

# The EVANGEL

35th Anniversary Edition





# From the Editor

Happy 35th Anniversary! This issue celebrates 35 years of *The Evangel* pages in the hands of The AALC readers. For the history and highlights, I point you to both Dr. Leins' and Dr. Lindberg's articles, and thank them for these contributions.

Recently Dr. Lindberg shared with me the purpose of *The Evangel* was to "encourage 'kononia' among congregations and pastors." He wrote that this "fellowship" happens in these ways:

- To show Jesus to the readers!
- To inform the church body of actions by The AALC leadership
- To provide inspiration through the Word, prayer, and counsel from the leadership for the living of the Christian life
- To share special events from churches, such as church dedications and clergy ordinations
- To address issues in secular culture on the basis of Scripture and Lutheran Confessions
- To address reader questions on Biblical, theological, and historical matters

It's amazing to think how God has used these pages to bless the church body since 1987!

Perhaps as you read through that list you are reminded of a topic that you have questions about or a topic that you would like to write about? Please know you are welcome to contribute either questions or an article. I am very grateful for each person who has written articles in my short time as editor thus far.

On another note: after 11 years of dedicated service to The AALC, Lynette Macias has stepped down as the Graphic Designer for *The Evangel* to pursue other interests. We wish to thank Lynette for her service to our church body!

While plans are being finalized going forward, we welcome and thank Karen Young for her work on this issue.

Thank you,


*Gretchen Baker*

Gretchen Baker  
The Editor

2	From the Editor
3	Presiding Pastor
5	Workers Retreat
6	Storybook of The AALC
9	The Evangel Timeline
10	Return on Investment
11	New Beginnings
11-12	Prayer Bookmark
13	Encouraging Women
14	Clergy Roster
15	Ordinations & Installations

Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version®, copyright ©2007 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Editor: Gretchen Baker  
Layout & Design: Karen Young



Ephesians 4:3

# Be Diligent to Preserve THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE

By *The Rev. Dr. Curtis E. Leins*

Why does The American Association of Lutheran Churches experience such a sense of community and camaraderie? There are several factors that work against us, you know. We are a small church body, stretched across the great expanse of North America. We only get together every two years for National Convention and only once a year for our Clergy Conference. So, how is it that our relationships continue to be strong and our affections and commitment to one another remain genuine and sincere?

There are a number of elements that contribute to our unity. First, there are the four ingredients that led to the formation of The AALC. They are listed in Dr. Lindberg's book, *To Tell The Truth*:

Therefore, the initial rationale for forming The AALC focused on four areas under the Lordship of Jesus Christ:

1. The Inerrancy of Scripture
2. The Truth of Lutheran Confessions
3. The Authority of the Local Congregation
4. The Primacy of Evangelism and World Missions<sup>1</sup>

These four areas not only describe why it is that we first joined

together, but why it is that we continue to stand united. First, we are unashamedly and absolutely committed to the authority of God's Word in our lives. As The AALC Constitution declares, we gladly accept, "[A]ll the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as a whole and in all their parts as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life." Our culture and our world appear to be moving further and further away from adherence to Christian values and biblical truth, but The AALC is ever more committed to the inerrancy and inspiration of Holy Scripture.

Second, there are a number of Christian groups that would agree that God's Word is inerrant. But they would differ with The AALC regarding the interpretation of the Holy Bible, especially concerning the chief article of the faith: justification by grace through faith.

From our inception, The AALC has confessed the ancient ecumenical Creeds, the unaltered Augsburg Confession, and Luther's Small Catechism as brief and true statements of biblical doctrine. Subscription to them is required of all of its members, both congregations and individuals.

In addition, we have accepted the *Book of Concord* as normative for our theology. We give subscription to these symbolic books of the Lutheran Church because they are the right exposition and explanation of the pure doctrine of the Word of God. Our



## Be Diligent to Preserve continued...

positions on Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions serve to set us apart from others and gather us together in unity and faith.

The third foundational element of The AALC is our commitment to the authority of the local congregation. Our churches have the same faith, but we express it in a variety of ways. AALC congregations have different styles of worship, different local traditions, and different emphases in community service, outreach, and missions.

We have unity without enforced uniformity. For example, our congregations use at least six different hymnals. Some of our pastors and churches have liturgical services, some have blended services, and some have contemporary services. We like our diversity and individuality. These things do not weaken our church body, but strengthen and broaden our fellowship.

Fourth and finally, we are committed to the primary importance of evangelism and missions. We take Christ's Great Commission seriously. Each congregation is aware of the Lord's command to, "Go therefore into all the world and make disciples." Similarly, each individual member recognizes God's divine call to share the life-giving message of the love of Jesus Christ.

Frankly, many of you reading this article already knew these four foundational areas that served to form and unite our church body. But there is one more uniting factor that has served to gather, strengthen, and unify The AALC. I'll bet that it did not quickly come to mind. It is *The Evangel* that you are reading right now!

This little magazine has helped us and blessed us over the years in more ways than we can count. Through this publication we have seen pictures of each other in times of great celebration and in moments of deep sorrow. We have learned about a pastor's new Call, a congregation's new building, the sickness of a friend, and the death of a saint. We have read articles about our Youth Ministry in Estes Park where AALC young adults have gathered by the hundreds. We have learned about the faithful service and outreach of our Women of L.I.F.E., creating quilts and sending gifts to the needy in this country and around the world. We have been inspired by extraordinary mission trips, generous gifts, and faithful service offered to God by individuals and congregations who are our brothers and sisters in the faith. We have watched the seminary grow and change over the years, seeing our congregational sons and daughters become the pastors, deaconesses, and commissioned church workers who serve Christ and our church body. *The Evangel* has provided us with theological education, biblical explanation, and spiritual inspiration. Sometimes, you find the picture of a friend in this magazine. Sometimes, you even find your own picture or article.



*The Word of God tells us to be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We are grateful for the gift of unity that we have with one another.*

The Word of God tells us to be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We are grateful for the gift of unity that we have with one another. Today, we are mindful that one important ingredient in the bond that we share is *The Evangel*. We thank Gretchen, our Editor, and Lynette, who does layout and design. Thank you for serving and preserving The AALC. We are grateful to you, and to all of the editors and designers who have provided *The Evangel* over the years. Most especially, we are grateful to God for the Unity of the Spirit and the Bond of Peace that He has given to us as brothers and sisters of The American Association of Lutheran Churches! †

*The Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins has served as the Presiding Pastor of The AALC.*

[1] Duane R. Lindberg, *To Tell The Truth*. (Fort Wayne, IN: The AALC, 2014), p.31.

# PASTORS & CHURCH WORKERS RETREAT

By Rev. Joseph Marsh

Imagine going to a church event that is absolutely free. There are hundreds of workshops and seminars on every imaginable topic. It is hosted in a warm climate in February. You are deluged with food every time you turn around (at no cost). Best of all, you run into old friends you haven't seen in years. There are lively worship events, nationally known main speakers, and did I mention it's free? Well, I went to that event twice, and I enjoyed every minute of it!

---

The main message of the event, which is also the main theme every year, is: "You Are Not Alone."

Several years ago, before COVID, I was invited to attend a workshop experience with some church workers from an LCMS congregation (and my music director daughter). The event was held in Phoenix, AZ, and called "Best Practices Ministry Conference." I wasn't sure what to expect, but the price was right.

This event lasted for several days and was held at a large Lutheran church and day school. Because it is in Arizona, and not Minnesota, the buildings are not all connected by long hallways. In fact, in many ways it reminded me of a college campus.

The first thing that impressed me was how well organized it was. From transportation to and from the motels, to the meals, the number of volunteers, the clear communications – it all ran smoothly and efficiently. Information about all of the events was communicated through an app on your phone (You know, that thing your kids and grandkids always have in front of their noses).

The next thing that I found pretty amazing was the number of people attending. There were over two thousand people coming and going from one event to another or just milling around and talking. With all the smiles and cordiality, it seemed like all the participants and volunteers were on their best Sunday behavior. I even ran into a man and his wife who had traveled all the way from North Carolina just to be volunteer helpers.

In addition to all the sessions, there were dozens of booths set up to share their ministry with us. Of course, Concordia Publishing House, many of the Lutheran colleges, and quite a few groups I had never heard of were there every day.

What was so heartwarming was to see so many people involved in ministry from all over the nation. God has blessed His Church with people who know how to love and care for each other.

The organizers of the event skipped a year because of COVID, but started it up again this last February. For me, it was the right moment and the right message. I was feeling pretty

drained and down from life in general. I know, I know, how can a pastor who preaches about trusting the Lord in all things get down? Believe me it happens, maybe more than many church workers will admit. Church workers are just human beings with all the faults and foibles of everyone else. Discouragement and burnout are common ailments that all church workers deal with from time to time.

I went to several sessions on various topics and attended several of the main speaker sessions.

One of the most helpful speakers was a woman who was a psychologist and also an administrator of a large grade school. I knew that COVID had negatively affected a lot of people and disrupted a lot of "normal" life. What I wasn't aware of is how much it had affected school age children. She explained that children only hear part of the story of what was going on during the pandemic. So, as children do, and also adults, they mentally filled in the blanks and in the process, produced worst case scenarios in their minds. Many children were confused and afraid, because they knew something big was going on but only had a small part of the story.

Sometimes in my small church and small frame of reference, it's easy to forget that other church workers all over the world experience the same disappointments as well as victories that I daily experience. When I left this year's event, I had a whole different attitude and excitement about ministry. It was a "God-send" for me. Even though it came right before Lent, I'm so thankful that I was able to attend.

Perhaps your congregation should consider sending all or some of your church workers next year. It's worth the travel and hotel expense and also the time commitment.

If you want to know more about this event, go to their website: <https://cclphoenix.org/bpm>. All you have to do is get there by plane, train or hitchhiking, find a place to park your suitcase, and enjoy the ride. And did I mention it's free? †

*The Rev. Joseph Marsh serves Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church, South St. Paul, MN.*





# THE EVANGEL

## STORYBOOK OF THE AALC

By the Rev. Dr. Duane Lindberg

*The Evangel* is our “storybook.” It contains the storyline of our church body in terms of the true and living faith in Jesus Christ, and the results of this faith in the lives of congregations, church leaders, and individual members.

It is the story of that segment of God’s people who gather under the banner of The AALC. The way this story has been told is a reflection of the personalities and gifts which the Lord has given and the expressions and insights which He has inspired by the Holy Spirit through His inerrant, infallible Word.

The story of *The Evangel*, then, is the account of the people who put it together and those who provided the places where it happened. So, the story of *The Evangel* is the story of the people and places which God brought together at a Kairos moment in our Church’s history... That moment was June 1987—the place was a room above the Will Drews TV Sales and Service store in Waterloo, Iowa. This place on W. 5th St. was also the first office of The AALC. Mr. Drews was the generous landlord who had taken a strong stand on the truth and dependability of Scripture in his own congregation: Trinity Lutheran Church, Waterloo.





So, the founder and first editor of *The Evangel* was a farm boy from Minnesota who had tried to run away from the Lord's Call to the ministry for eight years.



This donated space was accessed by an outside stair attached to the building. In stormy weather, this precarious stairway was a reminder that one could not reach *The Evangel*/AALC office nor Heaven, except by the grace of God.

In this donated, second-story space, Sandra Shippy, our first National Office Secretary, managed the telephone and postal communications of The AALC, and typed *The Evangel* and the Presiding Pastor's letters. This office could be described as "Spartan" in its furnishings: two steel chairs, one kitchen table, a dial telephone, and a mimeograph machine.

The first issues of *The Evangel* reflected the immediate concerns of the volunteer editor – Rev. Dr. Duane R. Lindberg – the Presiding Pastor of The AALC. He had been the leader of a predecessor organization to The AALC: the Committee for Lutheran Cooperation (CLC). This group had been organized for the specific purpose of encouraging the ALC (American Lutheran Church) to remain out of the merger which eventually formed the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).

So, the CLC became the catalyst for the formation of The AALC when the effort to halt the merger failed. The CLC coordinated the efforts to organize The AALC and *The Evangel* in 1987. This "in-house periodical" quickly became instrumental in launching the Church Body. Its pages reflected the immediate concerns of its editor: "Introducing The AALC" and "Clergy Credentials Committee Schedules Interviews with Pastor Applicants."

So, the founder and first editor of *The Evangel* was a farm boy from Minnesota who had tried to run away from the Lord's Call to the ministry for eight years. He attempted an escape into the field of chemistry and into the world of corporate industry (DuPont). But the "Hound of Heaven" was unrelenting, and eventually the Lord had his way with Duane Lindberg.

He who had been ashamed of the Gospel was forgiven and given the courage to resist the temptation of Higher Criticism and the false teachings of neo-Lutheranism. He took his stand on the full inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility of the Bible and employed

the pages of *The Evangel* to encourage this historic commitment of the Lutheran Church as spelled out in the Minneapolis Thesis and in the Constitution of the ALC. This was the conviction which produced *Evangel* articles like:

- "Statement on the Doctrine of the Word."
- "Basic Principles of The AALC Constitution"
- "A declaration of faith and intention... Of biblical and evangelical Lutherans..."

However, after a year, it was apparent to the Presiding Pastor and the Executive Committee that *The Evangel* needed an editor who could devote more time to its pages. Our prayers were answered from an unlikely place -- Washington, DC! Dr. Christopher Barnekov as a member of an LCA congregation in the East, had questioned the liberal direction of the merger. When he learned of The AALC, he not only offered his talents as a writer and editor, but also offered to move from the DC "swamp" to Waterloo and buy a house to serve both as a residence and The AALC/*Evangel* office.

After making appropriate inquiry, the Executive Committee accepted Dr. Barnekov's offer. As a Washington bureaucrat, world traveler, and descendent of Swedish nobility, Dr. Barnekov brought a unique perspective to his role as *Evangel* editor. His world-savvy perspective on church and religious issues is evident in the titles of *Evangel* articles which he wrote, such as:

- "US House (of Representatives) votes to block EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) plan for Assault on Religious Freedom"
- "Washington State rejects two anti-life ballot initiatives"
- "ELCA advocates euthanasia before US Supreme Court"

Thus, during Dr. Barnekov's editorship, *The Evangel* stimulated interest in church/state matters as well as evangelism and world missions. This breadth of biblical/theological interest in the worldwide church and society was a harbinger of *The Evangel's*

## Story Book continued...

move in 1994 from the Regional Office in Waterloo, Iowa, to The AALC's National Headquarters Office in Minneapolis.

This partial sketch of the *Evangel*'s beginnings is a testimony to the grace and creative power of the Lord God who is able to take the "nothings" of this world and make something out of nothing for His glory and the building up of His body – the Church.

The third *Evangel* editor, served from 1995 to 2005. Rev. Charles Eidum brought to the task the perspective of a parish pastor and world missionary. He was a seminary classmate of the Presiding Pastor and after serving a parish in Minnesota, answered the Lord's Call to the ALC mission field in Brazil. He and his wife, Edna, and their family served in the Parana Province for ca. 25 years under the auspices of the American Lutheran Church World Mission Department.

Pastor Eidem's passion for world missions was evident in his editorials and articles in the *Evangel* such as:

- "Praying through the 10/40 Window"
- "Reports from AALC Missionaries in Madagascar –the Lellelids and Walters"
- "First Hispanic bilingual church in The AALC"

Rev. Eidem also served as the AALC's World Mission Commission Chairman and as the Administrative Assistant to two Presiding Pastors: Dr. Lindberg and Dr. Aadland. In his office as *Evangel* Editor, he encouraged The AALC's outreach to sister Lutheran churches in other countries: Brazil, Madagascar, China, India, Mexico, and Canada. His 10-year tenure as the *Evangel* editor is the record for years of service among the nine who served in this capacity.

Rev. Greg Gerendas, Assistant to Presiding Pastor, Rev. Thomas Aadland, was *Evangel* editor during the transition of The AALC's National Headquarters and *The Evangel* office from Minneapolis to the Concordia Seminary campus, Fort Wayne, Indiana in 2006 – 2007. He introduced a new format with vivid color in the January/February 2006 issue of *The Evangel*.

A new editor, Rev. Fred W. Balke, received the *Evangel* reins in 2007. During his time as editor (2007 – 2009), the pages of *The Evangel* introduced readers to the fascinating storyline of each congregation in the denomination. Also, he invited letters to the editor. Pastor Balke's first issue (#137) published in September/October 2007 introduced a new AALC logo.



In 2010, another farm boy from Minnesota became the head storyteller on the *Evangel* staff. Rev. Richard Shields served concurrently as Seminary President and *Evangel* editor. He kept the church posted on the personalities (faculty and students), progress of the Seminary, as well as the prayer needs of ALTS. Also, his commitment to world missions was evident in articles like: "The Harvest is Plentiful" and his Bible teaching skills were revealed in articles like, "Under the Law – In the Gospel".

Rev. Philip Hofinga, gifted in linguistics and theology, received the mantle as *Evangel* editor in 2013. He introduced the August/October 2013 issue with an invitation: "All AALC members are encouraged to share their stories through the *Evangel*" –i.e. "all God is doing in our midst." He called attention to Hebrews 10:24: "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works."

In 2015, the prevailing male presence in the line of *Evangel* editors was complemented by the skills of a gifted woman, namely, Lisa Cooper. Her theological acumen had been sharpened in her studies at ALTS. Under her direction, articles like: "Making a case for Faith," "Just and Sinner," or "Pastor as Teacher of the Confessions" became grist for *Evangel* readers.

When Lisa retired, a talented farm girl from Minnesota was chosen for the office of *Evangel* editor in 2021. Gretchen Baker's perspective as an English major, bank employee, pastor's wife, and mother of a teenager helps stimulate *Evangel* readers' hearts and palates with her down-to-earth editorials. As editor, Mrs. Baker's emphasis is on communicating The AALC Story from individual members, congregations, regions, and the National leadership.

We would be remiss if we did not express, on behalf of our Church Body, a special thanks to our National Office Secretaries for their faithful help: typing copy, proofreading, and follow-up



# TIMELINE

on details getting *The Evangel* to the doors of our AALC family. The names of these gifted, gracious sisters in the faith are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Revelation 21:27), but they also deserve prominent mention and special thanks in this "Storybook" they helped write. These sisters in the faith include Sandra Shippy, Gloria Conrad, Eleanor Minor, and our current indispensable National Office Secretary, Bonnie Ohlrich.

The editors have reminded us that without the faithful, skilled work of Lynette Badenhop Macias – the layout and design specialist – "*The Evangel* would not have maintained the quality nor the creative success which it has had."

*The third Evangel editor, served from 1995 to 2005. Rev. Charles Eidum brought to the task the perspective of a parish pastor and world missionary.*

## Concluding postscript:

The name of our AALC's periodical, "*The Evangel*," was inspired by one of the key Bible verses which was lifted up as The AALC was being formed, namely, Romans 1:16: "I am not ashamed of the GOSPEL, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes."

This bold testimony to the Gospel –the Good News of Jesus Christ –was central in the formation of The American Association of Lutheran Churches. Therefore, since the word for "gospel" in the Greek text is "euangelion," which in Latin is rendered "evangelium," and in English is, "evangel," it seemed appropriate that The AALC's periodical should be entitled "*The Evangel*." †

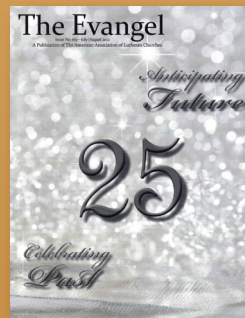
SOLI DEO GLORIA!

*The Rev. Dr. Duane Lindberg is Presiding Pastor, Emeritus, of The American Association of Lutheran Churches.*



2021

A look back at *The Evangel* through the years.



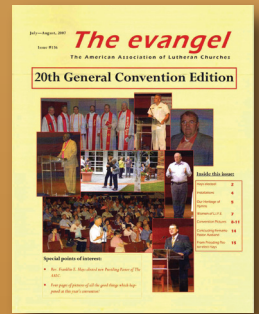
2012



2017



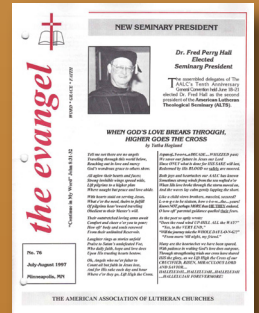
2002



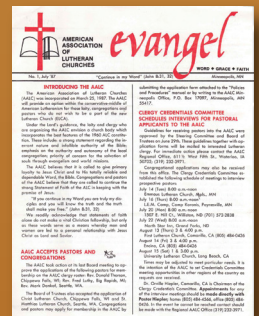
2007



1992



1997



1987

# St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Napoleon Township Foundation: Return on Investment

On Sunday, March 27, 2022, the Foundation hosted an appreciation dinner for congregational members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Napoleon Township, Napoleon, OH, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Foundation. The dinner, provided by St. Paul's Women of L.I.F.E., was a thank you to the congregation for supporting the Foundation these past 20 years with their prayers and gifts.

The responsibility of the Foundation board is to invest the gifts received to obtain the highest "return on investment" at the lowest investment risk. The income earned on investments by the Foundation provides the funds to fulfill the mission of the Foundation.

The Foundation has focused its mission in providing seminary students support from income earned on the gifts received. In the past 20 years, the Foundation has provided financial support to ten men in their studies towards ordination and one woman in her studies towards deaconess.

Pastors Dan Dapelo, Mike Badenhop, Joe Dapelo, and Dean Stoner provided video presentations. These men performed their ministerial field work and/or vicarage

at St. Paul's during their residential studies at Concordia Theological Seminary - Fort Wayne, Indiana, or on-line classes through American Lutheran Theological Seminary. The videos detailed where the Lord has led them and their families since their ordination.

After ordination, they have gone out within The American Association of Lutheran Churches shepherding congregations and holding positions within the National Office and on various Commissions of The AALC. Rev. Dan Dapelo is currently serving as pastor here at St. Paul's.

Their actions, after ordination, demonstrates the "return on investment" St. Paul's, The AALC, and congregations within The AALC have received from the investment in them by the Foundation during their time of studies.

Pastor Mike Badenhop summed up the overall message these men provided in their presentations in stating, "What you are doing at the Foundation is investing in the future of the church, by investing in future pastors of the church. God uses the work that you (Foundation) do and the support you give, to build up His church now and for generations to come." †



Left: Women of LIFE pic: The Women of L.I.F.E. who prepared the meal for the dinner (left to right): Donna Drewes, Susanne Tilse, Marsha Drewes, Bonnie Eggers, Jane Gerken, Marilyn Schueler, Lois Wachtmann, Norm Wachtmann

Right: Foundation Board pic: 9 of the 15 Board Members who have served the Foundation since its creation: (front row) Norm Wachtmann, Marilyn Freytag, Henry Wachtman, Donna Drewes, (back row) Norbert Sonnenberg, Ed Wachtman, Ken Meyer, Jim Daman, Carey Lange. Board Board Members not pictured: Mike Adams, Paul Warncke, and Anne Rethmel, plus two who have entered the Church Triumphant: Norm Drewes and Leroy Wiemken.





July 2022

PRAYER BOOKMARK

# New Beginnings on a Proven Foundation

by *The Rev. Dr. Robert C. Stroud*



*The Rev. Dr. Robert C. Stroud served as an Air Force chaplain before his retirement.*

I was a child of the American Lutheran Church (ALC). And, as I was growing up, I was proud of that fact. Not proud in a sinful way – thinking I was better than other Christians. But pleased in the sense that I was confident I was a member of a denomination that stood in the lineage of the one, holy Christian and apostolic church.

I was confident the Gospel preached in the American Lutheran Church was the same Gospel proclaimed for nearly two millennia.

I knew other Christians were faithful to God, as well. I understood the Lutheran doctrine which warns us never to confuse the visible church with the actual Body of Christ. Still, I was secure in believing the ALC, being grounded on the trustworthiness and infallibility of God’s written Word, would remain faithful to our calling to “make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19).

Little did I suspect that one day an ill-fated denominational merger would betray that childlike trust.

My pilgrimage will differ from your own, but don’t be surprised if you notice some parallels. I share it now, as a Lutheran Church Missouri Synod pastor, to commend members of The American Association of Lutheran Churches family for your faithfulness to this day.

My mother was a devout Christian woman who knew the Lutheran church was based on the Bible. She, like you, believed in the principles of sola fide, sola gratia and solus Christus. She also understood that the proclamation of all of these glorious truths is securely established on the solid foundation of sola Scriptura.

This is why I, as an ALC pastor, was deeply troubled when the Commission for a New Lutheran Church (which ushered in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) took hammer and chisel to sola Scriptura. The ALC constitution declared the Scriptures the “only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life.” The proto-ELCA would have none of that. As a delegate to the 1984 Convention, I witnessed how modern Sadducees skillfully aborted a spontaneous, Holy-Spirit-inspired move to include an affirmation to Scripture’s authority. It was politically impressive, but theologically reprehensible.

continued on page 12

1. Sonland Lutheran Church  
*Casa Grande, AZ*
2. Churches w/o pastors
3. Rev. Benjamin Baker
4. Commission for Commissioned  
Church Workers
5. Future Needs of ALTS
6. Rev. Joseph Adama
7. Shepherd of the Mountains Lutheran  
Church, *Frazier Park, CA*
8. St. Peter’s Lutheran Church  
*Elk Grove, CA*
9. Rev. Tim M. Cartwright
10. West Great Lakes Region
11. Rev. Steve Smeback
12. All affected by Covid-19
13. Newly elected Presiding  
Pastor of The AALC
14. Board of Directors of TAALC Foundation
15. Rev. Steve Lundblom
16. The AALC Ministerium
17. Regional Chairmen
18. Rev. Scott W. Bieker
19. Pilot Knob Lutheran Church,  
*Forest City, IA*
20. Dr. Dan Kruger, Treasurer of The AALC
21. Rev. Steven Klawonn
22. Ailing pastors
23. For our schools
24. Rev. Scott Strohkirch
25. New congregations
26. Prince of Peace Lutheran Church  
*Evansdale, IA*
27. Rev. Ryan Dexter
28. Persecuted Church
29. Rev. Gary DeSha
30. The Sending Place
31. Unity in the Church



# August 2022

## PRAYER BOOKMARK

1. Rev. Abraham McNally
2. World Mission Commission
3. St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Augusta, KY
4. Rev. William P. Moberly
5. AALC leadership
6. Trinity Lutheran Church, San Pedro, CA
7. St. Timothy Lutheran Church  
Charlston, WV
8. Board of Appeals and Adjudication
9. Clam Falls Lutheran Church, Frederic WI
10. Rev. Roger Twito
11. Board of Trustees
12. Christus Victor Ev. Lutheran Church  
Fayetteville, NC
13. Rev. Richard Sunderlage
14. Call Committees
15. Pensions Commission
16. Rev. Alexander McNally
17. Standing Committee for Men
18. Christ the King Lutheran Church  
Chesterfield, MI
19. Rev. Darrel Deuel
20. Seminarians
21. Christ the Ray of Hope Lutheran Church  
Albuquerque, NM
22. Rev. Dave Spotts
23. Publications Commission
24. Rev. John Hallock
25. Community Lutheran Church  
Wausaukee, WI
26. Rev. Jerry Storrs
27. Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry
28. Rev. Paul J. Johansen
29. Pastors & Church workers
30. Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
Bremerton, WA
31. Rev. Scott Yount

## New Beginnings continued...



*The Rev. Dr. Robert C. Stroud now serves Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Bremerton, WA.*

### The Birth of The AALC

As a result of the repudiation of a core Reformation principle, a number of wary congregations sought safer harbors. The ELCA unmoored the church from its historic faith, ensuring the new denomination would be “tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes” (Ephesians 4:14).

We who loved biblically faithful saints of the ALC, Lutheran Church in America, and Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, still mourn the betrayal of their trust.

Prior to the formation of the ELCA, I had been called by the ALC to serve on active duty as an Air Force chaplain. In that capacity, with the full support of excellent “endorsers” who oversee the chaplains of their individual churches, I was able to continue ministering without pressure to compromise my integrity in the slightest.

Nevertheless, our awareness that the ELCA was no longer home became stronger each year, and when our children left home for college, my wife Delores and I encouraged each of them to find a confessional Lutheran congregation to attend.

Anticipating my eventual retirement from the chaplaincy, I entered the colloquy process to transfer to the ministerium of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. Despite the imperfections of every organization comprised of fallen human beings, I have never regretted that decision for a moment.

### Celebrating Biblical Faithfulness

Although several of my friends were part of The AALC’s foundation, I had never conceived of ministering as pastor of an AALC congregation. However, God has graciously blessed our two bodies with the gift of warm altar and pulpit fellowship. And, because of that cherished relationship, I am able to serve as Vacancy Pastor of Emmanuel Lutheran Church.

As I embark on this exciting new adventure, I recognize that in one significant sense, there is nothing “new” about it at all. I am joining in personal ministry with my sisters and brothers who have remained faithful to our Lord and his call to proclaim the Gospel “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 13:47).

With many of you, I continue to pray for the members of the ELCA, but oh what a joy it is to be part of a church that has not undermined its relationship with its Lord by doubting his written Word. What a wonderful joy – and what a blessed peace. †

*The Rev. Dr. Robert C. Stroud serves Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Bremerton, WA. He is a retired USAF chaplain and on the clergy roster of the LCMS.*





# Encouraging Women in Weekly Church Attendance

By Rev. Dr. Cary Larson

I have not seen any comprehensive research on the topic just yet, however, I'm hearing allegorical evidence that the COVID pandemic has had various effects on Christian congregations in the United States. One consequence is that it seems that the pandemic "compressed time." If something was following a particular trajectory, the pandemic served as a catalyst to make it happen sooner. For example, if a pastor was contemplating retirement in 2025, the pandemic moved that retirement to 2021, or if a congregation was struggling with financial hardship, especially in the eastern or western parts of the country, that congregation might have made the difficult decision to close its doors. With this concern, I am monitoring worship attendance in our congregations.

While I was doing my research on my doctorate dissertation concerning evangelizing men, one disconcerting trend was brought to my attention: the rapid and steep decline in the participation of women in weekly worship since 2012. In fact, according to Barna—an organization that tracks the demographics of American religiosity— "the data indicates that women are no more likely to be actively churching in 2020 than men."<sup>1</sup>

The weekly worship attendance of women was consistent at the turn of the century and then plunged from 46% in 2012 to 29% by 2020. Another interesting picture came into view when Barna teased the numbers apart and divided women into two groups: women under 35 years and 35 years and older. Women in the 35 and older group decline from 49% in 2012 to 32% by 2020. This was a steeper decline than their younger sisters (38% in 2012 to 25% by 2020). While the difference is only 4%, this translates into thousands of women.<sup>2</sup>

Another Barna study titled "Christians at Work"<sup>3</sup> indicates that women believe that their individual talents and gifts are not valued in the church compared to the workplace. There is also the realization that despite the feminist's call, women cannot "have it all." Our American society's expectation of women to do it all is suffocating. Women are just as busy as men in the professional sphere, but according to statistics, raising children is still seen as "women's work." Even in the matters of children's faith development, mothers play a more active role than the fathers, despite the mandate of Scripture instructing fathers to be the spiritual head of the house.

At the end of the day, if women feel that they are underwater due to the demands of this 21st-century life, something has got to give, and it seems the easiest thing to put aside "until things slow down" is weekly worship.

There is no shortage of other theories about why women's worship attendance has declined from 2012 to 2020. Additionally, we don't have any reliable data on the effects of the pandemic, specifically on women's weekly worship attendance. So where do we go?

I wish I could provide a flawless seven-step program to address the challenge of the declining worship habits of women. I can't. But I know we can go to God's Word for perfect guidance.

- First, all American Association of Lutherans members need to be in prayer: "...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Phil 4:6).
- Second, we need to rely steadfastly on Christ Jesus' promise: "...And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock [the confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God] I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt 16:18).
- Third, the men of the church need to step up and joyfully perform their duty as the spiritual head of the family and catechize their children (grandfathers can offer assistance, too): "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." (Eph 4:6).

With these three significant responses founded in the inerrant and infallible Word of God, we can apply the godly wisdom and gifts of the Holy Spirit that equip us in the places we worship and live to address the attrition of women in our weekly worship. We also need to be intentional in encouraging all women of The AALC that they are valued members of the "priesthood of all believers," equipped by God's Word and the Holy Spirit to serve God in their vocations. †

*The Rev. Dr. Cary Larson has served as Assistant Presiding Pastor of The American Association of Lutheran Churches.*

[1] Rayan Burge, Barna Group. "Behind the Steep Decline in Church Attendance Among Women" 2011. Accessed May 1, 2022. <https://www.barna.com/changes-behind-the-scenes/>

[2] Barna Group, "The State of Your Church," Barna Group, 2022.

[3] Barna Group, "Christians at Work," Barna Group, 2018.



# Clergy Roster



*Rev. Tylan Dalrymple with his family: wife Amanda, children Matthias, Brin, and Sven. Photo by Hannah Thalacker*

## Rev. Tylan Dalrymple serves Wisconsin church

My name is Rev. Tylan Dalrymple. I am pastor at Christ Lutheran Church (AALC) in Chetek, Wisconsin, and St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS) in Cameron, Wisconsin. I became a rostered pastor in The AALC back in 2019. It is a great privilege and joy to serve Christ's church. A sincere sense of being "loved" is how I would describe joining my brothers and sisters in The AALC.

My life is so full of undeserved blessings that I'm almost afraid to write them down given the inestimable debt of gratitude I owe to our Lord and Savior Jesus. Therefore, I will not start from the beginning. I will begin with my call to ministry.

I never imagined being a pastor or having a family in my childhood. My goal was to become a professional wrestler. I now have a beautiful wife named Amanda. We have three children: Matthias is fourteen, Brin eleven, and our youngest Sven is six. My wife and I were both full-time public school teachers before we had our first child. Amanda was one of those teachers who poured all her heart and all her time into teaching. I worked an hour away from home and she worked about five minutes from home. I beat her home from work every night. Yet, as soon as Matthias was born, my wife and I decided her most important role was being a mother. We opened an in-home daycare and started milking goats to supplement the single income we would live on. When Matthias hit school age, we decided that homeschooling was the direction we would take for our family. This was a decision more to arm than protect our most valuable gifts from God. Looking back, ten years later, it was one of the best decisions we have made. I credit my wife's discernment in this matter. A good wife is truly a treasure.

I continued to teach school until 2010, when I finally finished seminary after several years of constant study both in person during the summer and online where possible. This is all rather

ironic since I planned on becoming a professional wrestler traveling around our nation week to week when I first graduated from High School. Growing up I had little-to-no knowledge of the Bible until I read it when I was about seventeen. Even then, I remember reading the book of "job" rather than the book of "Job." This too is strange given I do my daily reading in Koine Greek simply because it holds my attention better than reading in English. I trust our Lord knows me far better than I know myself.

On a personal note, I enjoy authors like G.K. Chesterton, C.S. Lewis, and J.R.R. Tolkien. Yet, I am a very slow reader when it comes to novels. I read history, philosophy, and theology much faster. My son doesn't appreciate waiting for me to finish a good story because he ends up waiting a long time for his turn with a book.

I also enjoy hunting. I like eating meat even more! We do all our own butchering on our little hobby farm. Each year consists of a few deer, a couple pigs, and about thirty chickens. Everyone in the family (including our youngest Sven) has to get their hands dirty because that's the real price of enjoying good meat. My wife has become a master with the smoker so we have lots of variety. Procuring our own meat also saves on grocery bills since my wife, oldest son, and I all enjoy staying fit through resistance training and grappling.

Most of our interests are the result of fellowship with beloved brothers and sisters in Christ who were willing to share their time and talents. Chesterton once said, "There are no uninteresting things, only uninterested people." I'm so excited to live forever because our Father in heaven fills our cups with life giving blood and thereby provides a life with unending love and meaning! †





# Ordinations & Installations



## Reverend Joseph Adama Ordained



Rev. Joseph Adama was ordained into the Office of the Holy Ministry of Word and Sacraments on Thursday, April 7, 2022. The Ordination Service and Installation Service took place at Peace Lutheran Church, Defiance, OH. Pastors in attendance were Rev. Richard Sunderlage, Rev. Dan Dapelo, Presiding Pastor Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins, Rev. Joseph Adama, Rev. Gary Benson, Rev. Dean Stoner. Photo by Jennifer Oster. †

## The American Association of Lutheran Churches

921 East Dupont Road, #920

Fort Wayne, IN 46825-1551

Address Service Requested



The  
American Association  
of Lutheran Churches

The Evangel – Issue 206  
July/August 2022



The  
American Association  
of Lutheran Churches



(260) 755-9401  
theaalc@taalc.org



Visit us on the web:  
www.taalc.org

## UPCOMING EDITIONS...

Please be in prayer for and consider contributing to these upcoming editions:



Sept/Oct Theme: The AALC Biennial Convention (*Content deadline July 1*)

Nov/Dec Theme: To be determined (*Content deadline Sept 1*)

**Church News:** *The Evangel* welcomes submissions of what's happening in your congregation, such as:

- Anniversaries of clergy ordination or installations
- Church activities or celebrations
- Men's and women's events
- Youth and children's activities
- Outreach or community events
- AALC clergy obituaries

To submit content, **email the editor** Gretchen Baker: [theevangel@taalc.org](mailto:theevangel@taalc.org)

**Or mail:** St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church, Attn: Gretchen Baker  
207 Taylor St., Traer, IA 50675