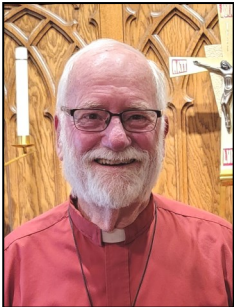


Heartland Heartbeats

Newsletter of the Heartland Mission District, NALC

"For He is our God. We are the people He watches over, the flock under His care. If only you would listen to His voice today!" Psalm 95:7 (NLT)

January 2024



Dean Doug's Musings

Every year for as many years as I can remember, I have chosen a "word of the year." It is the theme or emphasis or reminder of something that is important to me. It is something I want to focus on for that year.

One year it was the word "intersection" - the place where 2 roads meet, and you have to decide which way to go. One year it was the

word "through", reminding me that God's specialty is getting us through tough times. I believe that was the year I was battling cancer, and I was praying that God would get me through radiation, chemo, and surgery. Another year it was "relations" because I wanted to put special energy and love into all my relationships. Last year it was the word "emergence." I had just finished up an interim call, and I was not sure where I was going and what I might be doing. So, I put my trust in God for a new challenge or opportunity to emerge from somewhere. Wouldn't you know Bethel called me back into service as part time care pastor.

As you may or may not know, I had a few times recently when I blacked out for a short period of time that I tried to dismiss. As long as they were short and spread out that tactic worked. But on Christmas morning at the breakfast table I had another. One moment I was chatting with my family, and then I was out cold. About 20 seconds later I was fine. The rest of the day was normal Christmas family stuff. The following day, my kids, their spouses and 13 grandkids loaded up and headed to the "Bottle Works" in downtown Indy. There is a huge food court and an area of lots of games. My wife and I were walking around checking out the various food booths when it happened again. I was out cold, collapsed on the concrete floor. When I woke up, there was a woman holding my hand who identified herself as a nurse and her EMT husband was kneeling close by. She said she thought it was syncope. A security guard was right there as well. I sat up, but this time the woozy feelings didn't go away. We sat for a bit. Terri called my doctor, and he told us to head to the hospital ER. I spent five days in the hospital - a CT scan, heart catheterization, had a stent put in my main artery, a MRI, a pacemaker put in, and finally, a PET scan to check a suspicious spot in my lung. Obviously, it was more than syncope.

That's a long way to my word of the year for 2024, and that word is "TODAY." Today is the only day we are assured of getting, and no one but God knows all that today will bring. The Bible says "today is the day the Lord has

made." Psalm 68:19 says: "Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily 'today' bears our burdens." Jesus tells us not to worry about tomorrow, you have plenty to handle today. He also taught us "give us today our daily bread." And perhaps his most famous "today" came from the cross, "Today you will be with me . . ." And we all know Jesus is the same, yesterday, today and forever.

So today I give thanks for the gift of life and love and for all the wonderful people He has placed in my life. Today I am striving to walk humbly with the Lord. Today I pray I can reflect the light and life of Christ with all who cross my path. I will leave you with this prayer from Psalm 95:7, "For He is our God. We are the people He watches over, the flock under His care. If only you would listen to His voice today!"

Dean Doug Gast

STUFF the TRUCK!



Month of March 2024

HMD District-Wide "Stuff the Truck"

Volunteers from the HMD Disaster Response Warehouse plan to travel to every congregation and mission to pick up Disaster Response donations during the month of March. ([Click here for event poster.](#)) Pickup can be on any day and not just Sundays. Everything on the NALC Kits listing or components are acceptable. [For NALC Kits list, click here.](#) Depending of the volume of donations, instead of a 26' box truck we may be bring a just a pickup or a pickup with a trailer. If you are going to donate more than 500 complete flood buckets, I need to know as soon as possible for that will take multiple vehicles or trucks with a trailer due to weight. (Dan would love to have this problem.) [For Pickup Registration form, click here.](#)

Currently the only black out date is March 9, 2024. On this date, Disaster Response Training will be hosted at Peace Lutheran in Connersville 9:00 - 4:00. [Click here for training over overview and registration form.](#) Training is open to anyone whether they are an NALC member or not. RSVP to Dan Richardson March 9, 2024 or

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Mary Bates (740-509-1132) so we have a count for materials and food. Course "Fee" per person is a gift card, which will go to the Disaster Response Warehouse. If an overnight room is needed for the training, Peace Lutheran parishioners do have some rooms availability at no cost. Call Dan (317-435-2768) to arrange.

Disaster Response Training at Peace Lutheran in Connersville March 9, 2024: 9:00 - 4:00

TENNESSEE TORNADES

The Dec 9 outbreak of tornadoes caused damage from Rutherford TN through Clarksville TN and Hendersonville TN, impacting hundreds of homes and killing six people. NALC Disaster Response was in the area quickly.

Rake, shovels, etc. may be donated through Heartland Mission District Disaster Response. Contact Coordinator [Dan Richardson](#). Please send all gift cards to NALC Disaster Response, 16500 Noble Avenue, Caldwell, Ohio 43724. Email [Mary Bates](#) for more information on how to help.

Additionally, the church requests prayers for the affected families, seeking strength, comfort, and resilience during this difficult time. The collective generosity and prayers of the community can make a significant difference in aiding those facing the aftermath of this disaster.



Five congregations in our district continue the search process for a new pastor. Please lift these brothers and sisters in prayer in your worship as they actively wait for the Holy Spirit to lead the right person to respond to their congregations' mission and ministry.

The churches in the call process are:

Antioch Lutheran in Hoagland IN
St John's in Sunman IN
House of Prayer in Elizabethtown KY
Living Faith in Wabash IN
Bethel Lutheran in Noblesville, IN

We pray that the Holy Spirit move strong in each of these grace-filled communities of faith and that the Holy Spirit might be stirring in the hearts of pastor to apply and seek the right call for them.

RESOURCES FOR CONGREGATIONS WITHOUT PASTORS

Online Confirmation Program - contact the Southern Area Assistant to the Bishop, Pastor Mark Braaten, 903-316-1594 mbraaten@oslctyler.org or Pastor Teresa Peters at tpeters@thenalc.org Confirmation / Catechism Web Courses [Free] – Luther House of Study, lutherhouseofstudy.org/courses/ Sermons for Lay Leaders to Deliver at Worship Services Iowa Mission District sermon library www.iowamissiondistrict.com or contact Pastor Burkhalter at pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com. Pastor David Wendel posts sermons on YouTube youtu.be/gCcDIvwCbA, he also posts them on his Facebook page and the NALC Fellowship group; or contact Pastor Wendel at dwendel@thenalc.org.

YOUTH GREATER CALLING RETREAT Great Rivers Mission District

The event will take place at American Lutheran Church in Rantoul, Illinois, Feb. 23-25. The Rev. Teresa Peters, the NALC director of Youth and Family Ministries, will be the guest speaker.

She will be speaking on the "Greater Calling" of Christians. The goal is to get youth to recognize that they are called by God. Like all Christians, they are called to be disciples of Jesus—not because of anything they have done but because of what Christ did for them personally.

There will also be an opportunity to participate in a mission project with NALC Disaster Response. Students will help prepare disaster and hygiene kits for emergency situations. These kits help thousands of individuals who suffer natural disasters every year.

In addition to lessons and mission, there will be games, food, music, and fellowship with other youth.

The registration cost for the event is \$60 per person. This includes meals and accommodations. American Lutheran Church will provide separate sleeping spaces for boys and girls. Please have students and volunteers bring their own toiletries, a bedroll and pillow, and a bath towel. Meals include a snack on Friday, breakfast, lunch, and dinner on Saturday, and breakfast Sunday. The church will host a potluck after worship on Sunday for those who wish to eat before departure.

To register or for more information contact Pastor Aaron Dawson at dawsjr98@icloud.com. Please register all youth and volunteers by Feb. 2.

NALC YOUTH GATHERING



Put this on your calendars for next summer. An NALC Continental Youth Gathering will be held July 1-4, 2024, in Boerne, Texas (near San Antonio) Because of space constraints there are only 500 that will be able to share this experience. Get registrations in ASAP.

It has a great theme: "**We Belong.**" Indeed, we belong to Christ. We belong to the church. We belong to each other. Yes! We belong! This is for youth 12-18. This will be a four-day gathering that will provide opportunities for NALC youth to grow in faith and relationships with others as the body of Christ. There will be learning, vibrant worship, fellowship and fun.

IDEAS? CONTRIBUTIONS? DISTRIBUTION?

I would welcome any of the three above. If you have ideas let me know. If you would like something included, send it to me. If you know someone who would like to be included in this newsletter, send me their name and email. Thanks for all your help. Hope this Heartbeats find you well and doing good.

Joyfully serving Jesus together
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