

**APRIL
2017**

Volume 4 – Issue 2

A Publication of the Mid-Northeast Mission District
western New York, western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, western Maryland

He is not here; for he has risen, as he said. (Matthew 28:6)

Easter Faith and The 500th Anniversary Of The Reformation

The Rev. Dr. Alden W. Towberman, Dean

“He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!” Easter Joy awaits us as we make our way to the empty tomb.

As those words resonate throughout all of Christendom and are spoken in all our churches of the Mid-Northeast Mission District I encourage you to think ahead and connect them with the many events that are being planned as we prepare to celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation.

Without an Easter Spirit one would mistakenly conclude that the Reformation was primarily about doctrine, a power struggle with Rome, the selling of indulgences, putting the Bible in the hands of the people, the singing of hymns in worship and putting the worship service (mass) in the language of the people. All of this is important of course but... Without an Easter Spirit our churches lack vitality in their witness of the Gospel, our Lutheran doctrines become an end in themselves rather than a means of grace

and encounter with a Living Savior. Make sure you connect Easter with the Reformation as we are about our mission for the renewal of the Church in each of our congregations in the NALC. The two go together.

Rightly understood the Reformation began because of the rediscovery of Easter Faith in the life of Church centered around the Living Word of God and Faith grounded in God’s Grace for sinners who God loves with all of God’s heart!

The Reformation began before the nailing of the 95

Theses on the Castle Church Door in 1517. It began with the Living Lord encountering Martin Luther through the Scripture as he was teaching a class at Wittenberg University, Germany, on the Epistle of Romans.

What does it mean, Luther asked, “that the righteous shall live by faith?” To paraphrase Luther, ‘Whoa, you mean the righteousness by which I will be saved, is not mine?’ It’s what he called a *justitia alienum*, an alien

righteousness; a righteousness that belongs properly to somebody else. – namely the righteousness of Christ. And then Luther said: “When I discovered that, I was born again of the Holy Ghost. And the doors of paradise swung open, and I walked through.” It was out of this ‘religious experience,’ this encounter with the Living Christ, through the Word of God that the Reformation – the Spirit of Easter again filled the Church of Christ. So may it

be among us.

“Easter, Word, Grace and Reformation” are meant to be spoken in one breath.

So how will you celebrate the Reformation year? It’s about so much more than history. It’s about so much more than celebrating our ethnic roots and heritage, it’s about so much more than holding a Lutheran hymn fest. The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation brings the opportunity to be encountered by a Living Savior and to be an Easter Church. **(cont. on page 10)**

***Easter, Word,
Grace, and
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breath.***

MID-NORTHEAST MISSION DISTRICT OFFICES

Office of the Dean

Rev. Dr. Alden W. Towberman
St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church
201 West Jefferson Street
Butler, PA 16001

Church Phone: 724-287-6741
Mobile Phone: 724-698-3644
Home Phone: 724-586-3161
Email: atowberman@zoominternet.net

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: randrae.midnemdnalc@gmail.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

Web site administrator

Juhree Polkowski Email: juhreep@aol.com

PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayer requests continue for:

- **Pastor Carl Hendrickson** (back)
- **the grieving families** of Pastor Mark Chavez upon the death of Jocelyn Chavez and the Gleason family upon the death of Pastor David Gleason.

From the office:

- Benevolence statements for 2016 will be mailed in May
- When sending a check to the office, please indicate its purpose (*benevolence commitment, registration fee, individual donation, camp fee, camp donation, merchandise, etc. in order to avoid potential confusion*)

Please visit our mission district web site at

www.midnemdnalc.org



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

OUR LEADERSHIP

Dean

The Rev. Dr. Alden W. Towberman

St. Mark's, Butler, PA
atowberman@zoominternet.net

Assistants to the Dean

Pastor Nila Cogan

St. Thomas, Hooversville, PA
incogan@comast.net

Pastor Carl Johnson

St. John's, Kittanning, PA
cnarljohnson@gmail.com

Mission District Council

Pastor Thomas Beam

Hope, East Smethport, PA
tjbeam@hotmail.com

Pastor Joyce Dix-Weiers

*Elderton Lutheran Parish
Elderton, PA*
jadwltsg@aol.com

Pastor Carl Johnson

Recording Sec'y
St. John's, Kittanning, PA
cnarljohnson@gmail.com

Mrs. Margherita King

St. John's, Kittanning, PA
margheritakingstjohns@gmail.com

Ms. Connie Slope

Holy Trinity, Berlin, PA
cslope@msn.com

Pastor Al Towberman

DEAN
St. Mark's, Butler, PA
atowberman@zoominternet.net

Mr. Douglas Vogel

Dunmyer, Johnstown, PA
vogelswagon@gmail.com

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



This will be the third summer that our Mid-Northeast Mission District will offer an opportunity for youth to attend a camp that is run and operated by clergy and youth leaders from our mission district.

This year we are stepping out in faith and expanding our camping program. This year, instead of a 2 day camp we are extending the camp for four days. We are also bringing in a well-known speaker, Brain Wallace, as part of the learning component of the camp. There is the need to have showers at camp. And we would also like to start a store, that once started can generate its own income.



All these changes and needs mean we need money. Please consider investing in the future of our youth camp. Camp is an opportunity for our youth in the mission district to get to know each other and to be the core of the future of our mission district. It is a time for our youth to worship and learn more about our amazing God outside the walls of church. It is a proven fact that many who are pastors today first felt the feelings of becoming a pastor while attending a church camp.

The executive council of the Mid-Northeast Mission District designated May 7 as Camp Sunday. We would like all our congregations to send their **special offerings** from that day for the operation of our In-Tents Lutheran Youth Camp. Any monetary donations would be greatly appreciated and thank you for supporting this worthwhile cause. Donations are accepted at any time!

--- **Pastor Nila Cogan** is pastor at St. Thomas, Hooversville, PA and serves as the leader of our mission district's Youth Team. Her contact information is located on page 2 of this publication. Feel free to direct any questions to her regarding camp.

Special offerings can be collected in a variety of ways.

Suggestions include:

- Take up a separate collection during the worship service
- Collect donations as part of regular offering by providing special envelopes
- Collect donations as part of regular offering by designating the loose offering to Camp In-Tents

Checks payable to "MNE Mission District" with 'Camp In-Tents' noted on the memo line.

Please send all individual and congregation checks to Rebecka at the mission district office:

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

CAMP IN-TENTS DEDICATION

JULY 24, 2017 @ 3 P.M.

Everyone is invited! More information to follow.

**SAVE THE
DATE!!**

Mission District to Offer Summer Camp

By Pastor Nila Cogan

(Adapted from the article that first appeared in a recent issue of NALC News)

Many of us have fond memories of spending time at a church camp during our childhood. It was a time of making new friends, getting out in nature, and discovering that we could worship outside of a church building. For many of us it was the time for growing closer to God and first hearing a call to serve our Lord.

Camping has always been an important aspect of growing up Lutheran and it became a concern in recent years that camps affiliated with our previous church bodies were not promoting orthodox Christian teachings. This was a concern in the Mid-Northeast Mission District.

One of the congregations in the Laurel Mountains east of Pittsburgh, Pa., decided that they would offer their campus to be the location for a camp for the Mission District. Their land includes a grove with a large enclosed building used as an eating and gathering area with a large kitchen that could serve as a mess hall, a campfire area, a large meadow where many tents could be set up, along with other out buildings, and a lovely outdoor chapel set back in the woods. There is also a volleyball court, a baseball field, and a basketball court, along with plenty of space to play games like Capture the Flag.

The first year of camp was 2015 with the theme “Going Against the Flow” and discussions were based on where God is when bad things happen. Part of the camp was a field trip to the Flight 93 Memorial (the plane that went down on Sept. 11, 2001). Our first year had 25 campers.

Last year we increased to 40 campers with the theme “Rooted in Christ.” We looked at how we are all connected as part of God’s family and how one person’s actions can affect many others. We visited the Johnstown Flood National Park and the Flood Museum in the City of Johnstown and finished that day with a trip to a local dam for swimming and recreation.

During last year’s camp a name was chosen for the camp, and since we sleep in tents the name is In “Tents” Lutheran Church Camp. In many ways the camp is intense.

For the first two years the camp was only two and a half days long, but the youth requested that we extend the camp time. This year the camp will be four days — starting on Monday morning, July 24, and ending Thursday afternoon, July 27. The theme will be “Living Water - Living Bread” as we focus on the sacraments and a little on the Reformation. Our trip this year (we travel by bus) will be to Ohiopyle, a beautiful state park in the Laurel Highlands of Pennsylvania, for white-water rafting, hiking, etc.

We are planning a service time at a local food pantry and thrift shop. There also will be opportunity for swimming during the week. Since the camp is extended to four days, showers are being installed at the camp as a necessary addition.

There will be a guest speaker at this year’s camp. Brian Wallace, author and well-known speaker at Lutheran Youth Encounter events for many years and a speaker for Quakes for Life Promotions, will be bringing his wisdom and humor.

For more information on the camp, please call 814- 483-0296 or 412-817-3988 or visit <http://www.midnemdnalc.org/youth.html>.

IN-TENTS LUTHERAN CHURCH CAMP

July 24,25,26,& 27, 2017

St Thomas Church Grove near Hooversville, PA.

Theme – “Living Water – Living Bread”

The cost \$125.00 per person

Participating congregations will need to provide tents for their campers

Cost \$125.00

Half can be paid with registration – Half paid when arriving at camp

Registration Form

Name of youth participating _____ M ____ F ____

Age of youth at time of camp _____

Name of parent(s)/guardian _____

Address _____

Primary phone number _____ Other phone numbers _____

Home Congregation _____ Phone number _____

Name of Pastor or Youth leader _____ Phone number _____

I, the undersigned parent / guardian, hereby grant my youth’s advisor and/or chaperone the authority to obtain medical treatment for my child with the understanding that the pastor and/or leaders will get in touch with me as soon as possible. If I cannot be reached please contact the following:

Name _____

Relationship _____

Phone Number _____

Child’s family physician _____

This child takes the following medicine on a regular schedule:

This child is allergic to _____

Parent’s signature _____

Date _____

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intentionally
left blank

REFORMATION 500

Our Mid-Northeast Mission District offers the following 2017 events to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation:

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**CLERGY RETREAT - June 8-9, 2017**

Ancient Evangelical Future Conference 2017 — Medieval Wisdom 500 Years after the Reformation

June 8-9, 2017 | Trinity School for Ministry | Ambridge, PA

*Rod Dreher, Chris Armstrong, Evan Howard, Kevin Hughes, Susan Phillips, David Yeago*



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DEDICATION OF CAMP IN-TENTS — JULY 24, 2017

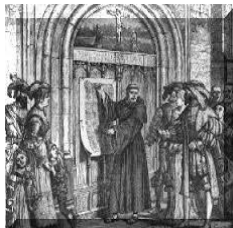
3 p.m.

In-Tents Lutheran Camp at St. Thomas Church Grove
1341 Ridge Road, Hooversville, PA 15936

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**ANNUAL CONVOCATION AND REFORMATION CELEBRATION — OCTOBER 29, 2017**

Registration 3 p.m. — Opening Festival Worship at 4 p.m.

*(Location and further details will be forthcoming)*



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**

**The Rev. Dr. James Arne Nestingen**  
*renowned Luther scholar*



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*The Reformation 500 team members:
Ms. Rebecka Andrae, Pastor Joyce Dix-Weiers, and Pastor Carl Johnson*

+Chrism Mass with Lunch Following – Was held at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Butler on Tuesday in Holy Week, April 11th.

Pastors of the Mission District and Lay Associate Ministers gathered on Tuesday of Holy Week for Chrism Worship, Holy Communion and Renewal of Ordination Vows to the Offices of Word and Service. A luncheon was provided by the Mission District following the service.

...Congregations remember your pastors in your prayers not only during Holy Week, but every week throughout the year. They are worthy of your very best encouragement and support.

+The Dean and assistants to the Dean, Pastor Carl Johnson and Pastor Nila Cogan, attended the funeral service and luncheon with the family following worship for Jocelyn Chavez at Christ Lutheran Church in Elizabethtown, PA on March 10th. ...Our prayers for Pastor Mark Chavez, NALC General Secretary, and his family.

+Congratulations to Pastor Garrett Siemsen who has been called to be the new senior pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Brentwood.

+A Solemn Requiem Eucharist was celebrated for The Rev. Dr. David Paul Gleason, a faithful servant of the Church and colleague, former senior pastor of First Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh. The service was held on Saturday, April 29th. The Rev. Kurt Kusserow, Bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA presided and the Rev. Donald J. McCoid, Bishop Emeritus, preached. A reception followed in Holy Cross Hall. (First Lutheran Church 615 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA)

+Our prayers for all concerned at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, in Grove City, PA in this time of transition. Pastor Daniel Grimminger has resigned his call and from the clergy roster of the NALC. Pastor Bob Quaintance has been assigned to be mentoring pastor to the congregation.

+On February 12, 2017 official closing services were held to dissolve Christ Lutheran Church in East Amherst N.Y. Several families of the former mission congregation will continue to be meeting weekly for worship and Bible study. As of March 7, 2017 Christ Lutheran is now recognized as a House Church of our Mid-Northeast NALC Mission District. Services are being held at the home of Dr. Richard and Debbie Pretorius, 6363 Tin Cherry Court East Amherst, NY 14051 and at the apartment of Jim and Sharon Scott, 1105 Young's Road, Apartment G, Williamsville, NY 14221 (716-867-3103) Along with weekend worship mid-week Bible study is being held. The contact persons for Christ Lutheran House Church are Jim Scott and Debbie Pretorius. It is their hope and our prayer to "plant a seed," to restructure and to rebirth the house church into a mission congregation once again sometime in the future.

+Getting Ready for Our 500th Year Reformation Celebration!

We are pleased to be able to announce that noted Lutheran theologian, historian, and pastor, the Rev. Dr. James Nestingen, will be our featured speaker for our Mid-Northeast Mission District Reformation Celebration this coming October 29, 2017 at a Sunday afternoon service and convocation at 3:00 PM. He will be speaking to us about the "Renewal of the Lutheran Church Today." Mark your calendars.

As God renewed His Church through Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation that began in 1517 with Martin Luther calling for 95 reforms in Church teaching and practice based on the Authority of Scripture and the recovery of the Scriptural principle of "Salvation by Faith through Grace" so God is at work among us to renew His Church today.

Many events are planned throughout the Mid-Northeast Mission District of the NALC during the anniversary year.

After Easter all our congregations are encouraged to make available to their members "Lutheran Hammer Lapel Pins" (Purchased through Concordia Church Supplies) that we are encouraging all members of our NALC congregations to wear during the anniversary year as a witness to our communities that as NALC Lutherans our faith is grounded in the Word of God and in Salvation by Grace. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Report of Mission District mission trip to Connellsville, PA

on March 18, 2017

On a cold, damp and sometimes rainy day nearly 30 individuals from across our Mission District spent the day in Connellsville. Our group split up into three different working teams. A group of volunteers spent the day hanging drywall in a home. A second group was working in another home, tearing out carpet and cleaning out a basement. A third group loaded up vehicles with boxes of food and delivered them to 37 families who were flooded.



Photos courtesy of Darcie Pomykata, St. Mark's, Butler, PA

Each group spent time listening to the stories that the people shared. Among the common concerns that many shared was the fears of continued flooding. In fact, many people still deal with water coming into their homes. Thankfully, it is not on the scale that they first experienced. Along the way in the delivery of the food, the group saw houses marked for demolition. They saw what is a small creek that soared to a raging river that carried many a people's belongings into a heavily wooded area. Yet, the one common thread throughout the day was hearing the appreciation individuals and families have for the numerous groups who have come to their aid since August. Each one, not only welcomed our listening presence, our work, but also our prayers. Yes, we prayed with each family. This is one thing that sets us apart from some of the other groups that have visited.

The congregations participating were Christ, Rupp, The Elderton Lutheran Parish, St. Mark, Butler, and St. Paul, Latrobe (Trauger). The Mission trip was planned by our Mission District Youth Planning Team, chaired by Pastor Nila Cogan. The group concluded their day together with a dinner at Carson's Restaurant in Scottdale.

The Rev. Mark A. Werner is pastor at St. Paul, Latrobe (Trauger), PA.

As a member of our mission district's Youth Team, he coordinated this mission trip with the disaster coordinator in Connellsville, PA – an area that suffered severe flash flooding in August 2016.

Dean's article

Continue from cover page.....

We have the Word and are part of the church the world needs if only we have the conviction to claim and witness our Lutheran faith for the sake of the Gospel.

As members of The North American Lutheran Church our Christian witness is faithful to Holy Scripture and to the historic Lutheran Confessions. Rejoice for this is one of our strengths in the NALC. As we are faithful to the AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE we come to know Christ and His Love for us both through law and gospel. The more we are immersed in the Bible the more we will be filled with His hope, strength, peace and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our hope is founded in GRACE, not in ourselves or in our own strength and abilities but on God's power and encouragement. Proclaim the Good News of the Gospel and live by Grace! ...God's Love endures for us. He takes up the cross for us, when we are unfaithful, He remains faithful. He is always fighting for us and always reaching out to us. He never tires of loving us.

May the new life of Easter fill you as we live forward our Reformation faith in a Living Savior.

In Christ,

Rev. Dr. Alden 'W. Towberman, Dean

Mid-Northeast Mission District, NALC

REFORMATION HAMMER PINS

Luther's Reformation Hammer Pins can be purchased through Concordia Publishing House by clicking on this link:

<http://search.cph.org/search#w=hammer%20pins>

The pins are \$1.99 each. Pastors and laity are encouraged to wear them leading up to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and beyond.



CALENDAR AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION	CONTACT(S)
Clergy Retreat	June 8-9, 2017		NALS Trinity School For Ministry Ambridge, PA	Rebecka Andrae, Admin. Assistant rebeckaandrae@yahoo.com
Mission District Council Meeting	June 22, 2017	10 a.m.-2 p.m.	Zion (Brentwood) Pittsburgh, PA	Pastor Alden Towberman, Dean atowberman@zoominternet.net
DEDICATION of IN-TENTS LUTHERAN CHURCH CAMP	July 24, 2017	3 p.m.	In-Tents Lutheran Church Camp Hooversville, PA	Rebecka Andrae, Admin. Assistant randrae.midnemdnlc@gmail.com
Youth Camp	July 24 -27, 2017	1 p.m. arrival time on Monday, July 24	In-Tents Lutheran Church Camp Hooversville, PA	Pastor Nila Cogan Incogan@comcast.net
NALC LUTHERAN WEEK	August 7-11, 2017		Nashville, TN	www.thenalc.org REGISTRATION OPEN
MID-NORTHEAST MISSION DISTRICT ANNUAL CONVOCATION	Sunday, Oct. 29, 2017	3 p.m. Registration 4 p.m. Opening Reformation Festival Worship	TBA	Rebecka Andrae, Admin. Assistant rebeckaandrae@yahoo.com

LUTHERAN WEEK – March 27-31, 2017

North American Lutheran Seminary at Trinity in Ambridge, PA



Jason Contangelo, serving as lector, is a residential seminarian who hails from our mission district's Church of the Apostles in North Tonawanda, NY.

ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

March

The Rev. Ann Miller Smith '76 (41 years). Pastor Smith serves at Evaline and Grace, both in Pittsburgh, PA.

The Rev. Roger Keller '96 (21 years). Pastor Keller serves at St. Luke's in Saxonburg, PA.

The Rev. Mack Smith, Jr. '81 (36 years). Pastor Smith served as Mission Developer at Christ, East Amherst, NY until Feb. 2017.

April

There are no anniversaries on record for April.



If you look closely, you'll see hammer lapel pins being worn!

Also, the dean is sporting a Luther hat owned by Pastor Grewe!

Mid-Northeast Mission District Council

*Our mission district's council
met February 23, 2017 at
First in Washington, PA.*

Back row, left to right:

*Mr. Doug Vogel
Pr. Carl Johnson
Pr. Joyce Dix-Weiers
Mr. Tom Weiers (visitor)*

Front row, left to right:

*Pr. Tom Beam
Pr. Nila Cogan
Pr. Al Towberman, DEAN
Mrs. Margherita King
Ms. Connie Slope*

*Pr. Robert Grewe, host
pastor for the day*

MID-NORTHEAST MISSION DISTRICT

Administrative Office

131 Starboard Villa Ln. # 315

Greensburg, PA 15601

www.midnemdnalc.org



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

