

ATLANTIC MISSION REGION CONVOCATION HIGHLIGHTS

The Rev. Mark Chavez, General Secretary of the NALC, delivered the convocation's keynote presentation "*Sent to Serve*" with only hours advanced notice that he would take the place of



the Rev. Gemechis Buba, Assistant to the Bishop for Mission, NALC who was unexpectedly ill. Pastor Buba's doctors told him he was not permitted to travel. Listening to Pastor Chavez one might never know our gifted General Secretary, who gave a very meaningful and poignant presentation with only a few notes along with Scriptural text, had not been the scheduled keynote speaker.

Other highlights included meaningful breakout presentations by Bill Oehlschlager from Lutheran Lay Renewal on "Sharing Your Faith," Cedric Brown of Navigators, and Lee Mills, AMR Renewal and Discipleship Team chair. The presentations focused on congregational renewal and discipling others.

The Women of the NALC held their first Atlantic Mission Region Conference Friday morning with a theme of "*A Woman Like Me!*" led by Amy Werner and Apryl Gorton. At the same time, some men, led by Pastor Peter DeBartolo, participated in a bible study "*On the Road to Emmaus, An Encounter with Christ.*"

During the business portion of the convocation the general reports were received and the 2019 Ministry Plan was approved. The transitioning from a Mission District to a larger Mission Region which will include Virginia and be comprised of 4 smaller geographically clustered Mission Districts, was discussed and approved. More details to come as they are worked out.

The *Stuff the Truck* for Disaster Response was a huge success with a near full truck load of items plus more than \$2,410 received in offerings toward the NALC's disaster response in FL and GA.

Mark your calendar for the
2019 Regional Convocation to be held on

October 18-19, 2019 at

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Joppa, MD



In the midst of tragedy Christ is praised . . .

“JESUS AT WORK — AT A HOTEL BREAKFAST TABLE”

*By Pastor H. Brian Triller
Emanuel Lutheran Church, Elmer, NJ*

The young man, a waiter, appeared to be listening to us as we were talking over breakfast at our hotel. It was around 7 a.m. on the second day of our recent District Convocation, and I was sitting at a table with Bill Oehlschlager from Lutheran Lay Renewal and Wayne Knerr from Emanuel, Elmer, N.J. Bill was telling Wayne and me about his Christian ministry experiences over the past several years.

The young server approached our table, asked us where we were from, and then asked if he could speak with us. He introduced himself and told us that he had become a Christian within the last year. He had a sparkle in his eyes and enthusiasm in his voice as he told us how the risen Jesus had come to him and transformed his life. He had been so heavily involved in drugs that he had estranged himself from his family. At one point he was taking massive amounts of Percocet.

Then he heard and believed what he calls “Jesus’ words,” encountering our crucified and risen Lord. Jesus gave him a clean heart and a new life, and He freed him from his life with drugs. By the grace of God, this young man was also restored in relationship with his family.

It was exciting to hear how Jesus had worked powerfully in this young man’s life. Then he told us something that cut my heart like a knife: the pastor from Lebanon, PA who was shot and killed just a few miles away two nights before, Roberto Sotolongo, was his pastor. The three of us sitting at that breakfast table were stunned.

The young waiter told us that he thought Pastor Roberto had been killed because some gang members wanted to stop him from proclaiming

Jesus’ words in their territory. He said that, although the devil and gang members were trying to stop Jesus’ words from being preached, they could never succeed. There is victory in Jesus.

The young man said the Christian response to Pastor Roberto’s death will be an increase, not a decrease, of telling people about Jesus. He then told us that he himself is going to go and tell more people about Jesus in some of the same places that his pastor had done it. He is not afraid to put his life on the line for the Gospel. Rather, he is eager to tell others about our Lord.

He has already been proclaiming Jesus. He said that one of his drug-involved friends approached him recently and asked him, “What you got?” He was asking our young server about drugs, but he responded to his friend by touching his own heart, smiling, and saying, “I’ve got Jesus!”

The three of us sitting at the table were deeply moved by this young man’s testimony to Jesus Christ, his being strong in faith and courage even while grieving the death of his pastor. When we asked him if we could pray with him, he said “yes.” So we stood around him, laying hands on his shoulders. We prayed for him, for his pastor’s family, and for their congregation, that our Lord will give all of them His comfort and strength as they grieve Pastor Roberto’s death. We also prayed that God will grant them His strength and guidance in their ongoing ministry to continue following Jesus and telling others about Him.

As we finished praying with him, the young man looked at us, his face beaming, and said, “I want a hug!” We willingly obliged.

Continued

In that encounter, which none of the three of us anticipated happening, we experienced Jesus at work in our midst. It began as a simple breakfast, but it ended by our being profoundly aware of the active presence of our crucified and risen Savior. Certainly, the Holy Spirit stirred up in the three of us our Shepherd's compassion for this young man; and we willingly shared that compassion with him. However, the three of us were blessed, too. We were blessed by the powerful impact of this young waiter's witness to Jesus. And we were blessed by being brought face-to-face with the reality of a pastor first being threatened and then being killed—executed just blocks away from our Convocation site for proclaiming the Gospel.

It began as a simple breakfast, but it ended by our being profoundly aware of the active presence of our crucified and risen Savior.

I look forward to meeting Pastor Roberto in the life to come. Between now and then, I pray for our Lord's help, that I may grow in faithfulness to Jesus and in courage to share His Good News wherever He leads me to do so. I close with these words of Jesus from His Sermon on the Mount: *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* (Matthew 5:10 ESV) Amen.

A MESSAGE
FROM OUR DEAN . . .

"PRAYER AND ANXIETY"

By *The Rev. David McGettigan*
Dean, NALC Atlantic Mission Region

"Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving" (Colossians 4:2).

Recent personal and quite anxious events have moved me to look much more deeply at those practices in my life that undergird my relationship to Jesus, my hope, my Savior in all times especially times of trouble. Prayer life was near the top of the review list because even Pastors, indeed Deans, falter in their prayer lives.

My sad realization and confession? There is nothing like a good crisis to bring you back to the very foundation of who you are and how you are with Jesus. When you are driven to the depths like our Old Testament brother Job who witnesses:

"But the night is long, and I am full of tossing till the dawn..."

My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle and come to their end without hope" (Job 7).

Suddenly prayer, literally crying out in anguish to the Lord, takes on a whole new complexion.

In gray skies, prayer takes on a remarkable simplicity, almost a visceral quality. No longer the pretense, telling God what He might do in helping me accomplish my plans. None of the posturing and pretending; things are pretty good and I just need a "little" help. Dejected and even desperate, prayer assumes a raw straightforwardness before God that cuts right through our fantasies of control and general self-directedness.

Among other things, I'm reading a book *Unworried: A Life Without Anxiety*, written by a Christian counselor. Several insights strike me, first, that we almost cannot avoid anxiety and it is not a sign of our lack of faith in Jesus. Indeed, the evil one uses crises in our lives and the attached anxiety to convince us we do not really

trust God and he makes us feel guilty and perhaps even sinful for having anxiety. Anxiety is not sinful, perhaps the underlying reason for our anxiety may be troubling because it is sinful, but the worry and stress itself is a human response.

God does not expect a disciple to live a totally anxiety-free life given we live in a fallen world and fallen lives. God never rejects us because we worry and feel burdened. God's love pours out even more abundantly and with greater power when we suffer — even from being anxious. Recall Paul's testimony when he pleaded three times for God to remove the ***"thorn that was given me in the flesh,"*** God said to him: ***"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness"*** (2 Corinthians 12:8).

Once we are over that hump, what do we do? First, know before you can deal with the underlying issue, it is important to deal with the anxiety, and anxiety is best dealt with in relationship — various relationships, but for us who believe, a deepening relationship with the One who brought us assurance that God's will is not that we suffer anxiously but be whole and graced, Jesus, who says: ***"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid"*** (John 14:27).

And the essence of every healing relationship is communication — with God that is prayer. Honest and simple prayer. Not the typical "laundry list" prayer but open hearted prayer that pours out, groaning before God for mercy. Regular and steadfast prayer that Paul calls us to in Colossians. Prayer without adornment.

One Sunday, reviewing the Worship Bulletin format before printing, I was struck by the Prayer of the Day, it read, ***"Direct our hearts, O Lord, by your merciful reign, because without your help it is impossible to please you."*** Frankly, I was tempted to change it or enhance it or say something more! It

just seemed so, well...curt, short and not so sweet, kind of bold in its confession of how bad off I am and we are.

That very week I also listened to a video of our Assistant to the Bishop, Dr. Gemechis Buba, giving a Bible Study on prayer to a Lutheran Conference in Denmark and his very first point based on Colossians 4 was just that. The first purpose of prayer is to confess that I am totally broken and unable to do anything of consequence without God first! Well, yea! And, then, the next purpose of prayer once we confess that brokenness is to open myself to God in relationship so that He might ***"direct my heart"*** or fill me or guide me or empower me, or heal me...whatever I need to please Him and, then, to live abundantly.

Thus, Paul's counsel that we ***"Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving."*** How did I come to account prayer as the extra burden that makes it more difficult to accomplish the important things of my life? How did I come to place prayer among the "if I get the time" items on my priority checklist for time management? How can I not see that the continued frustration that I feel in my lack of accomplishment, my exhaustion in trying and trying to do so much, the pain and anxiety that assaults me, may be tied to the low priority I place on prayer — going to the One who accomplishes all for me and the One who heals every ill?

Once when asked how she could possibly find time to pray in such a busy life with so many demands from needy people, the saintly Mother Theresa of Calcutta is reported to say, "Oh, I am too busy NOT to pray." Recall Jesus' invitation to those who are weary and heavy burdened? To take up his yoke and learn from Him, ***"For my yoke is easy and my burden light."*** And where did Jesus often retreat in his busiest times and most pressing ministry moments or when he was pained? He retreated to prayer.

Continued

Besides trouble with how to pray or what to say, the most frequent complaint I hear from folks, especially those who belong with me to the “company of the busy,” is TIME. Perhaps we the busy would best be served by coming to the realization that the time we are about to spend on truly important issues might just turn out better if we started by admitting we are ill equipped for what we are about to do without God’s intervention. ***“Direct our hearts, O Lord, by your merciful reign, because without your help it is impossible to please you.”*** Pray first, continuously, steadfastly. Pray boldly, honestly and openly.

That begs the question, how long? Honestly, there is no magic formula. Listen to Paul’s words ***“Continue steadfastly in prayer...”*** Some translations say ***“persevere”*** or ***“be vigilant,”*** in other words, be regular and patterned rather than worry about length. Remember Jesus often rejected the religious leaders who went on and on with useless words and Jesus responded fruitfully to the most vulnerable who simply begged His help with a simple request.

So, can I learn about my discipleship relationship with Jesus thanks to my latest crisis and ensuing anxiety? My desperate need of God’s help because I cannot go forward at all in pleasing him and living at peace especially in the troubled waters of life without his help. The biggest transformation he may be accomplishing in me is to realize all of my life, especially the worst moments, might just be better were I to engage him continuously and steadfastly in humble confession of my inability, and profound surrender to his power alone rather than waiting until I have an anxious heart.

Finally, remember, ***“...being watchful in thanksgiving.”*** Always remember to close a labor, a portion of your work, to assess my gradual healing from illness or anxiety, or at least close each day with thankfulness to God for his presence and his grace. Prayer is our lifeline to the One who is our life and promises life in abundance. Live prayerfully and live more fully whether life’s skies are blue or gray.

VINEMONT COMMUNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH INSTALLS THE REVEREND ABERA B. HELLEMO

Reverend Abera B. Hellemo was installed as pastor at Vinemont Community Lutheran Church, Reinholds, PA, on Sunday, September 16, 2018. Our Dean, the Rev. David McGettigan, was the presiding minister at the installation service. The Rev. Mark Chavez gave the installation homily. The congregation welcomed Pr. Hellemo with a very nice reception and luncheon following the installation service.



SERIES CONTINUATION OF

UNEXPECTED TRANSFORMATION

In this issue of *The Atlantic Vine* we continue a new series titled *Unexpected Transformation*. This series highlights the unexpected impact the Holy Spirit has brought into the ministry and lives of our clergy and laity with discipleship initiatives and as they focused on the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.

We hope you will find these stories inspiring. Along with the help of the Holy Spirit may your insights broaden as well as your vision to touch lives with transforming initiatives in new and meaningful ways.

“WHY I AM MORE DISCIPLESHIP FOCUSED”

By Rev. John Kulczycki

St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Middle River, MD

I grew up in Minnesota during the 50's, 60's and 70's. My parents raised their four boys in a Lutheran church. We attended church every Sunday and were a part of every church function. We have many wonderful memories. My brothers and I were all confirmed after which we all promptly stopped going to church. My brothers never returned. Ten years after my confirmation, with a lot of baggage in between, I entered Luther Seminary. I was called to a church in Pennsylvania where I served 7 years. For the past 30 years I have pastored in Baltimore, Maryland. There have been a lot of changes over all those years for me personally, for the churches I have served, as well as the church at large.

When I was young it seemed as though everyone I knew had a church with which they affiliated. Americans naturally associated with and believed in God. The church was a stable presence for the community. Attendance at church was a given for a majority of believers. There was no need to pay much attention to reaching out because there was already enough within. Believers were bold and

plentiful. This was a unique time for the church in our recent past. But that has steadily changed over the years. The Christian faith has been challenged so aggressively that it is has been hard to respond in an effective way. Our church culture and environment struggles to keep up with these changes. Our faith remains and our theology is strong but world views, dysfunctional habits and a hostile environment thwarts our Christian expression unlike it was in the past.

As I have lived through the past and now consider these things within my experience and collectively with others in the church, it seems that we need not do something differently but we must reconsider and embrace, myself included, what the church was called to do in the first place. We are to encourage all believers to boldly proclaim and live out their faith in Jesus Christ. This is the promise made by parents in baptism and the affirmation of the baptized at Confirmation. Although most know what they are supposed to do, the commitment of parents to the Baptismal promise and the follow-through

from Affirmation of Baptism and congregational shepherding has slowly been befuddled.

Here is where discipleship comes back into the picture. Discipleship is nothing new to the church. It is not unique to any denomination. Most Christians know what it is but do not have the conviction of its importance or know how to spring it into action. There are no “silver bullet” 5-step programs with which to carry out discipleship. There is no natural gene which kicks in like a bird that makes her nest and brings worms to its babies. Discipleship application is like parenting. It is a lifelong endeavor where learning and making mistakes is a natural part of the effort.

It has been surprising to me at how difficult it has been to adapt to the disciple making model. Like changing any routine it takes patience and conviction to approach my ministry with a new focus. It also takes time. With personal and congregational habits and rhythms established over a long time presenting a new directive doesn't come easily. In a culture that seeks immediate results, it is important to realize that discipling is a life-long endeavor for both the one discipling and the one who is being disciplined. Without this long term view and appreciation, the disciple making emphasis becomes just one more fad that has come down the pike like many others that have long gone and faded away.

There are many different ways to disciple depending upon the person and the situation. I like the notion of being a player coach or parent, someone who lives and walks with those who

seek to grow and those who have a desire to live out the Gospel message. Just as there are different approaches to parenting and coaching so in the same way there are many different ways to disciple depending upon the person and the situation. Discipling is for all believers and is our high calling. It can't be left up to someone else. It is for the priesthood of all believers to embrace.

I am convicted that we must be purposefully conscious of our personal and collective directive to live out and nurture not only our personal faith but the faith of others in all situations. The challenge is to put what is a historical Christian response to the Gospel into affective action not just within the walls of the church but at home and everyday life. That is why Luther wrote the small catechism.

In other words, discipling is spiritual parenting, coaching, walking with, and sharing with others in their faith. Growing this way, with others in God's grace is an integral part of why and how we live and function as the body of Christ. And just like a parent the goal is that someday those we nurture and encourage will do the same. We disciple so that those we disciple will be disciples themselves. At this point in my life I am convinced of the necessity for all in the body to know that they are disciple makers who nurture, walk with and encouraging others in their faith.

I like how Paul encourages and discipled the Ephesians in 3:16-17b, “that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...” Discipling was the calling of the earliest disciples and still remains for us today.

“MY DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY...SO FAR”

By Diane Hermanson

Lay Leader, Emanuel Lutheran Church, Elmer, NJ

Discipleship. Now, there's a word for you! Would I like to be one of Jesus' disciples? For sure! Who wouldn't? To be with him on a daily basis, to talk with him, to share meals together, to see him perform miracles, to hear his teachings and his prayers, to see his way with people, to listen to him open up the Scriptures? That would be a wonderful experience. Sign me up!

Oh, wait a minute. Didn't those disciples sleep on the ground? Weren't they sometimes hungry and afraid? Didn't they run and hide when Jesus was taken, interrogated, beaten and hung on the cross? Didn't most of them suffer and die for the proclamation of their faith in Jesus? Maybe I better rethink this discipleship thing. I don't want to deny Jesus, but I don't want to suffer and die either. It seems discipleship can be daunting; you know, scary and overwhelming. Hmmm.

Our congregation decided to become more involved in the discipleship process and joined with the Navigators to start a small group study. I received a letter from two pastors inviting me to become part of a “seed group” in this process. That made me feel good – to be chosen! I met with the pastors and other invitees to hear more about what it was and how it would work. It seemed like something I would be interested in, but it was going to take a commitment and my time. How far was I willing to go?

I was used to reading a small daily devotion and sometimes praying, so I continued that practice and asked the Lord to guide my decision in joining this group. I asked for discernment. Over the next week I received a lot of encouragement through my devotions and prayers. Early in the week, I was led to scripture that said, “Be still and know that I am God” (*Psalms 46:10*). I was reading

If You Want To Walk On The Water, You Have To Get Out Of The Boat by John Ortberg and read, “Jesus is looking for people who will get out of the boat...Jesus is where the water is” (page 27). These types of messages continued. By the end of the week, the message seemed clear and I decided to go for it.

It has been over a year since our seed group began. We started with an invitation to daily read a selected scripture and to record our thoughts about it. We were given specific passages to focus on for the first few months. Then we read a book about the grace of God, still recording our thoughts. Now, we choose how we spend our “alone time” with God. We meet about twice a month and also have a personal one-on-one phone call with the pastor. During our meetings and the phone call to discuss our journeys, we share things going on in our lives, any special insights we have received through our devotions, prayer requests, etc. We are building deeper relationships with Jesus and with each other. We are becoming more mature as disciples of Jesus.

At this point, I am working on my third notebook with my thoughts, questions, insights, prayers. Does it take time? Yes, and I now look forward to what, at first, seemed like an obligation. It is now a habit, one that I miss if something draws me away, and that does happen from time to time. During those moments I spend alone with God, He speaks to me. I have been aware of God through nature most of my life. On March 23 this year, He spoke to me through my computer! I had read a passage about stars and was thinking about all the stars in the sky and how God placed them and knows their number. Then I turned on my computer and my screensaver was a beautiful nighttime sky filled with...STARS! For me, that

was assurance that He was with me right where I was.

I am becoming more comfortable in my faith. That may sound strange to some. To me, it simply means I am not afraid of what I will find, or where He may lead me. God has made us for relationship. As believers, we are already disciples. He knows us intimately and wants us to be one with Him. My daily alone time has helped me to be more aware of His actions in my day-to-day life. I want the same for others. How can I help others “see” God? Sometimes, someone just needs someone to listen. I can do that! Jesus said, “Go and make disciples...” (Matthew 28:19) and invites us to walk with Him. We can invite others to walk with us. Through our relationships with others, we can encourage them to grow in relationship with Jesus.

And that is what this discipleship journey is all about...building relationships. I have a couple of “best friends” and a few good friends. I know that I can call on any of them at any time if I have a need, regardless of when I last interacted with them. I feel safe with them and they with me. I trust them with my confidences and they do the same with me. We know one another well enough to share without fear of judgment or ridicule. We built these relationships by spending time together, sharing our lives with each other, caring for one another, and holding each other accountable.

Jesus does not have specific requirements for those he calls. All he wants is for ordinary people to follow him. God works with each of us uniquely to help others join this discipleship journey. He has placed certain people on my heart that I want to disciple or share the good news

with. Some are already on the path, some are beginning their search, some deny his existence, but God has given me their names for a reason. I pray for them and for the Holy Spirit to guide me in speaking with them about this Jesus. Proverbs 19:21 says, “Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.” Through this discipleship process, I am trying to stay true to his purpose.

I noted in my journal that “there is greater joy in knowing Christ than any other joy I have experienced.” Continuing on this journey, I now recognize the joy in my heart that has been there all along.

About that commitment...it’s been almost a year, a busy year with lots going on, and I haven’t given a thought about commitment. Like I said, it’s a habit, a good one. From *The Upper Room* devotion on October 19, 2017, I noted that daily rituals can help us enjoy and look forward to quality time spent with God. That’s where I am. It is a daily ritual, a habit that I enjoy, learn from and hear from God. Psalm 84:2 says, “My heart and my flesh cry out for the Living God.” I am fulfilling that yearning that I have had since a young child. Christ abides in us through the Word. His flesh and blood is the food and drink we need to survive.

Early on in this discipleship journey, I noted in my journal that “there is greater joy in knowing Christ than any other joy I have experienced.” Continuing on this journey, I now recognize the joy in my heart that has been there all along. Join us! “Taste and see that the Lord is good!”

— (Psalm 34:8)

“CONVERSION AND DISCIPLESHIP — PART 2”

A continuation of the theme from “The Vine,” Issue 2

By Rev. Luke Seamon

Reformation Lutheran Church, Lancaster, PA

Before we can begin to talk about making disciples we must realize that discipleship is not the same as evangelism. I think many Christians today do not understand that discipleship and evangelism, while going hand in hand, are not the same. Evangelism is the preaching and sharing of the Gospel of Jesus to unbelievers in order to bring them to conversion, to faith in Christ, and to be baptized. Discipleship is teaching baptized Christians the doctrine of Christ and how to follow Him in their own lives.

Last time I wrote about how conversion – the repentance and faith of an unbeliever – is the work of the Holy Spirit through the Means of Grace: the Word and Sacraments. The Means of Grace are God's tools through which He creates faith in the rebellious heart of a sinner. We have His promise that He is always at work through these Means of Grace. Outside the Word and Sacraments we have no promise that God is at work to create and sustain faith. Faith is a miracle and a work of God, not a choice of human will or emotion, though, thankfully, when the Holy Spirit works the human will and emotions do indeed follow!

When speaking of conversion we must note that there are two ways in which God brings us to a penitent saving faith in Christ. We see this in the second chapter of Acts. The first is that by the preaching and sharing of the Word that Jesus is the Messiah, a sinner repents, believes, and is baptized, as St. Peter preaches in Acts 2:38-39.

The second way is when the children of Christians are baptized and brought up in the faith accordingly, as St. Peter states clearly: *“this promise is for you and for your children”* (Acts 2:39).

This is consistent with the pattern we see in Scripture. In the book of Acts we see that when the head of a household repents and believes, that he or she is baptized along with his or her entire household. As the head of the household, so goes the entire family.

So, the pattern of conversion for adult converts is repentance, faith, and Baptism in the Triune Name and for their children, baptism towards repentance and faith. We believe that in Baptism the Holy Spirit works faith even in infants, but that this faith must be nurtured and nourished as the child grows in his/her mental and emotional abilities so that one day they embrace the Lord fully as their own. Indeed, faith will die if it is not fed and nourished by parents and the congregations with the Word and the Sacrament of the Altar.

Most Lutherans were baptized as infants following this historic pattern passed on by the Apostolic Church. This is important for this discussion on conversion and discipleship because it means that many around us are already baptized. However, it very well might be that they have fallen away from the faith and need to be brought back again to repent of their sins and believe anew. In such a case, it is not necessary to be re-baptized. One may simply reclaim by faith the gift of God already given in Baptism. It also might mean that many around us might have allowed their faith to go cold and nearly die out. We cannot see into others' hearts to see whether their faith is alive. That is the work of God. Our work is simply to share with others the one thing that gives, feeds, and sustains faith: the Word and the Sacrament.

Continued

In light of this, one of the greatest tasks for us in making disciples is to help keep the faith of the baptized from being extinguished. Here we must give every effort to nourish the faith of our children continually. This means teaching parents and godparents how to practice the faith

at home: how to pray together, read Scripture together, discuss the Catechism together, and finally how to apply all these things into our lives. Those who do so will not only lead their households into mature spiritual growth, but also grow themselves as disciples.

NALC SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 30-31, 2018 — REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH, CULPEPER, VA

“The Importance of Senior Adult Ministry in the Local Congregation” was the theme of the 1 ½ day conference in Culpeper, VA, on Tuesday, October 30 and Wednesday, October 31.

Dr. Charles Arn, Professor of Church Ministry and Outreach at Wesley Seminary in Marion, IN, was the keynote presenter who led Tuesday’s session. Dr. Arn is a pioneer of senior adult ministry in the United States and has written several books in the field including *“Catching the Age Wave”* and *“White Unto Harvest.”* The conference focused on the implementation and need of an aging ministry within the local church. Special emphasis was placed on senior adult evangelism — the side door ministry.

On Wednesday Pr. Brad Hales, Director of Domestic Mission, NALC, led day two.

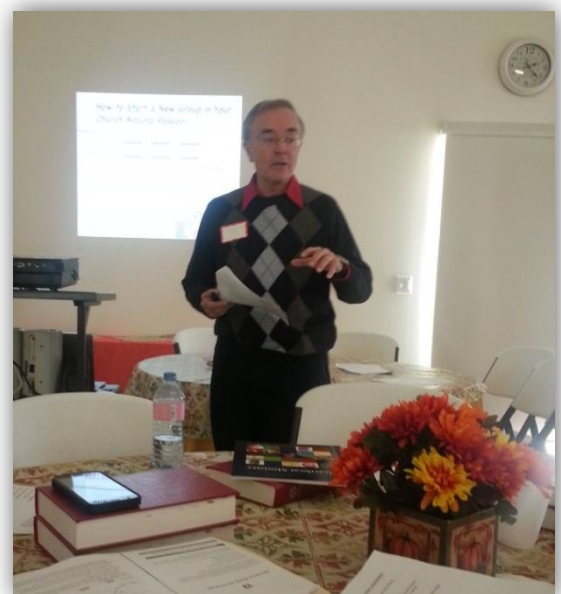
Discussion and focus on the practical things that need to be considered in developing a senior adult ministry and the importance of connecting with the local aging community. “Where the Rubber Hits the Road—The Nuts and Bolts of Congregational Senior Adult Ministry” the more than appropriate title to connect with the increasing growth of our aging population.

Two of the conference’s highlights bring focus to this ministry. They include: 1) 65% of the world’s population that has ever lived to age 65 are alive today; 2) the average life expectancy of an

American citizen is 84 years. Dr. Arn shared his research with the question: “Who is the New Senior Adult?” (see *The New Senior* by Charles Arn, p.77ff). A few include:

New seniors have goals they want to accomplish; they look forward to the future; they would rather serve others than be served; they spend time with others who share their values and interest; they enjoy going out; and they view retirement as a time to work, study, serve, and play.

To learn more about how and why to start a new ministry in this area visit the following website: <https://secure.wesleyan.org/sidedoor>.

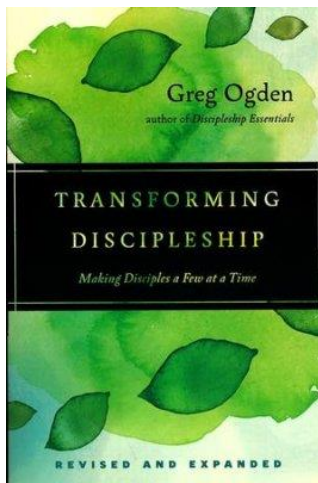


RESOURCES TO GROW IN CHRIST

TRANSFORMING DISCIPLESHIP... **Making Disciples a Few at a Time**

Author: Greg Ogden

This book has a 5 star rating and was one of 4 resources recommended by the NALC's Renewal and Discipleship Team at the August NALC Convocation in Denver, CO. It is written by Greg Ogden who has also written "Discipleship



Essentials." Offering the philosophy behind this best-selling book Ogden addresses the need for discipleship in the local church and recovers Jesus' method of accomplishing change by investing in just a few people at a time. With this approach discipleship

can become a self-replicating process with ongoing impact from generation to generation. This fully revised and updated edition includes a new chapter on discipleship and preaching.

"Many church leaders, yearning for church growth, look to the latest evangelistic strategies. But lack of growth might not be due to lack of concern for new people — it may be because we are not effectively discipling the people we already have."

Ogden looks at and recovers Jesus' method of accomplishing life change by investing in just a few people at a time. With this approach discipleship can become a self-replicating process with ongoing impact from generation to generation.

SCRIPTURAL RETIREMENT — *SERVING* **AND SHARING JESUS**

Author: The Rev. Brad Hales

Retirement can mean different things to different people. It may mean working for some, and not working for others. It may mean spending time with the grandchildren or taking trips. It may mean finally having the time to serve, or focusing on new paths and career opportunities. Or, it may mean caring for a loved one rather than getting to do something that you desire. Maybe you fall into one, or several of these categories.



Retirement has a profound effect on people's time, health, lifestyles and purposes. We know that the world may view retirement in certain ways. But how is retirement viewed through the lens of Holy Scripture?

Pastor Brad Hales, NALC Director of Domestic Mission, has developed a new Bible study resource called, *Scriptural Retirement: Serving and Sharing Jesus*.

Enjoy this new resource that developed at the conclusion of the webinar series, "Renewing and Revitalizing an Aging Church," – Scriptural Retirement Bible Study.

The website:

<https://www.thenalc.org/gallery/scriptural-retirement-resource/>

Download the Scriptural Retirement Bible Study:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-geRiXioxAQvyZf26soZlrznuRpyypdf/view>

PLAN AHEAD

SERVE HIM IN YOUR COMMUNITY...EVENTS & LINKS TO BE INVOLVED

Looking ahead to 2019 . . . Serve our Lord by planning for congregational and/or personal involvement in one of more of these up-coming events. Check the listings below and mark your calendars.

Also check out what is happening in your local community to partner with them.

You can do an internet search to connect with additional links but these will get you started.

December 1st & 2nd — Spiritual Renewal and Transformation Retreat led by Bill Oehlschlager

Saturday, December 1st 9 AM – 3 PM

Zoar Lutheran Church,
560 Freeport Road, Lebanon, PA

FEATURED TOPICS

7 Lessons for Living the Spiritual Life
10 Stops on the Road to Spiritual Transformation
Sharing Your Faith with Others
Lunch and fellowship included!

Sunday, December 2 at 9 AM

Messiah Lutheran Church
1800 Oak Street, Lebanon, PA

Worship at 9 AM with Bill delivering the
Keynote during the sermon time followed by
Sharing Your Faith with Others at 10:30 AM.

A light lunch will follow.

Cost: \$10 per person. To attend
call Robin Harris at 717-272-2922.

January 18th — March for Life

at the National Mall, Washington, DC
Theme for 2019: Unique from Day One

<http://marchforlife.org/mfl-2019/2019-mfl-theme/>

January 20th — Sanctity of Life Sunday

<https://www.lutheransforlife.org/>

February 8, 2019 — Night to Shine

Honor people with special needs
(as noted in the last issue of The Vine)...

<http://nighttoshine2019.com>

May 2, 2019 — National Day of Prayer

By projecting out farther expand the 2019
theme of “Love One Another” throughout all
of 2019.

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love
one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to
love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that
you are my disciples, if you have love for one
another.” —John 13:34-35

<http://www.nationaldayofprayer.org/>

The Atlantic Vine — Publication Times and Deadline Dates

Winter 2019 - Deadline 1/22

Spring 2019 - Deadline 5/7

Summer 2019 - Deadline 7/30

Fall 2019 - Deadline 10/29

SHARE RESOURCES WITH US!

Using resources you find effective?

Help others grow by sharing what it is you are using, be they books, activities, websites,
iPhone or Smartphone apps, or other tools you have found to be effective for you personally,
in your congregation, or ones you use in your small groups. Others will appreciate your sharing them.

Email resource/s to ‘newsletter@atlantic-nalc.org’
for the Winter 2019 edition. Let’s keep adding those ‘*Building Blocks of Discipleship*’
and ways to grow personal and transformational relationships with Christ.

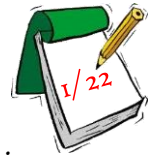
MAKE NOTE: THE NEXT AMR NEWS

Next submission deadline for The Atlantic Vine

Tuesday January 22, 2019.

*Remember this is one of your communication tools. We are to be the face of Christ in the world. Email your communications, correspondence or questions anytime between now and **January 22nd** to: newsletter@Atlantic-nalc.org*

- Publicize your upcoming special events on the AMR calendar.
- Communicate what's happening in your congregation.
- Tell us about activities that foster's relationships and growing in Christ.
- Tell us about an interesting study you have done.



FROM A BLOG POST AND A STORY ABOUT PEGGY SANSBURY, A BIBLE STUDY TEACHER AND MISSIONARY

As we look to the One who perfects our faith, let us also listen as He directs our steps. Let us remember, as Luke 12:48 reminds us, "to whom much is given, much more is required."
Let us serve with passion for He alone is worthy.

"Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!" – Rev. 7:12

