



News

of the Iowa Mission District
of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

March 2018

A Word from the Dean

THE LION AND THE LAMB

**“Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah,
the Root of David has conquered .”**
~ Revelation 5:5

The old saying about the month of March is that if it comes in like a lion, it will go out like a lamb – or vice versa. It may not always happen that way, but it is an indication of the volatility of our weather patterns this time of year. There is a meteorological battle taking place as the storms and cold of winter give way to the warmth of spring. We can expect almost any kind of weather in March – from bone-chilling cold and blizzards of snow to summer-like warmth and gentle rains. Sometimes all in one week. It can be as fierce as a lion or as gentle as a lamb.

The Lion and the Lamb are also used to describe Jesus. Jesus is identified as the “Lion of the tribe of Judah” – referring to the prophetic blessing given to the patriarch Judah by his father Israel, which became a royal symbol of the house of David the King. And He is also called the Lamb of God – the sacrificial lamb whose death brings salvation to us, just as the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb meant freedom and life to the Israelites rescued from slavery in Egypt.

At the close of this month we will observe Holy Week, commemorating Jesus’ final week of ministry leading to His crucifixion and resurrection. The beginning of Holy Week marks Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. And He comes in like a Lion. Jesus enters Jerusalem as the promised King, arranging everything to fulfill the prophecy of the long-awaited Messiah: “Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” (Zechariah 9:9) And the people recognize Him as such. They welcome Him with shouts of “Hosanna to the Son of David” And the first thing He does upon entering the city is to take whips and cords and drive the money-changers out of the temple. Here is the Lion of the tribe of Judah claiming His rightful place.

But at the close of the week, Jesus goes out like a Lamb. Standing before Pilate, surrounded by enemies and bombarded with accusations, He remains silent, “like a lamb before its shearer is dumb, so He opens not His mouth.” (Isaiah 53:7) And like the lambs of the Passover, Jesus is sacrificed for our sake on the cross. This Lion turns out to be a Lamb.

Yet, this is not the end. This Lamb of God is not some weak, defeated creature whose death is the end. For this is the true Passover Lamb whose death takes away the sins of the whole world. This Lamb turns out to be a Lion, whose very defeat on the cross is his victory. He is the Lamb who was slain who takes His seat at the throne of heaven before whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess Jesus as king of Kings and lord of Lords. And because He has given his life for us, His victory is ours as well. So no matter how this month begins, at the end we will celebrate the One who is our Lord, the Lion and the Lamb!

**“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away
the sin of the world!”**
~John 1:29

Pastor Marshall Hahn, Dean, Iowa Mission District, NALC



Sola Scriptura—Scripture Alone

Pastor Tony D. Ede

First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Manchester, Iowa

“...it is an exceedingly effectual help against the devil, the world, and the flesh and all evil thoughts to be occupied with the Word of God, and to speak of it, and meditate upon it...” +Luther’s Large Catechism, Introduction

Dear Friends, Grace and Peace be to you, from our Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit...Amen

My 5-year old was examining a tape measure that I had on my workbench. He commented on the “stripes” that marked the different measurements on the tape. As he measured different things around the garage - the welcome mat, the car tire, the piece of wood in the corner - he made a mental note of how big or small things were. He stretched out the tape from the floor and held it up to the top of his hair. I asked him, “How big are you?” and he replied, “Just right!”.

Sola Scriptura is the idea that God’s Holy Word, is “Just Right” for us. Scripture guides us with the words of Christ Jesus and God’s good and gracious will for our lives. No other book or measuring tool can help us in such a way. Sure, we can take a self-help book off the shelf and get a few handy tips for our life and relationship to our neighbors, but the Holy Spirit has put the Scripture into our hearts to enliven faith and bring us into communion with the priesthood of all believers. As we are being knit together in our mothers’ womb, as we pass through the waters of baptism, as we are

brought up in the faith, Scripture crafts us as His blessed and chosen people, to serve him - forgiven of our sins - all of our days.

Scripture is living and active within us! As we read the precious words, gather in prayer, sing the sacred hymns, and serve his people, God’s word continues to be alive. Though the valley of the shadow of death lingers near, and the shadow of Calvary’s cross is close, the Word of God shall stand forever. So, once again, we can proclaim that Christ is Risen, He is Risen Indeed!

As you are renewed these days of Lent and into the Paschal Triduum, let the familiar words of the Gospel Acclamation for Lent guide your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus...the Word of God made flesh...

Return to the Lord your God...for He is Gracious and Merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Joel 2:13

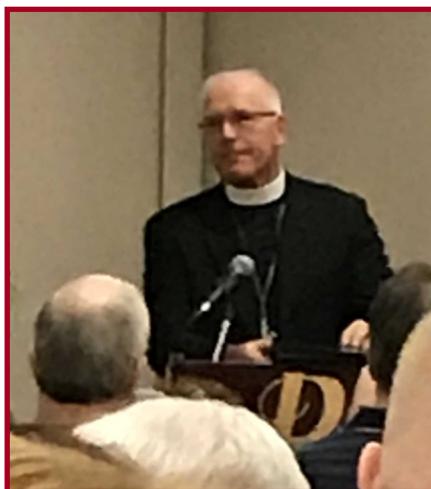
AMEN



This and That from around the Iowa Mission District



The annual NALC Pastors' Conference (January 30—February 1) was held at Drury Plaza Riverwalk Hotel in San Antonio, Texas, this year, within walking distance to the Alamo. Above right, Pastors James Puotyual (who is doing an internship in Des Moines, IA) and Pastor Christopher Martin (Emmons Lutheran Church, Emmons, MN) pose for a picture at the conference. Pictured below, giving presentations, are Bishop John Bradosky (right), and Doctor James Nestigen (left), who presented two teaching sessions on the lectionary epistle readings for Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Bishop Emeritus Paul Spring (center) preached the sermon at the Holy Communion service.



2018 Upcoming Events

April 9-10—Annual Pastors' Retreat at American Martyrs Retreat House, Cedar Falls, Iowa. The Reverend Doctor Amy Schifrin, President of the NALS, will present a "Liturgical Boot Camp".

August 15-17—NALC Convocation, Crowne Plaza Convention Center, Denver, CO.

September 15—Mission District Convocation, First Lutheran, St. Ansgar. Keynote speaker will be Pr. David Wendel.

2018 YOUTH MISSION TRIP

At the October Iowa Mission District Council Meeting the District Council voted to look into the possibility of supporting a Youth Mission Trip to Texas or Florida in the summer of 2018 to help with the recovery efforts from the hurricanes this summer. We are looking at a date at the end of July and would coordinate with the NALC Disaster Response Coordinator, Mary Bates. The Mission District would cover the transportation costs and arrange the details of the trip.

Youth groups in the Iowa Mission District that are interested in such a trip can contact Pastor Mark Lund or Pastor Marshall Hahn to indicate your interest – and put it on your calendar for 2018. More information on the trip will be sent out to the congregations of the Mission District as they become available. Anyone who would be willing to help in coordinating the trip may also contact Pastors Lund or Hahn (e-mail addresses are on last page of this newsletter).



Following Jesus—Luther Style

Faith Alone

In his youth, Martin Luther was obsessed with an overwhelming sense of his own sinfulness and the need to become righteous in the eyes of God. His early education and training in the Christian faith had led him to a misunderstanding of what God required of us as His people, and Luther saw Christ as a vindictive judge who took delight in punishing people. Rather than loving God, Luther once said he had hated Him because he thought the Lord was requiring a perfection that is impossible for human beings.

After years of fear and anxiety—and relentless effort to conform to his perception of God’s expectations—Luther finally discovered in his study of the Bible—particularly in Paul’s letter to the church in Rome—that perfection belonged only to Jesus, and through His own sufferings, death, and resurrection, Christ bestowed the gift of righteousness and eternal life on those who put their trust in Him. Luther said, “*I greatly longed to understand Paul’s Epistle to the Romans and nothing stood in the way but that one expression, ‘the justice of God,’ because I took it to mean that justice whereby God is just and deals justly in punishing the unjust....Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that ‘the just shall live by his faith.’ Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to have gone through the open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before the ‘justice of God’ had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven....*” (pp. 49-50, Here I Stand, A Life of Martin Luther by Roland H. Bainton)

After his eye-opening experience, Luther quit beating himself up (literally) and gained a whole new perspective in his faith. Set free from the chains of sin, death and the devil, Luther turned from his obsession with his own righteousness before God, and lived in the grace bestowed upon him by Christ. What does this mean? We Lutherans often have a difficult time articulating the relationship between “works” and faith. As a former Baptist (until the age of 20) I found comfort in Luther’s theology of faith alone, grace alone, Word

alone. It never occurred to me that one would look at living out the Christian faith as a “no-no”, and I was appalled in my mid-thirties to hear a younger Lutheran seminarian state very strongly in one of my seminary classes that we are saved by faith and can’t talk about “works”. Paul and Luther had no such problem with telling folks how to live in obedience to Christ and what they ought and should do in sharing the love and compassion of Christ with their neighbor. The problem comes when we get faith and works out of order. What we do in the name of Christ we do *because* He loves us and bestows His righteousness on us. We can’t do anything to become righteous and gain Christ’s love—as Luther learned in his early struggles. James is correct in pointing out that faith is not evident without the works (James 2:18). We would never have heard of Abraham and his deep faith in the Lord if he had ignored God’s call and remained in Haran (Genesis 12:1-4). But the emphasis must never be on “me”, but on Christ. Whatever deeds or actions we undertake, we do because we love Christ, not in order to gain some sort of reward or praise.

Our Lord Jesus told His first disciples that all who would follow Him must take up their cross (the one Christ gives us) and follow Him (Mark 8:34); and after His resurrection He told them they were to be witnesses to “these things” (His teachings, the witness of Scripture and the events of His death and resurrection), but to “*wait until you are clothed with power from on high.*” (Luke 24:44-49) To be faithful in our “following” means that we can’t be indifferent to our relationship with the Lord. It also means that we are not in charge—through the guidance of the Holy Spirit who reveals His will to us through Holy Scripture, we are equipped and prepared to live out our faith in Christ. Too often, the danger is that we either think we have nothing to do, or we forget that we are representatives of Christ, not acting on our own authority. On the one hand, we may be apathetic, but on the other we “work” ourselves back into depending on our own will, wisdom and merit. When we start measuring our efforts, keeping track of our deeds, or comparing ourselves with others, we have missed the point. This is why repentance is essential to our daily walk, that we may receive Christ’s forgiveness and begin again.

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

Donations and Correspondence

Checks sent to the Mission District for support should be made out to the **Iowa Mission District, NALC**, and mailed to Pastor Christopher Staley at **PO Box 141, St. Ansgar, IA 50472-0141**.

Correspondence for Mr. Craig Lease, Mission District Secretary, should be sent to **405 7th St. N., Northwood, IA 50459**

Items for the Mission District newsletter (pictures, news, etc.) are best sent via e-mail to Pastor Barbara Wills at barbaramwills@gmail.com.

Congregations of the Iowa Mission District

Ackley: **Our Saviour's**, Dan Buhs, Lay Minister
+Atlantic: Holy Trinity—Call Process
Avoca: **Trinity**, Pr. Eric Meissner
Badger: **Badger Lutheran**, Pr. Scott Meier
Boyden: **St. John**, Pr. Mark Lund
Dorchester: **Waterloo Ridge**, Call Process
Eagle Grove: **Evangelical Lutheran**, Pr. Jason Cooper
Eagle Grove: **Samuel Lutheran**, Pr. Rich Taylor
Ellsworth: **Trinity**, Pastor Jon Rollefson
Emmons, MN: **Emmons**, Pr. Christopher Martin
Gilmore City: **First**, Call Process
Grafton: **Emmanuel**, Pr. Solveig Zamzow
Greene: **St. John** (Vilmar), Call Process
Gunder: **Marion**, Pr. Marshall Hahn
Harlan: **Bethlehem**, Pr. Ronald Rasmussen
+Huxley: **Shepherd of the Prairie**, Scott Licht, Lay Minister
Irwin: **St. Paul**, Pr. Ronald Rasmussen
Laurens: **Bethany**, Pr. Scott Baker
Manchester: **First**, Pr. Tony D. Ede
+Monona, **Faith**: Pr. Mel Harris
+Northwood: **Peace**, Pr. Barbara Wills
Palmer: **St. John's**,

Plainfield: **St. John**, Pr. Kim Thacker
Readlyn: **St. Matthew**, Pr. Jean Rabary
Readlyn: **Zion**, Pr. Jean Rabary
+Robins: **Servants of Christ**, Pr. Ron Voss
+Rochester, MN: **Emmanuel**, Pr. David Steffenson
Ruthven: **Zion**, Pr. Thomas Summerfield
St. Ansgar: **First**, Pr. Christopher Staley
St. Olaf: **Norway**, Pr. Marshall Hahn
Sheldon: **St. Paul**, Pr. Craig Nissen
+Sibley: **Faith**, Pr. Tim Nappe
Spencer: **Trinity**
+Strawberry Pt.: **Mission in Christ**, Pr. Gary Burkhalter
Thor: **Ullensvang**, Pr. Darryl Landsverk
Waterville: **Old East Paint Creek**, Pr. Ken Kimball
Waukon: **Old West Paint Creek**, Pr. Ken Kimball

+ indicates mission congregation

*The Iowa Mission District
has 37 congregations!*

The following pastors are available for pulpit supply:

Pastor Paul Breddin—515--528-2284
Pastor David Schafer—563-568-6199
Pastor David Steffenson—253-302-9845 (Sundays)
Pastor Paul Weeg- -641-381-0675



Iowa Mission District Leadership

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Craig Lease, Secretary—pdlease@gmail.com
Pastor Christopher Staley, Treasurer—cbstaley@netins.net

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The Iowa Mission District website may be found at: www.iowamissiondistrict.com. If your congregation has a web site, and you would like to have the web address linked to your church name on the Mission District web site, please send the web address to me, Pastor Barbara Wills, at barbaramwills@gmail.com.