

SEPTEMBER  
2018

Volume 5 – Issue 1

# *the witness*

**A Publication of the Mid-Northeast Mission District**

*western New York, western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, western Maryland*

*"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble."*

*Psalms 46:1*

## **Cling to Jesus!**

***Reflections on spiritual warfare, attacks on the Body of Christ, and the importance of coming together as members of that Body.***

**The Rev. Carl A. Johnson, Dean**

First, a word of apology. When I was elected Dean I did not expect my father to die in January. Being an executor of his will has consumed me. I thank God that this is just a temporary state of being.

I thank God for Pastor Alden Towberman who so ably led our Mission District these past three years

as Dean. He has set the bar high for me. I just hope to be half the dean he was!

Just having returned from Denver, I am excited about the Church, and perplexed. I am excited to be a part of the NALC, but we are in spiritual warfare. The Grand Jury report on Catholic priests' sexual assault on children has branded us all. As Paul tells

us in 1 Corinthians, when one member of the body suffers, all suffer. There will be consequences. Last time the world attempted to take away the clergy housing allowance. There are always attacks on the tax status of the Church. The power to tax is the power to destroy. And the world wants us to either knuckle under, or be destroyed.

The world only knows black and white. And yet, to quote Anthony De Mello, we are streaky people.

*Simul Justus et Peccator* is who we are. It is why we cling to Jesus—He is our only hope. He is our confidence. Our hope is built on nothing less...

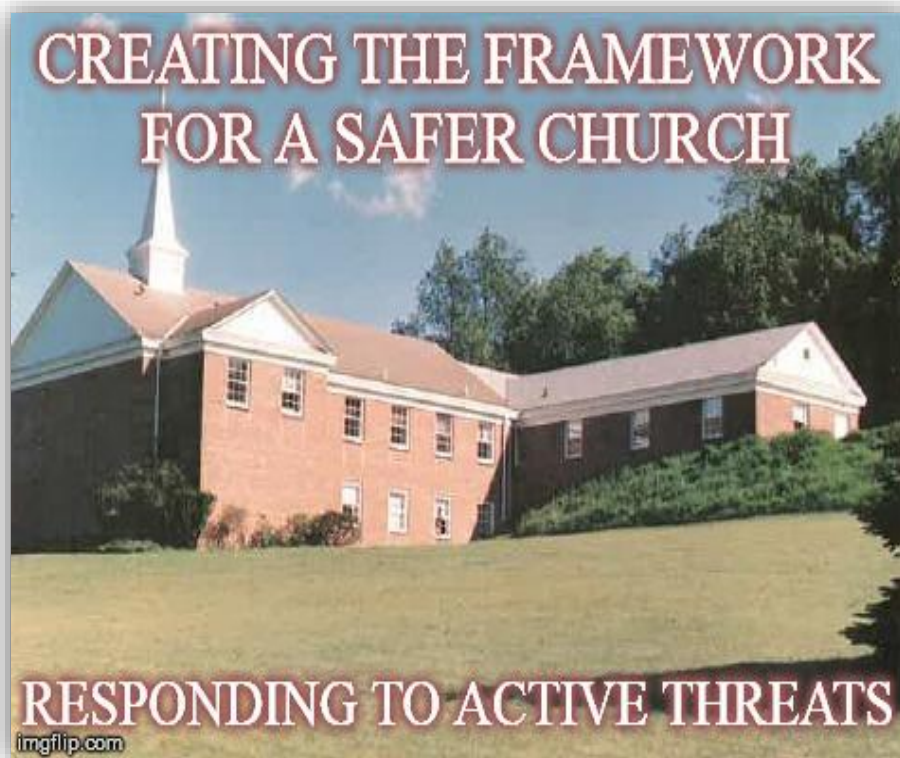
It was good to be in Denver, but I was acutely aware of those of you who were not present. Next

*"It is why we  
cling to Jesus—  
He is our only  
hope. He is our  
confidence. Our  
hope is built on  
nothing less..."*

year we are in Indianapolis. Indianapolis is much more doable for us as a Mission District. One of my goals for our Mission District Convocation September 22nd is brainstorming ways to get every single pastor and every eligible lay person in our Mission District to Indianapolis. Between now and then, we need to pray that God raises up our next bishop.

There are important things to discuss at our Mission District Convocation. It is good when we can get together in the unity of the Holy Spirit to fellowship and worship.

See you in Export!



## ANNUAL CONVOCATION

### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2018

*"God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in times of trouble."*

Psalm 46:1

**9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

*(8:15 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast)*

**Festival Eucharist at 9 a.m.**

Emmanuel, 5000 Old William Penn Highway, Export, PA 15632



**We encourage everyone to  
participate in this annual  
event in our life together  
as a mission district!**

Registration forms were emailed to congregations and pastors. If you are in need of a form, please don't hesitate to email the mission district office (see right) or visit our web site at [www.midnemdnlc.org](http://www.midnemdnlc.org)

**Our day together  
will include:**

#### **ACTIVE THREAT/SHOOTER TRAINING FOR CHURCHES**

*Provided by the  
Pennsylvania State Police*

**Festival Holy Communion**

**Business – including  
elections, reports, budget**

#### **NEW THIS YEAR:**

**First elections to the  
Camp In-Tents Board!**

**Workshops and Break-Out  
Discussion groups**

**Luncheon and fellowship**

**Stuff-the-Truck**

*Bring flood buckets & Bibles*

#### **COST:**

**\$10 per person OR  
\$25 per congregation**

**Registrations due Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>.**

**REGISTRATIONS AND  
PAYMENTS TO:**

#### **MID-NORTHEAST MISSION DISTRICT**

131 Starboard Villa Ln. #315  
Greensburg, PA 15601  
724-787-7780  
[rebeckaandrea@yahoo.com](mailto:rebeckaandrea@yahoo.com)

**Mid-Northeast Mission District**  
**Nomination Form for**  
**IN-TENTS LUTHERAN CAMP BOARD**



NAME	
ADDRESS	
EMAIL (PRINT VERY CLEARLY!)	
HOME PHONE	
CELL PHONE	
CONGREGATION <i>Name, City, State</i>	
OCCUPATION	
Indicate Clergy, Lay, or Youth (grade 6-12)	

*(Please feel free to use additional pages or the extra space on the back of this sheet if needed.)*

What experience do you have serving within the body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position?

What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?

List a favorite Bible verse and tell why it has meaning for you.

Additional space if needed:

~~~~~  
**Please return form no later than September 11, 2018 to:**

Mid-Northeast Mission District  
Administrative Office  
131 Starboard Villa Ln., #315  
Greensburg, PA 15601

[randrae.midnemdnalc@gmail.com](mailto:randrae.midnemdnalc@gmail.com)

724-787-7780

Form may be submitted electronically via email or hard-copy via USPS –postmarked no later than 9/11/18.

**Mid-Northeast Mission District  
Nomination Form for Mission District Executive Council**



|                                          |  |
|------------------------------------------|--|
| NAME                                     |  |
| ADDRESS                                  |  |
| EMAIL (PRINT VERY CLEARLY!)              |  |
| HOME PHONE                               |  |
| CELL PHONE                               |  |
| CONGREGATION<br><i>Name, City, State</i> |  |
| OCCUPATION                               |  |
| Indicate Clergy or Lay                   |  |

*(Please feel free to use additional pages or the extra space on the back of this sheet if needed.)*

What experience do you have serving within the body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

List a favorite Bible verse and tell why it has meaning for you.

Additional space if needed:

~~~~~  
**Please return form no later than September 11, 2018 to:**

Mid-Northeast Mission District  
Administrative Office  
131 Starboard Villa Ln., #315  
Greensburg, PA 15601

[randrae.midnemdnalc@gmail.com](mailto:randrae.midnemdnalc@gmail.com)

724-787-7780

Form may be submitted electronically via email or hard-copy via USPS –postmarked no later than 9/11/18.



# In-Tents Lutheran Church Camp

## July 23-27, 2018



"We Believe" was the theme for this years In-Tents Youth Camp and throughout the week the campers delved into the Apostles' Creed in various ways with the help of our speaker, Lloyd Garrelts. Lloyd not only spoke to the group but added to camp with his skills on the guitar. The week was a rainy one, but that did not dampen the spirit of the campers. From Team Building on the ropes course at a near-by Church of the Brethren Camp, to servant projects of putting together 48 school kits for NALC Disaster Relief; and painting the camp building everyone enjoyed this special week of Faith Building. In spite of the rain we were able to enjoy swimming, along with hours of volleyball and many were introduced to the Legend of the Magic Stick (compliments of our speaker Lloyd).

We had more church involved this year and 1/3 of the campers were first time campers. It always amazes the pastors and leaders of the caliber of the youth that we work with during camp. If you church has not sent campers to In-Tents, please consider doing so, it will a faith changing time for your youth. The dates for next years camp are July 15 -19, 2019. The camp board is also looking into adding a mini camp for upper elementary youth and a family camp. Please consider donating funds to the operating of the camp. Thank you to those who have supported our camp in the past.

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*Article submitted by The Rev. Nila Cogan, Camp Director.*

*Pastor Cogan also serves as pastor at St. Thomas in Hooversville, PA, as treasurer of the mission district, and as Assistant to the Dean.*

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### Camp photos:

Darcie Pomykata  
St. Mark's, Butler, PA

### Clockwise from top left:

- Chapel
- School kits mission project
- Team building obstacle course
- 2018 GROUP PHOTO
- Swimming

*Let's meet*  
**The Rev. Darian L. Hybl**



On July 9, 2017, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Export, PA voted to extend the divine call to Pastor Darian L. Hybl. Pastor Hybl then served Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Goodland, KS, where he had served since 2010.

A graduate of Longwood (College) University, Farmville, VA in 1991 with a BS in Professional Chemistry and a minor in Biology. Darian then attended and graduated from Western Carolina University in 1996 with a MS in Chemistry concentrating in Analytical Chemistry, specifically Computer Control and Fluorescence of B-Vitamins.

In 1993 Darian began attending Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catharines, ON, Canada while living in Youngstown then Niagara Falls (Bergholz), NY. He completed his studies at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, SC. During 1997-1998, Darian served his vicarage under the care of Pastor John Paul Lingle at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Dallas, NC. After 'successful' completion of his vicarage and graduation requirements, Darian continued his studies toward a STM and graduated with an M.Div. in May 1999 along with completing two units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE).

Darian served a small church in Dagus Mines, PA, before marrying Michele (Hope) in December 1999. They then made their home in Virginia and he taught Chemistry, Religion, Ethics and other classes for numerous community colleges in both North Carolina and Virginia until his call to Emmanuel Lutheran, Goodland, KS where he was ordained and installed on October 23, 2010. In September 2010, Darian was accepted onto the roster of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.

Pastor Darian was interviewed by Pastor David Wendel and accepted onto the roster of the North American Lutheran Church in January 2012.

Pastor Hybl and Michele have one daughter, Sarah who is in 4th Grade in the Franklin Regional School System. She enjoys Pokemon, dancing and building with Lego's.

They make their home in White Valley and enjoy family time, watching movies and visiting the new and exciting museums that the Pittsburgh area has to offer.

Pastor Darian was installed October 1, 2017 at Emmanuel by then Dean Rev. Al Towberman and looks forward to working with the many ministries in the Mid-Northeast Mission District. He still maintains his rostering in both the LCMC and the NALC, but has served both the LCMC and NALC on Pastoral Interview Board and as an Associate Dean of the Great Plains Mission District.

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***The Rev. Darian Hybl serves as pastor at Emmanuel in Export, PA.***

*Emmanuel is our host congregation for this year's mission district convocation. Please take a moment to introduce yourself to Pastor Hybl!*



An update from

## NILE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

Rochester, NY

*a mission start in the*

*Mid-Northeast  
Mission District*

The building improvements are almost completed.

We ran out of money to buy the handicap ramp for the wheelchair access. Once we have that installed, we are hoping to pass the building inspection.

**Gatluak Riek Mayian Nguo**  
*Nile Lay Leader*

*Photos, clockwise from top left:*  
-Sanctuary (facing towards front entrance)

Visible are some pews and the pulpit  
- Sanctuary (facing rear of building)  
- Back area  
- Storage area, door to restroom, and stairs to basement

Photos:  
Gatluak Riek Mayian Nguo  
*Nile Evangelical Church  
Rochester, NY*

It was 2011 when the Nile Evangelical Church was renting space in a church building. When the Nile congregation voted to join the North American Lutheran Church, that church mandated that they leave. In the seven plus years, the Nile Lutheran Church has been renting space in different places throughout the Rochester, New York area. A few years ago, they stepped out in faith and purchased a building that might one day be their home. After a few years of renovation, with much prayer, patience and with many donations, Nile has begun to worship in their new home.

The Nile congregation expresses its deepest thanks and appreciation to the Mission District Deans who have helped them through this process, for the congregations who have kept them in prayer and provided financial assistance.

St. Paul (Trauger, PA) was the first congregation of the NALC to formally partner with Nile. Over the years we have visited each other, shared in Bible studies, conversations and prayer. As recently as Memorial Day weekend in May, we enjoyed an overnight visit from members of Nile which included a picnic Saturday and joyous worship together Sunday, with Pastor Nestory preaching, nine baptisms, and vocal music by the Nile choir.

They still have debt on the purchase of their building and financial gifts are always gratefully received. Please make checks to Nile Evangelical Church.

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***Submitted by The Reverend Mark A. Werner, S.T.M.***

*Pastor, St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Trauger, PA*



# CALENDAR AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION	CONTACT(S)
Mission District Council Meeting	Sept. 4, 2018	10 a.m. -2 p.m.	Holy Trinity Berlin, PA	Pastor Carl Johnson, Dean <a href="mailto:cnarljohnson@gmail.com">cnarljohnson@gmail.com</a>
<b>MID-NORTHEAST MISSION DISTRICT ANNUAL CONVOCATION</b>	Sept. 22, 2018	9:00 a.m.-4 p.m.  (8:15 – Registration)	Emmanuel Export, PA	Rebecka Andrae, Admin. Assistant <a href="mailto:rebeckaandrae@yahoo.com">rebeckaandrae@yahoo.com</a>
Bible Museum trip (see insert)	Nov. 3, 2018	All day	Washington, D.C.	Amy Werner 724-424-8998 Carolyn Rastrelli 814-267-6277
Mission District Council Meeting	Dec. 11, 2018	10 a.m.-2 p.m.	TBA	Pastor Carl Johnson, Dean <a href="mailto:cnarljohnson@gmail.com">cnarljohnson@gmail.com</a>
<b>NALC Life Conference</b>	Jan. 17, 2019	TBA	TBA	Rebecka Andrae, Admin. Assistant <a href="mailto:rebeckaandrae@yahoo.com">rebeckaandrae@yahoo.com</a>
<b>MARCH FOR LIFE</b>	Jan. 18, 2019	Noon	Washington, D.C.	Rebecka Andrae, Admin. Assistant <a href="mailto:rebeckaandrae@yahoo.com">rebeckaandrae@yahoo.com</a>

## Ordination of The Rev. Matthew Vatalare

Installations of The Rev. Darian Hybl, The Rev. Susan Fox, The Rev. Joyce Dix-Weiers, & The Rev. Matthew Vatalare



Ordination of Pastor Vatalare  
St. John's, Kittanning, PA  
Photos 1-5



Installation of Pastor Hybl  
Emmanuel, Export, PA



Installation of Pastor Fox  
First, Ridgway, PA



Installation of Pastors Dix-Weiers  
(Senior Pastor) and Vatalare  
for Resurrection Lutheran Cooperative Ministry

## MID-NORTHEAST MISSION DISTRICT OFFICES

### Office of the Dean

Rev. Carl A. Johnson  
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church  
218 N. Jefferson Street  
Kittanning, PA 16201

Church Phone: 724-548-2051  
Mobile Phone: 724-664-3414  
Home Phone: 724-548-5512  
Email: [cnarljohnson@gmail.com](mailto:cnarljohnson@gmail.com)

### Administrative Office

Rebecka V. Andrae, Administrative Assistant  
Mid-Northeast Mission District Administrative Office  
131 Starboard Villa Ln. - # 315  
Greensburg, PA 15601

Office/Mobile: 724-787-7780  
Email: [rebeckaandrae@yahoo.com](mailto:rebeckaandrae@yahoo.com)

### Treasurer

The Rev. Nila Cogan, Treasurer  
Mid-Northeast Mission District  
212 Hilltop Rd., Friedens, PA 15541

Mobile phone: 814-479-2204  
Email: [Incogan@comcast.net](mailto:Incogan@comcast.net)

### Web site administrator

Juhree Polkowski

Email: [juhreep@aol.com](mailto:juhreep@aol.com)

### PRAYER REQUESTS

- **Maria Andrae**, daughter of Rebecka Andrae (mission district staff). Maria (14) is battling Anorexia Nervosa.
- **Clint Frontz**, father of Pastor Maurice "Chip" Frontz III (St. Stephen, Pittsburgh, PA,) is hospitalized with a severe case of pneumonia.

#### From the office

- A letter of appreciation was received from the NALS thanking the Mid-Northeast Mission District for our annual gift of \$2000 to the NALC Theological Education Fund which helps support the seminary.
- A letter of appreciation was received from the NALS thanking the Mid-Northeast Mission District for our gift of \$1000 given in honor of The Rev. Dr. Alden Towberman (in thanksgiving for his service as Dean 2014-2017) to the NALC Theological Education Fund which helps support the seminary.
- From Rebecka Andrae, Administrative Assistant:  
Thank you so much for all your prayers, financial donations, cards, texts, and emails over the past several months as my daughter began and continues treatment for Anorexia Nervosa. She is currently in a residential program in Sylvania, OH and it appears to be the best treatment option at this stage of her treatment and recovery. My family and I have been strengthened by the prayers of His people and are so grateful for all of you.

[www.midnemdnalc.org](http://www.midnemdnalc.org)



**Love. Grow. Serve.  
In Christ.**

## OUR LEADERSHIP

### Dean

**The Rev. Carl A. Johnson**  
St. John's, Kittanning, PA  
[atowberman@zoominternet.net](mailto:atowberman@zoominternet.net)

### Assistants to the Dean

**Pastor Nila Cogan**  
St. Thomas, Hooversville, PA  
[Incogan@comast.net](mailto:Incogan@comast.net)

**Pastor Joyce Dix-Weiers**  
Resurrection  
Lutheran Cooperative Ministry  
Elderton, PA  
[jadwltsg@aol.com](mailto:jadwltsg@aol.com)

### Mission District Council

**Pastor Thomas Beam**  
Hope, East Smethport, PA  
[tjbeam@hotmail.com](mailto:tjbeam@hotmail.com)

**Pastor Joyce Dix-Weiers**  
Resurrection  
Lutheran Cooperative Ministry  
Elderton, PA  
[jadwltsg@aol.com](mailto:jadwltsg@aol.com)

**Mr. Steve Krepp**  
Brighton Heights, Pittsburgh, PA  
[Stevekrepp213@gmail.com](mailto:Stevekrepp213@gmail.com)

**Ms. Connie Slope**  
Holy Trinity, Berlin, PA  
[cslope@msn.com](mailto:cslope@msn.com)

**Mr. Douglas Vogel**  
Dunmyer, Johnstown,, PA  
[vogelswagon@gmail.com](mailto:vogelswagon@gmail.com)

**Pastor Mark A. Werner**  
St. Paul, Trauger, PA  
[revmaw@wpa.net](mailto:revmaw@wpa.net)

### **JOIN US IN OUR MISSION DISTRICT FACEBOOK GROUP!**



**Mid-Northeast Mission District -  
NALC**





museum of the Bible

400 4<sup>th</sup> St. SW, Washington, DC 20024  
<https://www.museumofthebible.org/>

**Saturday, November 3, 2018**

Arranged by the WNALC-MidNEMD- Open to ALL!

**Museum admission:** Adult \$12, Child (5-11) \$7

Museum hours 9-6. (Early admission for group.) No re-entry.

You may tour the museum at your own pace.

**We will leave at 4:00 PM.**

Two (2) restaurants available for lunch. No outside food permitted (except water).

--*Manna* features a seasonal Mediterranean menu.

--*Milk + Honey Café* offers coffees, sandwiches, salads, ice cream and baked goods.

Each ticketholder receives a 20% discount at the Gift Shop!

**Tours:** There are many guided tours available. Most tours are \$8

each and last 1 hour. Tours will change as the exhibits change.

Please check the website for current options. Tours may be purchased during your visit.

**Bus: \$55**

In order to arrive at 9 AM and get the most from our trip, we need to leave very early. We will make stops for breakfast (1/2 hr.) and dinner.

Monroeville @ 4:00 AM location pending  
New Stanton @ 4:30 AM at Econo Lodge

INSERT PAGE

**MUSEUM OF THE BIBLE TRIP !**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2018**

**INSPIRATIONAL FUN  
FOR ALL AGES!**

## Museum of the Bible Registration

Due October 1, 2018.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Bus pick-up location: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark how many tickets you need.

**Tickets**      Adult **\$12**      Qty \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Child **\$7**      Qty \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Bus **\$55**      Qty \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total**      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

**Amy Werner**, memo Bible trip.

331 Hill Churches Rd. Latrobe, PA 15650

Additional Questions Amy Werner      724-424-8998

Carolyn Rastrelli      814-267-6277

No refunds given after Oct. 1. If need to cancel, please find someone to take your place.

Families !

Women's Circles !

Youth Groups !

Councils !

Sunday School groups !

The Rev. Dr. David Wendel  
*Assistant to the Bishop*  
NALC

The Rev. Carl A. Johnson  
*Dean*  
Mid-Northeast Mission District

The Rev. Dr. Alden Towberman  
*Former Dean*  
Mid-Northeast Mission District



*Call and Installation of*  
*The Rev. Carl A. Johnson*  
**DEAN**  
Nov. 19, 2017

**MID-NORTHEAST MISSION DISTRICT**

**Administrative Office**

**131 Starboard Villa Ln. # 315**

**Greensburg, PA 15601**

[www.midnemdnalc.org](http://www.midnemdnalc.org)



**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**



*St. Michael and All Angels*  
*Sept. 29*