

2015-2016
WOMEN'S COUNCIL



BACK: PAT, SHERRIE
FRONT: PAM, AMY, JESSIE
NOT PICTURED: LINDA, ROBBIE

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NEWS FOR WOMEN OF THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Fall 2015

August - October

THE CHAIR'S CORNER

Hello ladies of the Women of the North American Lutheran Church,

I bring you greetings from The Women's Council. Your council met together at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Lebanon, WI October 1-4. We enjoyed the wonderful fall weather while there – at least three of us did. Linda Brower, Pat Dittrich and I are all from Texas, and afternoon temperatures were still in the 90's when we left. Jessie Phillips hosted us for this meeting. Their 165 year old church is beautiful. The ladies of Immanuel made us delicious meals and snacks – ever had Himmels Futter? Translated, it means "heavenly food." It and all the food, snacks and cookies were delicious! They gave us lodging and provided "taxi" service wherever we went. A special "thank you" to all those ladies – and Pastor David!

During our meeting together, we did some team-building and goal-setting for the coming year. We had a great time – lots of laughter, conversation, discussion, listening and prayer. The Holy Spirit was truly with us as we mapped out our year together, all with the vision and purpose of the Women of the NALC as our guide. We are very excited to work together to provide information for mission and ministry for the WNALC.

We use this newsletter as the vehicle for this information.

Please, as you receive it, copy and share it with the women in your congregations. Take note of the list of Mission Districts of the NALC and see who your representative from the Women's Council is. If you don't hear from her, contact her, be in conversation with her about your women's ministry. Help her get to know you and visa versa. This is how we

connect with one another for ministry. We want to hear from you – what your needs are, what your concerns are for your women's ministry – and what you are doing!

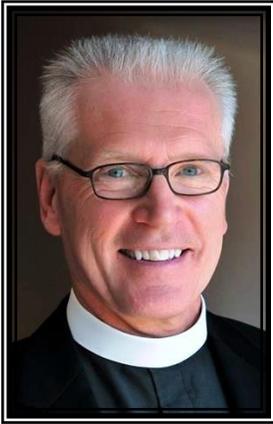
The Council would like to take this opportunity to thank Brenda Boor, Beverly Braun, Jeanne Wallace and Kay Weaver for their service on The Women's Council and for their time and commitment to the WNALC. We appreciate you all.

We – myself, Linda Brower, Pam Charas, Robbie Conley, Pat Dittrich, Jessie Phillips and Amy Werner – look forward to serving this coming year! We are committed to carrying out the vision and purpose of the WNALC and look forward to working with all the women of the NALC.

Blessings, and to God be the glory!

*Sherrie Palan, Chair
WNALC Council*

BISHOP'S ADDRESS TO WNALC ANNUAL GATHERING



Bishop John Bradosky
Reelected for 4 more years

³⁰ "The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes." ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. ³² Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." ³⁴ To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out."
John 9:30-34

Thank you for this invitation to be with you. Thank you for your faithful work and ministry.

In Luke's gospel it is the women who are the first to receive the good news of the resurrection. The angels ask, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!" The angels encouraged them to remember Jesus words. "The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again." And they did. The women are the first to proclaim the good news to the eleven. They are the first evangelists. The women believed and the men doubted. When Peter went to the tomb scripture says he left wondering what happened. It is important to remember that women of faith have always played an important role in the proclamation of the Gospel.

The text that you have chosen as the theme for your gathering is one of my favorite but it must be seen in the context of the larger story that consumes the entire 9th chapter of the book of John. It is a teaching moment for Jesus. His disciples see a man born blind and want to know why he was blind. Was it his sin or the sin of his

parents? Jesus says it is not a matter of sin but that the works of God might be displayed in him! This man was living in darkness, but the light from above was about to shine on him. Without the light of Jesus presence we cannot work. Without Jesus there is only darkness. Jesus professes that he is the light of the world.

Jesus has compassion on the man and then he takes action to heal him. He spits on the ground, makes mud and puts it on the man's eyes. He tells him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam and the man obeys, that is, he believes in Jesus. And he went home seeing for the first time in his life, he can see. Can you imagine?

People start asking him what happened, how can you see? And he told them about Jesus. He is a witness, who quickly becomes an evangelist. The Pharisees haul him in to hear his story and to undermine Jesus saying he cannot be from God because he healed on the Sabbath. Some said how could any one do such an amazing thing apart from God? So they asked the man what he thought. He said Jesus had to be a prophet. The Pharisees bring in his parents to be sure that he was actually born

blind. They want to know what they think about Jesus. They are afraid and tell them to ask their son. If you acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah you would be put out of the synagogue. So the Pharisees brought him in again, telling him to give glory to God by telling the truth. They contend they already know the truth and they accuse Jesus of being a sinner. The man is strong and deliberate in his position. One thing I know I was blind and now I see.

Their doubt turns into more questions trying to ridicule both this man and Jesus. What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes? The man sees through their questions, their rejection of Jesus. And he is even more firm in his conviction, I have told you and would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too? They hurl insults at him. You are his disciple. We are disciples of Moses... we don't know where this man came from?

Now look at the power of this man's testimony. It is bold and it had to be nothing less than the Holy Spirit giving him the words to speak. (Read John 9: 30-34)

After he is thrown out Jesus comes to the man.

(Continued on page 3)



BISHOP'S ADDRESS TO WNALC ANNUAL GATHERING, CONTINUED

(Continued from page 2)

He tells him that He is the Son of Man, the savior, the messiah. And the man believes in Jesus and worshipped Him. Then Jesus said I have come into the world so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind. Spiritual blindness can hit any one of us. When we move away from Jesus and think that we can see apart from Him we become blind. But when we turn to Jesus the light comes on and then we truly see because He is the light.

The implications for ministry are many here. To be laborers in the harvest we need to be like this man who was born blind.

1. *We must have our own story to tell of the difference Jesus has made in our life. "I was blind but now I see."*
2. *We must be certain in our conviction of who Jesus is. (The Son of Man, Savior, Messiah, Lord of all, etc)*
3. *Be bold and unrelenting in your witness trusting in the Holy Spirit to give you the words to speak (We have become much too quiet and accepting)*
4. *Keep the focus on Jesus in your proclamation. It is Jesus they most need to know!*

5. *Be ready to face rejection, insults and ridicule (We need one another for support, nurturing and care.)*
6. *Have compassion on others as Jesus had compassion on this man born blind. Jesus didn't see him as one who was just a worthless sinner. Jesus saw a person who could have a profound witness and make a difference in the lives of many others.*
7. *Avoid spiritual blindness. We are the Body of Christ, not an organization or an institution. We are a movement. If we fail to let Jesus lead and think the strength of what we are about will come from us we will be among those who become blind. We have left the past for this very reason. Let us never return.*

Given those seven realities let me suggest ways you can equip one another for the harvest. (By the way, the harvest is all about reaching those who are blind and in desperate need to see! And they are all around us!) Whenever you come together in for any meeting no matter what other business you need to conduct make sure you include the following:

1. *Encourage people to tell their stories of the*

- difference Jesus is making in their life*
2. *Study what the scripture and confessions teach us about who Jesus is. The most important question you can ever answer is the one Jesus asked his disciples, who do you say that I am?*
3. *In your ministry go to places where a witness is needed where there are blind people and speak to them, touch their lives with the powerful love of Jesus. Remind one another to trust in the work of the Holy Spirit to do amazing things when you make yourself available to Him.*
4. *Keep your focus on Jesus in all your work. This is not about you. It is not about gender. It is about Jesus. There are no agendas in Jesus. There is only Jesus.*
5. *In the midst of difficulties... and they are sure to come. Offer support and care to one another. The battle should not be within the church but with those overcome by the blindness of life without Christ.*
6. *Have compassion that motives you to action. Local mission, national mission, international mission have always been on the hearts of faithful women in Christ. Remember your identity as the first*

- evangelists.*
7. *Never become so caught up in organization that it replaces the mission. That is the sure sign of a dying church, when simply surviving becomes the mission.*

Having said that, I also want to remind you that you will need to have sufficient organization and structures that keep you focused on accomplishing Christ's mission of making disciples. Remember that is what the blind man became, a disciple of Jesus, follower of Christ. In order to make the Women of the NALC a vital part of the mission of the Church you must each take personal responsibility for its work, its purpose and its mission. You cannot wait for someone else to do that for you and then decide if you want to stay with it. This blind man took personal responsibility for proclaiming Christ. No one had to ask or demand it. He just did it! It came as a response to what he received from Jesus. So may it be with each one of you that you will find a way to invest yourself in this important mission and equip others to also be laborers for the harvest!

In the name of Jesus,
Amen.
Bishop John Bradosky

2015 - 2016 WOMEN'S COUNCIL

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Fall 2015

SHERRIE PALAN, CHAIR

I'm Sherrie Palan, and have been a member of the WNALC Women's Council since August 2012. I am a native Texan, was born and raised in Austin. I am the second oldest of five children, the only girl.

I am married to Bob Palan, a pastor who is originally from Fairbault, MN. We have been married for 13 years. Together we have six children – I have one daughter and four sons and Bob has one son. We have four granddaughters, ages 2, 5, 13 and 17, and two new grandsons born in January and July 2015. While being

a stay-at-home mom for 15 years, I also cared for other children, and did after-school care. I began work as a church secretary when my youngest was two years old, and have been doing that for 20+ years now, currently working in our church, yes, with my husband!

We moved to La Vernia, Texas, a small town outside of San Antonio, when my husband took a call at Immanuel Lutheran Church. We have been here for 13 years and love it! I have been active in the church as a Sunday school teacher, Confirmation

teacher, directing Christmas programs and Vacation Bible School, and have served on many committees within the church. I love singing and playing handbells.

I love to sew (when I can find the time), spending time doing yard work, taking day trips and spending time

with family and friends, and we love spoiling our grandchildren! I love serving the Lord and spending time with my church family, and I am honored to be serving Women of the NALC. I look forward to my time as your Chair and finding ways to serve the Lord together in mission and ministry.

LINDA BROWER, VICE CHAIR

Linda is married, for over 47 years, to Kris Brower who is pastor of St. Matthew Lutheran in Brenham, TX. She has 3 children, 6 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren and all live in TX.

She along with Kris, is originally from Indiana but they've lived in a lot of different places over the years, like a year in Germany, 4 years in NM, 4 years in TN, 15 years in IL, as well as 19 years in TX with a few other stops in between.

She is currently serving St. Matthew and the Brenham community by:

- ◆ serving as secretary and program chair for Women of St. Matthew
- ◆ writing church newsletter
- ◆ teaching Sunday morning adult Bible study
- ◆ serving on church building committee
- ◆ membership in the Washington County TEEA
- ◆ helping as liaison with Miracle Farm (local school for boys)

**SEND IN YOUR STORIES,
PICTURES, BLOGS, OR
EVENTS**

Please send your stories, pictures, blogs, or event information to Lane Magera, editor at wnalcnews@yahoo.com by December 1, 2015 for inclusion in the next edition of News for Women of the North American Lutheran Church. Photos included in this newsletter are the property of the article's subjects. Please contact them for permission to reuse.

Linda has worn many hats over the years to include:

- ◆ Stephen Ministry Leader (started Stephen Ministry in 3 churches)
- ◆ weekday adult Bible study leader (on prayer, spiritual gifts, caregiving, etc.)
- ◆ former chair of Evangelism Committee
- ◆ former Children's

Church leader
◆ former Mary Kay Consultant

She enjoys reading, necessary gardening, and a little macramé in her spare time.

She is now blessed to serve on the WNALC Council in hopes of meeting the needs of all the women in our NALC congregations—thank you for the opportunity!

PAT DITTRICH, SECRETARY

My name is Patricia Dittrich (call me Pat) and I am the current recording secretary for the WNALC Women's Council. I was born and lived on the south side of Houston, Texas. I was an only child, and no, I was not spoiled! My mom was raised Lutheran so we attended a Lutheran church where I was baptized and had 1st communion. I was active in the children's choir and was an acolyte. When I was 13 we moved to Richmond, TX, a small town about 30 miles south west of Houston. When looking for a church to join, we decided on Peace Lutheran Church in Rosenberg. This is where I was confirmed and also had the joy of meeting my husband, Michael, when we were in junior high. I was active in Luther League and the music group. During this time I also attended church camp for four summers which had a great impact on my faith life.

After graduation from high school, I attended

junior college and went on to get my bachelor of library science degree at Texas Women's University. In the meantime, Michael had joined the army and was stationed in Germany at the time we got married. We got married in our home church at Peace and a week later we flew back to Germany where we had a 2 year honeymoon courtesy of Uncle Sam. (At least that's what we tell people!).

After a posting at Fort Drum, New York (so much snow!!) and Ft Hood, Texas, we decided to try civilian life back home. We found 5 acres and built a house close to the really small town of Orchard, TX. Population is 360 counting people, dogs, cats, chickens & cows! We travel the 10 minutes to Rosenberg for shopping and of course, our home church at Peace. That is when our son Russell was born and as luck would have it, he is an only child too - and not spoiled either! I worked at the county

public library for a couple of years and then became manager of a small branch library in Needville, Texas where I spent the next 20 years.

The time came and Michael retired first and then I retired in 2012. We have been on the go ever since! We spend a lot of time volunteering at a Lutheran Church camp outside of La Grange, TX (Yeah Lutherhill!). Both Michael and I remembered how much fun we had and how much stronger our faith became because of church camp. Most of the time I volunteer in the office and Michael helps the maintenance guy. We also help out in the kitchen by washing piles of dishes! The best part is getting to attend the worship services. It fills me with hope for the world to see over 100 kids on their feet, raising the roof with singing praises

to God! God is definitely at work here! The volunteer work doesn't end with summer; Camp Lutherhill also has an active retreat season and offers meeting space & activities for all kinds of groups.

Through the years at our church I have been active in the youth programs, church council, special committees and more. After retirement I became active in the Quilting group, choir and the ladies' bible study circle. Currently I am the secretary for our church's women's group. I encourage everyone whether they are a delegate or not to attend an NALC Convocation and of course the Women's Annual Meeting! You get to meet people from all walks of life who live and breathe the same faith in our Lord & Savior! It is going to be an exciting year!!

ROBBIE CONLEY, TREASURER

Bio to come in next edition.

PAM CHARAS

Bio to come in next edition.





Fall 2015

JESSIE PHILLIPS

I was born in Tokyo, Japan in 1954 to an Army career serviceman (Carlos B. Lawrence) and his Japanese wife (Shizuko Otsuta who changed her name to Rose after she received her citizenship). I am the eldest of four children (twin brothers and a sister). I have lived in several different states and countries (Japan, Germany, NC, and VA) until 1967 when my father retired from the Army.

In 1972, I graduated from Caldwell High School, Caldwell, OH and in 2005, I graduated from Washington State Community College,

Marietta, OH (Assoc. Degree in Applied Science). I lived in Southeastern Ohio until 2005 when I married my husband, David Phillips, and we moved to Michigan. In 2011, David was called to Immanuel Lutheran Church of Lebanon, Wisconsin. David has been a pastor for 31 years (first as an United Methodist and now NALC Lutheran). I am a member of the Outreach Committee and Hand-bell Choir besides participating in all the great things a pastor's wife gets the privilege to do like women's bible study, children's church, missions, baby sitting parishioners' children,

making life-long friends, and the list never ends.

I am mother of two daughters (Jennifer and Kristina) and a son (Levi) and Step-Mother of three stepsons (Michael, Stephen, and John) and a stepdaughter (Meghanne). I have two granddaughters (Sydney and Khepri) and two grandsons (Tate and Ronin). All live in Ohio with the exception of my son (MI), stepson (NY) and stepdaughter (IL).

My previous employment starting from high school: cashier, bookkeeper, librarian asst., tax preparer for H & R

Block, sole proprietor (children's clothing store), medical receptionist/billing specialist for two Family Practitioners, librarian/unit secretary/TMP case manager for the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, medical receptionist for two ophthalmologist in Michigan, art/craft teacher at Lebanon Lutheran School and at present a daycare teacher (infant room) at Early Childhood Center of Lebanon.

My hobbies include knitting, crocheting, quilting, needlework, reading, and volunteering.

AMY WERNER

I grew up in the outskirts of Erie, Pennsylvania. I graduated Edinboro University with a degree in Elementary Education. I currently work as a personal care assistant working with special needs students at Clelian Heights School.

I am an active member of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Latrobe (Trauger) PA. I serve as a Sunday school teacher, Vice-President of the congregation's women's group, sing in

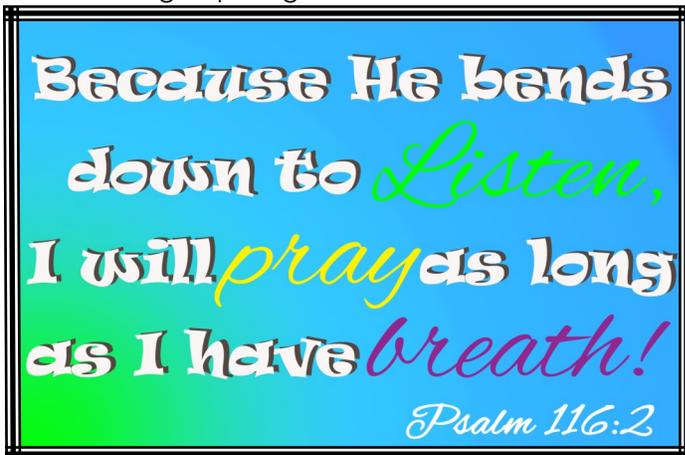
the choir and participate in the bell choir.

I am a group leader who organizes trips to annual Women of Faith Conferences. I was

recognized as group leader of the year for the Columbus event in 2015.

Since being elected in 2014, I serve on the Board for the WNLALC'S Mid-Northeast Mission District.

I am married to Pastor Mark Werner. We have one son, Jordan.



WNALC Mission District Representatives 2015-2016

LINDA BROWER

310 Cedar Circle, Brenham, TX 77833
979.203.6828
LindaB.wnalc@hotmail.com

Heartland Mission District (13)
Indiana and Kentucky

Iowa Mission District (35)
Iowa

Mid-South Mission District (8)
AL, AR, FL panhandle, GA, MS, and TN

PAM CHARAS

5624 Mark Dale Drive, Dayton, OH 45459
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mcharas@earthink.net

Ohio Mission District (54)
Ohio (5 Regions)

ROBBIE CONLEY

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Canada Mission District (22)
Canada

Great River Mission District (19)
Illinois

Michigan Mission District (8)
Michigan (Lower Peninsula)

Southwest Pacific Mission District (8)
AZ, southern CA, HI, and southern NV

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Carolinas Mission District (41)
North and South Carolinas

Eastern South Dakota Mission District (16)
Eastern South Dakota

SHERRIE PALAN

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Great Plains Mission District (14)
Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska & Oklahoma

North Texas Mission District (5)
TX (north)

Sonshine Mission District of Florida (5)
Florida (except panhandle area)

South Texas Mission District (25)
TX (south) and LA

Virginia (5)
Virginia

JESSIE PHILLIPS

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920.285.1558
jmp218@att.net

Caribbean and Hispanic Mission District (3)
Caribbean and Hispanic Ministries

Central Pacific Mission District (4)
Northern CA and Northern NV

Minkota Mission District (16)
MN and eastern ND

Northwest Mission District (6)
AK, ID, OR, and WA

Rocky Mountain Mission District (4)
CO, NM, UT, and corner of TX below NM

Western Dakotas, Montana, and Wyoming Mission District (5)
Western Dakotas, MT, and WY

Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (18)
WI and Upper MI

AMY WERNER

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awerner.wnalc@gmail.com

Atlantic Mission District (27)
CT, DE, ME, MD (east), MA, NH, NJ, NY (east), PA (east), RI, VT, DC

Mid-Northeast Mission District (32)
Western MD, western NY, western PA and WV



Fall 2015

THE WIDOW'S OFFERING

MARK 12:41-44

⁴¹ And Jesus sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴² And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. ⁴³ And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. ⁴⁴ For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

I remember when I was young, my father would always tell me to watch my pennies, and then the rest will follow.

Nowadays, pennies don't go very far and are almost never used. So, how about my dimes or other coins. If you are like me, my change is usually put in a piggy bank and given to one of our church's missions during our "Noisy Offering Sunday".

The Mission Support Committee of the Women of the North American Lutheran Church (WNALC) has another idea for that "loose change" around your house. During our August Convocation in Texas, we handed out bottles of water to be recycled as a "The Widow's Offering Bank". A 16.9 oz. bottle of water will hold \$90 worth of dimes. We are hoping that by next June (2016), when these bottles of dimes or other coins are deposited into our account, we will have accumulated enough to support our missions for that year. You will be surprised how quickly that bottle will fill up and how little effort it will take. So, look under those couch cushions, in those jean pockets, empty purses in your closet, under

car seats, in the washer, and other places you might find loose change and save those coins for the WNALC Missions.

An extremely important element in any of our giving must include that we "PRAY for missions, PRAISE God for the work that He is accomplishing, and GIVE THANKS with your offering to help further God's kingdom on earth.

Label and deposit slip templates are available through our website and newsletters.

Blessings to all in your service to Christ,

Jessie Phillips
WNALC Council

Pray
Praise
Thanks
Give

Collect contributions from your women's group(s) and forward offerings by JUNE 1st of each year to:

Women of the NALC
2299 Palmer Drive, Suite 220
New Brighton, MN 55112-2202

Be sure to enclose deposit slip designation WNALC as the recipient. All grant proposals will be voted on each year at the WNALC Gathering.

MY MISSION BANK

My daily contribution is to:

PRAY
for missions

PRAISE
God for the work
He is accomplishing

GIVE THANKS
with a coin offering to help
further God's kingdom on earth



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THE WOMEN OF THE  **NALC**
North American Lutheran Church

Connecting with our Sisters in Christ to Share God's Love

Mission Donation Deposit Slip

Donor's Information

Individual Church Mission District Group Other

Name: _____

Address: _____

Donation Amount

Amount of Donation: _____

Please make checks payable to **Women of the NALC** and note **"Mission Donation"** on the memo line.

Send to: **Women of the NALC, 2299 Palmer Drive Suite 220, New Brighton, MN 55112-2202**

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INDIA SHORT TERM MISSION TRIP - 2016

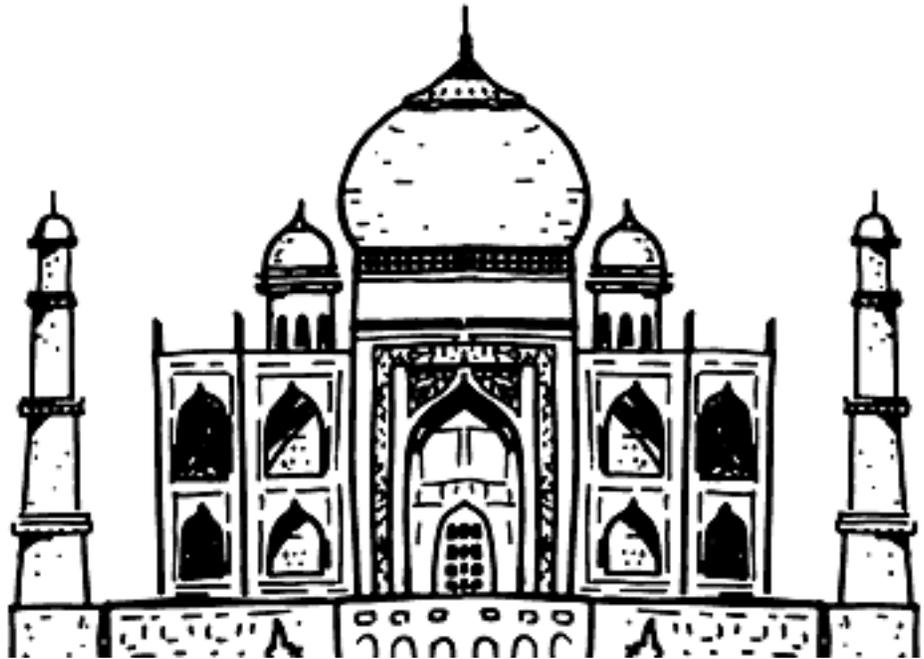
Please add to your prayers a group heading out on a short term mission trip. They are headed to India from January 18 - 29, 2016. The trip is sponsored by United Evangelical Mission, a NALC ministry partner.

Their goal is to give a hug, wipe a tear, pray, share, comfort and encourage the "poorest of the poor", giving what God has first given us, His Love in Word and deed.

The trip was open to anyone who has a heart in the shape of India!

Pastors and lay persons, men and women, young and old, all were welcome to join.

For more information, contact Pam Charas at mcharas@earthlink.net or call: 937 - 434 - 0993.



MISSION NEWS

BY PAM CHARAS

A few years ago Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, Assistant to the Bishop for Missions, wrote that "...Congregations are the reflection and manifestation of the body of Christ on earth. They are the hands of God at work in the world. God touches and transforms lives through congregations."

That is why we say the North American Lutheran Church is a

mission-driven and congregationally focused church of Jesus Christ. As a church and as a movement we have adopted a

congregational vision for mission that calls for every congregation to support one local and one global mission partner.

For more information about NALC endorsed missionaries, mission partners, mission ministries, the Great Commission Society, and the NALC mission congregations, visit the websites in the center.

Gemechis wrote, "Take this list of missions and pray for them and for God to guide you to a mission with whom you can partner." We humbly ask that you will add "support".

Great Commission Society:
<http://thenalc.org/great-commission-society/>

NALC Missionaries:
<http://thenalc.org/missionaries/>

NALC Mission Partners:
<http://thenalc.org/ministry-partners/>

Lutheran CORE:
<http://www.lutherancore.org/mission-connect/>



REPORT OF ANNUAL GATHERING

BY LANE MAGERA

Fall 2015

The 2015 Annual Gathering of the Women of the NALC began on Tuesday, August 11 at 1pm. Session 1 was themed "A Gathering of Witnesses: Secure in Christ's Love, Christians Tried & True" focusing on Hebrews 13:3 "Remember ... them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body." Following a worship song and prayer, we heard the Annual Report and had a call for nominations. Pastor Don Miles from India Transformed spoke about Power Evangelism vs. Persecution. There is a new Mission Model in India. Over 950 churches have been planted in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Indonesia serving street children and destitute women. 6.8 million people have been reached with the Gospel with the new Community Transformation Center model since 1988. More information can be found at <http://www.indiatransformed.org/>

Following a break and worship song, we were given a Disaster Task Force presentation.

Bibles and Gift cards were donated by women and congregations for those in need following the FEMA National Disaster in Texas counties of Cooke, Gaines, Grimes, Harris, Hays, Navarro, and Van Zandt. The Disaster Task Force made sure to deliver the contributions to the areas with the greatest needs. More info on the Disaster Task Force and arising needs can be found here: <http://thenalc.org/category/disaster-response-1/>

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*Hebrews 13:3***

Next we heard from Ida Martinson of China Service Ventures on The Costs & Joys of Witnessing in China. She spoke about the mission to improve the quality of life for the rural poor in Henan, China by identifying opportunities to serve in education, community, health, and good news. Their motto is "Not to be

served, but to serve." More information is available here: <http://chinaserviceventures.org/>

Each participant was given a slip covering for their disposable water bottle from the Mission Support Committee. We were shown how easily Mission Banks can be made and used in our congregations. More info is included in this newsletter on how you too can put these to use with your loose change until next year.

During dinner, we heard a beautiful song and testimony from soloist Robbie Harrell. Then we listened to Carmen Hale of Elam Ministries about the Bold and Courageous Church in Iran. Elam is a territory in the bible which is situated in modern day Iran. Carmen had many handouts and testimonies for us, including a guide called Iran 30 which can help inform you and your congregation about the church in Iran. The guide and other info can be found on their site at: <https://www.elam.com/> We closed at 6:30 pm with a song and prayer.

Session 2 began at 8 am with a focus on A Gathering of Witnesses: Commissioned by the Lord, Laborers in the

Harvest. Our verse for the day came from John 9:4 "As long as it is day, we must do the works of Him who sent Me. Night is coming when no one can work." Bishop John Bradosky joined us for breakfast to address us. His stirring address can be found in this newsletter and we thank him for taking time to join us during his busy convocation schedule.

We finished the morning with business. We elected all who were nominated to the 2015-2016 Women's council which was one seat short of what was needed. We approved the prior Annual Gathering Minutes as well as the Proposed Budget. We moved to give an offering of \$5,000.00 from WNALC funds to be split between India Transformed and China Service Ventures as a step out in faith and to kick-off our Mission Bank program. Next year we as an organization will vote on where our Mission Bank offering will be given. We hope to raise that much and more! After lunch, we bid farewell strengthened and recharged to carry out missions in our communities, our nation, and our world. Many thanks to those who planned the event for us to join as a gathering of witnesses.