



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

July 2017

A Word from the Dean

LITTLE CHILDREN, LOVE ONE ANOTHER

*“Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God,
and he who loves is born of God and knows God.
He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.”
I John 4:7-8*

Tradition tells us that the three letters of I, II, & III John were written by John the Apostle, the author of the Gospel of John. The similarities in language, theme, and style would support such a claim. The author, himself, refers to himself only as “the elder.” But even that would fit what is said of John that he was the last of the apostles to die and lived to a ripe old age, serving the church at Ephesus for some 30 years. Tradition also tells us that, in his old age, John used to be carried in a chair to address the congregation. And his message was always the same:

“Little children, love one another.”

In my Bible it takes 1,487 pages to get to the phrase, “God is love.” Yet, as the elder John proclaimed in his letters and in his 5-word sermons, that is the central truth of our faith – properly understood. It is important to add those last two words, because “love” is so often misunderstood in our day. Too often “love” is seen simply as an overpowering emotion – an intense feeling that can be used to justify whatever it takes to obtain the object of my love. In such a case, love becomes a very possessive thing. If I love something, I want to have it. If I love someone, I want to possess her – make her mine. It is a very self-centered kind of “love.”

But the love God shows to us is a self-giving love – a love that is focused not on myself and what I want or desire, but focused on the other, on what is best for her or him. It is the kind of love Jesus showed to us in giving His very life for us. **“Greater love has no one that this, that one would give up his life for his friends.”** This is the true love that is at that heart of God’s very nature and being. This is the love that we are to show to one another as His followers.

At times it seems our world becomes more self-centered, coarse, and vile with each passing day. The political discourse, popular culture, social media, and everyday interactions seem to drive us further and further apart from one another. A brief look at history will tell us that this is nothing new, however. The form and shape of these things may change, but the substance is still the same – human sin. Yet, we follow One who has overcome the world – who has taken all of our sin upon Himself and conquers it all by His love. And He calls upon us to follow Him in answering evil with good, sin with forgiveness, and hatred with love. If John were with us today, I have no doubt his message would still be:

“Little children, love one another.”

Pastor Marshall Hahn, Dean, Iowa Mission District, NALC

Being Reformed in God's Truth!

*Pastor Christopher Martin
Emmons Lutheran Church
Emmons, Minnesota*

Once upon a time, there was a prison filled with prisoners, all serving a life sentence. Their clothing on their backs had deteriorated into nothing more than tattered, filthy rags. Their diets consisted of stale bread and muddy water. The cells where the prisoners were kept leaked cold air in the winter, and insects and other not so pleasant things in the summer. Each prisoner was isolated from the others, and from the light of the outside world. It was cold, dark, damp, and without hope. And try as they might, no one had ever escaped.

That is until one day, a Liberator arrived. He overtook the guards, bound the warden, and had gained access to the keys. As he walked through the cell block, the liberator, with keys in his hands, unlocked the doors of the cell, calling out to the prisoners "Come on out! I have overtaken the guards and the warden who have kept you in this prison. I have new, clean clothes for you to wear and a banquet of the finest food prepared for you. Come out, be free!"

In John 8, the appointed Gospel lesson for the festival of the Reformation, we hear these words of Jesus: "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31-32) In Luther's time, the call of the Reformation "Sola Scriptura" or "Scripture alone", was a call back to the Scriptures, to the life-giving Word of our Lord which promised to liberate sinners from sin, by pointing them not to their own efforts, but to the life,

death, and resurrection of Jesus and the Word that He speaks that offers forgiveness and life.

Today, as we approach the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, this cry of "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free," is just as true as it was in Jesus' day and in Luther's day. Disciples of Jesus Christ are in constant need of having their hearts reformed by the life-giving Word of Christ. Sin wants to leave us like those prisoners in that dark

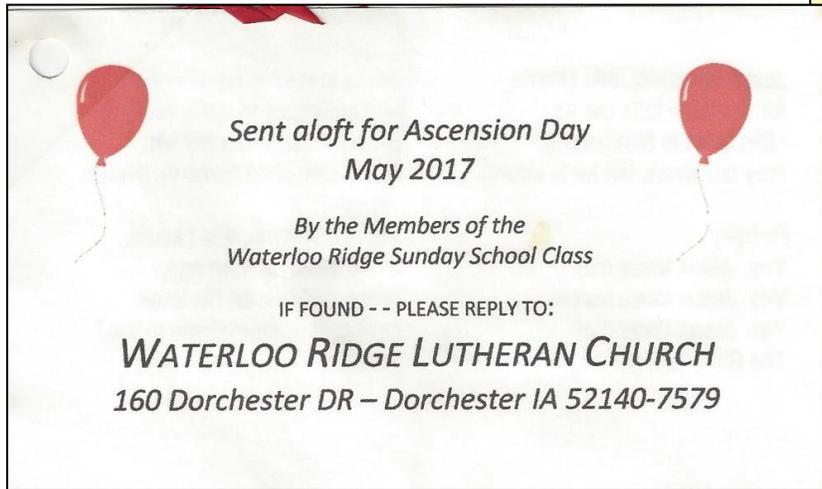
prison: dirty, cold, and alone. Thus, our Lord in Scripture through His Word of Law convicts us of our sin, and leads us to repentance. His Word of Gospel declares to us time and again that

Christ, by His life, death, and resurrection, is that liberator in our illustration. He does everything necessary to fling the doors wide open, clothe us with His righteousness, and lead us to the banquet feast of His kingdom—to recognize that our freedom from sin isn't our doing, it's His!

My prayer for all of us in the Iowa Mission District, for our Pastors, our Congregations, and individual Christians, is that God will use each of us, wherever it is that He's planted us—no matter how large or small our community or congregation may be—to be an instrument that lives and proclaims His life-giving Gospel, and flings the doors of the prison cell of sin wide open so that others may join us in celebrating all that Christ has



*This and That
from around the Iowa Mission District*



*Christian Greetings, 5-21-17
He is risen and ascended
to sit at the right hand of
the Father!*

*We found this balloon in
our hay field last evening @ about
7:30 as we were raking hay.
We live 1 mile south of
Loganville, Wis.*

*May the Lord Bless you,
as you continue on the journey*

*Vernon Hershberger
5.6145 Hwy 23
Loganville, Wis. 53943
608-415-8060*

**Mission in Christ Lutheran Church
Strawberry Point, Iowa
Celebration of the dedication of their new Worship Center**



Helping to celebrate the dedication of the new (and first) church building of the Mission in Christ congregation were pastors and members of various congregations of the Iowa Mission District. Pastor Mark Chavez, General Secretary of the NALC, reminded us all in his sermon that the church is the body of Christ and that the “worship facility” serves the people of God—people are not to serve the building. Pastor Marshall Hahn (Dean of the Iowa Mission District) opened the service with the invocation, Pastor Al Hock dedicated the Baptismal font, Pastor Mel Harris dedicated the pulpit, and Pastor Gary Hatcher (Dean of the Iowa Nebraska Chapter of the Society of the Holy Trinity) dedicated the altar. The Reverend Gary Burkhalter serves Mission in Christ as their pastor.



Reformation Commemorations

What Iowa Mission District Congregations are doing to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation



Reformation Celebrations

One of the ways congregations can commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation is by joining with other congregations. In north central Iowa, several NALC congregations are gathering with other Lutherans on the afternoon of Reformation Sunday to celebrate the gifts Luther gave to the Church. The details are still being worked out, but the focus will be on Christ alone, Scripture alone, Grace alone, Faith alone, combined with lots of music and a smidgeon of Luther's life and theology. Adult and children's joint choirs are in the works, and lots of congregational singing, in keeping with Luther's emphasis of making congregational hymn singing a part of the worship service.

Upcoming Events

August 9-11—NALC Convocation in Nashville, Tennessee.

September 2-3—150th anniversary celebration at Waterloo Ridge Lutheran Church, rural Dorchester, Iowa.

September 16—Iowa Mission District Convocation at Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church, rural Waterville, Iowa. Please note that the nomination form is at the end of the newsletter. There are two pages—one is to be filled out by the person making the nomination. The second page is biographical information to be filled out by the nominee. Both pages are to be sent to Mr. Craig Lease, Mission District Secretary.

WATERLOO RIDGE LUTHERAN CHURCH
169 DORCHESTER DR
DORCHESTER, IA 52140-7579



YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO OUR SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
WATERLOO RIDGE LUTHERAN CHURCH - SEPTEMBER 2ND & 3RD

Waterloo Ridge Lutheran Church Celebrates 150 Years

Saturday—September 2nd—7:00 pm

Praise God with Music & Prayer

With our neighboring N.A.L.C. Congregations (Refreshments following)

✠

Sunday—September 3rd—10:00 am

Festival Worship with Communion

Catered Ham Dinner (freewill offering)

Confirmation Reunions & Memory Sharing to Follow

✠

Please RSVP by calling 563-492-3806

Leave a message with your name & number attending



Why We Do What We Do ***Elements of Liturgy***

As we've noted before, there is a rhythm to the liturgy—hearing and speaking; receiving and giving. During the reading of the lessons we listen—and receive the Word of God; we are fed through the hearing of the proclamation of the Gospel in the sermon. Following this reception of the Word, we now respond through the confession of our faith in the words of one of the three ancient creeds of the Church: The Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed or the Athanasian Creed (used in many congregations on Trinity Sunday each year).

In the Book of Concord these creeds are referred to as “The Three Chief Symbols”. In the introduction to the creeds on page 17 of Tappert's translation of the Book of Concord, there is this explanation of the Apostles' Creed: *“The text of the Apostles' Creed as we now have it dates from the eighth century. However, it is a revision of the so-called Old Roman Creed, which had currency in the West by the third century. Behind the Old Roman Creed, in turn, were various creedal formulations which betray their relationship to root forms encountered in the New Testament itself.”* The Nicene Creed was adopted in its original form at the Council of Nicaea (AD 325) as a corrective to the Arian heresies (p. 17), and the Athanasian Creed—not written by Athanasius—is of uncertain origins but likely dates from the fifth or sixth century (p. 18). These ancient creeds reflect the teachings of the New Testament and were worked out carefully and prayerfully by ancient theologians. From time to time folks want to write more modern “creeds” to replace the ancient ones, but

too often such affirmations of faith run the risk of watering down the faith or introducing the very heresies the ancient creeds were meant to counter.

Although the three creeds are of differing lengths and detail, all affirm the faith in which we baptize—we believe in the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the name of God given to us by our Lord Jesus Himself in Matthew 28:19. While we confess our belief that God the Father created heaven and earth, that His Son Jesus came to save us through His death and resurrection, and that the Holy Spirit gives us the gift of faith and is our comforter and helper, we do not name God by these things that He does, but rather by His name—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All three persons of the Holy Trinity were present at creation, involved in the events of salvation (Jesus was sent by the Father and conceived by the Holy Spirit—and both these persons of the Trinity were involved with Him throughout His earthly life); and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

Confessing our faith in our Lord through the ancient creeds ties us to the saints of God of all times—those who have gone before us in the faith, and those who will follow after us. The creeds state clearly the Christian faith, and help protect us from errors that would lead us away from a right understanding of God's love for us and the Life He provides for us through our Lord Jesus. Each time we confess the creed it should be recited thoughtfully and with conviction—I believe—we believe.... This is most certainly true!

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
Allison: **New Life**, Galen Eiben, 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
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. Jerry Wittmus
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**, Call Process
Readlyn: **Zion**, Call Process
+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 Jean Rabary—563-608-2044
Pastor David Steffenson—253-302-9845 (Sundays)
Pastor Paul Weeg- -641-381-0675



Iowa Mission District Leadership

Pastor Marshall Hahn, Dean—stolafparish@netel.net
Craig Lease, Secretary—pdlease@gmail.com
Pastor Christopher Staley, Treasurer—cbstaley@netins.net

Mission District Council Members:

Pastor Barbara Wills—barbarawills@gmail.com
Pastor Gary Burkhalter—pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com
Brent Bruns—bvbruns@netel.net
Gregory Olson—golson@ruthventel.com
Chris Schlee—schleemasonry@hotmail.com
Newsletter Editor: Pastor Barbara Wills—barbarawills@mchsi.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 barbarawills@gmail.com.

2017 Iowa Mission District Convocation Nominee Submission Form

The Iowa Mission District Convocation will be held September 16, 2017, at Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church, 1799 Elon Drive, Waterville, Iowa. This year we have three positions to be filled: Mission District Dean (*The Dean must be an NALC pastor. Pastor Hahn is eligible for re-election*); Clergy Member and Lay Member for Mission District Council.

Please fill out all sections on the first page and have the nominee fill out the biographical section on the second page. Both pages must be sent to:

*Mr. Craig Lease, Secretary
Iowa Mission District, NALC
405 7th Street N.
Northwood, IA 50459*

Name of Nominee: _____

Phone number: _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Congregation: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Position this person is being nominated for:

Dean Clergy member at large Lay member at large

Please verify that this person knows of the nomination and is willing to serve if elected:

Yes No

Biographical Information of Nominee

Name: _____

Position for which you are being nominated: _____

Congregational Member at: _____

City: _____

Occupation: _____

Tell us something about yourself (*family, hobbies, etc.*)

How do you understand your faith?

How have you been active in the church?

Please list one of your favorite Bible verses and tell why it has meaning for you.

Please sign below to indicate you are willing to serve if elected and mail this completed form to:

*Mr. Craig Lease, Secretary
Iowa Mission District, NALC
405 7th Street N.
Northwood, IA 50459*

Signature