



# NALC News

North American Lutheran Church

August 2019

## DAN SELBO ELECTED BISHOP

The Rev. Dr. Dan Selbo was elected bishop of the North American Lutheran Church by the 2019 NALC Convocation on Friday, Aug. 9, in Indianapolis, Indiana.

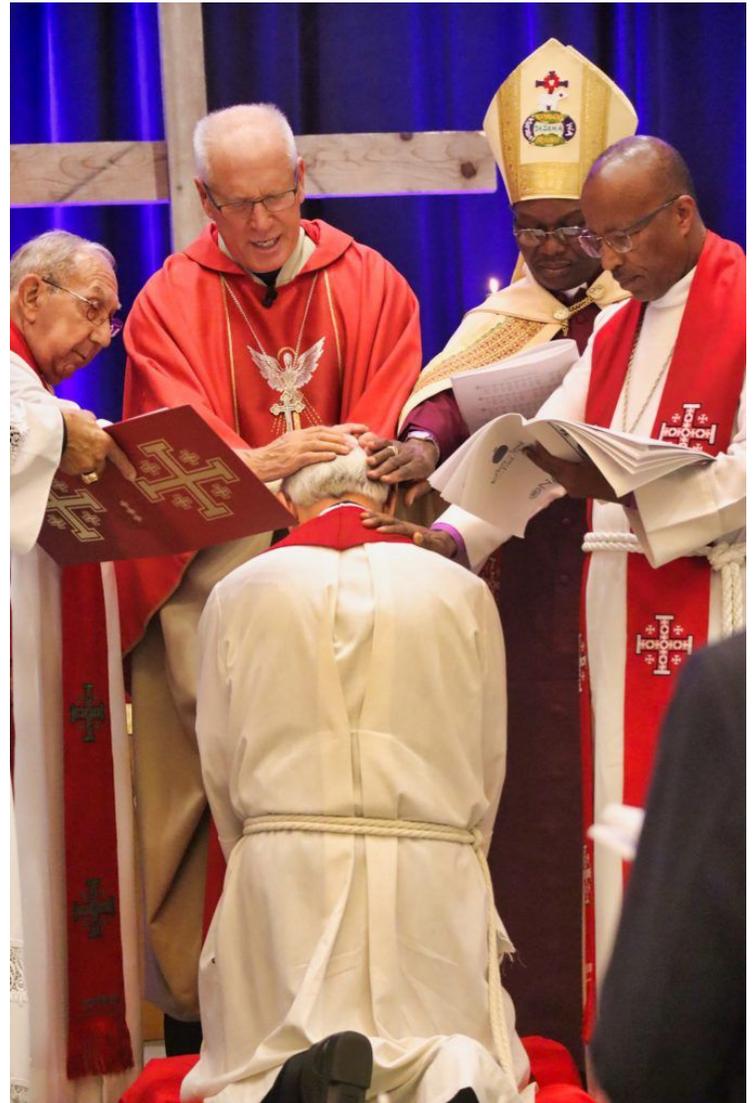
More than 800 delegates and visitors gathered Aug. 7-9 at The Westin Indianapolis for the 2019 Convocation and Mission Festival around the theme, "Walking by the Spirit with the Fruit of the Spirit."

Bishop Selbo was elected on the fourth ballot over the Rev. Dr. Eric Riesen, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Ashland, Ohio, by a vote of 326-211.

Bishop Selbo currently serves as pastor of St. Timothy's Lutheran Church in San Jose, California. He also served as the dean of the Central Pacific Mission District. He holds Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. He and his wife, Mary, have been married for 33 years. They have four children and two grandchildren.

"Dear friends in Christ, brothers and sisters, I am, as I shared last evening, honored to be standing here and humbled by the decision that's just been made," Bishop Selbo said following the announcement of his election.

"I am hearing and accepting this as a call not only from Christ and His Church but from God Himself," he said. "I want you to remember this day because if this works out, it is evidence that the Holy Spirit has been at work. And if it does not, this was your vote," he added with a smile.



**The Rev. Dr. Dan Selbo is installed as bishop of the North American Lutheran Church. Laying on hands were, from left, the Rev. Paull Spring, the first bishop of the NALC; the Rev. John Bradosky, bishop of the NALC; the Rt. Rev. Dr. Alex Mkumbo, bishop of the Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, and the Rev. Yonas Yigezu, president of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.**

*Continued on Page 2*



**More than 800 delegates and visitors attended the 2019 NALC Convocation.**

**Continued from Page 1**

“The theme, ‘Walking by the Spirit with the Fruit of the Spirit,’ this does not work without Jesus. Apart from Christ, it just has no future and hope. But, in Him and with Him and by His power, there is a lot of work to be done and this is a body through which God will work to carry out His purposes in this world.

“Called to be shepherd in the NALC, called to be your shepherd, I will work hard to help keep you and us on track and on task. But I want you to help me because I, like you, am called to follow the Shepherd, and I find myself each day needing to be reminded of what that means and what it looks like. I need your help to follow so I can help you to follow,” he said.



**The three bishops of the NALC: Bishop John Bradosky, Bishop Dan Selbo and Bishop Paull Spring, bishop emeritus.**

I am asking for your prayers today for wisdom, for grace to help me keep my eyes on Christ,” Bishop Selbo said. He also asked for prayers for his wife, Mary.

“Thank you for who you are, for being the Body of Christ,” he said. “I am honored to be part of the North American Lutheran Church. It is a powerful voice that is so needed in this world today. And we are on track, we are being led by the Spirit, we are following Jesus Christ, and we have a message this world is dying to hear and we need to share it. Thank you for your vote of confidence. I ask for your continued prayers in the four years ahead.”

“Dan Selbo is the leader our pastors and lay delegates have chosen to be the third bishop of the North American Lutheran Church. God willing, he will begin his service in the 10th year of our corporate life,” said Bishop John Bradosky. “I will do all I can as his predecessor to support him in the catalytic ministry to which he has been called, one of spiritual oversight, as defender of the faith, pastor and teacher to the pastors and congregations of the NALC, the chief evangelist, and one dedicated to the disciple-making mission of the Church.”

The Convocation narrowed the list of candidates from 14 nominees to four on the first ballot on Thursday.

Twelve pastors had been nominated by congregations prior to the Convocation. Biographical information

**Continued on Page 3**

*Continued from Page 2*

and responses to questions prepared by the NALC Executive Council from each of those candidates were made available in May.

The Rev. Dr. Amy C. Schifrin, president of the North American Lutheran Seminary, and the Rev. Dr. Amy C. Little of Trinity Lutheran Church in Monroeville, Ohio, were nominated from the floor of the Convocation.

The four finalists were Selbo, Riesen, Schifrin and the Rev. Dr. David Wendel, NALC assistant to the bishop for ministry and ecumenism. They addressed the Convocation and had the opportunity for informal conversation with delegates on Thursday afternoon.

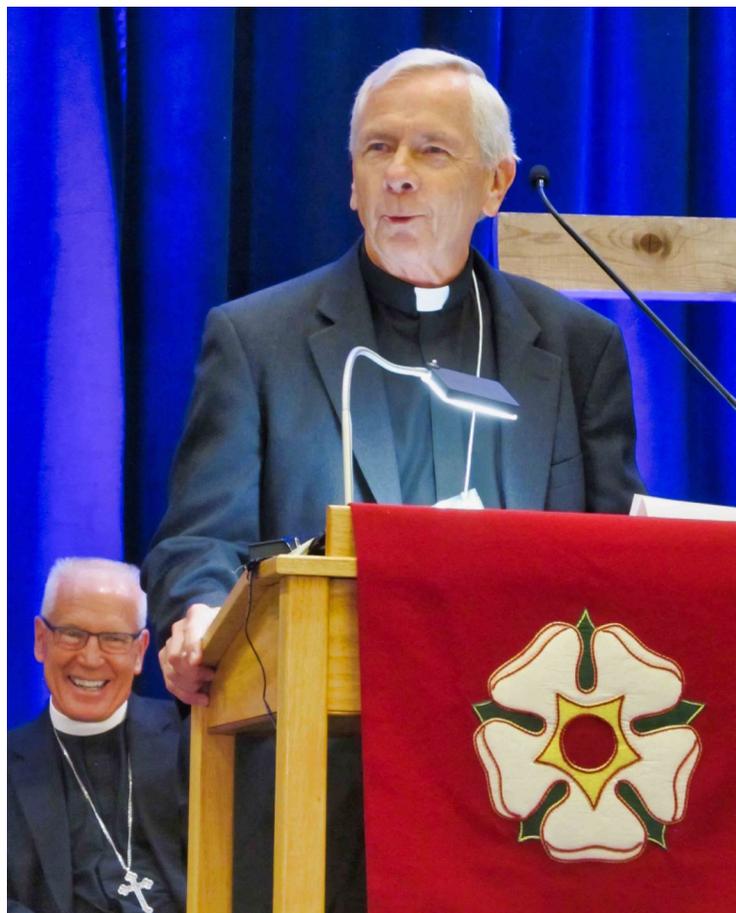
Ballots continued on Friday until a candidate received a majority vote. On each subsequent ballot, the name of the person receiving the lowest number of votes was eliminated. Schifrin received the lowest number of votes on the second ballot and Wendel on the third ballot.

The NALC has been engaged in a year of prayer and discernment leading up to the bishop election. Bishop John Bradosky announced a year ago that he would not be available for reelection.

“The Executive Council and the Nominating Committee are grateful for the prayerful manner and



***The four finalists for bishop after the first ballot were the Rev. Dr. David Wendel, the Rev. Dr. Dan Selbo, the Rev. Dr. Amy Schifrin and the Rev. Dr. Eric Riesen.***



***The Rev. Dr. Dan Selbo responds to the announcement of his election as bishop of the North American Lutheran Church as the Rev. John Bradosky, current NALC bishop, looks on.***

approach our church took to bring us to the election of our next bishop,” said the Rev. Mark Chavez, NALC general secretary. “So many people were praying. We wished for prayer, not politics. Thank you to everyone who helped in that effort.”

The 2019 NALC Convocation took place only a few miles from Fishers, Indiana, where 10 years earlier the first seeds of the NALC were sown Sept. 25-26, 2009, at the Lutheran CORE Convocation which asked that a proposal for the “reconfiguration of North American Lutheranism” be prepared and brought to Lutheran CORE’s 2010 Convocation.

The resulting proposal, which called for the formation of the North American Lutheran Church, was released on Feb. 18, 2010. The NALC was constituted at Lutheran CORE’s 2010 Convocation Aug. 26-27, 2010, in Grove City, Ohio.

***Continued on Page 4***

*Continued from Page 3*

Bishop Selbo was a member of the eight-member Lutheran CORE Vision and Planning Working Group that prepared the “Vision and Plan for The North American Lutheran Church and Lutheran CORE.”

That working group recommended that the NALC “be centered on four key attributes: Christ Centered, Mission Driven, Traditionally Grounded and Congregationally Focused.” Those Core Values continue to shape the life of the NALC.

Bishop Selbo was installed as bishop during the closing worship of the Convocation, but his four-year term officially begins October 1.

Videos of Bishop Selbo’s addresses to the Convocation during the election process, as well as his installation service, are available online at [thenalc.org/meetbishopselbo](http://thenalc.org/meetbishopselbo).

A Thursday night banquet honored Bishop John Bradosky for his service to the Church. Bishop Bradosky is retiring. The banquet featured the Rev.



***The Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, NALC assistant to the bishop for missions, delivered the keynote Bible study during the Convocation.***



***The Rev. Dr. Malcolm Guite, a poet, priest and singer from Cambridge, England, was the featured entertainment for the banquet honoring Bishop John Bradosky.***

Dr. Malcolm Guite, a poet, priest and singer from Cambridge, England.

“The entire church would like to honor Bishop Bradosky, and we look forward to celebrating his ministry among us,” said Pastor Chavez. “God provided the leadership that we needed in the person of John Bradosky, and we have already witnessed an unprecedented outpouring of gratitude and thanksgiving in the past several months. We look forward to celebrating his ministry among us for many years.”

The NALC Executive Council has established the Bishop John Bradosky Fund for Life-to-Life Discipleship as a way to recognize and give thanks for the ministry of Bishop Bradosky. It was announced at the banquet that \$17,125 had already been given to the fund.

In other elections, the Rev. Bassam Abdallah of Prospect, Kentucky, and Scott Kramer of Boerne, Texas, were elected to four-year terms on the Executive Council. The Rev. Jennifer Gold of Helotes,

***Continued on Page 5***

**Continued from Page 4**

Texas, and the Rev. Leslie Haines of Fort Wayne, Indiana, were elected to the Court of Adjudication.

The Convocation approved a \$2.2 million Operating Budget for the NALC. Budgets were also approved for the church's designated funds.

Reports on the work of the NALC's staff, teams, task forces, ministries and ministry partners were warmly received.

The Rev. Dr. Eric Riesen, chair of the Life-to-Life Discipleship Team, updated the Convocation on the team's work and introduced the CREDO Initiative. CREDO (Latin for "I believe") is an acronym for Confessional Renewal Embracing Discipleship and Outreach. A new video and new website highlight NALC Life-to-Life Discipleship. You can find the video and explore the website at [nalclifetolife.org](http://nalclifetolife.org).

The Mission Festival that preceded the Convocation highlighted the NALC's relationship with Lutherans in Ethiopia and Tanzania.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Alex Mkumbo, bishop of the Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, and the Rev. Yonas Yigezu, president of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, were featured speakers for the Mission Festival. They also brought greetings to the Convocation and took part in the installation service for Bishop Selbo.

Several ecumenical representatives were also present for the Convocation and brought greetings to delegates, including the Rev. Dr. Ray R. Sutton, presiding bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church and bishop of the Diocese of Mid-America of the Anglican Church in North America; the Rev. Dr. Joel Lehenbauer, executive director of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; Carmen LaBerge, executive director of the Common Ground Christian Network; the Rev. Martin Fromm, representing both the Global Confessional and Missional Lutheran Forum and the Church Coalition for the Bible and Confession in Bavaria; the Rev. Andreas Späth, vice president of the International Christian Network;



***The Rev. Dr. Eric Riesen, chair of the Life-to-Life Discipleship Team, updated the Convocation on the team's work and introduced the CREDO Initiative. CREDO (Latin for "I believe") is an acronym for Confessional Renewal Embracing Discipleship and Outreach.***

and the Rev. Erich Rutten, representing the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Events preceding the Convocation were the Mission Festival, Braaten-Benne Lectures in Theology, Women of the NALC Annual Gathering and the Ventures in Youth Ministry Symposium. The Convocation and the events preceding it comprise the NALC's annual Lutheran Week.

Documents, photos and videos from the Convocation and other events of Lutheran Week will be posted at [lutheranweek.com](http://lutheranweek.com).

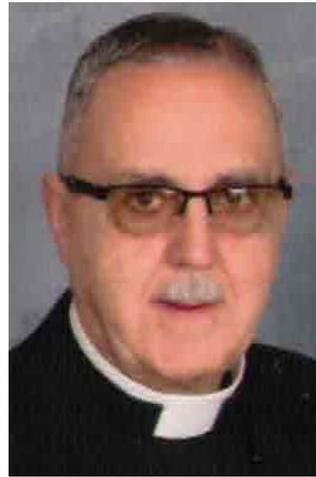
The dates and sites for the next two Lutheran Weeks were announced. Lutheran Week 2020 will take place Aug. 3-7, 2020, at the Omni William Penn Hotel in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Lutheran Week 2021 is set for Aug. 2-6, 2021, at the American Bank Center in Corpus Christi, Texas.

# EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, COURT OF ADJUDICATION MEMBERS ELECTED

The 2019 NALC Convocation, Aug. 8-9 in Indianapolis, Indiana, elected members of the NALC's Executive Council and Court of Adjudication.

The Rev. Bassam J. Abdallah of Prospect, Kentucky, and Scott Kramer of Boerne, Texas, were elected to the Executive Council.

Pastor Abdallah is a retired pastor and a member of House of Prayer Lutheran Church in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. He previously served as pastor of First United Lutheran Church in Hammond, Indiana, and Redeemer Lutheran Church in Bryant, Indiana. He was the chaplain for the 2019 NALC Convocation.



**Bassam Abdallah**



**Scott Kramer**

Scott Kramer is a member of St. John Lutheran Church in Boerne, Texas. He holds a degree in mechanical engineering and a Masters of Business Administration.

The incumbent members of the Executive Council both finished second in the voting. Rosemary Johnson of Hope Lutheran Church in Ladysmith, Wisconsin, and the Rev. Carl Rasmussen of First Lutheran Church in Kirkland, Illinois, were thanked by the Convocation for their years of service.

The Executive Council functions as the board of directors for the NALC and oversees the work of the church between Convocations.

The Rev. Jennifer Gold of Helotes, Texas, and the Rev. Leslie Haines of Fort Wayne, Indiana, were elected to four-year terms on the NALC Court of Adjudication.

Pastor Gold is director of Commission Expeditions and a member of St. John Lutheran Church in Boerne, Texas.

Pastor Haines is chaplain and executive director of Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries. She is a member of St. John's Lutheran Church of Lake Township near Fort Wayne, Indiana. She served 33 years in the U.S. Army.



**Jennifer Gold**



**Leslie Haines**

The Court of Adjudication decides appeals from disciplinary decisions and questions regarding interpretation of the NALC's governing documents.

The Convocation also ratified the Executive Council's appointment of members of the 2020 Nominating Committee. They are the Rev. Hugh Brewer of Lennox, South Dakota; the Rev. Dona Johnson of Loveland, Ohio; Carol Lattier of Lindale, Texas; Eric Osness of Edmonton, Alberta; and the Rev. Richard Tomlinson of Oregon, Illinois.

# 2020 BUDGETS APPROVED

The 2019 NALC Convocation approved a \$2.19 million Operating Budget for the North American Lutheran Church for 2020.

Budgets were also approved for the church's designated funds: \$723,000 for the Theological Education Fund (which includes the North American Lutheran Seminary); \$197,500 for the Great Commission Fund; and \$123,500 for the Disaster Response Fund.

Most of the budgets anticipate spending some cash reserves — budgeting expenses greater than anticipated income.

“As the North American Lutheran Church completes its ninth year of existence, our church body remains on solid financial footing. The NALC is blessed with generous and dedicated donors, particularly for specific initiatives such as disaster response and theological education, strong financial reserves, and an efficient, dedicated staff which works hard to accomplish much with limited resources,” said Ryan Schwarz, NALC treasurer.

“Nonetheless, a significant financial issue facing the NALC is that over the past few years, regular operating income has not been sufficient to cover operating expenses.” he added. “Operating expenses have risen somewhat, principally due to the addition of new resource persons to serve NALC congregations — domestic missions staff, a communications director and a youth and family ministry specialist among others. Regular operating income, which is primarily provided by congregational benevolence, has not kept pace.

“While the NALC's operating budget is not yet balanced, significant progress has been made in reducing these deficits to manageable levels,” Schwarz said.

“Total operating expenditures are budgeted at almost \$2.19 million for 2020, which is a very slight decrease from the 2019 forecast but a 2.8 percent



**Ryan Schwarz, NALC treasurer, offers his report to the 2019 NALC Convocation.**

increase over the 2018 budgeted amount,” Schwarz reported.

“We forecast an operating deficit of approximately \$80,000 in 2020. While we are disappointed not to be able to propose a fully balanced budget, we believe that this deficit is manageable in the context of the NALC's present operating reserves,” he said.

In addition to benevolence giving through the NALC, congregations are encouraged to support at least one local, one domestic and one global mission. The NALC encourages congregations to support local and global mission directly — giving to projects, missionaries and ministries rather than channeling that giving through the NALC offices.

***Continued on Page 10***



Andrew Fuller, NALC director of communications, guided delegates in the use of electronic voting devices.



Bishop Dan Selbo presides at Holy Communion following his installation as bishop of the NALC.



The Rev. Dr. Amy C. Schifrin, president of the North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS), reported on the work of the seminary. The NALS is currently in the search process for a new president. President Schifrin will continue to teach at the seminary.



Participants in leading the installation service pose for a group photo.



The Rev. Dr. David Wendel, assistant to the bishop for ministry and ecumenism; the Rev. Mark Chavez, general secretary; and the Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, assistant to the bishop for missions, pray during the service of installation for Bishop Dan Selbo.



Bishop John Bradosky and his wife, Kristi, enjoy the banquet honoring him for his years of service to the Church.



The Rev. Bassam Abdallah of Prospect, Kentucky, served as chaplain for Lutheran Week.

# 2019 NALC CONVOCATION



Members of the NALC Executive Council were introduced.



Representatives of the NALC's Ministry Partners were introduced.



The Rev. Dr. Eugene Grimm and the Rev. Dona Johnson report on the work of the NALC's Living and Giving Stewardship Team.

# 2020 BUDGETS

*Continued from Page 7*

The NALC Constitution asks the Executive Council to report to the annual Convocation the percentage of congregational giving required to fund the general budget. The council again reported that 5 to 8 percent of congregational income would be necessary to fund the Operating Budget.

“The 2019 proposed Theological Education Fund budget calls for a significant increase in total expenditures to almost \$725,000, primarily due to the anticipated hiring of a new president for the NALS while the current president remains on the teaching faculty for the next few years. The budget also contemplates increases in the number of seminarian scholarships and new financial assistance to an important annual conference for NALC high school students discerning a possible call to the ordained ministry. The budget contemplates total donations to the NALS and Theological Education Fund of \$435,000 in 2019, resulting in a substantial deficit of almost \$290,000. This deficit will be funded from the NALS’s very considerable financial reserves accumulated from past bequests and other donations,” Schwarz explained.

A variety of financial reports are available on the NALC website including the treasurer’s presentation at the Convocation, the 2020 budgets, the 2019 financial forecast, staff compensation information and the audited financial statements and budgets from previous years. You can find the reports at [thenalc.org/financial-reports](http://thenalc.org/financial-reports).

# BISHOP JOHN BRADOSKY FUND FOR LIFE-TO-LIFE DISCIPLESHIP

The NALC Executive Council has established the Bishop John Bradosky Fund for Life-to-Life Discipleship as a way to recognize and give thanks for the ministry of Bishop Bradosky.

The Executive Council intends to create an ongoing scholarship fund that will assist pastors and congregations interested in becoming involved in Life-to-Life Discipleship.

Gifts may be given online at [thenalc.org/donate](http://thenalc.org/donate) or sent to the NALC, P.O. Box 860565, Minneapolis, MN 55486-0565, clearly marked “Bishop Bradosky Discipleship Fund.”

# LUTHERAN WEEK EVALUATION

Those who attended Lutheran Week are encouraged to watch their emails for follow up materials from Lutheran Week, including a Lutheran Week evaluation.

It is very helpful to those who plan Lutheran Week to get as much feedback as possible to assist them in planning next year’s events.

## Let’s keep in touch

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**NALC**  
North American Lutheran Church

Please copy and share this newsletter widely.

# THE ELEPHANT IN THE CHURCH NO MORE

## BISHOP BRADOSKY'S REPORT TO THE CONVOCATION

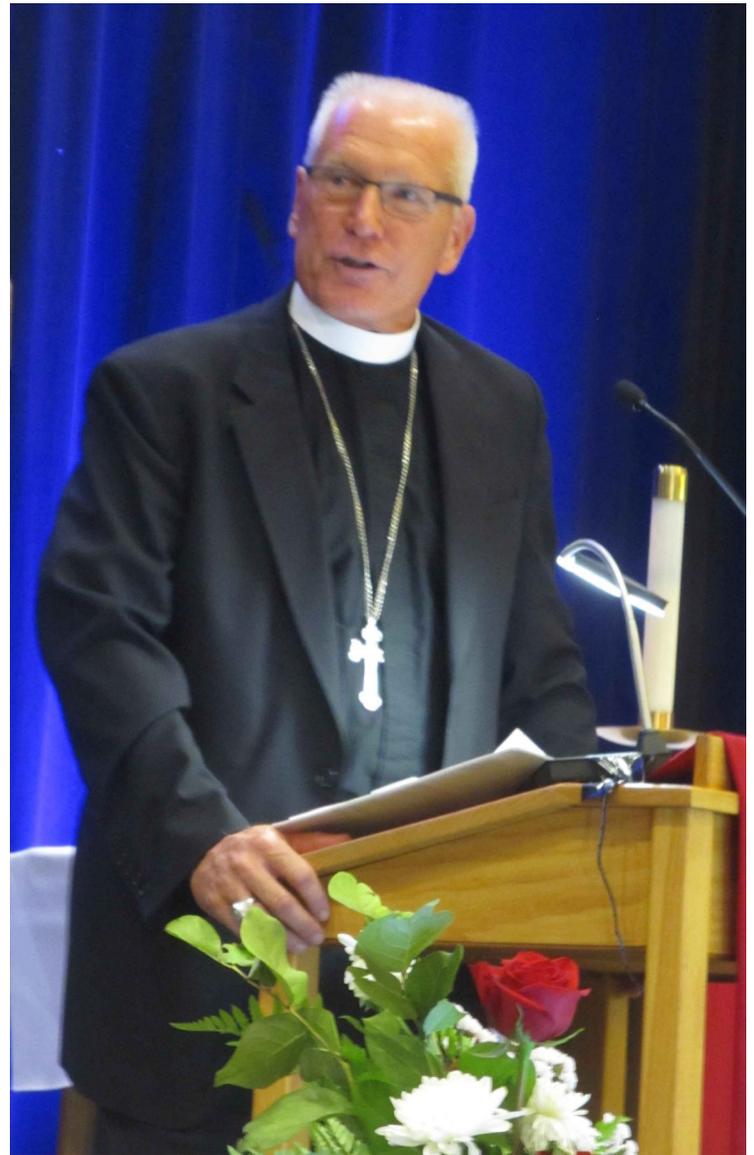
*The following is Bishop John Bradosky's oral report to the 2019 NALC Convocation. His written report is available in the Lutheran Week booklet which is available at [lutheranweek.com](http://lutheranweek.com).*

My written report is included in your bulletin of reports. I must begin by publicly thanking those who have provided their gracious support and care throughout this past year. Our executive and support staff, the deans, former bishops and theologians have been a source of great encouragement and inspiration.

One person who I have never drawn attention to over these past years, but one that I must call to your attention on this final Convocation serving as your bishop as she has sacrificed as much or more than I have in all my travel and endless preparation at home, is my beloved wife of 43 years, Kristi.

More than 25 years ago, I met a wonderful man who became a treasured friend as I served in Southern California, Dallas Willard. In his book titled, *The Divine Conspiracy*, he wrote about an interesting television commercial promoting the awareness of drugs and their effects on ordinary people. The commercial featured an elephant walking around inside a family home, strolling past a son doing his homework and a wife washing dishes, etc. The point of the commercial was that everyone in the house tried desperately to avoid and ignore the elephant. It was the biggest thing in the house, yet people were acting as though it was not there.

Applying this to the church, Willard writes, "Non-discipleship is the elephant in the church. It is not the much-discussed moral failures, financial abuses, or the amazing general similarity between Christians



**Bishop John Bradosky speaks to the 2019 NALC Convocation.**

and non-Christians. These are only effects of the underlying problem."

***Continued on Page 12***

While I believe we have come a long way in addressing this elephant in the room, that is, the lack of discipleship, there is still a long way to go. Our institutionalism on one side, and the effects of secularism on the other, can continue to make us irrelevant on one hand or remove any distinctiveness from the lives of Jesus-followers on the other.

The elephant in the church is the deeply-rooted notion that one can be a Christian without being a disciple of Jesus Christ. It is reducing Christian faith to simply believing that I am forgiven. It is faith, not in Jesus Christ, but in bumper sticker theology, “Christians aren’t perfect ... just forgiven.” It is a lifestyle not rooted in following Jesus and living in the reality of the Kingdom He proclaimed, but a matter of occasionally getting my baptismal barcode scanned during worship to insure me of forgiveness and an eternal life that is only a distant reality.

It has more to do with the cheap grace Dietrich Bonhoeffer described in *The Cost of Discipleship* than it does abiding in Christ and in the bonds of love in His Body, the Church, through mutually accountable and responsible relationships.

Bonhoeffer writes:

*Cheap grace means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner. Grace alone does everything they say, and so everything can remain as it was before. Well, then, let the Christian live like the rest of the world, let him model himself on the world's standards in every sphere of life, and not presumptuously aspire to live a different life under grace from his old life under sin. ...*

*Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession. ... Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate. It is grace without a relationship with Jesus Christ or necessarily anyone else in His Body the Church.*

*Grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a person their life, and it is grace because*

*it gives a person the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: “you were bought at a price,” and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for our life but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God.*

With the shifting we all feel under our feet in the church in North America, we need to pursue honest self-reflection and candid communication. We have nothing to gain by tightly closing our eyes, plugging our ears, and pretending that Western culture isn’t changing or that everything is okay with the church. In the enduring words of Bob Dylan, “let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late.”

I could go into great detail of the gradual process of how we have redefined grace during the decades of my life, but the latest came just a few weeks ago. I was reading one theologian who was fussing and fuming about those who in his estimation are trying to destroy grace. He wrote, “it is free grace or no grace at all, it can only be grace with no strings attached!” Now I absolutely agree with him that the grace of Jesus Christ is a free gift. But consider how he has redefined grace, “no strings attached.”

This is how we want to live our lives — no strings attached. This is our understanding of freedom — living with no strings attached. This is how we understand relationships — no strings attached. This is how we understand morality. As long as there are no strings attached, no one can get hurt, and if no one gets hurt it is not immoral. Our selfish absolute commitment to our independence is a matter of vaulting personal freedom above a faith relationship with Jesus Christ. This becomes the norm for defining grace. There are many cheap imitations of real grace. Cheap grace deceives the people who trust in it and distorts the Gospel of Jesus Christ, leading people down a path of self-destruction, if not eternal damnation.

The grace of Jesus Christ imparted to us in Baptism is not a matter of “no strings attached,” but rather an eternal attachment or it is nothing at all! If there is

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no attachment to Jesus Christ, there is no grace! It is only in this complete attachment to Jesus Christ that true freedom exists. In Baptism, we are connected to Christ — to His dying and rising. We are attached to the Body of Christ, His Church.

It is not just one string of attachment but a web of strings that connect us to Christ and to one another across the entire world and to the disciples of Jesus Christ, since He called the likes of Peter, James, John and Matthew. This exclusive attachment is the nature of discipleship. These are the bonds of faith and love!

This is the grace we received at our Baptism. Listen to Luther's words: "Baptism consists of being dipped into the water which covers us completely and being drawn out again. These two parts, being dipped under the water and emerging from it, indicate the power and effect of Baptism, which is simply the slaying of the old Adam and the resurrection of the new man, both of which actions must continue in us our whole life long. This, the Christian life, is nothing else than a daily Baptism once begun and ever continued." This is not just a matter of scanning our baptismal barcode or the gospel of sin management.

The death and new life in Baptism is lived out in the daily battle between the old Adam and the new Adam, between my sinful self and Christ's will for my life. I liken this understanding to precisely the nature of our conversations in discipleship coaching. "Current reality" is the honest confession of my sin, my shortcomings, my failures. God's intended future for me is what Christ commands in His Word to be little Christs. It is the constant journey as a follower of Christ clinging to our identity in Him, one step of transformation after another.

Luther continues, "we must keep purging out whatever pertains to the old Adam so that whatever belongs to the new person may come forth. What is the old man? This is what is born in us from Adam, irritable, quick tempered, spiteful, envious, unchaste, greedy, lazy, proud, yes and unbelieving; he is beset with all vices and by nature has nothing good in him. Now when we enter Christ's kingdom this corruption must daily decrease, so that the longer we live the

more gentle, patient and meek we become, and the more free from greed, hatred, envy and pride."

This is a daily walk that demonstrates progress in becoming more Christ-like in every way. This growth in faith and in the way of faithful living is never considered a "work" by Luther but the consequence or the effect of living out our Baptismal identity in Christ.

Luther writes, "when we become Christians, the old man daily decreases until he is finally destroyed! This is what it means to plunge into Baptism and daily come forth again. Where faith is present with its fruits, there Baptism is no empty symbol, but the effect accompanies it; but where faith is lacking it remains a mere unfruitful sign. If we wish to be Christians, we must practice the work that makes us Christians. Every day we must be found in faith amid its fruits, suppressing the old and growing up in the new."

I pray that my time among you serving as your bishop will help you to continue to focus on the mission Jesus gave to His Church to go and make disciples of all nations and that discipleship is no longer the avoided elephant in the room or in the Church. Instead of avoiding it, we are acting on it as the central focus for all we say and do within the Church.

Thank you for the honor and delight you have bestowed on me to serve as your bishop. Whatever progress we have made, it was the Holy Spirit at work, whatever good has been manifest, Christ was at work, whatever wisdom was imparted, the Word did it all. I am forever grateful for your love and prayers and to share these moments in the growth and development of the North American Lutheran Church. Be assured of my love and prayers for you as we move forward. In the name of Jesus. Amen.



# ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES RECOGNIZED AT CONVOCATION

## **65 Years**

The Rev. William A. Smith

## **60 years**

The Rev. Theodore C. Ager  
The Rev. N. Dean Haferman  
The Rev. Edwin D. Peterman  
The Rev. Brooke J. Walker

## **55 years**

The Rev. Kurt W. Borows Jr.

## **50 years**

The Rev. David H. Andreae  
The Rev. Gerhardt A. Gosnell  
The Rev. Harvey S. Mozolak  
The Rev. J. Larry Yoder

## **45 years**

The Rev. Steven L. Dornbusch  
The Rev. David Michael  
McGettigan  
The Rev. Gerald A. Miller  
The Rev. James E. Reiff

## **40 years**

The Rev. James C. Bangsund  
The Rev. Rolf Olson Bjornstad  
The Rev. Alfredo Casta  
The Rev. Erik E. Johnson  
The Rev. Paul L. Larson  
The Rev. James T. Lehmann  
The Rev. Thomas John Lurvey  
The Rev. Duane P. Marburger  
The Rev. Daniel M. Powell  
The Rev. Jan R. Putnam  
The Rev. Carl L. M. Rasmussen  
The Rev. Jerry L. Rhea  
The Rev. Mark E. Sabin  
The Rev. Karl A. Schoch  
The Rev. Brian F. Shirey  
The Rev. R. Dawson Tornes

## **35 years**

The Rev. Richard Barnes  
The Rev. Marilou Brook  
The Rev. B. A. "Tim" Christ  
The Rev. Stephen P. Cowen  
The Rev. Mark J. Daniels  
The Rev. Peter DeBartolo Sr.  
The Rev. Randall Eisenbeisz  
The Rev. Roger A. Herrig  
The Rev. Keith G. Less  
The Rev. David M. Phillips  
The Rev. Pedro Portillo  
The Rev. Amy C. Schifrin  
The Rev. William Schmidt  
The Rev. David B. Tholstrup

## **30 years**

The Rev. Paul E. Austin  
The Rev. David J. Baer  
The Rev. Thomas A. Curry  
The Rev. Teshome Tesfaye  
Deingede  
The Rev. Arlyn Howard  
Eisenbrandt  
The Rev. Zeleke Yimer Gesesse  
The Rev. Jeffray S. Greene  
The Rev. Jeffrey A. Morlock  
The Rev. Dawn Lee Nelson  
The Rev. James Pearson  
The Rev. Mary Ann Schave  
The Rev. Allen W. Schoonover  
The Rev. Michael R. Struck  
The Rev. David M. Taylor  
The Rev. Barbara M. Wills

## **25 years**

The Rev. Norman E. Dew  
The Rev. Bradley Joseph Hales  
The Rev. Charles C. Jackson  
The Rev. Andrew W. Jones  
The Rev. Herbert Gene Kitzman  
The Rev. Sally M. Meyer  
The Rev. Karen Tamorria

## CONGREGATION ANNIVERSARIES

### **225 Years**

St. Peter Lutheran Church  
Chapin, South Carolina

### **175 Years**

St. Matthew's Ev. Lutheran Church  
Riverside, Missouri

Immanuel Lutheran Church  
Lebanon, Wisconsin

### **150 Years**

Welcome Lutheran Church  
Brenham, Texas

Badger Lutheran Church  
Badger, Iowa

Freemount Lutheran Church  
Lindsborg, Kansas

Bethany Ev. Lutheran Church  
Montoursville, Pennsylvania

St. Luke's Ev. Lutheran Church  
Saxonburg, Pennsylvania

### **125 Years**

Mount Union Lutheran Church  
Elderton, Pennsylvania

Christ Lutheran Church  
Elderton, Pennsylvania

### **100 Years**

Bethesda Lutheran Church  
Wannaska, Minnesota



*Women of the NALC Annual Gathering*



*Ventures in Youth Ministry Symposium*



*Members of the Women of the NALC Council*

# AUGUST 5-9 INDIANAPOLIS



*Mission district deans met with Bishop John Bradosky on Friday morning.*

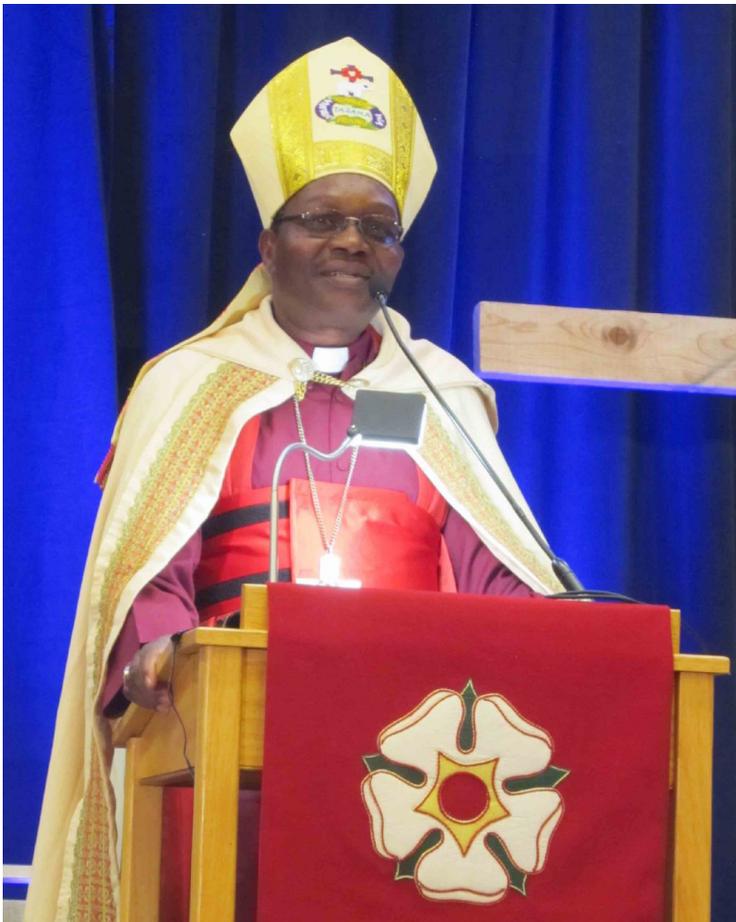


*The Westin Indianapolis was the site of Lutheran Week 2019.*

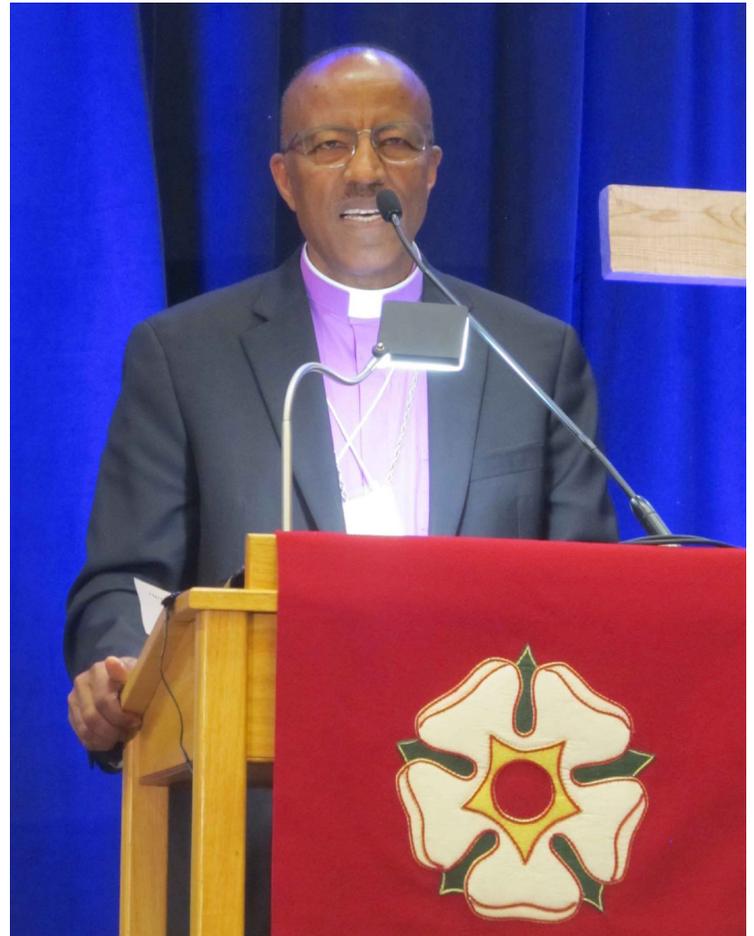
# MISSION FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS RELATIONSHIP WITH LUTHERANS IN ETHIOPIA AND TANZANIA

The North American Lutheran Church is committed to the renewal of all our congregations, working to develop and deliver resources that challenge and open the NALC to the work of the Holy Spirit in our ministry and mission. The Mission Festival is designed to inspire and serve as a resource to congregations.

The NALC Mission Festival on Wednesday, Aug. 7, highlighted the NALC's relationship with Lutherans in Ethiopia and Tanzania.



***The Rt. Rev. Dr. Alex Mkumbo, bishop of the Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, preached at the Service of the Word that opened the Mission Festival.***



***The Rev. Yonas Yigezu, president of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, delivered the keynote address for the Mission Festival.***

Leaders from the two largest Lutheran church bodies in the world were featured speakers for the Mission Festival.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Alex Mkumbo, bishop of the Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), preached at the Service of the Word that opened the Mission Festival.

***Continued on Page 17***

*Continued from Page 16*

The 8-million-member Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania has a Memorandum of Understanding with the NALC.

The Rev. Yonas Yigezu, president of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), delivered the keynote address for the Mission Festival.

The 9-million-member Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus has a Full Communion agreement with the NALC.

The church leaders from Africa took part in the Mission Festival and Convocation to honor the close relationship their churches have with the NALC. They both addressed the Convocation and took part in the installation of the newly-elected Bishop Dan Selbo.

A panel discussion featured President Yonas; Bishop Mkumbo; the Rev. John Bradosky, bishop of the NALC; and the Rev. Joel Lehenbauer, executive director of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

The discussion took the form of an episode of The Academy, an NALC webinar, and was recorded for



***A panel discussion during the Mission Festival took the form of an episode of The Academy. The Rev. Tony Ede, The Academy host, asked questions received electronically from delegates and those watching online to the panelists, from left, the Rev. Yonas Yigezu, president of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus; the Rev. John Bradosky, bishop of the NALC; the Rev. Joel Lehenbauer, executive director of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; and the Rt. Rev. Dr. Alex Mkumbo, bishop of the Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.***

distribution online. The Rev. Tony Ede, host of The Academy and pastor of First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mancheser, Iowa, asked questions received electronically from delegates and those watching the Mission Festival webcast.

The Mission Festival also featured a variety of breakout sessions to equip members for mission.

The Wednesday evening portion of the Mission Festival was a time for mission districts to meet separately. A Bible study related to President Yigezu's keynote address was provided. This was a time for mission districts to consider ideas presented at the Mission Festival and mission work in their geographic areas. It was also a time for mission district business.

For more resources and to stream videos from the Mission Festival, please visit [lutheranweek.com](http://lutheranweek.com). Additional mission resources are available at [missions.nalcnetwork.com](http://missions.nalcnetwork.com).



***A variety of breakout sessions to equip members for mission were offered during the Mission Festival.***

# 2019 BRAATEN-BENNE LECTURES FOCUS ON WORK OF HOLY SPIRIT

The 2019 Carl E. Braaten and Robert D. Benne Lectures in Theology focused on the work of the Holy Spirit under the Lutheran Week theme, “Walking by the Spirit with the Fruit of the Spirit.”

Presenters for the annual theological conference, held during Lutheran Week at The Westin Indianapolis, were:

**Dr. Robert D. Benne** of Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia – “The Holy Spirit and Christian Life.”

**The Rev. Dr. Paul R. Hinlicky** of Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia – “How the Holy Spirit Disappeared in Lutheranism.”

**The Rev. Dr. Craig Keener** of Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky – “The work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.”

**Dr. Matthew Levering** of the University of Saint Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois – “The Holy Spirit and Salvation.”

**The Rev. Dr. Derek Nelson** of Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana – “The Holy Spirit and the Stuff of Life.”

Following each lecture, those in attendance were able to submit questions for the lecturer. A panel from the NALC’s young theologians group asked the questions.

Video recordings of the lectures will be available on the Lutheran Week website: [lutheranweek.com](http://lutheranweek.com).

Like previous Braaten-Benne Lectures, the 2019 lectures will be published in a book available from the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau at [alpb.org](http://alpb.org).



*Speakers for the Braaten-Benne Lectures took part in a forum where they asked questions of each other. Pictured are, from left, Dr. Robert Benne, the Rev. Dr. Paul Hinlicky, the Rev. Dr. Craig Keener, the Rev. Dr. Nathan Yoder, the Rev. Dr. Derek Nelson and Dr. Matthew Levering.*



*Dr. Robert Benne delivers his lecture at the annual lecture series named in honor of him and the Rev. Dr. Carl Braaten.*

# HEIDI PUNT COMMISSIONED AS NALC GLOBAL WORKER IN HAITI

The Rev. Heidi Punt, pastor of Christ United Lutheran Church in Granite Falls, North Carolina, was commissioned as an NALC Global Worker for service in Haiti during the 2019 NALC Convocation in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Pastor Punt has received a call to serve as an NALC Global Worker through Sundouloi Ministries (SMI Haiti). She will continue to serve on the congregational level in the United States.

She offers the following reflections on her call to this mission work:

*Mission on the local, national and international level has always been central to my call as pastor. The Great Commission – to go into all the world, teach and baptize (Matthew 28) – is not just theoretical or theological to me. It is where the rubber hits the road! It is where discipleship and biblical authority becomes tangible and real!*

*This passion for mission began way back in my teenage years, when God made it abundantly clear that despite all my misguided choices and hurtful events, He loved me. From the moment when His forgiveness and love washed my soul and soothed my whole being, I knew that even if I did nothing else in my life, I had to let people know that they were loved by Jesus Christ. It wasn't so much a conscious choice as it was a "compelling of the Spirit" (Acts 20:22). There was a fire ignited within me! I didn't know how or where or what to do with this but ultimately it turns out I didn't need to have all those details figured out because God already "knew the plans He had for me" (Jeremiah 29:11).*

*In seminary I majored in missiology, equipping myself with all the "head knowledge" on how to do mission work (start churches and help revitalize and grow existing*



**The Rev. Heidi Punt is commissioned as an NALC Global Worker to Haiti during the 2019 NALC Convocation. Taking part in the prayers are, from left, the Rev. John Bradosky, bishop of the NALC; the Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, assistant to the bishop for missions; the Rev. Dieter Punt, Heidi's husband; and Kit Brunson, treasurer of SMI Haiti.**

*congregations). Every call and every congregation served to prepare, empower and equip me to serve Christ more faithfully and love His people more deeply. Aligning myself with the NALC Core Value to be Mission Driven, was another one of those sparks added to my "fire."*

*However, throughout the last 16 years, or so, it seems that I became too busy with "doing church" that I forgot why I was called to ministry in the first place, namely that I had to let people know that they were loved by Jesus Christ.*

**Continued on Page 20**

*I could go into a deep exegesis of what this love means but, in short, it is summed up by Jesus Himself, where there is light, there is no darkness (1 John 1:5). Feeding the hungry and clothing the naked (Matthew 25:35-40) — being the heads, hearts and hands of Christ from within our congregations for the sake of others is what “love” really means.*

*The trip to Haiti, this past year, reminded me of what my call as pastor was really all about. As I looked into the eyes of the little children and felt their hands linger in mine, as I heard the resounding singing of the young women and the powerful prayers of the older ladies, things became simple and uncomplicated to me.*



**Pastor Heidi Punt working with children in Haiti**

*Here were people, God’s people — whom He loved, who had never heard that there was such a God who forgives, a God who gave His only Son to die for them so they might have eternal life (John 3:16). Many people in Haiti have never heard this, not because they choose not to go to church, but because they literally do not have the*

*opportunity to hear God’s Word preached and proclaimed or the Sacrament shared and given.*

*This call came as no surprise to anyone in my family. Dieter always knew that I was called to mission work even joking that he would hold the fort down while I went “gallivanting around the world ... making disciples of all nations.” Even my two younger children seemed not to be surprised when I shared my recent call to Haiti. I thank God that He had them come with us on the last mission trip and had them actually witness God’s call to me. They understand that this is more than just short-term ministry and that this is more than just “helping others” — it is bigger and totally governed by God.*

*In the NALC, we say that we are Mission Driven. We believe that the mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel and to make disciples for Christ. God had me meet real people with actual breath in their lungs, who do not know that they are loved by God because someone didn’t take the Great Commission literally. We ask that you would continue to lift this up in prayer. And I invite you to prayerfully consider where God is calling you to serve, to take the Great Commission literally.*



**Pastor Heidi Punt prays with others in Haiti**

**Sundouloi Ministries (SMI Haiti) is a Ministry Partner of the NALC. For more information on their work, please visit [SMIHaiti.org](http://SMIHaiti.org). To partner in ministry with Pastor Punt, visit [thenalc.org/partners/pastor-heidi-punt](http://thenalc.org/partners/pastor-heidi-punt).**