



News

of the Iowa Mission District
of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

January 2019

A Word from the Dean

LET IT SHINE!

*“We have seen His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”
- Matthew 2:2*

The season of Epiphany begins with the story of the Magi come to worship the infant Jesus. His coming has been revealed to them by the light of a star appearing in the heavens. It is a fitting symbol for the revelation of Christ's coming. As Isaiah prophesied centuries before, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.” Jesus, the Messiah, comes as a bright light, piercing into the shadows of our world darkened by sin and death. Beginning in Galilee, He calls His followers and begins to shine the light of God's love in His ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing. And the people come flocking to Him, hungry for the hope and healing He brings. He opens their minds to the truth of God's Word. He touches their hearts with the proclamation of God's grace, and He opens their eyes at the marvels He performs.

It is a light of amazing brilliance and power He brings to the world. Perhaps the most amazing thing about this light that Jesus brings is that He calls upon us to carry it into the world. “You are the light of the world,” He says to us. We are to carry on this ministry of teaching, preaching and healing as His followers, so that others “may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” How are we to do this? Certainly not by depending on our own power and strength. That would be to fall back into the darkness of our sin. It happens when we are so bathed in the light of Jesus' love that we reflect that light in all we do. It happens when we are immersed in His Word, receive His promise through His Word and gifts of grace and draw strength from our communion with Him in prayer and fellowship on such a regular basis that His light reflects itself in our own lives.

May we be enlightened by His presence and power in our lives in such a way that His light dispels all the darkness of our world, and shines through us for all the world to see.

Pastor Marshall Hahn, Dean, Iowa Mission District, NALC



Sola Gratia—Grace Alone

Pr. Kenneth Kimball

Old East Paint Creek—Waterville, Iowa

Old West Paint Creek, Waukon, IA

The Reformation slogan “Grace Alone” targeted and rejected any idea or suggestion that human works or effort or will or cooperation was required as a pre-condition for salvation. The “Alone” (“sola” in Latin) was meant to rule out any combination of “Grace + Works” or “Grace + Free-will” or “Grace + My Decision” or even “Grace + Discipleship” in the matter of salvation.

Grace is not a supernatural “substance” or “ingredient,” injected into sinners to help them earn or achieve righteousness before God. God’s grace, so the thinking went, was infused at Baptism to start us off with a little push in the right direction with occasional refills through Holy Communion and church-going and prayer, enabling us to cooperate in the transformation of our sinful selves into saints. Grace becomes an aid to “spiritual fitness” paralleling the use of sports drinks, power bars, and even medical injections by those pursuing physical fitness.

Sometimes, a bit more Biblically based, grace is understood, from its Old Testament roots from the Hebrew word “kheyn” (“to be favorably disposed toward someone”) as God’s predisposition or attitude of love and mercy towards us which we neither deserve nor earn. Unfortunately, this is often used to turn grace a principle by which we justify our sins and our unbelieving indifference to the Gospel.

In its fullness, “grace” is not a supernatural ingredient poured into our souls; it is not merely a general principle or policy of amnesty. It is more than just God’s attitude toward us. Grace is primarily a Person—namely Jesus Christ, God the Son Incarnate, crucified, and risen, Who gives us Himself, Who establishes a saving relationship with us as our Savior and Lord: “*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth...from His fullness we have all received grace upon grace...grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*” (John 1:14, 16-17) and

“*For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men*” (Titus 2:11).

Jesus didn’t give or share with us a substance or principle or even just a

loving attitude—He gave Himself to and for us, in the whole of Who He is and what He has done, is doing, and promises to do for us. In Ephesians 2:1-10, “saved by grace” is embedded within and inextricably linked with Christ’s giving of Himself to and for us, which creates the very faith that receives Him. Cf. Galatians 2:20-21, Romans 3:19-26, Romans 5:1-10, et al.

“Grace Alone” means keeping our trust in Jesus alone for our salvation, that Jesus is enough, that in facing sin, death, and judgment, we aren’t grasping at the broken thread of our own works or decision or spirituality, but trusting that Jesus has hold of us and will never let go.

Grace is primarily a Person—namely Jesus Christ...

This and That from around the Iowa Mission District

2018 Highlights



ANNOUNCEMENTS

2018 Upcoming Events

August 5-9, 2019—Luther Week, Indianapolis, IN. (Note: **Election of Bishop!**)

April 29-30—Mission District Pastor's/Lay Ministers' Retreat.

September 14, 2019—Iowa Mission District convocation, First Lutheran, Manchester, IA.

IOWA MISSION DISTRICT 2019 Youth Mission Trip

The 2019 mission trip for youth in our mission district is in the planning stage.

Tentative dates: July 22-29, 2019.

Destination: North or South Carolina.

Personal cost for each person going: \$250.

*Contact person: Pastor Jason Cooper,
cooper_jd@yahoo.com.*

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 Gary Burkhalter at **312 E Mission St, Strawberry Point, IA 52076**.

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.

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.



Steadfast In God's Word Conversations with God

How do we learn to speak with the Lord? I remember when I was a little girl my parents taught me to pray “*Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep...*” It’s the first prayer I learned and the learning predates any memory of being taught—this was the bedtime prayer I prayed throughout my early years. We also prayed a mealtime prayer—a simple prayer thanking the Lord for our food. It was after I became an adult that I learned to pray “*Come Lord Jesus, be our guest.*”—the table prayer my children learned as they grew up. None of these prayers come directly from Holy Scripture, but the beliefs and trust in the Lord’s provision expressed in them are rooted in Psalms and the teachings of our Lord. In Psalm 4:8 the psalmist expresses his trust in the Lord’s protection: “*In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for thou alone, O LORD, makest me dwell in safety.*” And the Lord’s provision for material needs are scattered throughout the Scriptures, as noted in this prayer from Psalm 104: “*O LORD, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy creatures.... These all look to thee, to give them their food in due season.*” (vv. 24 & 27) Our Lord Jesus also addresses this concern in the Sermon on the Mount: “*...do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.*” (Matthew 6:31-33)

Our earliest prayers tend to focus on our material needs—safety and food—the most basic and earliest of our needs. Note that infants cry when they’re hungry or insecure, and deep within each of us there is still that primal concern for safety and physical nourishment. However, as we grow and mature physically and emotionally, most of us learn to consider the needs of others. We’re taught to share our food and our toys, to say “please” and “thank you”, and to include the needs of others in our prayers (if we’ve been blessed with faithful parents who provided for our spiritual needs as well as our physical ones). And yet, too many times our conversations with God still tend to be tethered to our physical wants and desires, fears and anxieties. As beings created in the image of God, we humans are called to a higher standard. Animals live to be fed and safely sheltered—too often we humans act

as if that is all there is to our lives, as well. I love to watch grey squirrels—they remind me so much of myself when I’m stressed and anxious about the daily difficulties of living. They’re always storing up nuts and food and running anxiously back and forth, often putting themselves in danger by their continuous hyper-alert efforts to avoid it. Sometimes their furry little bodies continue to vibrate even when they’re sitting on a branch—rigidly alert to the slightest threat.

In verse 33 above from Matthew 6, our Lord Jesus calls us to a higher standard—to the fullness of life and prayer that we were created to enjoy as children of our heavenly Father, made in the image of our Creator. “*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...*” This is a call to enter more deeply into conversation with our Lord and to engage with Him beyond our physical needs and desires. In some sense Holy Scripture is a record of our history with the Lord and His nurturing of humans from our infancy in the Garden of Eden (the earliest verses of Genesis) into the full maturity of those who are gathered around the throne of God in His heavenly kingdom (recorded from the Revelation to the Apostle John). It is also the witness of our Lord’s steadfast and enduring love for us as He provides for the restoration of the broken relationship we brought about—and continue to break—through our willful disregard of His guidance and instruction. And even beyond all that, the Holy Writings that record God’s good and gracious will for us, also provide a means of entering into the most amazing and life-giving relationship of all—offering us the words and resources to enter into conversation with our heavenly Father who loves us and longs for our love in return.

In the coming months we will abide for a time in the Holy Scriptures and contemplate some of the ways in which they invite us into conversation with the Lord and give us the language and opportunities to engage in prayer beyond the personal “wish list” we too often render to Him. In Psalm 46:10 the Lord says, “*Be still, and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth!*”

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

Congregations of the Iowa Mission District

Ackley: **Our Saviour's**, Dan Buhs, Lay Minister
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. David Schafer, Interim
Gilmore City: **First**, Tracy Nerem, Lay Minister
Grafton: **Emmanuel**, Pr. Solveig Zamzow
Greene: **St. John (Vilmar)**, Pr. Christopher Martin
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**, Call Process
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 36 congregations.*

The following pastors are available for pulpit supply:

Pastor Paul Breddin—515--528-2284
Pastor James Glesne—563-380-8110
Pastor David Steffenson—253-302-9845 (Sundays)
Pastor Paul Weeg- -641-381-0675



Pastor Tim Nappe is also available for pulpit supply. His primary focus is his ministry with “Reaching the Unreached”, and he will share information about this mission work whenever he does pulpit supply for a congregation. Contact information: 712-331-4245. Or email at pastortim.milford@gmail.com

Iowa Mission District Leadership

Pastor Marshall Hahn, Dean—stolafparish@netel.net
Craig Lease, Secretary—pdlease@gmail.com
Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer—pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com

Mission District Council Members:

Pastor Jason Cooper—cooper_jd@yahoo.com
Pastor Mark Lund—pastormarklund@gmail.com
Pastor Christopher Martin—pastorcwmartin@gmail.com
Gregory Olson—golson@ruthventel.com
Chris Schlee—schleemasonry@hotmail.com
Kathy Scharnhorst—gaf@butler-bremer.com

Mission District Communicator (newsletter editor/web master):
Pastor Barbara Wills—barbaramwills@gmail.com