

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Publisher
Church mouse

Issue Number
52

Date
Sept 2015

New website

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

www.stmarkslutheranmiddleburgh.com

Looking for new members!

If you would like to become a member of St. Mark's Lutheran Church please speak with Council President Diane France.

Ongoing bottle and can drive.
Please leave **clean** bottles and cans by the garage door. Proceeds will be used for the mortgage.

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 the narthex.

Prayers Concerns

Please lift the following people up in prayer:

Tamara
Jessica's family
Debbi
Cynthia
Anne
JoAnn
Ruth

Upcoming Events

Sept 8 - Council meeting 6:00

Sept 9 - Choir practice 6:00

Sept 12 - Men's prayer breakfast 9:00

Sept 13 - Sunday School resumes 9:15

Sept 14 - Handbells 6:00

Every Thursday 5:30 - Prayer meeting in sanctuary.

Speakers for our upcoming services:

Sept 6 - Chris Cash
Sept 13 - Pastor EJ Sweeney
Sept 20 - Pastor Don Klob
Sept 27 - TBD

Special thanks to all our speakers for sharing their time with us.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Happy Days !!!!!

Birthdays: September

Sept 8 - Noelle Roney
Sept 10 - Leonard Cater
Sept 13 - Pat McCoy and Tamara
Guerrero
Sept 15 - Robin Gordon
Sept 17 - Beth Cash
Sept 18 - Mason Palmatier
Sept 19 - Marie Whittaker
Sept 20 - Joe Falcone
Sept 23 - Theresa Crapser
Sept 25 - Cody Martin
Sept 27 - Damian DeMaria
Sept 28 - Sharon Amendola

Anniversaries: September

Sept 2 - Theresa and Christopher
Crapser
Sept 10 - Leonard and Marie Cater
Sept 11 - Maurice and Karen Van
Dyke
Sept 15 - Patti and Allen Turner
Sept 17 - Pat and Niles McCoy
Sept 20 - Bill and Vanessa Gordon
Sept 23 - Deb and Jim Brigadier
Sept 24 - Delores and Michael
Harrison and Marie
and Richard Whittaker

**Zumba Classes will be
Wednesdays from 1-2 in the
fellowship hall. Check the
calendar in the hallway for
more details.**

**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 - Sundays from
9:15 - 10 AM

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

Youth Group - every third Saturday of
the month at 6:30 PM

Creative Women's Ministry - Fourth
Friday of the month at 7 PM starting
September 25th

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Servers for September

September 6:

Acolyte - Morgan
Ushers - Deb/Marie
Reader - Nanette
Greeter - Harry
Prayer - Gene
Counter - Debbie

September 13:

Acolyte - Dylan
Ushers - Lori/Jenna
Reader - Sharon N.
Greeter - Maurice
Prayer - Beth
Counter - Diane

September 20:

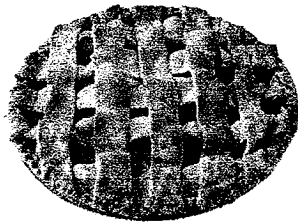
Acolyte - Logan
Ushers - Harry/Sharon
Reader - Ethel
Greeter - Pat
Prayer - Georgia
Counter - Carrie

September 27:

Acolyte - Dylan
Ushers - John C./Gabby
Reader - Georgia
Greeter - Janet
Prayer - Ginny
Counter - Debbie



Thank you!



Saying **"THANK YOU"** seems like a small gesture on our part; however, our Phoebe Circle is very grateful for your support of our annual pie sale. This is the only fundraiser we have where the proceeds are used to support our ministry of making quilts and encouragement baskets. Whether you baked a pie(s) or made a monetary donation, it is sincerely appreciated. May God bless you for your generosity.

Are you looking for that special gift?

The Phoebees have beautiful handmade wreaths for all seasons as well as crafts on display in the Youth building located next to the church. If you are interested in looking at them, please contact Sharon Nesbitt. The building will be open every Sunday morning after worship service or call her at 518-827-4644 to schedule a time to stop in. The proceeds will be used to help with our monthly mortgage payment.

Continuity Challenge for Congregations

The clergy shortage is upon us. Congregational vacancy lists grow longer. The Boomer pastors are retiring in droves.

And the next generation of pastors?

As I've mentioned in previous columns, only half as many Millennials attend church compared to Boomers back in the 1980s. So don't hold your breath waiting for significant numbers of younger seminary graduates to become available for call.

What's needed for long-term ministry continuity is an entirely different congregational leadership paradigm. Otherwise, far too many congregations will end up closing their doors due to the lack of pastoral candidates available for full-time calls.

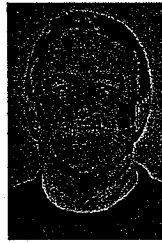
Seminaries are desperately trying to adjust. The emergence of more online courses is one way they are adapting to a decreasing number of potential residential, on-campus students. However, this might be a case of too little too late.

A traditional seminary education as the norm is increasingly becoming a thing of the past. By one estimate, 50 percent of Protestant seminaries will be closing within the next decade. Probably an exaggerated prediction, but still a hint of how rapidly things are changing.

How can your congregation adapt to this new reality when it comes to the limited supply of seminary-trained, full-time pastors?

1. Retired part-time clergy are still available in many parts of the country. Lots of Boomer pastors are retiring, and some are not adjusting all that well to their new life-stage. Some of them would love an opportunity to be involved in ministry on a part-time basis.

2. Perhaps a trusted, gifted member of your congregation would consider seminary studies. These could begin online. This person might only have to do one year of full-time residential study. The rest could happen with distance learning. Check with the North American Lutheran Seminary,



In Pursuit of the Great Commission

Pastor Don Brandt

the NALC office, St. Paul Lutheran Seminary, or the Institute of Lutheran Theology for some options. Or consider Fuller Seminary, which is extremely innovative regarding online study options and now has seven satellite campuses in the United States.

3. Develop a long-term strategy for recruiting and sustaining lay leadership for most of your ongoing ministries. This could include both compensated (typically part-time) staff, and volunteers. Note: Even a small stipend paid for a key ministry leadership responsibility can serve to legitimize that leader in the eyes of your congregation. It also brings an added level of accountability to that position. Examples of positions that can be well served by lay leaders include worship music leadership, small groups coordinator, community service director, children's ministry, youth ministry, and seniors ministry director.

Don't make the mistake of assuming that the developing clergy shortage signals the death knell for vibrant and effective congregational ministry. The fact is, very few Lutheran congregations have realized their full potential when it comes facilitating lay leadership. And these lay ministry opportunities will more often than not prove to be a blessing to those who step forward.

The late Erma Bombeck, a well-known columnist, once said, "When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left and could say, 'I used everything You gave me.'" In far too many of our congregations gifted lay people are denied the opportunity to fully utilize their God-given gifts and talents.

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Martin Luther toy is fastest selling ever

A little plastic Martin Luther may be just as popular in Europe in 2015 as the Reformer was 500 years ago.

A little three-inch plastic Martin Luther toy has become the fastest-selling Playmobil figure of all time.

The German toy manufacturer announced in February that the first edition of 34,000 pieces sold out in less than 72 hours, forcing the company to urgently request its factory to produce more of the "little Luthers."

Dressed in his 16th century academic robes and sporting a neat brown bob, little floppy cap, big brown eyes, and c-clamp hands, Martin Luther stands ready as he holds his tiny quill pen and a copy of his New Testament in German.

The Little Luther was produced as a part of Germany's celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 at the request of church and tourism officials.

Luther is revered in Germany not only as the Reformer of the church but also as the father of the German language.

The only other German figure that matches Luther's strong sales is the German painter and artist Albrecht Dürer whose toy sold 80,000 pieces



Playmobil's Martin Luther has become the company's fastest-selling toy ever.

over three years. Dürer was a contemporary and supporter of Luther.

Concordia Publishing House is among those selling the Luther toy in North America. You can order him for \$9.99 from cph.org.

Little Luther is ready to help children and adults celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

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Bottom line is that a significant percentage of congregations will not have much choice in this matter. This is urgent. It's time to prepare for a future when the availability of full-time, seminary-trained pastors will be something we will not be able to take for granted. It's time — even if it is partly motivated by necessity — to fully embrace the priesthood of all believers.

The Biblical vision for this is perhaps best expressed in 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9: "As you come to him,

the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

Pastor Don Brandt serves Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Salem, Ore. You may contact him at donb@oursaviorssalem.org.

NALC Convocation reflects on martyrdom

The 2015 NALC Convocation focused on the reality of Christians suffering for the sake of Jesus and the Gospel. Those at the Convocation heard stories that were both heartbreaking and inspiring about Christians being killed today because of their faith in Christ.

The Convocation heard keynote addresses from Pastor Bassam Abdallah, Robert Spencer and Margaret Khamoo. They highlighted the struggles Christians are facing at the hands of Muslims and explained the nature of the Islamic faith and why it is a threat to Christians.

About 600 people attended the Convocation Aug. 12-14 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel at the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport.

"Martyrdom and the Sufferings of the Righteous" was the theme of the Carl E. Braaten and Robert D. Benne Lectures in Theology, the annual theological conference which precedes the Convocation. Six speakers explored the theme from different theological perspectives.

A Mission Intensive event began the Convocation. Wednesday afternoon and evening were spent focusing on what it means for the NALC to be a Mission-Driven church. In addition to inspiring speakers including Bishop John Bradosky and Pastor Gemechis Buba, those in attendance focused on developing road maps for mission for their congregations and Mission Districts.

Bishop John Bradosky was reelected as Bishop of the North American Lutheran Church. Also nominated for Bishop was Pastor James Lehmann of Immanuel Lutheran Church of Flatville (Thomasboro), Illinois.

Elected to the Executive Council were Rosemary Johnson of Hope Lutheran Church in Ladysmith, Wis.; Brian Sutton of St John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Statesville, N.C., and Pastor Carl Rasmussen of First Lutheran Church in Kirkland, Illinois. Carolyn Nestingen of Roseville, Minn., and Pastor Marty Ramey of Dallas, N.C., were elected to the Court of Adjudication.

Bishop Paull Spring, the NALC's bishop emeritus, was honored on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his ordination. Over \$10,000 was received in gifts to the North American Lutheran Seminary in thanksgiving for Bishop Spring's ministry and in honor of his ordination anniversary.

2016 budgets were approved. The Convocation approved an operating budget of nearly \$2 million. Budgets were also approved for two of the NALC's designated funds: \$170,000 for the Great Commission Fund and \$625,860 for the Fund for Theological Education (which includes the North American Lutheran Seminary). It is estimated that 5-8 percent of congregational offerings will be necessary to meet the operating budget.

Amendments to the constitution of the NALC were approved reflecting a change in relationship between Lutheran CORE and the NALC. The amendments must be ratified by NALC congregations before they will go into effect.

Video recordings of the 2015 NALC Convocation and the Braaten-Benne Lectures on Theology will be available for viewing online at www.thenalc.org.