

## **“FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS” - ESTHER 4:14**

### *Introduction to the summer issue of The Atlantic Vine*

Given the chaos the world is now experiencing, and given the Church's mission to make disciples (*Matthew 28:19-20*), Esther 4:14 noted above is perfect wording to introduce the main focus for this *Atlantic Vine*: *The Holy Bible—God's Written Word*.

Given the status of this world today, another verse makes it clear where our refuge is:

*“Be merciful to me, O God, ...for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by.” (Psalm 57:1 NAS)*

Our refuge is to be found in the Lord. And one way we take refuge in Him is by going to the Scriptures inspired by the Holy Spirit. God's written Word is the place to grow a personal relationship with His Son, who reveals the Father as our refuge and source of mercy. Additionally, the written Word is the place we learn to worship our Triune God.

The Holy Scriptures serve as a refuge and a source of divine strength for us as we live each day in the midst of the current chaos. The Bible is our guide to moral character. It is our text book to direct us in challenging situations, showing us how to use the gifts God has given us for His good purposes. Through the Bible, our Lord provides insights into His wisdom as we seek to make decisions according to His will.

Through God's written Word, He comforts and protects us, as He comforted and protected David when David cried out to the Lord from a cave (*Psalm 57*). We learn from this Psalm that to be wrapped in God's written Word is to be wrapped in the shadow of His wings until the day He leads us into the place where we will spend eternity with Him.

Between now and then, as we deal with challenges such as growing racial and political tensions, as we

seek to restore our personal lives and our worship practices in the face of a pandemic and governmental orders, let us stay centered on the Word of God. As we face each new day, let it be our guide and the foundation on which we stand together with confidence. To assist with that, a new resource, “*Keys for Your Biblical Journey - Study and Meditation Aids*,” has been compiled for individuals and groups to use as one reads the Word, studies and meditates upon it. This resource link is noted on page 10.

As you will see in the following pages there is no shortage of NALC resources to help draw one into the Bible. Obviously there is an abundance of other topical and themed studies yet we hope you will take advantage of using the NALC material and the “*Keys for your Biblical Journey*.” You will find spending daily time with Jesus in His Word does transform life.

May you find this *Atlantic Vine* issue to be a source of inspiration, information, and encouragement as you seek to abide in the refuge of God's written Word, and protected in the shadow of His wings for to the Lamb be blessing and honor forever.

*“To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.” (Revelation 5:13 NAS)*



## **"Changed by God's Word: Reflections by Five Followers of Jesus"**

*By Dianne Hermanson, Judy Cellmer, Patsy Madden, Rev. Mark Werner, and Rev. Brian Triller  
Emanuel Lutheran Church, Elmer, NJ*

***"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19a).***

So begins the Great Commission which the risen Jesus has given to all of us in His Church. Here at Emanuel Lutheran in Elmer, NJ, in obedience to Jesus' command, an intentional disciple-making process was begun in 2017.

In September of that year, Pr. Brian Triller (retired) and five congregation members began this process by forming what was named the Initial Seed Group. This group is a modified version of what the Navigators call a Leadership and Learning Team. Now under the direction of Emanuel's pastor, Pastor Mark Werner, the Seed Group currently has four other members: Patsy Madden, Dianne Hermanson, Judy Cellmer, and Pastor Brian.

### **Pastor Brian Triller**

Our Seed Group's members seek to grow in relationship with Jesus Christ and with each other as disciples of His, so that we may help others, including congregation members, to mature as disciples of Jesus. At the center of the disciple-making process is the crucified and risen Jesus, who keeps His promise to be with His followers "always, to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20)." Jesus is with His Church and reveals Himself to us in His Word. (See John 1:14.)

In addition to participating in Word and Sacrament corporate worship and in group/independent Bible study, each member of our Seed Group practices two other Word-centered disciplines. The first discipline is a daily time alone with God to meditate on portions of the Bible and then respond to God's Word via prayer and seeking to apply God's Word to our daily lives. The second discipline is having intentional conversations with each other which focus on: (a) how we are hearing our Lord speak to us through His Word; (b) how we are responding to and applying

His Word in our lives; and (c) how we are seeing God at work in our lives and the lives of others.

We have noticed some ways in which God is changing us and impacting our congregation through His Word. These changes are related to the promised transformation process that is realized as the Holy Spirit renews our minds through faith in the Word of God. (See *Romans 12:2*.) Below are descriptions of some of these changes as seen by Dianne, Judy, and Patsy, followed by some comments by Pr. Mark.

### **Dianne Hermanson**

During this 2½ year journey, I can see that I am more involved with my Lord and Savior. I am changing in how I relate with others in my community of faith. God speaks to me in my alone time with Him and when we are together in Seed Group meetings. New relationships have been developed within our Group and beyond. We have grown more comfortable and trusting with each other.

These relationships encourage me, support me and strengthen me. I share more of my life with them than I would have previously. I mentioned in an article in our congregation's newsletter that I was becoming more comfortable in my faith. I am not afraid of what God will reveal to me or ask of me. I am not always comfortable with what He asks, but I have learned that He walks with me no matter what.

An example of this would be my participation in the healing services we have at Emanuel. Each of us in the Seed Group was asked to offer healing prayers for others and to anoint them with oil. I do not feel well versed in praying out loud with others. However, I have found that laying my hands on someone seeking healing and anointing them with oil is a simple way to meet another person's needs. The prayer then comes to me through the grace of the Holy Spirit. I have even prayed with total strangers when the opportunity has been presented. That is a new activity for me, one

I would not have done before joining the Seed Group. Before, I would have simply said a prayer in my head and perhaps added it to my prayer list.

### **Judy Cellmer**

These days, when I am faced with an insurmountable obstacle in my life, I automatically turn to God first. In previous years, I turned to Him after going through the “woe is me” phase, becoming very pessimistic, talking to anyone who would listen, and trying everything possible that I knew to solve the problem. I prayed to God for help and guidance when I finally recognized that it was out of my control. I now understand the true meaning of humility. I go to God first!

I have my solitary place where I study Scripture and converse with God, but sometimes I just close my eyes and pray on the spot! I say the Serenity Prayer. Often, I just say, “Strengthen and guide me, Lord.” Turning to God immediately doesn’t always wipe away the worry and anxiety, but it does erase the self-pity and pessimistic attitude. I feel His never-ending presence and His shoulder helping me carry my burden and shining the light on the path to peace and serenity. The Lord has become my physical and spiritual GPS.

Several years ago, I had a life-altering experience that left me pondering the question, “What would You have me do now, dear Lord?” Accepting the invitation to join the Emanuel Lutheran Church’s discipleship Seed Group was God’s answer to my prayer. I feel that my transformation will be a continual life-long process.

My husband Terry’s sudden death on March 14th and my mother’s passing on May 2nd have left me grief stricken. Adding the COVID-19 pandemic to the mix, which prevented me from being with most of my family, just heightened the grief and anxiety I was feeling. This time, I reached for God’s hand first and put my total faith and trust in Him. God has given me many wonderful gifts: a wonderful marriage for 49 years, my two sons, my three grandsons, a wonderful daughter-in-law, my family and friends, my church family, etc. The list goes on and on. Each morning

when I wake up, I thank God for these gifts; and I ask Him for the strength and guidance to get through the day. God’s promises to always be there are steadfast in my heart!

### **Patsy Madden**

As I began this journey in Emanuel’s Seed Group, I had no idea where it would lead me. First of all, I couldn’t imagine being chosen to be in the group. I didn’t feel I had anything special to offer anyone. I have settled into my daily alone time with Bible study and prayer, which is very meaningful; and I have learned from the reading we have done as a group. But, do I feel different or transformed? No...I feel I am still a work in progress. God surely isn’t done with me yet. But I do feel that, as a member of this group, I’ve grown in the sense that I’ve participated in things I’d never been involved in before, which has helped me grow in my faith. I am continuing to learn from studying His Word and also from listening to others. To answer the question of why I was chosen to be part of this group, I needed to have a deeper relationship with God and to study and understand His Word more. So far, this and more has been accomplished.

I continue to look forward with great anticipation and a growing faith. I am a firm believer that things happen for a reason; and so many times my daily devotional is so appropriate for the day or situation. This tells me God is truly watching over me and that I was brought into this group for a reason.

In our group we share with one another each time we are together. I feel it has helped us all to become more trusting of each other, and we have become a close-knit group. We don’t always have to help by doing...we can help by just listening. We know that we can rely on each other and that what we share stays within our group. We can all help each other through our struggles which can be stepping stones to transformation.

### **Pastor Mark Werner**

Three years ago, I was blessed to have a sabbatical. I spent that time looking at congregations who did

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more than simply talk about discipleship. I was looking to see how a disciple-making culture was being lived out. I was blessed greatly in that learning.

When I discerned that God was leading me to a new call, I went back to those things that I learned. In other words, I was especially open to a call where the congregation wasn't just talking about disciple-making or waiting for the new pastor to initiate the process, but a congregation that was serious enough to already be in the process.

It has been a year since I came to Emanuel. Over that year, I have grown in my own walk both from my own discipleship coach, Pr. Brett Jenkins, as well as from the Seed Group here at Emanuel. This group is multiplying, as making disciples should be what we are about. Coming into this process has encouraged me and continues to be a source of Spirit-filled strength as I see each member of this group grow in their walk with Jesus.

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## **“THE BIBLE AS THE WORD OF GOD”**

### **THE NALC STATEMENT & STUDY GUIDE**

*Notes from the Rev. Gregory P. Fryer  
Immanuel Lutheran Church, New York, NY*

Some people were blessed with Bible-reading parents. I was such a one. My father died young, of cancer, at age 45. But I knew him long enough to know that he was a devout man and a good father and husband. I still have his Bible, though I myself am an old man now.

And when I think of my dear mother, an image that readily comes to mind is me wandering out into the kitchen in the morning, still sleepy, and finding her at the kitchen table with a cup of coffee reading her good old King James Bible. It made a difference in her life. I do not know how to explain what a wonderful person she was except by lifting up her faith, her church, and her Bible.

Our goal in all the documents we commend to you now is chiefly and simply to encourage you to pick up and read your Bible even more than you have in the past. One of the great suggestions in the article now before you “*Keys for Your Biblical Journey — Study and Meditation Aids*” (on page 10) is to read the Bible “aloud.” It is worth it! Any good piece of writing is worth reading aloud. In our household here in New York City, I often sit in my rocking chair and read things aloud for Carol, who loves to sit and embroider or work on a quilt while I read aloud for us. Reading aloud encourages you to enter more deeply into the text, so that you will have some idea how to read it for others. Plus it is a good image and practice for your family. Perhaps you could gather

your children around and read some of the Bible aloud each night before they head off to bed.

Most times you will not need the NALC Statement “*The Bible as the Word of God*.” You and your family and other people in the church can just go ahead joyfully and read the Bible. But if ever skeptics should challenge you about your love of the Bible, this statement will help you, I do believe. In our congregation, for example, when we were deliberating our move to the NALC, one of our members — very dear to me — stunned me by saying that she had read an article in the *New York Times* explaining that the Bible was not written by God, but by men — by men with the limitations and prejudices of their own ancient times. Well, I wish I had this Statement back then to help me along in trying to get her back on track. Note its title: “*The Bible as the Word of God*.” It pulls no punches. It is a classic statement of the inspiration of Scripture by the Holy Spirit. Yet it also knows that the Bible was written by human beings — by prophets and apostles and evangelists — who indeed had their own gifts and limitations, but whose work was sanctified by the Holy Spirit to help sustain the faith of Israel and the faith of the church through ongoing centuries.

The documents of the NALC Commission on Theology and Doctrine are unsigned. They are the joint work of the Commission. I want to honor that. But also I want to say this: the NALC statement



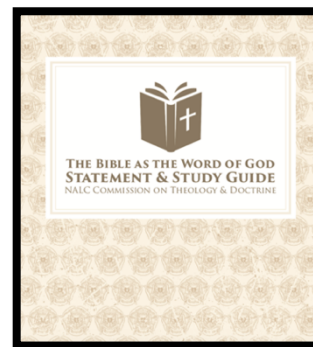
“The Bible as the Word of God” was written by one of the foremost Lutheran theologians in the land. Our NALC is highly blessed to have him. I have given this document to one of the leading Catholic theologians in America. When he heard that it was written by such-and-such a theologian, he was eager to have it — our theologian is so much respected across the ecumenical church.

The second half of the booklet is the “*Study Guide*” for the Statement. That Study Guide is not so important. It is simply the notes I jotted down as our Monday Evening Bible Class here at Immanuel Lutheran Church in New York City worked our way through the Statement “*The Bible as the Word of God.*” I hope our experience and questions and enthusiasm will be helpful to other congregations and clergy, but the important thing is the Statement, not the Study Guide.

We are a blessed church to have this Statement. God bless you in your Bible reading.

Download this free booklet with permission from the NALC website at:

<https://thenalc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Bible-as-the-Word-of-God-Statement-Study-Guide.pdf>



## **THE BIBLE - FINAL AUTHORITY IN ALL MATTERS OF FAITH AND LIFE**

*Website and Selections from the Rev. Brad Hales  
Director for Aging Ministry and Congregational Renewal, NALC*

Pastor Hales who, together with the Assistant to the Bishop for Mission, and is the Director for Aging Ministry and Congregational Renewal, works with NALC mission teams to develop a vision and strategy for aging ministry and congregational renewal. Pastor Hales has written a number of Bible studies focusing on different aspects of congregational renewal. Some of the titles might indicate they are only for the aging among us however, don't be fooled! They are Bible studies for all of us to be led by the Holy Spirit to grow in the Word, and relationship with Jesus Christ.

Pastor Hales, pastor of Reformation Lutheran Church, Culpeper, VA, notes on Reformation's website, "It's all about Jesus! We believe and confess the Bible is God's revealed Word to us, spoken in law and gospel. The Bible is our final authority in all matters of faith and life." On another page you'll find "We are absolutely centered on God's Word, sharing Jesus Christ of Nazareth as our Lord and Savior."

It was Pastor Hales request for the development of a guide to help study the Bible that a new resource, “*Keys for Your Biblical Journey - Study and Meditation Aids,*” was compiled for individual and group use. You'll find this resource link to download from our Mission District's website on page 10.

Links for these Bible studies written by Pastor Hales are found on pages 10–11. Use them for group and personal study. No group? Start one online!

- Hope for Older Adults
- Graying in Grace
- Renewing the Local Church—A Biblical Perspective
- The Gift of an Aging Church
- Vocational Discipleship: Renewal for the Individual and the Church
- Scriptural Retirement

Resources links are found on pages 9-11.

## **“DO NOT FEAR...OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD”**

*By the Rev. David McGettigan, Dean*

*NALC Atlantic Mission Region*

***“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”***

*(Matthew 10:28)*

Facing an overnight hospital stay after recent surgery, I knew from experience that I likely would not sleep well, probably at all. I prepared by bringing along good reading – my Bible, and a book by a favorite Roman Catholic theologian, Scott Hahn.

On one of her vital signs check, my wonderful nurse asked me what I was reading and I cheerfully responded, “A book on death called, ‘Hope to Die.’” I learned something instantly -- reading about or bringing up DEATH in a hospital tends to be a conversation stopper. My nurse just looked at me rather strangely and walked out. My poor roommate, in much agony after more complicated surgery, simply groaned. I think I heard him moan, “Oh my God, death??”

Hahn kind of acknowledges that when he says, “*We strive to avoid the death that is unavoidable, but we don’t strive to avoid the death that is avoidable. We fail to see, as Paul did, ‘to live is Christ, and to die is gain’*” (Philippians 1:21). So, what is it all about for us followers of Jesus to live in Him and find gain in death. Well, what it doesn’t mean is that we are naïve or pollyannaish about death.

In fact, we are the most realistic about death because we live facing inevitable physical death and the dangerous daily spiritual deaths in the light of the Lord of life who is Jesus Christ, God’s life giving Word in flesh, and with the light of His written Word in Scripture as our means and guide to deal with those and that ***“which can destroy both soul and body in hell”***. We live facing death in the resurrected experience and power of Jesus which has been promised to us today and at the end. We know

death’s limitations and its promise which is always resurrection and life.

From that Gospel proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus and our share in that resurrection even in our bodies, flows a path that is always life giving. Hahn quotes another RC theologian, Patricia Stone, to remind us that all the elements of spiritual health that are afforded us by God’s grace *“follows, eventually, if not immediately, from the revelation of the resurrection...If the whole man is immortal, a comprehensive morality follows.”* As you read on, their term *“comprehensive morality”* refers clearly to the way of living that is the daily journey of the disciple – aka discipleship.

Drawing upon the intimate and personal relationship with Christ, and the treasure of the His Word in Scripture, the call of the disciple of Jesus is to bring resurrected life to every experience of death. I contend, that call has almost never been more timely than today.

All around us are threads of death – physical and spiritual, to the body and the soul – that are nearly unprecedented. And we, or many of us, live in mortal fear, anxiety, confusion, suspicion of others and their motives. A recent visit to my primary care doctor confirmed in his words, *“We are losing more people to the secondary effects of the virus and response, as well as the other frightening events, than we are directly to the illness – rampant depression, domestic violence, high suicide and overdose rates”*.

We still live under the pall of the pandemic and, despite lowering death rates, the media seems to delight in referring to the *“deadly virus”*. Daily exposure to the death of civility and peaceful means of disagreement given over to verbal assault or actual one-on-one violence. The death of respect for law, the death of property in burning, looting, rock hurling. The death even of our history and

*continued*

monuments under the assault of self-righteousness and revisionism, the death of institutions that once undergirded our ability to cooperate and work out differences replaced by new philosophies and well organized groups who build nothing but only tear down and destroy. The death of our confidence and trust in our civil institutions and leaders driving many to confusion and wandering about seeking “MY truth” instead of “THE truth together.”

This is fertile mission ground for the life proclaiming disciple of Jesus who both lives out and delivers a path that is Christ and His Gospel before the sin drenched and unyielding march of death that threatens to capture and kill even the soul if allowed. We have the hope our brothers and sisters need and beg for amid this culture of death because, yes, we know death’s limitations in the promise of resurrected life on its other side.

Two thought provoking articles on vocation – the call of the disciple to use God’s gifts bestowed for service with neighbor -- appeared in the most recent *Lutheran Forum* from American Lutheran Publicity Bureau.

The first by Robert Benne “*The Great Evasion: The Calling of the Laity*” invites the Church to a reawakening finally of our authentic teaching on vocation which is infinitely more than just the call to ordained ministry. “*It was his (Luther’s) teaching that first gave ordinary people a sense of divinely ordained purpose in the ordinary activities of their lives*” to quote Benne. He cites the work of Max Weber on Luther and vocation, “*But at least one thing was unquestionably new: the valuation of fulfillment of duty in worldly affairs as the highest form which the moral activity of the individual could assume. ...Every legitimate calling has exactly the same worth in the sight of God.*”

Clearly, each of us baptized disciples of Jesus Christ has a “*divinely ordained purpose*” and, might I add divinely empowered call, to face whatever is of death in this world with the Gospel of life lived out and proclaimed in our ordinary activity and relationships.

We have the difference that can change the world around us – each of us.

The second from Rich Carter, “*THE Problem of Vocation in the Twenty-first Century*” posits that a primary issue with vocation, our call to discipleship, is our doctrine of doing aimed at self-help, service that is self-centered more about my good feelings than the other, and ultimately still the vainglorious and fruitless goal of winning salvation by doing good.

Carter draws us back to a more Lutheran doctrine of doing he phrases as “*Freedom in Christ for service with the neighbor*,” emphasis on the word “with.” I hear again the life giving and transforming service of the disciple recognizing the unity we have in Christ with all to whom He sends us even or especially in service. We are not just do-gooders or religious NGO’s. Our gifts for service are realized and made fruitful with the cooperation of the one whom we are serving and that person serves us by allowing this relationship to grow because our fundamental unity is in Christ.

One of the great deaths we face today is the fracturing of our unity swallowed up in divisive philosophies and selfish means to an end. The Gospel disciple call is that our service fosters a deep union between the server and the one served bridging whatever divides us on the surface because of the resurrected Christ in us.

Reject what is of death in the methods and even so-called solutions of the world. Embrace and deepen anew your relationship with the living Word, Christ Jesus, and His Word passed on to us by generations of faithful disciples in writing and preaching. A final word from Paul to the Romans (12:21) and to us as we pray for and long for a disciple’s heart in this troubled world,

***“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”***



## **DISCIPLING THROUGH FAITH WEBBING**

***Submitted by Gary (and Laurie) Pecuch, [faithwebbing.com](http://faithwebbing.com)***

Below is a continuation based on the introductory article on the concept of Faith Webbing in the last *Atlantic Vine* where Gary and Laurie Pecuch share a Faith Webbing story. The couple has served on the youth ministry staff of St. John's Lutheran Church in Grove City, Ohio since the early 1980's. Learn more about Gary and Laurie by visiting [faithwebbing.com](http://faithwebbing.com).

### **"Christopher: Relying on Church Family"**

Christopher was a young teen helper at Vacation Bible School. On Tuesday morning of that week he was dropped off in the parking lot, except this day was different. Since Christopher had left VBS the day before, his grandfather had passed away from a long term illness. Christopher's grandfather was a spiritual giant, a pillar of the congregation. Everyone knew the situation. I approached Christopher in the parking lot that morning simply to tell him that he did not need to be at VBS and that we had all of his responsibilities covered. I gave him permission to leave and encouraged him to spend time with his family. However, feeling the heaviness of his grief, the first place Christopher turned to was the church. In the wisdom of a seventh grader Christopher looked up at me and said, "Gary, I need to be with my church family today."

As he entered the building he was immediately met by teens and adults who he had known all of his life. Christopher was surrounded and enveloped in the

love of his church family. Scores of people, continuing to build their relationship with Christopher, willingly shared in his pain and went to the funeral home during the calling hours, attended the memorial service, and stood beside him in the days, weeks, months and years that followed.

Christopher was fortunate. Although a young teen, he had grown up in the church and had spent all of his young life developing his personal web of faith, a web that was there for him when he needed it most.

Laurie and I call this concept "Early and Often." Most children have their flight patterns pretty much established by the age of twelve. The softball kids are softball kids. The volleyball kids are volleyball kids. The scouts are scouts. The musicians are musicians, and the 4-H kids are 4-H kids. You get the idea. All of which is well and good, however by age twelve, we also want them to be "church kids." They need to be; they have to be.

As parents, our goal would be to make sure our children were totally immersed in the life and mission of a local congregation by the age of twelve. So then like Christopher, they would be surrounded by a loving caring web of faith made up of church family members whom they have known for years. Church family members who will be there to walk with them through the ups and downs of this adventure God has placed in called life.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> NALC Disaster Response Tool Trailer Update**

***Sponsored by Emanuel Lutheran Church, Elmer, NJ; Coordinators Anette and Sam Manno***

The Corona Virus brought the tool trailer project to a standstill. The slightly smaller size than tool trailer #1 required reconfiguration of the layout, however additional electrical wiring and shelving are now complete. Some tools have been donated and some funding has been



received, however the Coronavirus and social distancing caused the April fundraiser to be rescheduled, "twice!" The new date is October 16<sup>th</sup>. Please pray a successful fundraiser will occur and full funding received. *Send contributions to Emanuel Lutheran Church, PO Box 363, Elmer, NJ 08318, indicating "NALC Tool Trailer" in the memo section.*

This Disaster Response Tool Trailer is dedicated in memory of the Manno's son, Matthew Montana



## FAITHFUL CONVERSATIONS

*By the Rev. Jay Jackson, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Joppa, MD*

On June 20, 2020, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church and School hosted a conversation centered around race and culture and how our faith informs this important discussion. Three guest panelists were hosted by Pastor Jay Jackson for the two-hour event.

**Rev. Dr. John Nunes (LCMS)**

– president of Concordia College in NY

**Nikki Lerner**

– Culture coach, multi-cultural teacher and worship leader in MD

**Pastor Craig McLaughlin**

**(Mt Zion Methodist Church, Bel Air, MD)**

– Senior pastor of a community focused church

The conversation was centered around how to faithfully talk about race in our divisive culture. The event was live in person and live streamed and after an hour of guided conversation, the panelists took questions from the audience and from on-line participation. Personal examples were lifted up and ways to walk with one another in Christ were celebrated. Through work, relationship, and time, we learned how to be intentional and seek out the ones



*Top left to right: Rev. McLaughlin, Rev. Jackson*

*Lower left to right: Nikki Lerner, Rev. Nunes*

who are missing from these important conversations focused on listening to our neighbors. Although it was only two hours in length, it was a time to share and listen and seek Christ first among our brothers and sisters, with the understanding that because of our relationship with Jesus Christ first, we can have new relationships with one another.

View the full conversation found on the Trinity Joppa YouTube channel at this link:

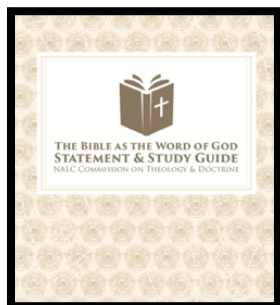
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXQW-ZcuMwk>

## MINISTRY RESOURCES TO GROW IN GOD'S WORD

Given this issue of the *Vine* focuses on Scripture, resources listed all highlight God's Holy Word. Note links to the online resources. FYI– even though in an Adobe .pdf format one can copy and paste a link into your web browser without typing each character.

### “THE BIBLE AS THE WORD OF GOD, STATEMENT AND STUDY GUIDE”

This document (see the commentary write up on pages 4-5) is from the NALC Commission on Theology and Doctrine. It can be downloaded in its entirety from the NALC website free. Find it at:



<https://thenalc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Bible-as-the-Word-of-God-Statement-Study-Guide.pdf>.

### NALC DAILY READINGS

You can find daily scripture readings on the NALC website to read, meditate upon and focus on applying the instructional message to your daily life. You can “Download the daily devotions link” to receive each day's reading on a computer or mobile device. You'll also find a link to the past daily reading archive. The link: <https://thenalc.org/?s=download+link+for+daily+devotions>.



## **MORE CONGREGATIONAL & INDIVIDUAL RESOURCES**

### **KEYS FOR YOUR BIBLICAL JOURNEY — STUDY AND MEDITATION AIDS**

How does one study the Bible? What can be done to understand the Biblical text better? Where are answers to Biblical question found? How does one focus to meditate on the Word and apply it to life today?

This Study Guide was designed at the request of Pastor Brad Hales, reviewed and edited by Pr. Greg Fryer and Pr. Brian Triller. It's a 2 page, back-to-back, document that can be folded and kept in one's Bible or downloaded to one's computer or mobile device. It can assist with acquiring habits to find more understanding and improved focus as one meditates on God's Holy Word. Led by the Holy Spirit, it will assist one to grow a deeper relationship with our Lord, Jesus Christ. It can lead to deeper discussions in small groups and with one's pastor.

Find it on our AMR website. Share this guide others. Download the guide at

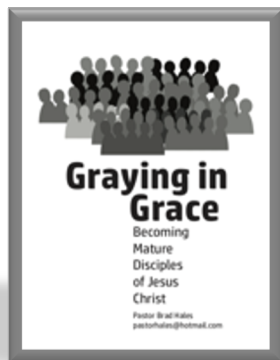
<https://www.atlantic-nalc.org/keys-for-your-biblical-journey/> or email [news.atlantic.nalc@gmail.com](mailto:news.atlantic.nalc@gmail.com).



### **GRAYING IN GRACE**

As an adult becoming an active disciple of Christ begins long before hair turns gray from aging. This study is meant to draw those 60-65 and over into a closer relationship with Christ, yet persons years younger will benefit from this study. Find it at:

<https://thenalc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Graying-in-Grace.pdf>.



### **HOPE FOR OLDER ADULTS**

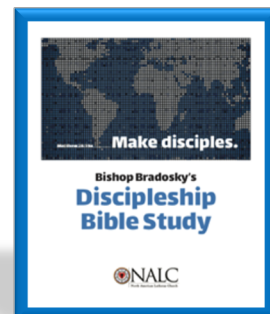
During this time with the threat of a pandemic our older adults are affected in multiple ways. "*Hope for the Older Adult*" helps navigate how God's Word can bring strength and comfort. The study is found at the link below. Consider printing this study for someone without a computer or printer. <https://thenalc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Hope-For-The-Older-Adult-Brad-Hales.pdf>.



### **MAKING DISCIPLES**

*(Bishop Bradosky's Discipleship Bible Study)*

This Bible study was initially used at the 2017 NALC Convocation and designed for attendees by our now Bishop Emeritus Bradosky. It is designed for attendees to be gathered in small groups to discuss "Making Disciples" as described in the Bible. This study remains very relevant for groups and for personal study. It may be found at: <https://thenalc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Bishops-Discipleship-Bible-Study.pdf>.



### **DISCIPLELIFE 2020**

The DiscipleLife 2020 Conference in Orlando Florida this past February was the beginning of a missional partnership between Anglicans and Lutherans in North America. Quoting from our NALC website, "The Anglican



*continued*

Church in North America and the North American Lutheran Church would both describe themselves as “Great Commission” churches—committed to the Lord’s charge to “Go, make disciples...baptize...teach...” (*Matthew 29:19-20*). Other Christian bodies in North America share the same focus, but lack the commitment to the key role of Word and Sacrament in forming Christians who will be disciples and followers of Jesus, intentionally, authentically and with accountability. Essential to such forming of disciples is community, and developing congregational cultures which foster and support disciple-making. As simple as they sound, disciple-making and creating congregations with disciple-making cultures are not familiar or comfortable to most Lutheran and Anglicans in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century!”

The video recordings from all keynote speakers from the DiscipleLife Conference are posted on the NALC website including those of our Bishop Dan Selbo, and our Bishop Emeritus John Bradosky. If you were not able to attend, or even if you did attend, you are invited to hear how the Holy Spirit has been working in the hearts of these speakers. You will be encouraged and motivated as you listen, or listen

again to these presentations. The link is <https://disciplelife2020.org>, select “Conference Recordings” after scrolling down on the page to find them all.

## SCRIPTURAL RETIREMENT

### - SERVING AND SHARING JESUS

What does retirement mean? Do you find retirement mentioned in the Bible? Another study found on our AMR website at <https://www.atlantic-nalc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Scriptural-Retirement-21-Bible-Study-by-B.-Hales.pdf>.

## RENEWING THE LOCAL CHURCH

### - A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

We hear the word renewal frequently in the NALC and other churches as well. Dig deeper in “renewal.” Download this study at <https://www.atlantic-nalc.org/bible-study-renewing-the-local-church-a-biblical-perspective/>.

## THE GIFT OF AN AGING CHURCH

This study looks at the vibrancy of our older adults. <https://www.atlantic-nalc.org/bible-study-the-gift-of-an-aging-church/>.

## ATLANTIC MISSION REGION (AMR)

### THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE & 2020 ANNUAL CONVOCATION

#### *Due to Coronavirus the Emphasis of Both Gatherings Changing*

*Please Note...  
AMR  
Program  
Changes  
Coming!*

The Coronavirus has injected itself into the intended flow of both the **AMR Theological Conference** and the **2020 Annual AMR Convocation**. Meeting via GTM is not as conducive to more intentional in person discussions, interactions, and social time together. The planned conversations on worship will be postponed until fall 2021. Instead both Planning Teams are diligently working to present a new focus of discussion at these two events so our time together will be well spent and more meaningful.

*All district pastors and congregations will receive updates regarding these changes from Robin Harris, our regional and district administrator as soon as they are finalized.*

The information will be updated on our AMR website “*Atlantic-NALC.org*.” Target dissemination date about August 13<sup>th</sup>.



## ATLANTIC MISSION REGION (AMR) COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

*July 18, 2020 - GoToMeeting Teleconference*

*by Robin Harris, AMR Administrative Assistant to the AMR Council and District Deans*

- **The 2020 Theological Conference** – Due to Coronavirus gathering restrictions the AMR theological conference will now be held via Go to Meeting teleconference on Thursday, September 17 in the morning. Details to be announced.
- **The 2020 Annual AMR Convocation** – The convocation will also be held via Go to Meeting teleconference. It will now be held ONLY on Saturday, October 17 in the morning. Details TBA.
- **A Mission Starts/Outreach Fund** will be established with the money allocated from the Mission Starts/Outreach line item of the Ministry Plan budget. This will ensure that the full \$3,000 will be disbursed for this purpose and any unused amount will accumulate over time. Congregations and individuals may contribute directly to this fund which will help mission starts/plants to pay for publicity, liturgical needs, etc.
- **The impact COVID-19** – A discussion centered on the impact COVID is having on our Region and ways we can all stay connected during this time.
- **Support Services:** Pr. Dan Schaefer (Dean of the Central M.D. and licensed professional counselor) is in the process of setting up support services to help pastors, their families, and congregation staff/lay leaders cope with the extraordinary stress they have been experiencing due to the pandemic and transitioning back into in-house worship.
- **Lay Ministry Certification Process** – Discussion of development and support of lay ministry certification to help congregations continue to worship when an ordained supply pastor is unavailable during a time of pastoral transition.
- **RDMT Report:** Guest Lee Mills (chair of the AMR's Renewal & Discipleship Ministry Team) reported that the RDMT is continuing to work on ways to develop discipleship-making cultures in AMR congregations.
- **Seminarian Grants:** The process of awarding scholarship grants to seminarians who are actively engaged in their studies is being developed.
- **Dean Reports** were heard from the Deans of all four Mission Districts and from the Dean of the AMR.
- **Roster updates** are noted below for all AMR roster changes since the Council's last meeting in March.

## ROSTER UPDATES IN THE ATLANTIC MISSION REGION

### THE REVERENDS MICHAEL TAVELLA AND AMANDA GRIMMER RETIRE

On Sunday, June 30, after 33 years of serving together at Holy Trinity

Evangelical Lutheran Church, Abington, PA, Pr. Tavella and Pr. Grimmer retired. Even allowing for social distancing the congregation extended and extremely warm send off to this



dedicated husband-wife team. Holy Trinity surprised and honored them by naming them Pastors Emeriti. They will be back for Christmas when HTELC will further celebrate their 33 years of ministry.

We wish them fulfillment and much joy on this new phase of journeying with our Lord.

See more about their warm send off in a thank you letter posted on Holy Trinity's website:  
<https://www.holytrinity.net/farewell-and-thank-you-for-33-years/>.

**THE REV. LARRY GUENZEL** is currently serving as interim pastor at Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church.

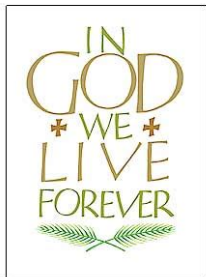
*continued*



**THE REV. PAUL LORENTZEN** (1949-2020)

On July 5, Pr. Lorentzen entered the Church Triumphant. His memorial service will be held sometime in August on Staten Island, NY.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Pastor Lorentzen's family.

**THE REV BRUCE FOSTER**

Pr. Foster was approved to the NALC roster by the NALC Executive Council at their July 16, 2020 meeting. He resides in Lynn, Massachusetts.

Pr. Foster's email:  
*therevbrucefoster@gmail.com*

Pr. Foster, welcome to the NALC and the Atlantic Mission Region.




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## **ATLANTIC MISSION REGION CONTACTS**

**ATLANTIC MISSION REGION COUNCIL**

AMR	Dean David McGettigan <i>dmcgettigan@comcast.net</i>
Central MD	Dean Dan Schaefer <i>rev.dan@verizon.net</i> Lay Rep Joan Oliphant <i>joankeffer@comcast.net</i>
Northeast MD	Dean Brett Jenkins <i>pastorjenkins.sts@gmail.com</i> Lay Rep Wayne Knerr <i>knerrw@helenaagri.com</i>
Southern MD	Dean John Kulczycki <i>john.kulczycki@verizon.net</i> Lay Rep Jerrie Rosenfeld <i>jdkent03@hotmail.com</i>
Western MD	Dean Steve Shipman <i>prsteveshipman@gmail.com</i> Lay Rep Philip Polstra <i>ppolstra@gmail.com</i>

**AMR RENEWAL & DISCIPLESHP  
MINISTRY TEAM**

Chair, Lee Mills <i>lmills.email@comcast.net</i>
The Rev. Mark Chavez <i>mchavez@thenalc.org</i>
The Rev. Brett Jenkins <i>pastorjenkins.sts@gmail.com</i>
The Rev. John Kulczycki <i>john.kulczycki@verizon.net</i>
The Rev. Brian Triller <i>briantriller@protonmail.com</i>
The Rev. Luke Seamon <i>pastor@reformation-nalc.org</i>
Ex Officio & Admin Judy Mills <i>news.atlantic.nalc@gmail.com</i>

**ORGANIZATIONAL STAFF**

Robin Harris, AMR Admin. Assistant	<i>ryhh67@verizon.net</i>
Kathaleen Lilley, AMR Treasurer	<i>kflilley@comcast.net</i>
Judy Mills, Editor, The Atlantic Vine	<i>news.atlantic.nalc@gmail.com</i>

**GoToMEETING REMINDER...**

A reminder that any AMR congregation currently not utilizing Zoom, GoToMeeting, or other tech meeting rooms have access to GoToMeeting by contacting our AMR administrator Robin Harris at *ryhh67@verizon.net*.

## MAKE NOTE: THE NEXT AMR NEWS

***Next submission deadline for The Atlantic Vine — November 3, 2020.***

*Email Judy with your communications and correspondence to: [newsletter@Atlantic-nalc.org](mailto:newsletter@Atlantic-nalc.org).*

*This newsletter aims to communicate beyond individual congregations.*



- Publicize any special events or special stories about members of your congregation.
- Share an interesting discipleship story.
- Share any effective resources your congregation is using.
- Remember submissions may be made by congregational members too!

## ***You Have All You Need***

*You have a Bible? Read it! When anxiety termite away at your peace, read Philippians 4:6: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” Or perhaps laziness is knocking on your door. Read Colossians 3:23: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart.”*



*Don't make a decision, large or small, without sitting before God with an open Bible, open heart, open ears. Philippians 2:13 says, “God is working in you to help you want to do and be able to do what pleases Him.” You have all you need to face the giant-size questions of your life. Most of all, you have a God who loves you too much to let you wander. You have a heart for God? Heed it. A Bible? Read it.*

*- Max Lucado*

### ***THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY RELEASES 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL “STATE OF THE BIBLE SURVEY”***

A closing note: one will find an outstanding survey report by the American Bible Society and Barna Research, released July 22, 2020, worthy of consideration. It reveals how in-church attendance directly affects personal faith and scripture reading. It also shows how COVID-19 has impacted religion and Scripture engagement. Copy and paste this Adobe .pdf link to your web browser to view the report.

<https://news.americanbible.org/blog/entry/corporate-blog/american-bible-society-releases-10th-annual-state-of-the-bible-survey>.