



DISCIPLELIFE 2020 EVENT FOR PASTORS AND LAY MEMBERS IS FEB. 13-15 IN ORLANDO, FLORIDA

DiscipleLife 2020 — a joint conference of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) and the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) for pastors and lay people — will be held Thursday through Saturday, Feb. 13-15, at the Sheraton Orlando North in Orlando, Florida.

The conference will feature speakers from both church bodies as well as from the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Roman Catholic Church.

The ACNA and NALC would both describe themselves as “Great Commission” churches — committed to the Lord’s charge 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” (Matthew 28:19-20 ESV).

Other Christian bodies in North America share the same focus, but lack the commitment to the key role of Word and Sacrament in forming Christians who will be disciples and followers of Jesus, intentionally, authentically and with accountability. Essential to such forming of disciples is community, and developing congregational cultures which foster and support disciple making. As simple as they sound, disciple making and creating congregations with disciple-making cultures are not familiar or comfortable to most Lutherans and Anglicans in the 21st Century.



DiscipleLife 2020

DiscipleLife 2020 is an opportunity for biblically grounded Anglicans and Lutherans to meet together, get to know one another and network for greater mission and ministry in local contexts; and to acknowledge and embrace “small steps” toward disciple making at the local level — fostering an “awakening toward action,” regardless of the size of the congregation or the experience of clergy and laity; and to return home encouraged and empowered to get involved, to get motivated and to get moving with regard to being disciples and making disciples.

Continued on Page 2

Continued from Page 1

The conference opens on Thursday afternoon with a devotional Bible study by the Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, assistant to the bishop for missions for the NALC.

An opening keynote address will feature the Rev. Dr. Foley Beach, archbishop of the ACNA, and the Rev. John Bradosky, bishop emeritus of the NALC. They will address the shared values of the two churches and cast a vision of how a renewed focus on the Great Commission changes lives, congregations and affects real change in the culture around us.

“Word and Sacrament in a Disciple-Making Congregation” is the focus of a plenary address by the Rev. Dr. John Pless, assistant professor of pastoral ministry and missions, at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Breakout sessions on Thursday will feature Pless, as well as the Rev. Dr. James Nestingen, an NALC pastor and professor emeritus of church history from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota; and the Rt. Rev. Stewart E. Ruch III, ACNA bishop of the Diocese of the Upper Midwest and rector of Church of the Resurrection in Wheaton, Illinois.

The Rev. Dan Selbo, bishop of the NALC, and the Rev. Dr. Foley Beach, archbishop of the ACNA, will lead the Thursday evening plenary session on “Planting Disciple-making Congregations in the Anglican Church in North America and the North American Lutheran Church.”

A panel discussion and question and answer session will be held on Thursday evening.

Friday morning opens with a devotional Bible study by the Rev. Lisa J. Schwandt, dean of the ACNA College of Deacons for the Anglican Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast and lead pastor for discipleship at HopePointe Anglican Church in The Woodlands, Texas.

“Vision of a Christian — Life as a Disciple of Jesus” featuring the Rt. Rev. Dr. Todd Hunter, bishop of the ACNA Diocese of Churches for the Sake of Others and founder of the Telos Collective, is the focus of the Friday morning plenary session.

Friday morning breakout sessions feature Hunter, Nestingen, Pless and the Rev. Dr. Eric Riesen, president-elect of the North American Lutheran Seminary and chair of the NALC’s Life-to-Life Discipleship Team.

Katherine Coolidge, director of parish and diocesan services for the Catherine of Siena Institute in Colorado Springs, Colorado, will address “Creating a Disciple-Making Culture in Your Congregation” at the Friday afternoon plenary session.

Friday afternoon breakout sessions feature Coolidge as well as the Rt. Rev. Clark W.P. Lowenfield, bishop of the ACNA Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast and founder of the Simeon Society, and the Rev. David Keener, pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Evans, Georgia, and a member of the NALC’s Life-to-Life Discipleship Team.

Friday afternoon will conclude with a panel discussion featuring speakers from the plenary and breakout sessions.

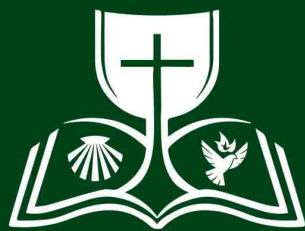
Saturday will include a closing worship service and a session on action steps to enable participants to take what they have learned from the conference home to their congregations.

The \$249 conference registration fee includes all events and all meals. To register or for more information go to disciplelife2020.org.

NALC MINISTERIUM MEETS ON FEB. 13

NALC pastors will meet at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday morning, Feb. 13, for the annual meeting of the NALC Ministerium. The meeting will be held prior to the DiscipleLife 2020 Conference which begins on Thursday afternoon.

Bishop Dan Selbo will address the pastors and share his vision for the NALC and seek input from the pastors. There will also be an opportunity for pastors to renew their ordination vows.



DiscipleLife

2020



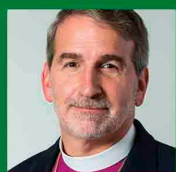
ANGLICAN CHURCH
IN NORTH AMERICA



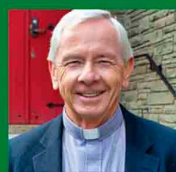
NALC
North American Lutheran Church

A VISION FOR FORMING DISCIPLES THROUGH WORD AND SACRAMENT

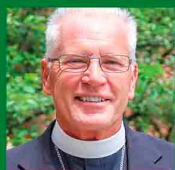
JOINT ANGLICAN/LUTHERAN CONFERENCE



The Most Rev. Dr.
Foley Beach (ACNA)
Archbishop & Primate,
Anglican Church in North America



The Rev. Dr.
Dan Selbo (NALC)
Bishop,
North American Lutheran Church



The Rev.
John Bradosky (NALC)
Bishop Emeritus,
North American Lutheran Church



The Rev. Dr.
Gemechis Buba (NALC)
Assistant to the Bishop for Missions,
North American Lutheran Church



Mrs.
Katherine Coolidge (RCC)
Director of Parish & Diocesan Services,
Catherine of Siena Institute



The Rev.
Brad Hales (NALC)
Director of Domestic Mission,
North American Lutheran Church



The Rt. Rev. Dr.
Todd Hunter (ACNA)
Bishop, Anglican Diocese of
Churches for the Sake of Others



The Rev.
David Keener (NALC)
Discipleship Guide,
Life-to-Life Discipleship Movement



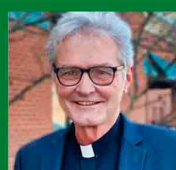
The Rt. Rev.
Clark Lowenfield (ACNA)
Bishop, Anglican Diocese of the
Western Gulf Coast



The Rev. Dr.
Jim Nestingen (NALC)
Lutheran Theologian,
North American Lutheran Church



The Rev. Dr.
John Pless (LCMS)
Assistant Professor of Ministry & Mission,
Concordia Seminary - Fort Wayne



The Rev. Dr.
Eric Riesen (NALC)
President Elect,
North American Lutheran Seminary



The Rt. Rev.
Stewart Ruch (ACNA)
Bishop, Anglican Diocese of the
Upper Midwest



The Rev.
Lisa Schwandt (ACNA)
Pastor for Discipleship & Lead Deacon
HopePointe Anglican Church

**If you're a pastor, lay leader, missionary, or just passionate
about discipleship, join us for this conversation about:**

Word, Sacrament & Spirit // Spiritual Formation & the Vision of the Christian Life
Congregational Renewal & Disciplemaking Culture // Church Planting & Missionary Discipleship
Kingdom Collaboration & Missional Partnerships

REGISTER NOW
www.disciplelife2020.org

Sheraton Orlando North
February 13 Lutheran Ministerium //
February 13-15 DiscipleLife 2020

CONNECTING FAITH AND LIFE

Happy New Year! As we move into 2020 and look forward to what the coming year holds for us in the NALC, it is exciting to think about the plans God has in store for our future, especially in light of the ways He has led us in the past.

We are now in our 10th year as a denomination, coming to the close of our first full decade as a church body. Considering how the NALC began — with a vision for one day growing to more than 100 churches and now finding ourselves with more than 430 congregations, strong and still growing — it is a living testimony to the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit that our witness to the Gospel has been used as it has to build and grow Christ's Church.

In my first three months as bishop, I have had the opportunity to gain a good perspective on where we have been in our past, where we find ourselves today, and what we face as some of the challenges and opportunities for our future.

There is no question that we are well positioned to continue bearing fruit from the many good seeds that were planted in our early years. There is also no doubt that we have a lot of hard work yet to do as we find ourselves in a world in which the name of Jesus is not as welcomed as it once was.

To think that the path in front of us will be easy is neither honest nor wise. The deceiver is alive and well and has no other purpose than to distract and dissuade the Church. We need to keep our eyes open and on Jesus and make full use of the armor we have been given (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Nonetheless, as we enter this new year and as we look to our future, we not only follow the One who is "the same, yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8), but we place our trust in the God "who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20 NIV). It is with that hope and in that promise that I am truly excited about and encouraged by where and how, I believe, God will continue to lead.



FROM THE BISHOP

REV. DR. DAN SELBO
BISHOP

In conversation with our staff, leadership teams and our deans, we are well into the process of developing a 2020 Vision for our future. The vision will be consistent with the four Core Values we have in the NALC, and with the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) we have been given and entrusted with by Christ.

It will also be a vision that will continue to stretch our pastors and mission districts to work together for common goals and that will challenge all of us, in even greater ways, to take faith steps in our individual and collective callings to follow Jesus. The plan, as mentioned in last month's newsletter, is to share the vision with our pastors at the Ministerium portion of the DiscipleLife 2020 Conference in Orlando, Florida, in February, and then to rework and revise it for presentation at the 2020 NALC Convocation in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in August.

The 2020 Vision is designed to set a path for the next four years, giving direction to what we will be doing in the years ahead. The vision has 10 components, recognizing that the challenges we face and the future God has given us will take work and energy on a variety of levels.

The vision priorities include, among other things, a continued emphasis on discipleship and disciple making, an intentional and expanded focus on outreach efforts and mission starts, a commitment to pastoral support for all of our congregations, and a renewed and refocused energy on the development

Continued on Page 5

of our North American Lutheran Seminary system and the recruitment and training of the next wave of pastoral leaders coming up through our partnering seminaries.

In developing our vision, I am fully aware of the fact that with every vision comes the inherent danger that the words will never translate into action. It is easy to put a vision on paper and to think and dream about what might happen in the years ahead. It is not so easy to put a vision into action and to plan and work in implementing and carrying it out. Our challenge will be, once our vision is set, to continually be working together to revise, revisit and recommit ourselves to it, until the vision we have on paper becomes a reality in the life we live together.

The same is true when it comes to our faith walk with Jesus, and the relationship between the theology we profess as believers and the life we choose to live as followers of Christ. It is one thing to say and believe that “God has first place” and “Jesus is Lord.” It is a different thing to give Him first place and allow Him to be Lord of our lives. Unless, and until, our faith leads to action, then our discipleship walk with Jesus is less than what our Lord intended when He called us. The call we have been given is one that requires a response. And the response we make is one that leads, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to a changed, transformed and more Christ-like life.

Now, as Lutheran Christians, we need to be careful that we never confuse God’s justifying declaration — because of the cross and resurrection of Jesus — with the ongoing sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. We are justified because of Jesus. We are made righteous because of Christ. He is our help. He is our assurance. He is the only hope we have of becoming right with God. At the same time, the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit is taking place within us until the day we are ultimately called home to Him. We are continually being reshaped, remolded and reworked, throughout all of life, into the image and likeness of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18).

In our theology, we cannot exchange or confuse the one with the other. We need to be clear about *how*

***In our lives, our theology
has little impact if it
never translates into
a changed life.
As a denomination, our
vision has little effect if
it never moves us to true
and real action steps.***

we are saved and *from what*, and about *why* we are saved and *for what*. We are saved *from* “sin, death, and the power of the devil” by the justifying blood of Jesus. We are saved *for* following Jesus, sharing our faith and helping others follow Him, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit (Ephesians 2:8-10).

In our lives, our theology has little impact if it never translates into a changed life. As a denomination, our vision has little effect if it never moves us to true and real action steps.

As we move into this new year, look back on where we have been, and as we consider our future and vision together about where we believe God will lead, let us not lose heart and grow weary, but always and forever fix our eyes on Christ (Hebrews 12:2-3).

I look forward to this coming year and to sharing and working together on our 2020 Vision.

In His name,

Bishop Dan

SUMMER BIBLE CAMP IN BELARUS

By Pastor Valery Hryhoryk

Dear brothers and sisters, greetings in the name of the Lord. This past summer was not very friendly in Belarus. June was our only month of good weather. The most cold and rainy month was July. July is usually the warmest month of the summer. However, this year it was different.

As you may know, July is the month when we have our youth and children's camp. As I said, the weather was very rainy and cold, but the Lord protected the camp! He gave us a big tent that protected all the small tents from rain and cold. Ten small tents were put inside the big tent, and this arrangement was perfect for such bad weather conditions.



The bonfire became a central gathering place, and all seats were taken around it when it was not raining — to dry clothes and catch some natural warmth from the fire.

The theme of the camp was “The Lord’s Prayer” and “Destructive Behavior in a Contemporary Society.” At the end of the camp the children knew the Lord’s Prayer and what every aspect of it means. The Bible

Continued on Page 7



The children were happy and the Lord was glorified! No one wanted to leave; however, our teachers constantly monitored the state of things. They made sure the children had dry socks and warm hands. The parents were worried, and this we could understand.

A team of youth from Slovakia came to help with the camp. This has become a good tradition and made the camp international. Evenings spent around the fire were good times for personal witness and fellowship.





Continued from Page 6

camp was also evangelistic, and we were happy to see new faces!



At the end of the camp, every child received a Bible and some Christian books as a gift. One of the books is called *Love, Truth and Grace* by Swedish Lutheran theologian Per-Anders Grunnan. This book is a reflection, in simple terms, on Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*. The children also received a famous book titled, *Five Love Languages*, by Gary Chapman.



Thank you, Lord, for our Bible camp and for the Lord's people who made it possible! Thank you for the wall of protection around the event! Bible camps and ministry to children restore historical and biblical Lutheranism in Belarus!

Pastor Valery Hryhoryk serves as an NALC Global Worker in Belarus with East European Missions Network. For additional information or to partner, please visit: thenalc.org/valery-hryhoryk.



MISSION UPDATE FROM KATTERHENRICH FAMILY

Growing up at St. John's Lutheran Church in Grove City, Ohio, Stephen and Rachel were blessed to learn the value of knowing and serving God, as well as serving others. The Katterhenrich Family has been serving with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Tanzania since 2011.

Wow. It's been 10 years since we began taking classes in linguistics. Stephen carried on with classes to help him in his role in translation, and now as of December, Stephen has completed his Master's degree in Applied Linguistics! The last several months have included countless hours of reading, studying and completing class work in order to finish his degree. The deadline to complete the degree was coming up soon, and we decided it was worth taking a few more months away from the field to finish this milestone. The final comprehensive exam included six hours of writing essays to three major questions on linguistic topics. We were all relieved to hear that Stephen had passed and scored well. Stephen has been blessed by his education and time at Dallas International University (formerly Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics).

Dedication

An exciting event took place a few months ago for the Bungu community — their first dedication of a



portion of Scripture! The translation for the Book of Mark was completed earlier this year, going through all the steps — drafting, advisor checks, community testing, consultant checking, reviewers check and linguistic check — and finally to the printer.

A group of Bungu leaders then arranged for a dedication ceremony to celebrate this Gospel book being available in their language. Although we were not able to attend, we rejoice with them and praise God that He has provided His Word in a way that we trust He will continue to use to build His kingdom among the Bungu people.

Getting back to the task

After several months of visiting churches, family, friends and studying in the United States, we are getting ready to return to our work in Tanzania. Flights are booked for Feb. 6, but there's much to be done before that date arrives. The most pressing need which weighs on us is to get our ministry support levels back up before we can return.

Continued on Page 9



Continued from Page 8

Many of you are already giving generously to support our ministry of Bible translation in Tanzania, and for the past nine years God has faithfully provided all that we needed to continue serving the Bungu people and the other communities awaiting a Bible in their language. Please pray with us that God would provide pledges for the remaining amount.

Family updates

We've had some other milestones in our family recently. Scott turned 3 years old in November and had a small party with a few friends and many little figures from the Paw Patrol (his recent favorite TV show). Hope also had a birthday and is now 6 years old. She had a stunning cake made by her aunt that was a combination theme of mermaids and "Frozen" (movie). She also learned to ride a bike without training wheels this fall which has been very exciting. We were so grateful to have had several good friends to be with during our time in Dallas for school — some we already knew and some were new friends and we thank God for those special relationships!

Having wonderful relationships with people in many different places is one of the biggest blessings but also one of the biggest challenges in our lives. We often have this conversation with our kids, about



how we are always missing someone somewhere, but we have so many people whom we love and who love us!

Hope recently said, "I wish that Ohio and Texas and Kansas City and Tanzania, and all of the places we've been could all be smushed together so we could just walk to see everyone." It's a beautiful dream, and it's something we can really look forward to, when we are all united in Christ and redeemed by Him. We can't wait to see heaven filled with people from all tribes and tongues!

Stephen Katterhenrich, an NALC Global Worker, is serving in Tanzania with Wycliffe Bible Translators/SIL. For additional information or to learn how you can partner with their ministry, please visit thenalc.org/stephen-katterhenrich.



TRANSFIGURATION LUTHERAN MISSION CHURCH UPDATE

"Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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 behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." — Matthew 28:16-20 (ESV)

By Pastor Pedro Portillo

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit are with you all. It is an honor for me to write this reflection to all of you. It is a privilege as a pastor to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel with the authority that our Lord Jesus Christ has given me.

Transfiguration Church does not have a physical and permanent building right now. My new journey is to go where Jesus is sending me to be a companion to



His people who do not have a voice in our society. We lost our worship location in the funeral chapel during the season of Lent. Since then, we have been worshipping in different cities and towns in northern Texas.

At the moment, my job is to reveal the command that Jesus is giving me, and the commitment that I am making. Looking at the Gospel, I find my answer.

First: He is sending me out to all people everywhere to make them disciples.

Second: I am to baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Third: I am to teach them to obey the Word and everything He has commanded me.

Fourth: I am to proclaim salvation — that He has promised to be with you and me always, to the end of the age.

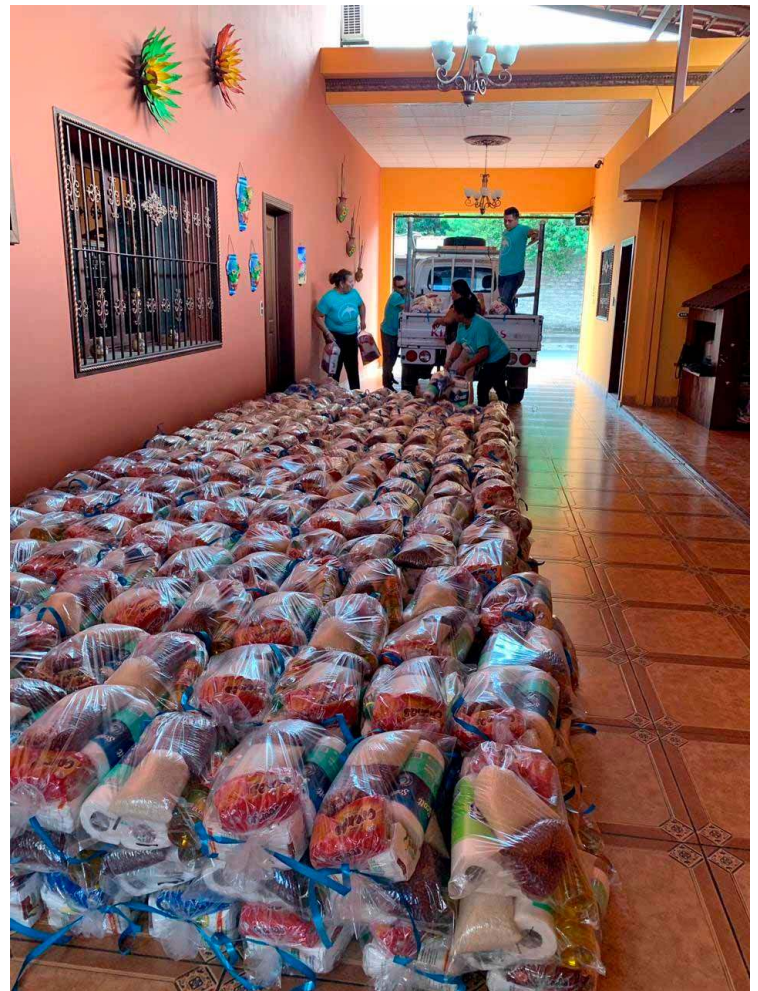


Continued on Page 11

A. Go make disciples: The Great Commission is a big challenge for many Christians in today's society to fulfill. We are so busy everyday. We often don't have time to share the Gospel with our own family or our neighborhoods. We have become slaves to work and technology. We seek more material stability for our families than we seek after the commandment of God to visit people and make them disciples for Him. Many congregations want to make disciples, but they don't go out to share the Word of God. Many congregations and leaders have great mission and vision statements, but nothing happens because they don't know their neighbors. They have the tools from the Bible, but they don't use them.

Sacramental community requires complete involvement with the neighbor. When we bring people and worship to Jesus, we build the Church, and as a gift we become part of His Body and His Church. The sacramental community is one that worships inside and outside the temple. Jesus, in His ministry, visited all the towns and villages. He proclaimed the Good News under the tress, around the river, desert, streets, plazas and in synagogues. He proclaimed the Gospel a few times in the temple. Jesus gave us a great commandment — to go out to make disciples for Him.

Many churches are dying for three reasons. One, they are so comfortable inside the temple. The second reason is they want the people to come to them and become disciples. Third, because they are too poor to buy or rent a church, like us.



Jesus is sending us to go into towns and villages to baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. He sends us with the perfect tools, the Bible, the authority of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. He is not sending us alone; we have the Holy Trinity power over us to do the job.

B. Baptize, in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit to build the sacramental community. Through Baptism, we become the people of God. "See how much the Father has loved us! His love is so great that we are called God's children — and so, in fact, we are" (1 John 3:1 GNT).

Through Baptism, St. Paul in Galatians 3:26-27 said, "It is through faith that all of you are God's children in union with Christ Jesus. You were baptized into union with Christ" (GNT).

Continued on Page 12

In Romans 6:4, St. Paul said, “By our baptism, then, we were buried with him and shared his death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from death by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might live a new life” (GNT).

My brothers and sisters, any child or adult who is baptizing around the world is part of this community and part of the Body of Christ. We should take responsibility to care for and protect them as our brother or sister in Christ Jesus.

We have many brothers and sisters who do not speak English. They live in Latin America, in Europe, in Africa, in Asia. We need to suffer for all those who are baptized in Christ Jesus and are dying in Syria, in Palestine and in many other countries.

We have the authority of the Bible and the power of the Holy Trinity to speak out. We have the command to defend the poor, the oppressed, the immigrant and those who pray to God for justice and peace. Through our Baptism, we become witnesses of Jesus and our witness of Jesus is to be willing to die for Him.

C. Teach them to obey everything He has commanded you is a discipleship commitment. Teach the Gospel, demand physical and spiritual transformation.

Ephesians 4:23 says, “Your hearts and minds must be made completely new” (GNT).



1 Peter 2:9 says, “But you are the chosen race, the King’s priests, the holy nation, God’s own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his own marvelous light” (GNT).

Teach and obey the Word of God is a call to renewal. Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Do not be surprised because I tell you that you must all be born again” (John 3:7 GNT). We are to teach others to live life in the light of the Gospel.

Ephesians 5:8, “You yourselves used to be in the darkness, but since you have become the Lord’s people, you are in the light. So you must live like people who belong to the light” (GNT).

D. Gratitude. I am happy to be born again and to be able to teach others to live in the light of the Gospel as part of any Baptism, wedding, quinceañera, mission trip, funeral and worship service that I celebrate with different people each weekend.

Special thanks to Grace Lutheran Church in Eaton, Ohio; Holy Ghost Lutheran Church in Fredericksburg, Texas; Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church in Tyler, Texas; and Elsie E. Burkle from Eaton Ohio, for their financial and prayer support for the global ministry of Transfiguration Lutheran Mission Church.

Pastor Pedro Portillo serves Iglesia Luterana La Transfiguración. For additional information or to partner with them in ministry, please visit thenalc.org/partners/iglesia-luterana-la-transfiguracion-irving.

NALC REPRESENTATIVES MEET WITH SYNOD LEADERS FROM LUTHERAN CHURCH IN BRAZIL

By Pastor David Wendel

At the request of the Rev. Joel Schlemper, the synod pastor (bishop) of the Center and South Santa Catarina Synod of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB), and with the help of one of his clergy, the Rev. Daniel Conte of Florianapolis, Brazil, a first meeting with representatives of the North American Lutheran Church took place on October 6, 2019, at the Intercontinental Hotel near the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.



Leaders from the Center and South Santa Catarina Synod of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil met with NALC leaders.

Initiated through an existing relationship with NALC pastor, the Rev. Jim Lehmann, and Immanuel Lutheran, in Flatville, Illinois, the meeting was arranged by the Rev. Dr. David Wendel, NALC assistant to the bishop for ministry and ecumenism. Also representing the NALC was the Rev. Phil Gagnon, due to his work with congregations in Mexico. Other pastors present and representing the Center and South Santa Catarina Synod were the Rev. Andre Hiendlmayer, a missionary serving in Florianopolis, and the Rev. Samuel Scheffler, a missionary serving in Luzerna.

German Lutherans began to arrive in Brazil in the middle of the 19th century. By the 1920s there were four Lutheran synods in Brazil. All of the pastors came from Germany. In 1954, the four synods merged into one church body, the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, which was organized in six geographic areas. In 1997, this church was reorganized into 18 synods by geographic areas.

Representatives of the church gather every two years for a Church Council (assembly), which elects a President Pastor for a four-year term. The Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil consists of approximately 600,000 members, with more than 700 ordained pastors. This church has always had both liberal and pietistic-conservative lines within its members and pastors.

In the 1960s, the American Lutheran Church (ALC) sent missionaries to Brazil, with the Holy Spirit and the ministry of John Aamot inspiring a renewal movement aimed at three basic concerns: evangelism, discipleship, and leadership training.

This movement assumed a more biblical-evangelical position, in contrast to the growing liberal theology.

Continued on Page 14

In the 1980s, this movement created a theological seminary in order to better train pastors and missionaries. The movement is called *Movimento Encontro* (Gathering Movement) because it gathers thousands of people in multiple gatherings every year, besides other ministries that are established and supported by this movement. You can learn more online at me.org.br.

As one of the 18 synods of the IECLB, the Center and South Santa Catarina Synod shares the vision and values of this Gathering Movement. This Synod is interested in building relationships with Lutheran churches that highly regard the Scriptures as the Word of God, the Great Commission to make disciples, the active priesthood of all believers in local churches, and confessional Lutheran theology.

With some connections in Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC), Synod Pastor Schlemper, Pastor Conte and others requested this first meeting with NALC representatives, as it is a more traditionally organized Lutheran denomination.

As a biblically, confessionally grounded synod, they are interested in our experience, our life within a biblically, theologically liberal church body, our dissension and finally, our departure from that church body and the establishment of the NALC.

At this time, the IECLB allows them to remain as a biblically, confessionally orthodox synod within the denomination and some congregations not in the Center and South Santa Catarina Synod are allowed to seek pastors from within that faithful synod. They are aware, however, that there may come a time when the church body will not allow that to continue.

After the meeting, Synod Pastor Schlemper stated:

As Lutherans committed to the Word of God, to the Great Commission and to the Lutheran Confessions, we seek to draw closer to evangelical Lutherans who are doing mission. We asked for a meeting with NALC leaders so we could learn more about this Lutheran church and build a relationship that would encourage us all to walk faithfully in obedience to the Word of God.

It was a precious moment we had to hear about the NALC's history and about the way the NALC seeks to be a faithful and relevant church of Christ in its context. We heard many things that we as Lutherans could easily relate to, because we have similar issues in the Lutheran Church in Brazil. We were encouraged as we learned about the commitments that the NALC has taken.

We are very grateful for the kindness and for the warm welcome with which we were received by Pastor David Wendel and Pastor Phil Gagnon. We look forward to the next steps of this relationship. Hopefully, we will get to know more Lutheran Christians of NALC congregations and be mutually encouraged in our mission to make disciples of all nations.

Steps forward, which were discussed, may include developing further relationships with NALC pastors and congregations, perhaps reciprocal visits, invitations to the NALC's Lutheran Week, making confessional theological education available online through the North American Lutheran Seminary, and an invitation to their leaders to participate in the 2020 Global Confessional and Missional Lutheran Forum in Wittenberg, Germany.

NALC pastors and congregations interested in establishing relationships with the Center and South Santa Catarina Synod of the IECLB are encouraged to contact Pastor Wendel at dwendel@thenalc.org.

Let's keep in touch

Rev. Dr. David J. Baer, *editor*
North American Lutheran Church
2299 Palmer Drive, Suite 220
New Brighton, MN 55112-2202
+1-651-633-6004 | news@thenalc.org



NALC
North American Lutheran Church

Please copy and share this newsletter widely.

ADDRESSING “SMALL” MATTERS BEFORE THEY BECOME “BIG”

Speaking of the nature of Christian community, St. Paul writes to the church in Ephesus, saying,

Therefore, putting away falsehood, let every one speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. (Ephesians 4:25-27 RSV)

Within the Body of Christ, Paul points out that there is to be a new way of living and relating to one another in community. This way is intended to be strategically different from the ways of the world and, in these verses, the apostle highlights the need for doing away with gossip, rumors, lies and “falsehood,” as everyone in the church is to speak the truth one to another, for we are each directly and intimately connected to each other. Although there may be times when we are angry or upset with one another, still, Paul writes, “do not let the sun go down on your anger,” for in doing so, we are allowing evil to creep into the Body of Christ.

St. Paul’s words are helpful and constructive for each of us who are baptized members of Christ’s body, whether in our relationships, in our homes and, yes, especially in our congregations. The reality is that often we choose to overlook or ignore small matters, letting the sun go down on them day after day. Yes, there are times when there are insignificant issues that can be characterized as “nit-picky” which should be acknowledged for what they are and dismissed as not worth time or energy.

However, what one person considers insignificant and nit-picky may be important to another. Ignoring or overlooking such matters often allows them to be blown into greater proportion, finally being added to a pile of other such matters which become something of an insurmountable mountain that can be a barrier to healthy, positive relationships, mission and ministry.



MINISTRY MATTERS

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

Paul encourages those of us in the Body of Christ to deal with matters promptly, not letting the sun go down on anger, misunderstanding or bitterness, lest a toxic situation take hold in the church that hinders the spread of the good news of Jesus’ death and resurrection, for the salvation of the world. No wonder the devil would want to manipulate even such small matters in the Body of Christ, trusting that once ignored, they will soon become major conflict in the church — as well as in homes and families!

How do we approach such situations? I am reminded of the so-called “broken windows theory.” It is a policing theory that suggests that even the smallest visible signs of anti-social behavior and civil disorder, including such things as vandalism and the breaking of windows in abandoned buildings creates an environment that encourages further crime and disorder, including serious crimes. Addressing the first signs of “broken glass” creates an atmosphere of order and respect, thereby preventing more serious crimes.

In the same way, when the smallest issues arise in home or congregation, it is better to heed Paul’s counsel and address such matters immediately, honestly and positively. When there are disagreements within the church community, rather than ignoring them and hoping they may go away, it is more productive to bring the involved parties together, speak the truth with one another, listening

Continued on Page 16

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY UPDATE

By Gary and Laurie Pecuch

We will be wrapping up our “Trot through the Old Testament” in February. We will begin the New Testament in March. Click on the link below or catch us live on Facebook.

Tuesday Feb. 11, at 2 p.m. EST

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/193440781871106051>

Remember that all webinars are posted to the faithwebbing.com website as shorter topical video clips.

Looking for summer trip options? Contact us. We have ideas!

The 2020 Nexus Institute: Registration is open for the all-NALC Nexus Institute. The week is July 12-17.



Nexus is a week-long theological experience for high school students. It is a free opportunity with the only costs being travel to and from Des Moines, Iowa. The NALC Nexus week filled last year and it is anticipated it will fill again this year, so register early. For additional information go to nexusgv.org or grandview.edu/academics/other-programs/nexus.

We are happy to connect with you at your convenience on a variety of topics related to children's, youth and/or intergenerational ministry.

Gary and Laurie Pecuch serve the NALC as youth ministry coaches. You may contact them at families@thenalc.org.

DAILY BIBLE READING GUIDE

A three-year plan of daily Bible readings is available on the NALC website.

The daily Bible readings may be downloaded as a printable calendar or electronic calendar. They may also be received as daily text messages. For more information go to thenalc.org/projects/daily-bible-readings.

MINISTRY MATTERS

Continued from Page 15

intently to each other, so that the disagreement may be resolved, forgiveness offered, those at odds may be reconciled, and unity restored.

When hurt and offense is ignored in relationships, as time goes on, the pain often intensifies, sympathetic allies are recruited and what was once a small matter can become a major issue within a marriage or a congregation. This is why St. Paul offers the advice, “do not let the sun go down on your anger.” Deal with issues immediately, honestly and with the goal of reconciliation and restoration. When we address small matters in the congregation in this way, it creates a loving Christ-like environment which manifests the reality that indeed, in the Body of Christ, “we are members one of another!”

CLERGY CARDS

Clergy identification cards for 2020-21 have been mailed to all NALC pastors.

Pastors who have not received their 2020-21 card should contact Joan Corniea in the NALC office at jcorniea@thenalc.org or 888-551-7254 (toll free) or 651-633-6004 to request that a card be sent.