus. There is no expectation that this will be the basis for Full Communion. However, our hope and prayer is that this relationship will one day lead to Full Communion.

Subsequent meetings have resulted in five pastoral and education affirmations, released publicly in April 2017, expressing our consensus in these matters: *Holy Baptism, Holy Communion, Holy Scripture, Jesus Christ, Gospel and Justification*. These were prepared for congregational study and sharing, ideally within a joint ACNA/NALC group. Included were study guides and a response form to provide feedback to the consultation.

A fifth pastoral and educational affirmation is being finalized on *The Christian Life; On Being Disciples and Making Disciples*. A study guide is also being developed together with strategies for wider use within our congregations.

As a result of the work of the NALC theological education working group, a proposal was approved at the August 2013 NALC Convocation establishing the North American Lutheran Seminary, to be located on the campus of Trinity (Anglican) School for Ministry, Ambridge, PA. This partnership has been a blessing to both the ACNA and NALC, the faculty, clergy, seminarians and laity, as we are brothers and sisters in Christ, now working together in the formation of future pastors and lay leaders.

It is worth noting that representatives of the NALC were invited to attend the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON), Jerusalem, June 17-22, 2018, as official observers. This was the first time GAFCON has invited ecumenical observers. Almost 2000 Anglican primates, clergy and lay participants met, continuing to respond to the crisis within the Anglican Worldwide Communion.

Together with LCMS and LCC, the ACNA and the NALC participated together in a Marriage Summit in May 2013, which resulted in the joint statement, *An Affirmation of Marriage*. Reflecting our shared commitment to the Great Commission and discipleship, we co-sponsored a DiscipleLife 2020 conference in February 2020 in Orlando Florida, with 190 participants in attendance.

From the beginning of this relationship, we have had a few local congregations hosting one another and meeting together for study and worship. We have had one dual-affiliated ordained minister, serving as a certified priest of ACNA and as a NALC pastor. Currently, we have an Anglican-Lutheran shared ministry, Grace Church, Washington, NC. Although we continue to be two distinct denominations with distinct orders of ministry, we consider ourselves united in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Ecumenical officers of both church bodies have begun work on a draft which will further clarify the relationship between ACNA and NALC, strengthen and deepen this relationship and provide guidelines for cooperation among clergy and congregations, enabling more shared local ministry.

Roman Catholic (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops): At the formation of the North American Lutheran Church, Father (now Bishop) James Massa was present to witness the “changing landscape of North American Lutheranism.” Shortly thereafter, Bishop Massa facilitated a meeting between Bishop Paull Spring, Bishop John Bradosky and myself in Rome at the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, with Cardinal Koch, the president of the council. We also were invited to attend the Wednesday audience, were seated with the Ad Limina bishops and had the chance to meet and speak briefly with Pope Benedict. From that time, ecumenical representatives from the USCCB have been present at each of our convocation, except Dallas, bringing cordial and fraternal public greetings. Leaders of the NALC have met with representatives of the USCCB in 2015, 2016 and 2018. It was a significant and interesting event having Father Jared Wicks, foremost Roman Catholic Luther scholar speak at our August 2017 Convocation on the significance of Luther, from a Roman Catholic perspective, for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

As a result of conversations with Friar Wicks and other USCCB representatives, we became engaged with the writings of Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict and now Pope Francis on “missionary discipleship.” We have had speakers from the Catherine of Siena Institute speak on “Creating a Parish Culture of Discipleship” and “Forming Intentional Disciples.” Roman Catholic priests Father Steve Pullis and Father Charles Zlock spoke at our 2018 Pastors’ Conference on discipleship and the Great Commission. Consequently, a resolution was approved at the August 2018 NALC Convocation inviting representatives of the USCCB to join us in forming a more intentional ecumenical consultation on “missionary discipleship.” This resolution was presented at our October 2018 meeting with the USCCB ecumenical officers, which was to be considered by their committee. Soon after, their ecumenical officer resigned, some time passed before a new officer was in place and then the pandemic prevented a follow-up meeting. We are now working to schedule a next meeting.

Common Ground Christian Network: We continue to be involved as an organizing member of the Common Ground Christian Network, a group of denominations, organizations, congregations, and individuals who believe 21st-century Christians need to stand together for the cause of Christ. The “common ground” upon which we stand is the affirmation of classical orthodox Christianity. While there have been several meetings early on in the life of the CGCN, it is primarily a network and is not aimed at ecumenism or the development of ecumenical relationships.

Restating the 2020 Vision point eight: *“to be a denomination whose international and ecumenical relationships strengthen our shared commitment to the Great Commission, the Great Commandments, and the Church catholic, and which enhance our partnership on the congregational level.*

The immediate goal is stated as: to review our current international and ecumenical relationships and clarify the goals for each of our partnership commitments in light of this vision component.”

It seems clear that there has been significant alignment with regard to our international and ecumenical relationships, aimed at strengthening our shared commitment to the Great Commission, the Great Commandments and the Church catholic, aimed at enhancing our partnership on the congregational level. We can celebrate that in every relationship there has been a decided focus on “how can these relationships impact and enrich local congregational life and ministry. That being said,

As we acknowledge and give thanks for these relationships upon the 10-year anniversary of the NALC, our goals will be to continue to strengthen and deepen these relationships, affirming:

- a. The truth and authority of God’s Word
- b. The good news that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone
- c. The commission of our Lord to go, baptize, make disciples, teach...
- d. The Body of Christ as an inter-connected global confessional and missional fellowship
- e. Ecumenical and inter-Lutheran engagement on the regional and local levels, encouraging in particular increasing involvement between congregations of the NALC, LCMS, LCC, ACNA, LCMC, the Roman Catholic Church and our partners in Ethiopia and Tanzania.
- f. The desire and intention to always have before us: “to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves” (Mark 12:28-34).
- g. But even more, “to love one another as Christ loves us!” (John 13:34).

Respectfully submitted in Christ,

The Rev. Dr. David M. Wendel
Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry & Ecumenism



9. FINANCIAL STRENGTH

A church body with the financial strength to support its God-given vision

GOAL

A balanced budget that fully supports the vision priorities by 2022

We will develop a vision to inspire and expand financial support, reducing and refocusing current spending allocations wherever possible, and challenging all congregations and mission districts to increase their financial support by 1% of their congregational budget per year, for four years.

We will offer a direct challenge to larger congregations and individual donors, seeking financial support from outside sources to supplement our resources, and providing and communicating opportunities for end-of-life “Legacy Gifts” to the NALC.

We will establish an emergency fund for pastors in need, and consider the development of a NALC endowment fund as a way of providing on-going and long-term financial support and strength.

We will consider a “Three-Year Vision Appeal” (2021-2023) to provide a solid financial base. The goals and purpose for such an appeal will be clearly defined. Promotion of the appeal will begin in the fall of 2020 and continue throughout the three years. Appeal components will be directly tied to vision components and goals.

Necessary financial reserve levels for all NALC and NALS efforts will be considered and promoted as part of this component. All funding allocations will be directly connected to and supportive of efforts that enhance our collective witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and our future in the NALC.

COMPONENT LEAD

Supported by:

The Rev. Dr. Daniel W. Selbo, the NALC Treasurer,
the NALC Executive Staff and
the NALC Living & Giving Stewardship Team

2021 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
2020 VISION #9 – FINANCIAL STRENGTH

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from thee, and thou rulest over all. In thy hand are power and might; and in thy hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. And now we thank thee, our God, and praise thy glorious name.

– 1 Chronicles 29:11-13 RSV

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Dear Lord, we thank you for your protection of the churches and members of the NALC in 2020. With the COVID-19 lock-downs of churches and businesses, many feared what the future would bring. But you were with us and brought us through the pandemic. Today, we as a church, not only stand but stand strong. You gave us the strength we needed and your people faithfully contributed to their local churches and our congregations continued their support of the NALC. And now we thank you and praise your glorious name! Amen!

Operating Revenues 2020

Total Donations Revenue was \$1,948,792 and exceeded budget by 5.9% or **\$108,792**. Given the COVID-19 restrictions on churches being able to assemble, the donation growth stands as a testimony to the faithfulness of God's people and their support of the NALC.

Revenues for Lutheran Week registrations were less than budgeted due to events being canceled; however, expenses were less as well for this category and therefore had minimal impact on Net Operating Income.

Operating Expenses 2020

Organizations and Meetings expenses were less than budget by **\$298,685** or a 54.7% decrease, which then contributed significantly to Net Operating Income. As in-person convocations will now be biennial, the off year will show less revenue and expense

with the reverse for years of the in-person events.

Staff Expenses (the NALC's largest expense category) came in under budget for the year by **\$119,266** or 8.8%, primarily due to travel restrictions.

All other expense categories were in line with the budget and therefore had minimal impact on Net Operating Income.

Total Operating Expenses were less than budget for the year by **\$380,178** or 17.4% due to lower expenditures in the categories mentioned above.

Total Operating Income

Total Operating Income exceeded the 2020 budget by **\$297,452**. To God be the praise and glory! Thank you to all the wonderful staff and volunteers, they worked so diligently amidst the challenges of the pandemic!

Balance Sheet 2020

Total Cash and Cash Equivalents finished the year at \$3,491,151 compared to \$3,456,446 at close of 2019, an increase of **\$34,705** or approximately 1%. Of the 2020 cash balances, \$2,607,733 is Restricted or Dedicated Funds. The remaining funds of **\$883,418** are General Operating Funds – similar to a household's checking and saving account balances.

2021 as of June 30

As of June 30, Total Donation Revenues were \$1,025,741 which is **\$154,741** ahead of YTD Budget. Total Operating Expenses for the same period were \$771,818, which is **\$106,712** less than the YTD Budget. Staff costs were less in the period due to the vacancy of the general secretary position as well as continued travel restrictions.

Net Operating Income at mid-year was **\$261,335**.

2022 Proposed Budgets

Operating Budget

The 2022 proposed Operating Budget contemplates a 4% increase in Congregation and Individual donations. Projected Total Income is \$2,018,580.

Organization and Programs expenses are reduced by 22% due to no in-person convocation.

Staff Salaries, Taxes and Benefits are increased 3%. The 2022 budget also includes funding the general secretary position for the full year.

Projected Total Operating Expenses are \$1,969,417.

Total Income is expected to exceed Total Expenses by \$49,163.

Great Commission Fund (GCF)

Mission commitments and funding are expected to increase and therefore exceed income in 2022 by (\$45,500). The deficit will be funded from the GCF restricted fund balance of \$46,369. Plans are being formulated to replenish the GCF balance in 2022 and 2023 as part of Bishop Selbo's 2020 Vision for the NALC.

Disaster Response Fund (DRF)

The DRF Anticipated Donations in 2022 are \$175,000. Total Expenditures are expected to be \$142,850 for a Net Surplus of \$32,150 which would be added to the 2021 year-end restricted fund balance of \$321,800.

Theological Education Fund (TEF)

The TEF Anticipated Donations in 2022 are \$635,000. Total Expenditures are expected to be \$875,410 thereby creating a deficit of (\$240,410). Like the GCF above, the TEF will draw from their restricted fund balance of \$662,693 to cover the deficit. The seminary is vital to the future of the NALC. As part of the Bishop Selbo's 2020 Vision for the NALC, there will be a Comprehensive Campaign to significantly increase funding for the seminary and other vital ministries of the NALC in 2022 and 2023.

Respectfully Submitted,

C. Michael Johnson, CFP
NALC Treasurer

Note: Audited financials were not completed in time for the Mission Convocation, however, they will be posted on the NALC website once completed. All numbers in this report are therefore unaudited. Variations are expected to be minor. Financial Statements for 2020 and the 2022 Proposed Budgets follow this report.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church in the position of treasurer.

**NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
2022 Operating Budget**



FOR CONVOCACTION ACTION

	<u>Budget 2021</u>	<u>Forecast 2021</u>	<u>Proposed 2022</u>
<u>Income</u>			
Donations - Congregations	\$ 1,785,000	\$ 1,785,000	\$ 1,856,400
Donations - Individuals, Mission Districts and Other	105,000	105,000	111,300
Convocation and Conference Registrations	156,450	156,450	36,250
Other Fees and Income	20,000	15,500	14,630
Total Income	\$ 2,066,450	\$ 2,061,950	\$ 2,018,580
<u>Expenses</u>			
Organization and Programs			
Convocation and Conferences	\$ 258,830	\$ 258,830	\$ 65,010
Staff Travel	135,000	70,000	111,000
Executive Council	24,000	30,000	36,000
Committees and Task Forces	101,684	101,684	133,500
Stewardship Team	19,000	19,000	20,000
Mission Teams & Programs	24,000	24,000	23,000
Subtotal - Organization and Programs	562,514	503,514	388,510
Communications			
Communications Task Force	4,700	3,700	2,500
Digital Communications	39,490	38,900	46,000
Newsletter and Postage	1,750	1,750	1,750
Other Printing	5,500	5,500	3,100
Subtotal - Communications	51,440	49,850	53,350
Administrative Expenses			
Rent	16,338	16,371	17,091
Professional Fees	32,820	52,820	32,820
Phone	13,800	13,800	13,800
Insurance	9,500	9,500	9,500
Software and IT support	17,000	17,000	17,000
Office supplies and equipment	8,300	8,300	8,300
Depreciation (operations equipment)	10,188	9,520	10,708
Depreciation (DR capital investment)		21,185	22,325
Subtotal - Administrative Expenses	107,946	148,496	131,544
Staff Salaries, Taxes and Benefits	1,224,965	1,185,465	1,276,283
Miscellaneous	18,750	18,750	19,730
Bishop's Discretionary Fund	10,000	10,000	10,000
Support for Ministry Partners	90,000	90,000	90,000
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 2,065,615	\$ 2,006,075	\$ 1,969,417
Net Operating Surplus / (Deficit) before One-Time Items (1)	\$ 835	\$ 55,875	\$ 49,163

NOTE: 2021 Forecast excludes impact of PPP loan received by NALC, which may be converted to grant income pursuant to the CARES Act.

**NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
2022 Dedicated Funds Budgets:
Missions and Disaster Response**



FOR CONVOCATION ACTION

	<u>Budget 2021</u>	<u>Forecast 2021</u>	<u>Proposed 2022</u>
<u>Great Commission Fund</u>			
Anticipated Donations			
Anticipated Donations	\$ 110,000	\$ 152,000	\$ 110,000
Designated Funds			\$ 60,000
Total Income	\$ 110,000	\$ 152,000	\$ 170,000
Expenditures			
Mission Congregations - Seed Funding	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
Congregational Revitalization and Renewal	10,000	10,000	10,000
Missional Leadership Development	10,500	10,500	20,500
Global Workers	75,000	75,000	75,000
Global Mission Projects	10,000	10,000	10,000
Total Expenditures	\$ 205,500	\$ 205,500	\$ 215,500
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ (95,500)	\$ (53,500)	\$ (45,500)
Fund Balance - Beginning of Year	\$ 150,373	\$ 99,869	\$ 46,369
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(95,500)	(53,500)	(45,500)
Fund Balance - End of Year	\$ 54,873	\$ 46,369	\$ 869
<u>Disaster Response Fund</u>			
Anticipated Donations	\$ 150,000	\$ 160,000	\$ 175,000
Expenditures			
Direct Disaster Relief	\$ 60,000	\$ 63,000	\$ 75,000
Operations and Disaster Preparation:			
Stipend for Coordinator	40,000	40,000	42,000
Warehouse and Equipment Capital Exps.	-	98,250	-
Task Force/Coordinator Travel	12,000	12,000	12,600
Local Trainings	4,500	4,500	5,000
Warehouse Rent/Equip Maintenance	5,000	5,000	6,250
Promotion Materials/Media	2,000	2,000	2,000
Total Expenditures	\$ 123,500	\$ 224,750	\$ 142,850
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ 26,500	\$ (64,750)	\$ 32,150
Fund Balance - Beginning of Year	\$ 332,231	\$ 386,550	\$ 321,800
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	26,500	(64,750)	32,150
Fund Balance - End of Year	\$ 358,731	\$ 321,800	\$ 353,950

NOTES: Actual amount of Direct Disaster Relief expenditures will depend on occurrence of disaster events during the year. Warehouse and Equipment purchases reported here to show use of restricted funds; will be capitalized and depreciated for accounting purposes.

**NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
2022 Dedicated Funds Budgets:
Theological Education**



FOR CONVOCACTION ACTION

	<u>Budget 2021</u>	<u>Forecast 2021</u>	<u>Proposed 2022</u>
<u>Theological Education Fund</u>			
Anticipated Donations			
Theological Education Fund - General	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
North American Lutheran Seminary	335,000	335,000	535,000
Total Anticipated Donations	\$ 435,000	\$ 435,000	\$ 635,000
Expenditures			
NALS - Operations (see detail below)	\$ 499,557	\$ 599,930	\$ 740,010
Financial Aid for Seminarians	114,280	69,503	82,000
Seminarian Gathering / June Intensive	34,110	33,400	35,400
Subsidies for Theological Conferences	32,450	36,000	18,000
Total Expenditures	\$ 680,397	\$ 738,833	\$ 875,410
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ (245,397)	\$ (303,833)	\$ (240,410)
Fund Balance - Beginning of Year	\$ 977,664	\$ 966,526	\$ 662,693
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(245,397)	(303,833)	(240,410)
Fund Balance - End of Year	\$ 732,267	\$ 662,693	\$ 422,283

Detail: North American Lutheran Seminary

Total NALS-Specific Donations	\$ 335,000	\$ 335,000	\$ 535,000
Operating Expenses - Seminary Center, Ambridge:			
Faculty and Staff	\$ 428,307	\$ 454,830	\$ 549,890
NALS-NALC Development Staff	\$ -	\$ 38,400	\$ 69,420
Board of Regents	12,000	12,000	14,900
Communications and Marketing	31,250	66,700	97,800
Development	20,000	20,000	-
Contribution to TSM Overhead	8,000	8,000	8,000
Total Expenditures	\$ 499,557	\$ 599,930	\$ 740,010
Net NALS Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	\$ (164,557)	\$ (264,930)	\$ (205,010)

North American Lutheran Church
Balance Sheet
December 31, 2020

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash	3,277,318.45
Certificates of Deposit	213,832.85

Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	3,491,151.30
---------------------------------	--------------

Accounts Receivable	51,027.25
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Prepaid Expenses

Rent Security Deposit	1,228.31
Prepaid Expenses	56,098.89
Prepaid Lutheran Week Deposits	17,635.44
Prepaid Other Event Deposits	21,062.00

Total Prepaid Expenses	147,051.89
------------------------	------------

Total Current Assets

3,638,203.19

Property and Equipment

Computer Equipment	31,133.23
Office Equipment	1,119.98
Website	15,000.00
Disaster Response Vehicles	93,739.00
Disaster Response Warehouse	115,233.51
Accum Depr-DR Capital Invest	(15,717.46)
Accumulated Depreciation	(38,144.92)

Total Property and Equipment

202,363.34

Total Assets

\$ 3,840,566.53

LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$ 190,190.01
Pending Deposits	2,512.34
Loans Payable-PPP	171,800.00
Grants Payable	24,528.93
Balance due to Other Agency	3,616.33
Balance due to Restricted Acct	1,500.00
Accrued Salary and Wages	71,653.92
Accrued Payroll Taxes	2,112.64
Accrued Expenses Payable	15,260.94
MN Sales Tax Payable	87.16

Total Current Liabilities

483,262.27

Total Long-Term Liabilities

0.00

Total Liabilities

483,262.27

Capital

Net Assets	3,456,445.92
Net Income	(99,141.66)

Total Capital

3,357,304.26

Total Liabilities & Capital

\$ 3,840,566.53

North American Lutheran Church
Income Statement
For the Twelve Months Ending December 31, 2020

	Current Quarter Actual	% of Income	Year to Date Actual	% of Income	Year to Date Budget
<u>OPERATING REVENUES</u>					
<u>Donations</u>					
Congregation	\$ 514,980.77	55.35	\$ 1,762,874.56	65.61	1,740,000.00
Individual	52,403.00	5.63	107,597.00	4.00	92,000.00
Mission Districts	1,500.00	0.16	7,500.00	0.28	8,000.00
Disaster Resp-Capital Investmt	35,233.51	3.79	70,133.51	2.61	0.00
Donations - Miscellaneous	287.46	0.03	687.02	0.03	0.00
	604,404.74	64.96	1,948,792.09	72.53	1,840,000.00
<u>Other Income</u>					
Candidacy Fees	1,055.00	0.11	9,040.00	0.34	10,560.00
Registrations - Convocation	0.00	0.00	14,275.00	0.53	150,000.00
Registrations - B-B Lectures	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	34,500.00
Pastors' Conf Registrations	0.00	0.00	46,290.00	1.72	62,250.00
DVD/Media Sales	100.00	0.01	695.00	0.03	0.00
Interest Income	935.54	0.10	6,837.57	0.25	8,650.00
Miscellaneous Other Income	15.46	0.00	265.46	0.01	2,960.00
Total Other Income	2,106.00	0.23	77,403.03	2.88	268,920.00
	606,510.74	65.19	2,026,195.12	75.41	2,108,920.00
<u>OPERATING EXPENSES</u>					
<u>Organizations and Meetings</u>					
Convocations and Conferences	(24,305.91)	(2.61)	190,667.71	7.10	333,991.00
Executive Council	230.38	0.02	13,388.76	0.50	48,000.00
Committees and Task Forces	2,544.95	0.27	19,249.63	0.72	120,000.00
Stewardship Team	2,400.46	0.26	6,919.68	0.26	19,500.00
Mission Team	3,526.59	0.38	17,581.08	0.65	25,000.00
Subtotal - Organizations and Meetings	(15,603.53)	(1.68)	247,806.86	9.22	546,491.00
<u>Communications</u>					
Communications Team	0.00	0.00	4,691.48	0.17	2,500.00
Digital Communications	13,189.17	1.42	36,932.67	1.37	37,000.00
Newsletter and Postage	458.05	0.05	1,579.01	0.06	1,550.00
Printing-brochures/stationery	4,189.62	0.45	5,863.33	0.22	7,700.00
Subtotal-Communications	17,836.84	1.92	49,066.49	1.83	48,750.00
<u>Administrative Expenses</u>					
Rent	4,024.70	0.43	15,862.04	0.59	15,862.00
Professional Fees	25,896.46	2.78	66,474.04	2.47	35,600.00
Phone	3,918.16	0.42	13,896.22	0.52	17,000.00
Insurance	966.04	0.10	9,458.47	0.35	9,750.00

For Management Purposes Only

**North American Lutheran Church
Income Statement
For the Twelve Months Ending December 31, 2020**

	Current Quarter Actual	% of Income	Year to Date Actual	% of Income	Year to Date Budget
Software and IT Support	3,294.47	0.35	15,859.30	0.59	17,500.00
Office Supplies, Equipment and Expenses	5,219.74	0.56	10,357.09	0.39	7,350.00
Depreciation Expense	2,785.06	0.30	9,332.36	0.35	7,450.00
Deprec-DR Capital Invest	5,095.82	0.55	14,246.48	0.53	0.00
Subtotal-Administrative Expenses	51,200.45	5.50	155,486.00	5.79	110,512.00
Staff Salaries and Wages	244,142.66	26.24	977,815.54	36.39	956,480.00
Staff Taxes and Benefits	52,051.28	5.59	215,372.13	8.02	254,086.00
Staff Travel	10,102.34	1.09	43,112.76	1.60	145,000.00
Subtotal-Staff Expenses	306,296.28	32.92	1,236,300.43	46.01	1,355,566.00
Miscellaneous	5,840.74	0.63	24,430.69	0.91	27,650.00
Bishop's Discretionary Fund	2,000.00	0.21	5,701.52	0.21	10,000.00
Support for Ministry Partners	90,000.00	9.67	90,000.00	3.35	90,000.00
Total Operating Expenses	457,570.78	49.18	1,808,791.99	67.32	2,188,969.00
Net Operating Income	\$ 148,939.96	16.01	\$ 217,403.13	8.09	(80,049.00)
RESTRICTED/DESIGNATED FUNDS (See Separate Detail)					
Donations					
Total Restricted/Designated Donations	323,857.43	34.81	660,844.32	24.59	0.00
Distributions					
Total Restricted Distributions	220,284.29	23.68	977,389.11	36.37	0.00
Net Restricted/Designated Funds	103,573.14	11.13	(316,544.79)	(11.78)	0.00
TOTAL NET INCOME	\$ 252,513.10	27.14	\$ (99,141.66)	(3.69)	(80,049.00)

For Management Purposes Only

REPORT ON LUTHERAN BENEFITS

Here is a brief summary of the current status of Lutheran Benefits as of the end of May 2021:

The Lutheran Benefits Health and Ancillary Plans

- 151 employees (120 congregations) are currently enrolled in the health plan
- 105 employees (66 congregations) are currently enrolled in the ancillary only plan
- 486 total lives covered (including dependents)

The Lutheran Benefits 403b Retirement Plan

Employees

- Total number of employees enrolled in the plan: 530
- Total number of participants (with an account balance) active and terminated: 485

Employers

- Total number of enrolled churches: 269
- Total number of churches enrolled actively submitting dollars: 216

Transfers

27 new transfers have been processed in the last year (June 1, 2020 to May 31, 2021) totaling \$4,116,966.36

Plan Assets

Total plan funds under management – \$122,573,104.25

Lutheran Benefits Trends

June 30 each Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*
Health Plan									
Employees	282	250	176	172	194	198	187	158	151
Congregations	181	178	152	145	148	157	150	124	120
Ancillary Only Plan									
Employees	18	50	76	80	71	69	72	101	105
Congregations	8	24	62	61	47	61	54	63	66
Retirement									
Total employees	282	343	398	423	478	504	512	527	530
Active participants	n/a	n/a	364	358	365	388	343	397	485
Total employers	181	216	236	251	267	282	245	261	269
Active employers	155	n/a	186	177	221	234	212	203	216
Total plan funds	\$45.4M	\$56.2M	\$60.7M	\$61.1M	\$77.9M	\$84.6M	\$87.9M	\$92.4M	\$122.6M

*May 31

REPORT OF THE LIVING & GIVING STEWARDSHIP TEAM

Our mission:

To make disciples of Jesus who faithfully receive and generously steward God's gifts.

The Living and Giving Stewardship Team's greatest achievement this year was to develop a vision for stewardship throughout the NALC. Our team sponsored a retreat September 28-30 at the Franciscan Spiritual Renewal Center, Phoenix, Arizona. Bishop Dan attended along with the Rev. Mark Chavez, former general secretary, Mike Johnson, treasurer, Dr. Beverly Miller, the Rev. David Wendel and the Rev. Dona Johnson, chair. Together, we prayerfully and intentionally discussed our barriers to growth and what we are currently doing to foster faithful stewardship practices – joyful generosity and gratefulness, nourishing and building stronger relationships with each other and participating in life-long learning opportunities which broadens one's understanding of stewardship both theologically and in practice. We also developed a mission statement (see above) and a three-part theological vision: *1. God is the Creator and Giver of all things, 2.) We are Recipients and Managers of everything we have, and 3.) In Christ, we become faithful and generous in response to all God has given and done for us.* Out of this preparatory work, we created a 5-10-year vision that will help us build a culture of generosity throughout our NALC staff, pastoral leadership and every congregation. The NALC vision for stewardship includes the following:

A church body that **fully embraces its calling** to be faithful stewards of all God has given and entrusted to us, believing that Jesus is Lord of our time, talent, treasure and testimony.

A church body in which every pastor and congregation **teaches, preaches and practices** faithful stewardship, expressed in its relationship with God, its love for others, and its witness to the world.

A church body in which our **love for God** is expressed in our relationship with and **love each other**, is at the heart of faithful stewardship.

A church body in which every congregation **seeks to grow in its understanding** of what we are called to be and to become in Christ, with its pastors and members embracing the theological vision of stewardship and seeking to apply these in daily life.

A church body in which **discipleship and stewardship** are understood as complimentary parts of the same whole, responding not from a transactional mentality but a transformed life.

A church body that **trains and equips** its seminarians, pastors and lay leaders in practical and biblical stewardship practices, with the goal of becoming confident in discussing finances in light of faith and engaging in lifelong learning.

A church body that **produces and provides** practical stewardship training resources to enable its members to experience the joy of giving.

A church body that **responds in gratitude and generosity** to the gifts and calling they have in Christ, flowing from individuals and households, to congregations, to mission districts, to the NALC and beyond.

A church body in which the stewardship of its congregations **impacts people locally, denominationally and globally** for God's kingdom.

A church body whose leadership **lifts up and models** faithful stewardship, inviting all of its members into the mission of Christ.

A church body in which **major donors find joy in sharing their wealth** with a church fulfilling its mission of Christ on earth.

A church body in which pastors and members learn the **freedom of living debt free**, are **effective managers of their household finances**, and are **responsibly planning** for their future.

A church body where all members **hear and obey the call of God** to living out their God-given vocations, including the call to become pastors and teachers in the church.

A church that is **adequately staffed** for the mission and ministry to which it is called.

A church body that knows and believes that God has already given us the **resources we need to carry out that calling we have been given**.

Ultimately...

A church body that understands its temporal purpose and calling in this world in light of its eternal residency and citizenship in heaven.

With that said, every vision, if it is to be implemented needs well-defined goals. Here are a few goals for 2021-22 that are already in progress: 1.) Living and Giving Stewardship members, the Rev. Dr. Eugene Grimm, Mike Johnson and the Rev. Dona Johnson have joined the Financial Strength Working Group to help lead our first-ever comprehensive campaign and 2.) RESET, a highly interactive seminar was offered at the 2020 Mission Convocation. Future goals include: 1.) recruit new leadership to join our Living and Giving Stewardship Team, 2.) develop a new curriculum for Summer 2022, and 3.) work with the seminary to develop stewardship curriculum.

We want to thank each of our pastors, congregations and donors for their faithful generosity during 2020-2021. Despite the impact of COVID-19, we were able to serve and sustain our mission through online gatherings and ministry sessions. Overall, giving increased in 2020 – 1.1% from congregations and 9% from individual donors. And for these gifts, we give both praise and thanksgiving to God, through His Son Jesus Christ – for God moves our hearts to give. And lastly, words cannot express how grateful we are for you, your faith and how you continue to bless the NALC by giving freely of your time, talents, who continues to give freely of their time, talents, treasure, talents and testimony. Thank you!

In His abundance,

The Rev. Dona Johnson

Chair, Living & Giving Stewardship Team

Living and Giving Stewardship Team: The Rev. Dr. Eugene Grimm; the Rev. Dona Johnson, Chair; Mike Johnson, Treasurer; Beverly Miller; the Rev. Ron Voss; and the Rev. Dr. David Wendel.



10. STRATEGIC PLANNING

A Strategic Planning Team (SPT) that continually prays for and works to develop the next steps for our God-given vision and future

GOAL

Annually review and revise the 2020 Vision to ensure that our denominational priorities remain consistent with our shared calling in Jesus Christ

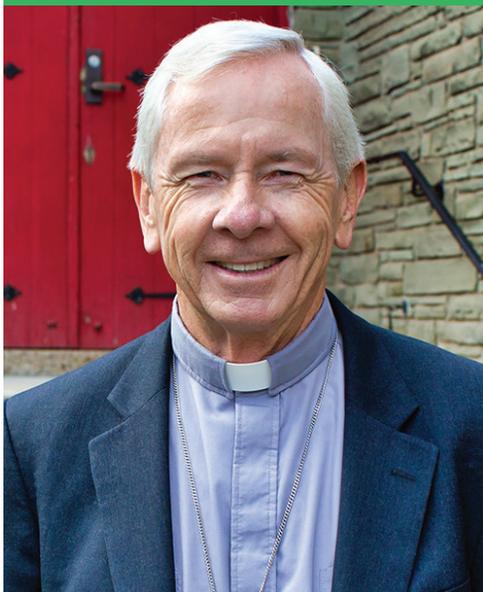
We will recruit seven members to serve on the NALC SPT by November 2020.

We will set specific and measurable goals and timelines for any revisions.

We will seek input from NALC pastors, leaders and leadership teams.

We will work toward a God-sized vision, consistent with our NALC Core Values.

COMPONENT LEAD



The Rev. Dr. Daniel W. Selbo

Bishop

San Jose, California, United States

dselbo@thenalc.org

Supported by:

The NALC Staff and the Executive Council Sub-Team

OTHER REPORTS

› 2021 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
REPORT OF THE COURT OF ADJUDICATION

Since the last convocation, the Court of Adjudication has handled one substantive matter.

The Court of Adjudication has also adopted changes to Article 4 of its rules. The changes, which are subject to Executive Council approval, will enable the court to determine earlier in the dispute-resolution process whether and to what extent a matter falls within the court's limited jurisdiction. These changes should reduce the likelihood that the parties or the court will devote time and effort to issues that the court has no authority to resolve.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Samuel Duncomb
Mr. James H. Gale
The Rev. Jennifer Gold
The Rev. Jeffray Greene
The Rev. Leslie Haines
Mr. Lyle Hollander
The Rev. John Moffett

› 2021 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
REPORT OF THE DISASTER RESPONSE TASK FORCE

2020-2021 Task Force Members: Mary Bates (Caldwell, Ohio), the Rev. Michael Giese (Gallipolis, Ohio), the Rev. Jack Richards (Everett, Washington), the Rev. Mark Werner (Elmer, New Jersey), the Rev. David McGettigan (Atlantic City, New Jersey), Patricia Dittrich (Rosenberg, Texas), The Rev. Ernie Sheldon Chair (Statesville, North Carolina), Tim Schubach (Centerville, Ohio), Michael Dittrich (Rosenberg, Texas), Marcella Nelson (Brookfield, Wisconsin - WNALC), Bob Palan (LaVernia, Texas), Ricky Richards (Clifton, Texas), Cheryl Pontius (Tyler, Texas), Gail Brandt (Middle River Maryland), the Rev. George Zornow (Owosso, Michigan), Jan Riedel (Auburn, California), Rod Paulson (Kings Mountain, North Carolina), Terry Doyle (Rantoul, Illinois), Deacon Robert DePugh (St. Petersburg, Florida), Deacon Glenn Schaeffer (Pensacola, Florida)

Introduction: Disasters this past year did not shut down when the country shut down. For many people, this past year has been a year of confusion and fear during COVID-19. However, the disasters continued to strike. And NALC Disaster Response continued to respond with your donations, support and volunteer teams!

In addition to active responses throughout this past year, deliverables of the Disaster Task Force include:

- Four disaster preparedness trainings provided.
- 14 servant event mission trips were completed; volunteer teams rebuilt homes during long term recovery; from California to Texas to Florida to Carolinas.
- Six regional disaster warehouses have been established in addition to another 7 under consideration.
- One national disaster warehouse has been completed (in Caldwell, Ohio).
- 16 “Stuff the Truck” events were hosted which keep the warehouses filled and ready to respond.
- 10 Disaster Response Sundays were coordinated plus 3 mission district convocations were attended.
- Bimonthly disaster task force meetings are held.
- Women of the NALC (WNALC) updated the donations list of flood buckets, Bibles, quilts, and kits –they hosted a Bible drive during Christmas and throughout the year hosted “Stuff the Truck” events – thank you WNALC!

COVID-19 caused the closing of our congregations in March 2020. NALC Disaster Response provided face masks, sanitizing items – including gloves and wipes to ambulance services, clinics and hospitals in North Carolina, Texas, Ohio and several other areas!

July 30, 2020 – Hurricane Isaias struck Oak Island, North Carolina. Bert Lea is a fourth-generation islander and lives in his great-grandfather's house which was pushed off its foundation 50 feet to the rear of the lot but remains intact. The Carolinas Mission Region is responding and helping Bert rebuild his family home.

September 11, 2020 – Hurricane Sally made landfall at Pensacola, Florida as a Category 2 hurricane, damaging our NALC church, St. Paul Lutheran, the pastor's home and over 30 members of the congregation had damages. Volunteers, emergency relief supplies and prayers were there immediately and continue to serve as we rebuild, providing volunteer teams throughout 2021.

Fire season on the West Coast – wildfires burned in 12 states, with over 100 million acres burned in California, over 9 million acres burned in Oregon, and numerous other fires destroying homes and families; over 30 people died. These were the most severe and largest wildfires in recorded history. Our Central Pacific Mission District responded and continues to reach out to area families.

Texas polar vortex (freezing weather event) occurred in the month of February – for five days, temperatures were below zero degrees as far south as Houston. There were 254 counties in Texas declared by FEMA for this disaster: our congregations were flooded when plumbing froze and broke and thousands of homes were flooded. NALC Disaster Response provided flood buckets and Spiritual Christian Care in the Fort Worth area, specifically assisting San Miguel Lutheran Church and members of four of our congregations in the area.

Newnan, Georgia was devastated by an EF-3 tornado that killed seven people, NALC Disaster Response supported Word of God Lutheran Church Sharpsburg GA to respond, delivering emergency relief supplies throughout the community.

Spiritual Christian Care: the most important part of NALC Disaster Response is the Christian care we provide – Bibles and volunteers are needed when disasters strike. Pastor George Zornow and Mary Bates have re-written and updated the Spiritual Christian Care training program. More instruction and more focus is provided for youth

and young adults who want to provide Spiritual Christian Care and thankfully, there are many young people who respond when disasters strike!

A box truck, a 28' trailer, two pickup trucks, three tool trailers, and two shower trailers (the third one is being built for the West Coast) are available to NALC congregations when disasters strike. The first bunkhouse trailer is in the process of being built – bunkhouse trailers will serve our congregations, in disaster-impacted communities, who do not yet have a church building.

Women of the NALC (WNALC) are scheduling “Stuff the Truck” events to collect Bibles, all types of kits and flood buckets for each of our warehouses. By collecting donations of material goods – they lead the efforts to support thousands of families when disasters strike. By keeping each warehouse fully stocked, volunteer teams can load and go immediately when those disasters happen – NALC volunteers are often the first to arrive with help! Check out the website for WNALC to follow where “Stuff the Trucks” are scheduled – we need every congregation to collect flood buckets, health kits, school kits, layettes, quilts, gift cards and Bibles – we hope to have a collection point in each mission region and district – Thank you WNALC!

The national Disaster Task Force continues to meet regularly, coordinating and maintaining the necessary structure to support our congregations who are able to respond when disasters strike. By teleconferencing bi-monthly and as needed, communications and information is shared throughout the NALC. NALC Disaster Response has a new address at our new national warehouse, see below!

NALC Disaster Response
16500 Noble Ave.
Caldwell, Ohio 43724
740-509-1132

Thank you for all you do and may God bless you in the coming year!

Mary Bates
NALC Disaster Response Coordinator

› 2021 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
REPORT ON YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

Faithwebbing.com is in its sixth year of providing web-based youth ministry coaching services. Per the 2020 Vision strategic plan, the faithwebbing.com ministry relates to vision point one (A church body committed to developing disciple-making congregations and cultures).

To that end, the mission statement of faithwebbing.com is “to train and equip God’s people with the necessary faith skills to live out their personal calling in life.”

Developing Faith Skills is a discipleship making process and culture, which is for all ages and does not pertain only to young people.

Here is a synopsis of the past year —

Per Communication:

- Faithwebbing.com provided a videotaped report for Lutheran week 2020.
- There was continued development of the email distribution lists.
- The Youth Ministry Facebook page had regular postings of resources, links and video clips.
- Written updates appeared in the monthly newsletter.
- An email update is sent to all those individuals who desire to be placed on the faithwebbing.com monthly email update list.
- Regular communication continues to happen with individuals via email and phone calls.

Per Resources:

- Nine monthly webinars were offered during the school year. The May 2021 webinar concluded the “Trot Through the Bible Course”. It took three school-years to “trot” through the lessons.
- The May 2021 webinar also concludes six years of monthly webinars. All the 50+ webinars have been edited into 300+ shorter video clips and have been posted on the faithwebbing.com website.
- The faithwebbing.com website offers four sets of resources (*For Churches, For Personal Development, The Trot Through the Bible Lessons*, and a “Verses to Live By” section).

- The website dropped the log-in feature so that all can gain easier access to the site.
- A new series called “Verses to Live By” will launch via Facebook during the next school year.
- A new series pertaining to “Faith Skills” will also launch via Facebook in the coming school year.
- There is a new faithwebbing.com Facebook page.
- There is a new faithwebbing.com YouTube Channel.
- A set of resource books (*Faith Webbing* and *What’s in Your Bag?*) continues to be sent to all new congregations all well as an invite to connect initially with faithwebbing.com via email and the website. Sets of books are also available at no cost to any current churches who would like another set.
- Many thanks to Norway Lutheran Church in St. Olaf, Iowa, and Marion Lutheran Church in Gunder, Iowa, both of which gave generously to fund the book giveaway project.
- Faithwebbing.com continues to coordinate with the Nexus Institute Theological Conference for Teens to provide an annual summer experience.
- Faithwebbing.com is available to connect with individuals or congregations interested in developing Faith Skills into their lives or ministry.

There is excitement surrounding multiple new projects as networking and partnering with congregations continues. It is a blessing and a pleasure to be in relationship with churches, partners and affiliates throughout the United States and Canada. The greatest joy is connecting with individual churches and church members as we learn and grow together.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurie Pecuch
Youth Ministry Coach, faithwebbing.com

· 2021 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
REPORT OF THE LUTHERAN WEEK PLANNING TEAM

It has been two years and one pandemic since the Lutheran Week Planning Team's last report. In that report, we noted that the team's Long-range Planning Subcommittee had secured the locations for our 2020 Lutheran Week (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) our 2021 Lutheran Week (Corpus Christi, Texas). Pittsburgh, of course, did not happen. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who served on the 2020 Pittsburgh planning team: The Rev. Mark Chavez; Jenny Brockman; Jacqui El Torro; the Rev. Dr. Nathan Yoder; Gary Pecuch; the Rev. Tony Ede; the Rev. Andrew Ames Fuller; Maddie Benson; Dawn Hahm; the Rev. Carl Johnson; Steven Krepp; Rebecca Andrae; the Rev. Nila Cogan; Becky Seifert; Anne Gleason; the Rev. Will Hartfelder.

I am pleased to report that the 2021 planning team has responded to the call to serve and given a drastically shortened time frame, worked diligently to prepare for our gathering in Corpus Christi. Current team members with specific areas of responsibility are Jill Nesheim (WNALC); the Rev. Dr. Nathan Yoder (Braaten-Benne Lectures); the Rev. Orrey McFarland (Younger Theologians); Jenny Brockman (Missions); Gary & Laurie Pecuch (Youth Ministry Workshops); the Rev. Tony Ede (A/V-Technology); the Rev. Andrew Ames Fuller, Ariel Wicker (Communications/Website); Dawn Hahm, the Rev. Norm Sulaica, and Michael Kennedy (Local Hospitality/Logistics); the Rev. Nila Cogan (Chaplain); Jacqui El Torro (Hotel Contracts); the Rev. Dona Johnson (Stewardship); Becky Seifert (Staff Liaison); Anne Gleason (Finance); the Rev. William Hartfelder (chair).

The Long-Range Planning Subcommittee (Jacqui El Torro; Anne Gleason; the Rev. Will Hartfelder), especially in light of the decision to make Lutheran Week a biennial event, has been in communication with venues for 2023. Here again, the impact of the pandemic is a factor as venues respond to current needs compounded by the needs of groups that had to delay their gatherings. Nevertheless, as of this writing, the subcommittee is very close to a recommendation.

A long time ago I heard the word "coincidence" defined as "a vivid awareness of what God is doing all the time." So, how fitting it is that, after our pandemic hiatus, we are gathering in 2021 as the Body of Christ in a place named exactly that - Corpus Christi. Our gathering in Corpus Christi is no mere "coincidence." It is a reminder of who we are, whose we are and why we are.

Respectfully and joyfully submitted,

The Rev. William A. Hartfelder, *Chair*

• 2021 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

With the NALC moving to biennial convocations, we are entering a transitional stage in our election process. To that extent, the 2021 Nominating Committee presents the candidates named below for positions to be elected at the August 4-6, 2021, Mission Convocation in Corpus Christi, Texas. We believe that all the individuals named are qualified and would do well in their service if elected.

Executive Council:

During the interim between convocations, the Executive Council shall implement the work and policies of the NALC and shall act for the NALC, subject in all matters to review of its actions by subsequent convocations.

This year, the NALC Mission Convocation delegates shall elect one pastor and one layperson to the Executive Council for four-year terms. The 2021 clergy candidates are as follows (name, current congregation and nominating congregation):

- The Rev. Dr. Jess Abbott, Christ Lutheran Church, St. Petersburg, Florida; nominated by Faith Lutheran Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- The Rev. Mark A. Werner, Emanuel Lutheran, Elmer, New Jersey; nominated by Emanuel Lutheran, Elmer, New Jersey

The 2021 lay candidate is as follows (name, current congregation and nominating congregation):

- Mr. Joel B. Williams, Badger Lutheran Church, Badger, South Dakota; nominated by First English Lutheran Church, Lennox, South Dakota

Court of Adjudication:

The Court of Adjudication has jurisdiction to decide appeals from disciplinary decision, questions regarding the interpretation of the NALC's governing documents and claims that any person, body or entity has violated the governing documents of the NALC.

This year, the NALC convocation delegates shall elect two individuals, lay or clergy, to a four-year term on the Court of Adjudication. The 2021 candidates are as follows (name, current congregation and nominating congregation):

- The Rev. Miguel A. Acosta, Stone Lutheran Church, Ashland, Ohio; nominated by Stone Lutheran Church, Ashland, Ohio
- The Rev. Dr. Jeffray S. Greene, Prince of Peace, Fayetteville, Georgia; nominated by Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church, Manistee, Michigan
- Mr. Lyle Hollander, St. John Lutheran, Boyden, Iowa; nominated by St. John Lutheran, Boyden, Iowa
- Mr. Matthew A. Lind, Port Madison Lutheran Church, Bainbridge Island, Washington; nominated by Port Madison Lutheran Church, Bainbridge Island, Washington

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Hugh W. Brewer, *Chair*

The Rev. Kevin Scott

The Rev. Dona Johnson

› 2021 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
REPORT ON OPERATIONS

Congregations and Pastors Joining the NALC

One of the exciting things that is happening in the NALC is that new congregations and pastors continue to join. I knew this was happening, but it is happening much more frequently than I had realized. Just a quick word of introduction, I'm working with congregations and pastors who are seeking to join during this interim period until we have a new general secretary. I began on May 1 (with lots of help from Mark Chavez and our staff!) and I'm working to keep the process going during these interim months.

It is amazing to me to see the number of congregations and pastors who continue to seek us out. It reminds me that we have a growing and vital ministry as we seek to proclaim the Biblical faith.

We have two groups that seek to join. One includes congregations and pastors that are leaving the ELCA. As the ELCA continues its trajectory, many congregations and pastors are seeking an orthodox and Biblical home. The other group joining us includes congregations and pastors that are in the LCMC and who would like to be dual rostered with the NALC. It is a blessing to receive them.

Let me share some numbers:

Congregations that joined the NALC (2020) - 12

Congregations that have joined the NALC (Jan. 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021) - 7

Pastors who have been certified in the NALC (2020) - 33

Pastors who have been certified in the NALC (Jan. 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021) - 10

Finally, some words of thanks. First, thank you to Mark Chavez, who oversaw and worked with this ministry for so many years. I knew that Mark worked hard with all of this, but I have a new and deep appreciation of all that he has done.

Second, thank you to our support staff. I am working most directly with Joan and Anne, who have been so supportive and helpful. And I am also blessed by Becky, Jenny and now Ariel. What an incredible group of people! They are dedicated, gifted and wonderful people who continually go the extra mile. We are blessed as the NALC!

I pray that our Lord continues to guide us as we grow in Him and welcome new people into our midst.

Geographic Setting of NALC congregations

Farming area: 119
 Remote area: 4
 Small town or rural: 204
 Large town: 14
 Suburb: 61
 City: 52

Total clergy: 720 471 Active 224 Retired 25 On leave from call

Candidates approved for ordination from August 1, 2020 to July 31, 2021: 6

Deaths of pastors from August 1, 2020 – July 31, 2021: 8

YEAR	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
BAPTIZED	125K	136K	137K	140K	141K	141.5K	142K	142.5K	145K	145.5K
CONGREGATIONS	330	364	384	393	407	421	424	433	444	454
DUAL LCMC/NALC CONGREGATIONS	39	34	71	76	82	83	91	96	97	100
DUAL LCMC/NALC PASTORS	n/a	n/a	n/a	40	151	163	168	174	184	187

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Dr. Mark Braaten

· 2021 CONVOCATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
REPORT OF THE WOMEN OF THE NALC

Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to tread on the heights.

—Habakkuk 3:17-19 NIV

When life gets crazy, we can always turn to the Word of God. 2020 was the year of Habakkuk 3:17-19 for not just the women but for all of us. The church doors closed and we could not worship together. There was no toilet paper or bleach to be had and the store shelves were empty. Times were bad as death and illness ran rampant throughout the globe.

Yet we rejoiced in the Lord, we were joyful in God our savior. Although we met virtually for our annual Gathering in 2020, we had over 80 attendees, we took care of business that needed to be attended to and elected Peggy and Sandy to the Women's Council.

As of April 2021, the WNALC had donated the following to Disaster Response: 1264 flood buckets, 3200 quilts, 360 school kits, 1680 Bibles, 360 health kits, 240 baby kits. We are continuing to collect, give and distribute items via "Stuff the Truck" and "Stuff the Tonka." Direct donations are always welcome, please put WNALC in the comments.

Our Mission Banks for this year were Disaster Response and The Great Commission Society. These two were selected because of their broad appeal and the unlimited outreach they provide. Mary Bates and Disaster Response is on the ground wherever the need is, the focus is bringing basic needs wrapped in the joy of God's Grace to those who have been impacted by the forces of nature. Regardless of who, what, where or when. The Great Commission Society (GCS), walks out the Great Commission globally. There is 70+ ministries that are blessed by the GCS supporting them maximizes our efforts and those of the NALC. Thus makes our feet like the feet of a deer, enabling us to tread on the heights. As of April, our Mission Banks total for the year was \$1,862.34. Whatever the total amount will be divided equally between Disaster Response and GCS.

Looking ahead to 2022, our guidelines require us to meet annually, inasmuch as the Women's Council has voted to meet virtually on years that there is no convocation and

in-person on convocation years. More on that will be forthcoming from the new council. This year we offered scholarships to help defray some expense of coming to the gathering for those that need it. Our Facebook group is growing in members and inspirational messages are being shared daily.

God has blessed us all abundantly even during a pandemic, I have been blessed to serve on this council with six wonderful women. Marcella and I began this journey together. She has been more than a vice-chair, rather co-chair these past three years. She is such a great asset to the Body of Christ. Marcella, Jill, Rachel, Kim, Peggy and Sandy – you are the greatest.

Yet we will rejoice in the Lord.

Jacqui El Torro

Chair, Women of the North American Lutheran Church

APPENDIX

UPCOMING EVENTS

Pastors' Conference

Orlando, Florida

Beginning: February 15, 2022

Concluding: February 17, 2022 at 12:00pm

Lutheran Week 2023

Announcement coming soon

GLOBAL WORKERS



**The Rev. Neeraj Ekka &
The Rev. Nijhar Minz-Ekka**
*Ranchi, Jharkhand, India with
World Mission Prayer League (WMPL)*



Stephen Katterhenrich
*Mbeya, Tanzania with
Wycliffe Bible Translators*



Jonathan (Jon) Gowin
*Gambia with Bethany Gateways and the
Indigenous Mission of West Africa (IMWA)*



Dr. William Obaga
*Kenya with
World Mission Prayer League (WMPL)*



The Rev. Valery Hryhoryk
*Belarus with
Spiritual Orphans Network (SON)*



The Rev. Didi & Serafina Panzo
*Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with
World Mission Prayer League (WMPL)*



Kevin & Sarah Pfister
*Bulgaria with
Operation Mobilization (OM)*



The Rev. Heidi Punt
Haiti with SMI Haiti



The Rev. Martha Shanka
*Dubai, United Arab Emirates with
Spiritual Orphans Network (SON)*

MISSION DISTRICT MEETINGS

2020 Vision

In his preamble to the 2020 Vision strategy, Bishop Selbo states “The rationale for this vision...is worth saying: 'Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain..' (Psalm 127:1) and 'Where there is no vision, the people perish..' (Proverbs 29:18).”

As a Congregationally Focused church body, we recognize that the primary work of the Church happens in congregations. There are, however, several ways we can work together to support the calling we have in Jesus. The 2020 Vision offers several ways in which the focus of our efforts is directed toward congregational life, as well as ways in which congregations and mission districts can work together.

1. In light of the 2020 Vision goals, in what ways do you see the Lord “building the house” in your mission district and congregations? In what ways are the 2020 Vision goals “helping and strengthening” mission and ministry within your mission district? Are most aware of the 2020 Vision in each of its vision points? Are congregations involved, not involved, apathetic?
2. How could your mission district encourage pastors and congregations to make 2020 Vision an integral part of vision for life and ministry?
3. Which vision point is having the greatest impact in your mission district? Your congregation?
4. In what ways can Bishop Selbo and the executive staff assist your mission district and/or congregations in living out the 2020 Vision strategies?
5. Develop three concrete, manageable, attainable action steps to be taken within your mission district and congregations to further the goals of 2020 Vision.



NALC

North American Lutheran Church

Lutheran Benefits 403(b)9 Retirement Plan

NALC Denominational Plan

- **Section 107 provisions for Ministers of the Gospel:**
 - Pre-tax contributions may be distributed for qualified housing expenses and may be excluded from gross income as a parsonage allowance in retirement.*
- **Ministers of the Gospel Housing Equity Account**
 - Distributions available prior to age 59½ for home down payment**
- **Direct Rollover and Transfer Capabilities from current 403(b), TSA, IRA**
- **Current employer/employee contribution limits: up to \$56,000/year*****
- **Pre-tax and ROTH capabilities**
- **Convenient online enrollment & easy-to-use website for 24/7 account access. Electronic prospectuses available online.**
- **Customer service team to assist with enrollment & answer questions**
- **Advisor service team for personal financial and/or retirement planning**
- **Pre-built investment fund portfolios or build your own portfolio**
- **No-load, low cost Vanguard & Dimensional Funds**
- **Loans or hardship withdrawals available**
- **Capability of separate portfolios for each money source – and ability to distribute from any fund or money source**
- **In-plan Roth conversion capabilities**
- **NO COST to your church / entity to implement**



For more information, please call:

1-800-516-HAHN (4246)

LutheranBenefits@HahnFinancialGroup.com

- Distributions from 403(b)9 denominational retirement plans are usually taxed as ordinary income. One exception may be distributions by Ministers of the Gospel for qualified housing expenses. Withdrawals made before age 59½ may be subject to a 10% federal income tax penalty. Generally, once you reach age 70½, you must begin taking annual Required Minimum Distributions (RMD), unless still employed by an entity participating in the denominational plan.
 - Investing involves risk, including the potential loss of principal.
 - Neither Hahn Financial Group, Inc. nor its representatives provide tax or legal advice. For answers to your specific questions, please consult a qualified attorney or tax advisor.
 - Investment Advisory Services and Insurance Products offered through Hahn Financial Group, Inc., a SEC Registered Investment Advisor.
- *Rev. Rul. 63-156, 1963-2 C.B. 79, **IRC Section 107, 403(b)9 Denominational Church Plans, ***www.irs.gov.

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Psalm 139:13-14

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Employee	\$773
Employee/Spouse	\$1,661
Employee/Child(ren)	\$1,205
Family	\$1,934

Available to rostered Clergy and/or rostered Congregations with the NALC

Explore your options!



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North American Lutheran Church

Lutheran Benefits

Self-Funded Major Medical & Prescription: Health and Ancillary Plan Highlights

Major Medical/Prescription Health Plan Benefits

- **\$1,000 annual deductible for an individual/\$2,000 for families**
- **20% coinsurance after deductible**
- **\$3,000 maximum out-of-pocket expenses for an individual/\$6,000 for families**
- **Shared Savings Model may allow the deductible to be waived for qualified pre-authorized procedures**
- **ACA Preventative Medical Evaluations covered at 100%**
- **\$0 co-pay for generic drugs**
- **Rx Help Center may help lower costs of specialty medications**
- **No coverage for elective abortions or abortifacient drugs (Psalm 139:13-14)**

Ancillary Benefits

(Cost is based on age, income, smoker status and options selected.)

- **\$50,000 base life insurance policy with an additional \$50,000 Accidental Death & Dismemberment coverage**
- **Short and Long-Term Disability – protecting a portion of your income to normal retirement age or beyond if still working**
- **Employee Assistance Program that provides counseling and follow-up services for personal and/or work-related problems**
- **\$10,000 Critical Illness Policy that will pay you a lump sum cash payment in the event of heart attack, stroke or certain types of cancer**
- **Optional Flexible Spending Account that includes options to save for medical and/or daycare expenses**
- **Optional Vision Plan covering exams, lenses and contacts**
- **Optional Dental Plan that goes beyond cleaning, cavities and root canal coverage and includes dentures and orthodontia**

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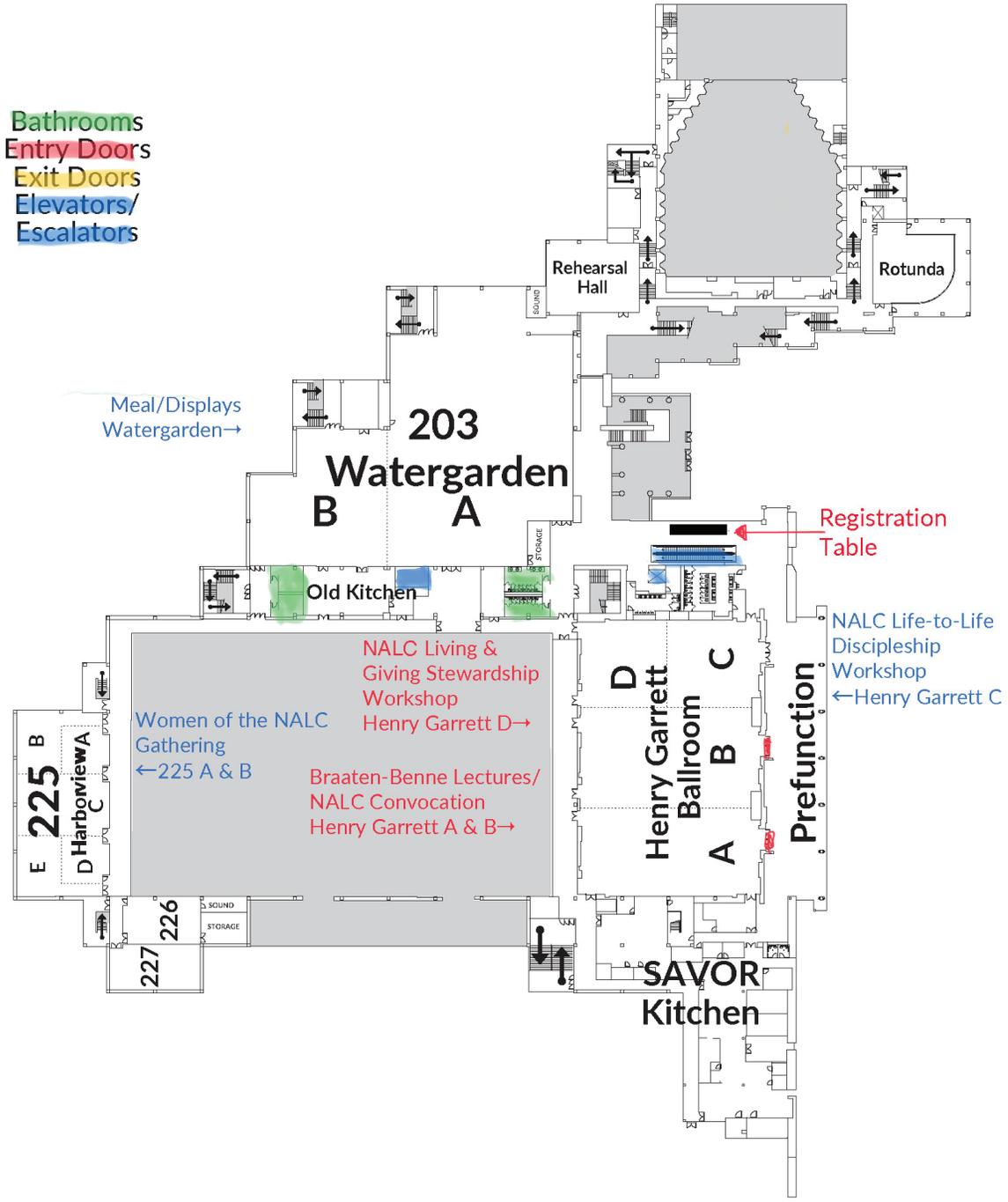
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