

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

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A MOTHER'S DAY PRAYER

Heavenly Father, to you I pray...

On this day called,

"Mother's Day."

*Let all mother's on earth give praise,
To you...for the children that you gave.*

*For you have blessed them from above,
with little souls to nourish and love.
Let them mold each one with care...
And teach them to be kind and share.*

*Forgiveness is the special key...
Start early on, to help them see.
Their fragile minds are easily
impressed.
Please teach them ways, so they'll be
blessed.*

*Sow godly seeds into their minds.
With careful pruning, you will find...
Young adults with such strong roots,
all through life, will bear rich fruit.*

*And then have faith for God to show...
Them all the rest they have to know.
Remember they're His children too.
For they were only lent to you.*

Prayers Concerns

Please lift the following people up
in prayer:

Prayers for our new pastor
Falcone family
Bill
Traci's family
Family of Joan
Marsha
Pickett family
Doerge family

Upcoming Events

May 8 - Council meeting 7:00

**May 14 - Men's breakfast for
mother's day 9:00**

May 24 - St. Mark's Net Dinner

It is better to walk alone, than
with a crowd going in the wrong
direction.

Never lose hope. You never
know what tomorrow may bring.

You cannot hang out with
negative people and expect to
live a positive life.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Happy Days !!!!!

Birthdays: May

May 5 - Gloria Falcone
May 8 - Mary Schaffer and Claude Brown
May 11 - Dennis France
May 13 - Debbie Brigadier
May 14 - Augie Kauffman
May 16 - Michael Cinquino
May 22 - Sharon Nesbitt
May 26 - Stephanie Nichol
May 28 - Kobe Gordon
May 30 - Brianna Gordon

Anniversaries: May

May 21 - Jill and Kenneth Hanley

For those of you that were unable to stay for the annual meeting (you missed some delicious food!) copies of the committee reports will be in the next few newsletters for your information.

Did you know St. Mark's offers the following opportunities for you and your family to participate?

Phoebes - every Monday from 9-2 PM

Youth Sunday School - Held during the worship service message

Adult Sunday School - Sundays from 9:15 - 10 AM

Prayer Ministry - every Thursday night beginning at 5:30 PM

After School Program - every day from 3 - 5:30 PM following school schedule

Men's Prayer breakfast - second Saturday of each month

If you know of anyone that could use an encouragement basket please speak with Janet or Gloria.

If you have articles you would like in the newsletters please put them in Debbie's mailbox.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Servers for May

May 7:

Acolyte - Dylan
Ushers - Jim/Deb
Reader - Sharon
Greeter - Pat
Prayer -
Counter - Carrie

May 14:

Acolyte - TBD
Ushers - Tom/Sharon
Reader - Ginny
Greeter - Janet
Prayer - Deb B.
Counter - Deb P.

May 21:

Acolyte - Dylan
Ushers - Dean/Lori
Reader - Nannette
Greeter - Deb P.
Prayer - Beth
Counter - Diane

May 28:

Acolyte - TBD
Ushers - Diane/Dennis
Reader - Deb B.
Greeter - Ginny
Prayer - Carolyn
Counter - Carrie

New website

Our webpage is up and running.
Check it out. The address is

[www.stmarkslutheran
middleburgh.com](http://www.stmarkslutheranmiddleburgh.com)

Prayer Ministry

You are invited to participate in a new prayer ministry. We meet on Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. in St. Mark's sanctuary. If you are unable to attend and have a prayer request you would like lifted, please contact the church office or feel free to place your written request in the prayer box located in narthex.



Prayer Walking in Middleburgh

Who: People who are seeking to join God in mission in Middleburgh

What: A group of friends who pray together for the people who reside in and around Middleburgh as they walk around the community.

Where: Meet in the United Methodist Church parking lot.

When: Thursday, April 27, beginning at 2 p.m.

Dates and times for subsequent walks will be determined by the group.

Why: To stir our hearts to see people, places, and needs through God's eyes and to seek insight into God's kingdom plans and purposes for our community

How: With the help of the Holy Spirit



The Middleburgh
Ecumenical Bell Choir
Concert

Sunday - June 11, 2017
3:00 p.m.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
Fellowship Hall



What is a pastor and what is pastoral leadership?

Let's recap. As we transition from one year to another, it is common to review the year past, summarizing in such a way that we move forward into the new year with increased clarity and intentionality.

Having spent 2016 focusing these Ministry Matters articles on issues of pastoral leadership, I thought it might be helpful to recap and summarize what we've discussed. If you've missed one or want to re-read, you will find the newsletters archived on the NALC website, www.thenalc.org.

What did we learn about pastors and pastoral leadership as we've "conversed" through the year just past?

We began by acknowledging that there is confusion regarding the pastor, the pastor's call, authority and leadership and how that relates to lay leadership in the congregation. This leaves pastor and parish unsure how to relate to one another, how to lead the congregation, how to resolve what are sometimes simple problems.

This confusion often begins with a lack of clarity or understanding of the "call" of the pastor. In Lutheranism, there is to be both an "internal" sense of call from God as well as an "external call" from the Body of Christ affirming that this person seems to have been called and thus the Church extends a formal call to the person.

The two, together — the internal and external call — work to discern the movement and activity of the Spirit with regard to God's call to ministry. Neither is more important or valid in the call of a pastor. (See the January 2016 NALC News.)

Unfortunately, some pastors enter ministry thinking "it's all about me!" This is defined as "narcissism" — as excessive interest in oneself. Pastors with narcissistic tendencies have little desire to involve



Ministry Matters

Pastor David Wendel

Assistant to the Bishop
for Ministry and Ecumenism

other leaders, a need to control and not share decision-making, and a tendency to show offense when and if anyone should disagree. Sometimes lay people in the congregation think the church is all about them, as well. No wonder a pastor and council president, both having narcissistic tendencies, will conflict and do battle! Both have forgotten, or never understood, that it's not about the pastor or the council — it's about feeding and caring for Christ's sheep! (See John 21:15-19 and the February 2016 NALC News)

St. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, "*Moreover it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.*" Besides our all-too-human tendency toward narcissism, another great barrier to pastoral ministry is failure to earn the love and trust of one's congregation. How does a pastor build trust? NALC active and retired leadership offered these words of advice: preach the Word of God and only the Word of God. Practice deeply listening and openly sharing. Keep confidential matters confidential. Make parish visitation a priority and be aware of and sensitive to the congregation's history. Build consensus and practice joint decision-making. (March 2016)

But we ought not move too quickly away from "preach the Word of God," for not all understand what that means. In April, we discussed the need for faithful NALC pastors to engage in Biblical preaching that discerns both Law and Gospel,

Continued on Page 14

Continued from Page 13

keeping the Scriptural Word as the primary focus for every sermon, making preaching “incarnational.”

The Scriptures proclaim not a spiritualized Christ, but an embodied, enfleshed Lord who comes to us, yes, through the work of the Holy Spirit, but through Word and Sacrament — what Luther called the “means of grace.” God gives Himself to us in His Son, Jesus Christ, who is now embodied in the Word — written, read, studied and preached — and in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, broken and poured out for us in the Lord’s Supper. This is the challenge and the expectation of every faithful pastor and preacher in the NALC. (April 2016)

Perhaps one of the most misunderstood and neglected aspects of leadership in congregations is that of maintaining unity. Although this is, or should be, one of the primary tasks of the pastor, he or she cannot create and maintain unity alone. It is the work of the leadership team as a whole — pastor, congregational officers and council.

This happens only through thorough knowledge of and commitment to living the Holy Scriptures, seeking no other agenda other than that established by Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church, as pastor, officers and council work to foster a climate of direct, open and honest communication, building consensus in all things. (May 2016)

One of the most destructive factors in the pastor-congregation relationship is the “hire and fire” mentality many have with regard to their pastor. The NALC Manual on the Call Process states on page 9:

Calling a pastor is not the equivalent of “hiring an employee.” The call process is much more relational and covenantal. Calling a pastor is much more like a marriage, and the call process more similar to finding a mate for life. In this sense, going slowly and intentionally, seeking God’s will, and developing a relationship are more important than lining up skills and needs.

Accountability and clear expectations between pastors and councils are essential to healthy, open, communicative relationships that last. The positive energy and effort invested in the relationship

between the pastor, the council and the congregation will not only help those involved in the leadership team, it will bear good fruit within the community as a whole and be a witness to the world of how we Christians love and care for one another. (June 2016)

Bishop Paul Spring shared recently that, in his experience, 75 percent of all congregational conflict results from lack of pastoral leadership skills or lack of a pastor’s ability to deal with conflict in a healthy, faithful manner. We need pastors in the Church today who have leadership skills! This is not something that is usually taught in seminary, nor is “leadership” something that we are born with. The U.S. military continues to be a place where leadership can and must be taught and learned. Hence, in July, we cited the “Top Ten Leadership Lessons from the United States Sergeant Major Academy.” I encourage you to read them again in the July 2016 newsletter.

In September, we turned to the topic of “The Pastor and the Congregation’s Vision for Mission.” The Word of God reminds us, *“Where there is no vision, the people perish”* (Proverbs 29:18). Together, pastor and congregation share responsibility for seeking God’s will and guidance with regard to a vision for faithful mission and ministry in their local context. When a congregation is beset by competing visions, it is common for individuals to try to gain power and authority, to take control and establish one’s own vision and direction. No wonder pastors and lay leaders so often find themselves in the midst of tension, conflict and power struggles.

And speaking of tension, conflict and struggle, in October, we turned to the issue of heightened anxiety in our day and age. Pastors and preachers can be adept at “afflicting the comfortable.” Are we equally competent comforting the afflicted? It may be the case that some of us pastors are afflicting our congregations with additional anxiety at just the time when anxiety is already extremely high. And at a time when what is needed for congregations are the words of our Lord and of Holy Scripture, communicating peace, promise, reassurance and hope! It is the role of the pastor to be discerning and discriminating with regard to how we minister and preach to the flock entrusted to us.

Continued on Page 15

One would hope it needn't be said, but essential to pastoral leadership and effectiveness in ministry is "Love, Respect and Good Communication." What does this look like? All should remember that it is not "my" or "our" congregation, but the Church of Jesus Christ where we seek what is best for all. When angry or upset, deal with it in a healthy, productive way. Be a good listener; make clear, straightforward comments; exercise self-control; show respect; work together for a positive outcome; memorize and live Galatians 5:22-26. (November 2016)

Finally, in December we acknowledged that pastoral ministry happens not in some kind of perfect, sanitized community, but in the Church — made up of humans who are "all-too-human!" This means we minister in a broken world where all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God — including pastors, council officers, and every member of every congregation. How do we minister faithfully and successfully in this human Body of Christ? Forgive as we've been forgiven; state expectations clearly; bear with one another; speak the truth in love. In short, we are to love one another as Christ loved and gave Himself up for us (John 13:34; 15:12). (December 2016.)

Now that we've spent 2016 focusing on topics and issues of pastoral ministry and leadership as I see them in the NALC, I would like to invite you — pastors and members of the NALC — to send me your questions regarding pastors, pastoral leadership, congregational life and leadership. When possible and appropriate, I will address my articles in 2017 to your suggestions. Please be aware, I will not be able to address every topic or question, but will choose from among those of greatest interest to the most people, as we continue to talk about "Ministry Matters" in the North American Lutheran Church. Email your questions and suggestions to me at dwendel@thenalc.org.

Call process update

The list of congregations seeking to call NALC pastors is available on the NALC website at thenalc.org/pastoral-vacancies.



The North American Lutheran Church has entered into an agreement with faithwebbing.com to provide children's, youth, and family ministry coaching for NALC congregations.

Faithwebbing.com is a web-based youth and family ministry coaching service offered by Gary and Laurie Pecuch of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Grove City, Ohio.

To gain access to the members only section, fill out the contact form at faithwebbing.com or send an email to faithwebbing@gmail.com.

February Webinar: The next faithwebbing.com webinar will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 21, at 2 p.m. Eastern Time. We are continuing with a march through the list of Faith Skills. Next up is how we help youth to develop written standards to live by and personal ministry plans. We will see how far we get during the hour.

Here is the webinar link:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2934623301941407234>

Webinars will be offered on the third Tuesdays of March, April and May. All webinars will be held at 2 p.m. ET.

Previous webinars are posted on faithwebbing.com.

An Outcome-based Ministry Training Program will launch with the initial onsite event in Grove City, Ohio, Feb. 16-18. Participants are entering a 12- to 14-month training experience designed to equip them with the necessary tools to build a long-term sustainable ministry in their congregations.

National Youth Ministry Leaders Conference: Folks have been asking for a National Youth Ministry Leaders Event specifically for NALC congregations. The event for adults who work with congregational children and youth will be offered Aug. 7-8 (just prior to the 2017 NALC Convocation in Nashville, Tenn.). More information coming soon.