



2013 Convocation

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Report of the Candidacy Committee

The Candidacy Committee of the NALC is a nine-member, geographically-dispersed panel working to identify and support future leaders of the church. Working in partnership with the Bishop and his staff, we seek to prayerfully guide qualified candidates as they move through the educational process and continue to discern God's call to ministry. The committee oversees internship site development and placement, as well as a scholarship fund for theological education. In addition to our work with seminarians, the committee also leads the colloquy process for ordained pastors seeking to move into the NALC from other traditions.

Each year the committee meets in March, June, and October to conduct interview panels for individuals at various stages in the candidacy process. Whether coming to us for an entrance, endorsement, or approval decision or perhaps a developmental interview for additional guidance, the committee seeks to aid the candidate's discernment process and theological development while at the same time bearing in mind the requirements and expectations of the wider church. At each of the three milestones in the candidacy process, candidates are reviewed to determine their progress using seminary transcripts, candidacy essays, CPE and/or internship evaluations, and a one to one-and-a-half hour conversation with the committee focused on biblical, theological, and confessional matters. Personal and pastoral references, as well as full criminal background checks, are required of all NALC ministry candidates. In calendar year 2012 the committee gave nine (9) positive entrance decisions, four (4) endorsements to proceed with internship, and ten (10) approval decisions recommending those candidates to the church for first call.

2013 marks the third consecutive year the Candidacy Committee has sponsored a two-day gathering for NALC seminarians at the annual Convocation. This is an intentional time for prayer, Bible study, relationship-building, and discussion of ministry matters. In past years Bishop Spring, Bishop Bradosky, and Pastor Cathi Braasch have been seminar leaders. This year Pastor Braasch has once again graciously volunteered her time and talents to lead this valuable opportunity for our ministry candidates.

The committee would like to thank those who are working on the new NALC website, providing a valuable portal for contact and information regarding the candidacy process. We are also grateful for the work of the NALC Task Force on Theological Education and the Executive Council as we work together in the many areas where our responsibilities overlap and depend upon each other. We also express our thanks and appreciation to Bishop Bradosky, Pastor Mark Chavez, Pastor David Wendel, and Becky Seifert for their ongoing partnership with and assistance to the committee. Finally, I offer my personal gratitude to each committee member for their time, talent, and dedication to the task to which we have been called. May God bless our work and the North American Lutheran Church!

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the committee,

Rev. Rafe L. Allison, Chairperson

2013 North American Lutheran Church Convocation Report of the Court of Adjudication

The Court of Adjudication respectfully presents this report.

I. Cases Handled

No cases were filed, considered, or decided in the last year.

II. Rules Regarding Disciplinary Cases

Under Section 15.04 of the Constitution, the Court is obligated to “draft rules of procedure sufficient to ensure fairness to all interested parties and to enable the Court to reach informed decisions.” With one partial exception, the Court fulfilled this responsibility in 2011. Under Section 14.05 of the Constitution, the Executive Council is to “develop and approve a process for discipline and appeal proceedings.” The Executive Council’s work on this task is nearly complete. Once it is complete, the Court will draft rules that are consistent with the NALC Constitution and with the process adopted by the Executive Council.

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We all are privileged to serve and we stand ready to fulfill the responsibilities assigned by the Constitution to the Court of Adjudication. We are, however, gratified that no conflicts have yet required our attention.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard F. Currey, Esq.
Jon Evans, Esq.
James H. Gale, Esq.
The Rev. Dr. Jeffray Greene
The Rev. Dr. Ralph A. Kempfski
Carolyn Nestingen, Esq.
The Rev. Dr. Ron Warren

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Report of the Joint Commission on Theology and Doctrine

The Joint Commission on Theology and Doctrine met in August 2012 and May 2013, as well as by conference call in January 2013.

As part of its responsibilities, the Joint Commission regularly reviewed the ecumenical relationships affecting the North American Lutheran Church and Lutheran CORE. The report of Pastor David Wendel, Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry and Ecumenism, includes a summary of these relationships.

The Joint Commission continues to sponsor a gathering for younger theologians as part of the Convocations week. We are grateful that Dr. Amy Schiffrin and Dr. Nathan Yoder serve as co-conveners for this gathering. Additionally, the Joint Commission sponsors an annual theological conference, also in conjunction with the convocations. The theme for next year's conference will be "Bible, Canon, and Creeds." Since the constituting convocation of the NALC, Dr. Carl Braaten and Dr. Robert Benne have served as co-conveners for these theological conferences. They have requested that their responsibilities be passed on to others. The NALC and Lutheran CORE owe a deep sense of gratitude to these two eminent theologians for their leadership of these very important conferences.

The Joint Commission recommended to the NALC Executive Council that a task force on theological education be appointed. The Executive Council approved this recommendation and appointed the members for this task force. This year's NALC Convocation will review and take action on the recommendations of this task force.

In response to a request from Bishop John Bradosky, the Joint Commission provided counsel to him regarding worship leadership by laypersons. This "word of counsel" is intended to be transitional in nature, pending a report on the one office of lay ministry.

The Joint Commission recommended to the NALC Executive Council that a task force be appointed to study and bring recommendations on the formation of one office for lay ministry. The Executive Council approved the recommendation and has appointed persons to this task force. The Joint Commission has offered the following recommendations to the task force:

1. that an office of deacon be created as an ordained ministry in the NALC;
2. that the ministry of deacon be principally as an evangelist, missionary, and catechist;
3. that the NALC provide training and formation for the office of deacon, a certification and calling process, and ordination and installation rites for this ministry; and
4. that the policy for lay ministry, previously adopted by the Commission, be a part of the work of this task force.

The 2012 NALC Convocation directed the Joint Commission to prepare informational and other materials for congregations as a part of the congregational ratification process for membership in the Lutheran World Federation. The Joint Commission provided materials as authorized. In

addition, the Joint Commission recommended to the Executive Council the adoption of two other LWF-related documents: a statement on full communion and a letter of counsel to Bishop Bradosky regarding worship leadership and participation by NALC congregations and pastors. The Executive Council adopted both documents.

The Joint Commission considered themes for theological reflection in the coming years. The Joint Commission listed four major matters as priorities: the protection of nascent life, religious freedom, marriage and sexuality, and concern for the poor and needy.

Over the past year, the Joint Commission prepared a teaching document, “A Word of Counsel on the Sanctity of Nascent Life.” Both the Lutheran CORE Steering Committee and the Executive Council of the North American Lutheran Church received this document and commended it to the church as a study and educational work. At the present time, the Joint Commission is working on a comparable message on the care of the poor and the needy.

The year 2017 marks the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation. A subcommittee of the Joint Commission is presently developing ways by which NALC and Lutheran CORE congregations may properly recognize this important event in the life of the church.

The following persons serve on the Joint Commission from Lutheran CORE: Kenneth Sauer, Carl Braaten, and Stephen Hultgren; from the North American Lutheran Church: Robert Benne, David Hahm, Mary Havens, Benjamin Johnson, Glen Johnson, James Nestingen, Eric Riesen, Amy Schifrin, Henry Schulte, Susan Tolton, and Larry Yoder. Paull Spring serves as convener. Co-chairs are Paul Uring, Lutheran CORE Moderator, and John Bradosky, Bishop of the North American Lutheran Church.

Respectfully submitted,

Paull Spring
Paul Uring
John Bradosky

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Report of the NALC Canada Commission

The NALC Canada Commission has been charged with the task of seeking formal acceptance by the Government of Canada for the NALC – Canada Section as a registered charity and as the legal expression in Canada of the North American Lutheran Church. Individual Canadian congregations of the NALC are already registered charities simply by virtue of being churches, but it is necessary that there be some larger organization to see to matters which are more difficult for individual congregations to see to on their own. This includes such things as the provision of a pension plan, health and dental insurance, and long term disability insurance, etc. The NALC – Canada Section will also make such arrangements as necessary to facilitate the legal transfer of funds across our borders. But the NALC – Canada Section will limit its activities to these “Left Hand Realm” issues and will not be organizing itself as an autonomous Canadian church. The NALC is neither an American church, nor a Canadian church. It is a Lutheran Church in North America that has congregations in Canada and the USA. The trick is to get the government of Canada to understand this.

To this end the NALC Canada Commission has been working with our lawyers to draft legal documents spelling out the precise parameters of our “corporation” in the hopes that the government will grant us swift approval. As you can well imagine, the word “swift” usually only applies to governments when they are collecting taxes. But we are a people of hope!

The final draft of the proposal for the NALC – Canada Section General Operating Bylaws is nearly completed and should be in the hands of the government shortly. We have been told that it might take 10 months or more for them to complete their work, either approving it or sending it back to us for revisions.

In the meantime there is nothing to stop us from being the North American Lutheran Church. Individual congregations in Canada have their own charitable number and are able to operate as they always have. Each congregation is allowed by law to send up to \$5,000.00 to the NALC international office, without the need of agency agreements or contracts for services being in place. Pastors from the USA can take calls in Canada, assuming their visas are approved, and Canadian pastors can likewise take calls in the USA. Certain things (e.g., eligibility for military and prison chaplaincies, transfer of larger sums of money, etc.) will have to wait until the NALC – Canada section has been approved.

Probably the most pressing matter is the question of pension, health, and dental benefits. We are happy to report that the Lord has provided for us a ready-made solution through the generosity of our brothers and sisters in the Lutheran Church Canada, who graciously made their plan available for NALC pastors serving in Canada. They made the necessary changes to their bylaws and now we are able to belong to a fairly large group with a very good plan. In addition to this, the LCC has allowed Canadian NALC pastors to receive our license to solemnize marriages through them. They have truly been a blessing to us, and we look forward to many years of fellowship with them.

The wheels sometimes seem to grind slowly, but they are indeed grinding. We are a young organization, with much to do. But how very exciting it is!!

Respectfully submitted,

The Canadian Commission:

Pastor Donald Allman – Chair
Pastor Karl Johnsen – Secretary
Pastor K. Glen Johnson
Pastor Phillip Gagnon
Pastor Victor Langford
Pastor Mark Chavez

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Report of the Nominations Committee

The 2013 Nominating Committee of the North American Lutheran Church is pleased to announce those who have been nominated to serve on the NALC Executive Council and the NALC Court of Adjudication:

Executive Council - Lay Member (4-year term)

- + Matthew Burkhart - Columbus, Ohio
- + Richard Jansak - Hendersonville, N.C
- + Paul O'Malley - Auburn, Ind.
- + Frank Polkowski - East Amherst, N.Y.

Court of Adjudication (4-year term - Two positions)

- + Jon Evans - Pittsburgh, Pa.
- + Pastor Jeffray Greene - Rantoul, Ill.

Executive Council - Ordained Minister (4-year term)

- + Pastor Bassam Abdallah - Hammond, Ind.
- + Pastor Cathi Braasch - Elwood, Neb.
- + Pastor Phillip Gagnon - St. Albert, Alberta
- + Pastor John Hopper - Hot Springs, S.D.
- + Pastor Eddy Perez - Miami, Fla.
- + Pastor Royan Rodney - Middleburgh, N.Y.
- + Pastor Amy Schifrin - Elkader, Iowa
- + Pastor Donna Smith - Champaign, Ill.
- + Pastor Solveig Zamzow - Grafton, Iowa

The 2013 NALC Convocation will elect one lay person and one pastor to the Executive Council and two members of the Court of Adjudication.

The Nominating Committee requested nominations from NALC congregations and NALC members by sending a request to congregations and by including requests for nominations in the *NALC News*.

Those who were nominated were asked to provide biographical information using a form developed by the committee.

Biographical information on the candidates was provided in accordance with the NALC Constitution which requires the Nominating Committee to provide biographical information on the candidates 90 days prior to the Convocation. The information was posted on the NALC website, published in the *NALC News* for May, and sent by e-mail to NALC congregations.

The responsibilities of the Nominating Committee are mostly clerical: to request nominations and then receive them; to request biographical information from the candidates and to provide it to NALC congregations and Convocation delegates.

The Nominating Committee also received nominations for the 2014 Nominating Committee and forwarded those names to the Executive Council for consideration. The Executive Council submits proposed members of the Nominating Committee for confirmation by the Convocation.

We were grateful to receive the names of so many well-qualified individuals for service to our church. God has blessed the NALC with many dedicated servants. Please pray that God will raise up the leaders who will best serve us at this time in the life of our church.

Respectfully submitted,

2013 NALC Nominating Committee

Pastor David Baer - Whitewood, S.D. (Chair)

Richard Jansak - Hendersonville, N.C.

Christopher Nevins - Fredericksburg, Texas

Victor Stevens - North Ridgeville, Ohio

Pastor Michael Tamorria - Rockford, Ohio

2013 North American Lutheran Church Convocation Report of the Task Force for Theological Education, 2013

The Task Force has continued its work of planning and preparing for faithful theological education for both NALC clergy and laity. This past year, its work has focused on the vital task of establishing seminary education to insure that NALC congregations will be well supplied with clergy who are properly grounded in confessional theology and practice. A presentation of the seminary concept will be made to the Convocation.

The Task Force hired a retired seminary president as its consultant in September, 2012, to work with it in recommending to the Executive Council and the Convocation a location for the NALC Seminary (NALS) and how it would be organized. Policies and procedures, issues involving governance, budgets and revenue, and a core curriculum were discussed. The Task Force recommends that the NALS Center be located at a currently established seminary that has accreditation with the Association of Theological Schools, which is the main accrediting agency in the United States and Canada. Such an arrangement will be less expensive than establishing our own institution and will allow our students to pursue post-graduate theological studies.

A subcommittee of the Task Force made a site visit to three locations in March, 2013, and submitted its recommendation to the Executive Council for a Seminary Center, which would be the main hub for the NALS. The recommendation rested on Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, PA, an Anglican institution that has had a good relationship with the NALC for some time. The NALS would also be comprised of satellite locations, or Houses of Studies, across the country. A Department of Lutheran Studies has already been established at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Charlotte, NC, with Dr. Mary Havens (NALC) as Director. If this NALS proposal is approved by the Convocation, the Gordon-Conwell Department of Lutheran Studies at Charlotte will become the first NALS House of Studies. Other Houses of Studies may be located in other regions as funding and resources permit.

The Task Force also drew up criteria for calling a general Director for the NALS.

Quality faculty members have been identified to teach on-site and online courses. Courses will be offered at the Charlotte site beginning fall, 2013. Courses at the Seminary Center, if approved, would begin sometime in 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

Roy Harrisville III, Chair
James Bangsund
Robert Benne
Carl Braaten
Roy Harrisville, Sr.

Ben Arlen Johnson
Richard Merkouris
Amy Schifrin
Nathan Howard Yoder
David Wendel

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Report of the Women of the NALC

The Women of the NALC, which is for every woman within the church body of the NALC, is dedicated to *guide and direct our Sisters in Christ in their efforts to move forward in faith and mission, through prayer and evangelism, and with the Holy Scriptures as the ultimate authority of God.*

The WNALC supports and assists the women's ministries of the church, linking them together as a community of faith, hope, and love. We have accomplished this by connecting the WNALC with the individual ministries and by connecting the individual ministries with each other. We have coordinated and assisted with regional gatherings in many Mission Districts and continue to develop these gatherings so that the women may join together in their spiritual journey and mission opportunity.

Members of The Women's Council serve as liaisons with the Mission Districts to connect the women's groups with each other and with the WNALC. We have spoken at many gatherings, both regional and individual.

This past year, we developed guides to assist the women in creating a Thank Offering Service that is personalized to their individual ministries and passions.

At last year's annual meeting, we learned that we were not required to have our own constitution, as we were an auxiliary ministry of the NALC church body. Operational Guidelines were presented at the meeting that addressed our operational functions. These were adopted at the meeting. The Guidelines were then sent to each rostered women's ministry (any group that had provided contact information to us). We have had responses from the majority of these women's groups. One hundred percent of those ministries returning a response approved these Guidelines.

Our website, WNALC.org, is a place for women to obtain information and news. We offer daily devotions and prayers on our Facebook group page. This page gives women the opportunity to join in conversations with others about their spirituality, mission, and activities. We encourage all women to join us and participate on this "closed group page."

We continue to offer guidance to those who are forming new women's ministries, whether they are creating new ministries or they may be part of a congregation new to the NALC.

We will continue to connect our Sisters in Christ, as we Share God's Love.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Wallace, National Chair
The Women's Council for the Women of the NALC

