

# Nominating Committee Report

The 2018 Nominating Committee presents the candidates named below for positions to be elected at the NALC Convocation Aug. 15-17 in Denver, Colorado.

We believe the individuals named below are qualified and would do well in their service to the NALC if elected.

Additional nominations for Executive Council and Court of Adjudication may be made, providing they meet the requirements set forth in the NALC Constitution (Articles 10.03, 15.01), which specify that *“Three or more delegates representing at least three congregations may together submit an additional nomination in writing. To be in order, the nomination, together with supporting biographical information, must be submitted to the Nominating Committee no later than 45 days prior to the Convocation.”*

The deadline for submitting additional nominations is June 30, 2018.

Nominations for the Board of Regents may be submitted at any time prior to the Convocation and from the floor of the Convocation.

Nomination and biographical information forms may be found at [www.thenalc.org/nominations](http://www.thenalc.org/nominations).

The committee is grateful for the opportunity to have served the NALC, and we commend these well-qualified individuals to the Convocation for your consideration. We pray that God will guide the election process so that those who will best serve us will be raised up.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pastor Wendy Berthelsen  
Pastor Cathi Braasch  
Ms. Shelly Ree  
Pastor Bert Schultz  
Mr. Marc Voigt, Chair

## **Executive Council - Lay Member (4-year term)**

*(One person to be elected)*

+ Richard E. Jansak  
+ Larry D. Shull

## **Executive Council - Ordained Minister (4-year term)**

*(One person to be elected)*

+ Pastor Timothy E. Johnson  
+ Pastor Melinda H. Jones  
+ Pastor James R. Palan

## **Court of Adjudication (4-year term)**

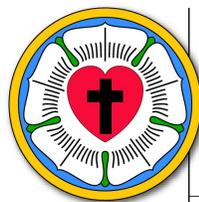
*(Two persons to be elected)*

+ James Gale  
+ Pastor John J. Moffett

## **NALS Board of Regents (6-year term)**

*(Three persons to be elected)*

+ Pastor Wendy A. W. Berthelsen  
+ Pastor Dennis R. Di Mauro  
+ Pastor Phillip E. Gagnon  
+ Kevin D. Langholz  
+ Pastor James T. Lehmann  
+ Pastor Troy A. Mulvaine  
+ Pastor David M. Phillips  
+ Pastor Donna Hacker Smith  
+ Pastor Norman J. Sulaica  
+ Roger Weyersberg



# NALC

North American Lutheran Church

# Richard E. Jansak

*Nominee for Executive Council*

**Name:**

Richard E. Jansak

**Address:**

Hendersonville, North Carolina

**Congregation:**

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church  
Gastonia, North Carolina

**Occupation:**

Retired



**Basic Biographical Information:**

Married with six daughters and 11 grandchildren. Degree in electrical engineering from the University of Bridgeport and an MBA from the University of Rochester. Hobbies include private flying, computers and the stock market. Attended several sessions at Gordon-Conwell working on Lutheran Studies Certificate, completed Confessing the Faith.

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position:**

Held many positions within the local church including Bible study facilitator, Sunday School teacher, council member and council president. Started a once-a-week home Bible study group consisting of 14 members. Regularly attend church home or away.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

I have tried to contribute to the work of the NALC Executive Council over the past four years. I believe I have encouraged and been supportive of my fellow Executive Council members and the NALC staff as they have addressed and resolved issues within a growing and dynamic new denomination.

Over a business management career of some 30 years, I have accumulated experience in finance, team interaction, marketing and problem resolution.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

The number of congregations within the NALC (over 420) has stretched the current NALC organization to the point where a new organization is being seriously considered. Implementation of the recommendations of the Growth and Structure Task Force will be a major effort over the next few years. A new Bishop in 2019 will also need to agree with the need and solution to the organization recommendations.

Beyond the organizational issues, the NALC needs a more far-reaching communications strategy. My experience visiting Lutheran churches indicates that there remains a lack of knowledge of the NALC and what the reasons were for its formation. The NALC needs to provide a scripturally-based home for those Lutherans and other individuals unhappy with current liberal trends.

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

My hopes are that the implementation of the recommended organizational changes goes smoothly and is effective in maintaining a reasonable workload for the NALC Bishop and staff. More reasonable workloads should create opportunities for greater outreach and communications with organizations and individuals desiring to associate with the NALC.

The Discipleship Initiative is becoming effective at the congregational level and should bear fruit in the coming years.

**What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

Becoming disciples and fulfilling the Great Commission are our most important priorities.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its Mission Districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church body?**

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One of the main objectives of an improved organization is to realign the Mission Districts to enable them to focus on mission. Smaller Mission Districts will provide the time and resources to attend to developing mission churches, a major objective of the NALC. Member congregations will need to support and be involved in the mission activity. Mission development needs to move to the local level.

Some Protestant denominations have put forth a position that one might obtain salvation without Christ. Unbelievable! NALC members must constantly live our Christ-Centered commitment by the way we live our lives and demonstrate our faith.

**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

One of the joys of being retired is the time to read and study more. As the facilitator for our weekly Bible study group, I spend about three hours the day before preparing for the actual Bible study. I enjoy reading the commentaries and gaining additional insights related to the upcoming lesson. This time with the Word and the Holy Spirit is wonderful. I do formally pray, but I find more and more that I often converse with God throughout the day and, sometimes, in the middle of the night. It is our habit to offer grace at every meal, including meals outside the home.

**List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

“For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’”

— Jeremiah 29:11

Life isn't always easy. I've been through some career changes and personal changes in my life and sometimes questioned where I was going. This verse, however, always came back to my mind and was, and is, very comforting. My future is secure with Jesus!

# Larry D. Shull

*Nominee for Executive Council*

**Name:**

Larry D. Shull

**Address:**

Spartanburg, South Carolina

**Congregation:**

St. Jacob's Lutheran Church  
Chapin, South Carolina

**Occupation:**

Semi-retired, Textile  
Machinery Sales and Plant Appraisals



**Basic Biographical Information:**

Married to Elizabeth for 39 years, one daughter, one grandson, one great-granddaughter. Studied Industrial Engineering and Accounting at Gaston College, Gastonia, N.C. (non-grad). Hobbies: Reading, sports, gardening.

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position:**

Executive Council of Carolinas Mission District (ending second term), Finance Chair; Adult Bible Study Leader, 35 years; Team Leader, Stewardship Committee, St. Jacob's Lutheran Church (present); Board of Directors Lutheran Family Services in the Carolinas (two terms, 1996-2002); Representative to ELCA Churchwide Assembly (2005 and 2009); Synod Council, the South Carolina Synod of the ELCA (2009-2011); Church Council (seven terms), Council Chair (five terms).

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

Love for the Body of Christ, love of Scripture and willingness to share by leading study groups; ability to listen; willingness to witness to Christ's love for each of us.

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**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

Leading young men and women to recognize a calling to the ministry; societal changes including persecution of Christians in the United States, as well as within other countries; being able to teach and lead members within our church body to witness to others freely and boldly.

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

To see our congregations grow in understanding, as well as membership, and to extend into our communities and regions with new mission churches; to stand boldly for the truth of Scripture and to teach our youth within our congregations so that they are not swayed by the secular teaching found within our local schools and universities; to build up support for our seminary and other teaching facilities (i.e. Department of Lutheran Studies, Gordon-Conwell); and to develop camping ministry locations within regions of the NALC where our youth (particularly) and adults can gather to learn and fellowship together under orthodox leadership.

**What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

First and always, teaching and preaching the Gospel; building our youth programs to strengthen our future ministries and building strong new leadership; witnessing within our local communities to build up the Body of Christ (in membership) in order that our global partners will see the earnestness of our works in Christ; supporting our Great Commission Society financially and prayerfully; speaking out publicly against the infringement of our God-given rights within our own country.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its Mission Districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church body?**

Form a team to build and assemble curriculum for our Sunday School classes and our youth programs that teach us how to intentionally be Christ Centered and Mission Driven; develop young family ministries to help parents to incorporate prayer and devotions into family settings and teach our children the importance of lifelong learning and Christian fellowship.

**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

First of all, beginning and ending each day in prayer and conversation with God; seeing prayers being answered almost every day of my life; in fellowship with our church family and other friends and believers that I encounter each day; in the love of and from family and friends; and in being humbly rewarded with opportunities to serve him in our congregation and his whole Church.

**List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” — John 3:16.

This verse assures me of an eternal life with him without the penalty or wages of sin that I truly deserve. It takes away all fear of death and the grave and lets me live in peace, free to love others as I attempt to learn how to love others as he loves me, knowing that when I stumble he is there to pick me up and help me begin again.

# Timothy E. Johnson

*Nominee for Executive Council*

**Name:**

Timothy Earl Johnson

**Address:**

Abbotsford, British Columbia

**Congregation:**

Peace Lutheran Church  
Fort St. John, British Columbia

**Occupation:**

Pastor



Canadian Lutheran clergy (ELCC and then ELCIC), ordained June 1978 to early retirement June 2012, after failed congregational vote to leave ELCIC.

Appointed as an NALC rostered minister to serve an Anglican parish by a conservative bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada (The Right Rev. William Anderson, Diocese of Caledonia), November 2012 to final retirement in April 2016.

**Basic Biographical Information:**

Born March 31, 1951, in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, the year my father, the Rev. Carl Johnson, graduated and was ordained. Carl's ministry took us across three western provinces and included three years at the Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute (CLBI) in Camrose, Alberta.

High School graduation, Fort St. John, British Columbia (1969); Camrose Lutheran College, Camrose, Alberta (1969-1971); University of Alberta, Edmonton, B.Sc. (Honours, 1972); Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, M.Div. (1978); Internship at Christ Lutheran (ELCC) and St. John's Lutheran (LCA) in Winnipeg and the Falcon Lake Resort Ministry.

Married to Bev Weidman, March 28, 1975. We have two adult children, David and Drew, and lost an infant daughter, Anne, only a day and a half old (in 1984). Drew is married to Amanda and they have one son, Zachary, our only grandchild ... so far. We plan to move this summer, 2018, to our

final retirement destination in Vernon, British Columbia.

Interests include music, particularly the rich folk music of the church these last 40 years, and "fiddling and fixing" things around the house and garage (like my aging Miata).

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position:**

- + Golden Valley Lutheran Church, Viking, Alberta, June 1978 to April 1984.
- + Trinity Lutheran Church, Lanigan, Saskatchewan, May 1984 to November 1988.
- + Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Langley, British Columbia, November 1988 to October 2004.
- + Grace Lutheran Church, Dawson Creek, British Columbia, October 2004 to June 2012.
- + Program Committee and Board of Hastings Lake Lutheran Bible Camp, Central Alberta Division for Theological Education and Leadership of ELCIC, 1985-1988.
- + Examining Committee, Saskatchewan Synod, ELCIC, 1987-1988.
- + Lutheran Campus Ministry Board for Central Canada, 1986-1988.
- + Team ministry at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Langley, British Columbia, with the Rev. Brad Senften, 1992-2004.
- + British Columbia Synod Confirmation Camp, instruction, music and leadership, 1990-2004.
- + Conference Dean (at times) in Lower Fraser Valley and Peace River Conferences of ELCIC.
- + British Columbia Synod Task Force on Issues of Sexuality, 2004-2005.

Contributed a 2005 essay, "A Clear Question," to the Additional Contributions of the Same-Sex Blessings discussion in the ELCIC. In 2007, with colleague, the Rev. Ed Mitchler, distributed a mailing to all congregations, pastors, and theologians of the ELCIC in defense of the church's traditional understanding of sexuality. In 2012, the congregational vote to leave ELCIC failed narrowly. I resigned and was prepared to take early retirement. Then ...

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Anglican Parish of the South Peace, Dawson Creek, British Columbia, Nov. 2012 to March 2016, which eventually led to appointment as Archdeacon of Caledonia-East and serving on Diocesan Executive and Administration Group. NALC service in this ministry was by special call extended by the Executive Council dated Nov. 12, 2012.

### **What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

Family and history in Western Canadian Lutheranism: Small and large parishes, mission support, Lutheran cooperation (not every synod had a church in every town), the Bible school and Bible camp movements, Luther League, and the church schools. Awareness of the other Lutheran groups and ministries. Friendships and relationships with pastors and congregations of the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations (CALC).

Joy in studying the Bible: Time slowed down in sermon preparation and even “old” texts, studied and preached on before, revealed new messages. I don't know if as much got communicated in preaching, but I took the richness found in preparation as a gift.

Other personal gifts: music, attentive listening, attention to detail.

Anglican gifts (from three and a half years with a conservative bishop and diocese in northern Canada): This gave appreciation for the earlier, deeper history of facing liberal trends in North America, how 13 Anglican bishops in Canada maintained the tradition (but ultimately failed), the aboriginal context in Canada, the worldwide Anglican communion, GAFCON, Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) and Anglican Network in Canada. All this besides learning about Anglican worship from the inside out.

### **What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

Are we prepared to be a remnant community, small, and unpopular? I confess that I expected many more in the ELCA and ELCIC to stay, to stay faithful to our Confessions of Faith concerning the Scriptures which after 2009 and 2011 meant leaving the ELCA and ELCIC. Now not so many have and we face the reality of how many we are — or are not.

The unpopularity may get worse. It was sobering, but also strengthening, to see the 2015 Braaten-Benne Lectures take up the theme of “Martyrdom and the Suffering of the Righteous.” The lectures, and particularly the testimony of persecution, is evidence of greater challenges to come and of our Lord's preparation of us.

Theological education and the replacement of retiring pastors will be an ongoing challenge. It is well worth placing our major energy and resources there. I visited Ambridge in August 2013 when the NALC Convocation was held in Pittsburgh and am delighted to see the energetic work now taking place there at the NALS (and incidentally for me to see it taking place together with the Anglican Trinity School for Ministry).

### **What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

I hope that we will prove to be what we intend to be: the faithful bearers of a North American Lutheranism that our forebearers brought and lived — in contrast to an over-liberalism that lost its way.

I hope to see young men and women moved by the Spirit to enter into ministry in the NALC.

And I have some hope for a gathering of the fragmented pieces of Lutheranism in North America. There were smaller groups before, Lutheran Brethren, Lutheran Free churches, etc. There are issues of polity and authority, as well as worship styles, music, and history. Some years now after the Big Explosion(s) is there a chance to talk about weaving together? Using the relationships we

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already have for conversation without worrying about any results might be all we can do for now.

### **What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

Theological education would be a first priority. I see this as "theology for the parish." In Canada, the ELCIC merger discussion and documents were clear to keep the congregation as the locus, the site of the church — the place where Word and Sacrament are turned loose on the world. Effective, astute, faith-filled and joyous pastors committed to the faith life of congregations is the goal.

Support and commitment to some leader(s) visiting congregations could be an important ministry. In Dawson Creek, British Columbia, in 1957, our family was visited by Dr. Mars Dale, head of home missions for the ALC. I was just a kid, but I'm sure his office was in Minneapolis and we noticed. Right now leadership is so few, with so many needs, and almost everyone is working "off the edge of their desks." Many congregations need to "see the face of the NALC" in someone else than just their own pastor. (And kudos to those who do just that.) Regional bishops may be a step in this direction.

A new ecumenism may be developing. The emergence of the Global Anglican Fellowship Conference (GAFCON) has exposed the split in the worldwide Anglican communion. Anglicanism and North American Lutheranism have experienced the crisis (Will there be only one?) and a solid new consensus is emerging out the other side. We are already finding each other (e.g. ACNA). Taking part in this may grow in importance.

### **What tangible actions can the NALC, its Mission Districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church body?**

Bible study. The most tangible action I can think of is to immerse ourselves (again) in deliberate, comprehensive Bible study like we had in the Bethel Series, like the Search Bible studies, like Doctrine in Diagram. We have not fared so well with issue-driven Bible study; it has put the cart before

the horse. We need to let God's Word set the agenda.

And offer it to the community. Fewer and fewer of our neighbours know the Bible anymore — and that may seem a curse. But the blessing is that many of them no longer carry a bias against, distaste for, or resentment of church and religion but may be simply curious. Besides studying for ourselves we can turn ourselves "open to the public."

Family ministries. The understanding of the estate of the family is a particularly Lutheran gift and ministries of service, education, support to families will benefit not only members of congregations but also be an open door for mission.

### **Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

Daily devotions in a personal, chapter-by-chapter reading of Scripture — Old Testament, New Testament (Acts to Revelation), Gospel, Psalm — has become a firm foundation. It does not depend on the church year, the daily news, the political agenda and so is rather liberating. Something here almost always provides foundation, stability, or direction for the day. I experience God active in his Word.

Aging has meant waiting for direction more. Did I use to always know what to do next? Now both motivation and direction are sometimes lacking. At first there was some panic around this, but two things have happened by waiting: 1) Observation that there is a lot going on and some of what God was doing was not visible at first (when I was busy), and 2) Trust has grown; both direction and motivation have come after waiting and that has built confidence that the Holy Spirit is guiding. I experience the Holy Spirit giving direction and motivation when I have been empty in myself.

The Small Catechism of Martin Luther. When I was awake between 3 a.m. and 5 a.m. in the mornings in 2011-2013 from fear, it was the words, "We are to fear, love, and trust in God above anything else," that were able to give me rest. The familiar words and phrases of the Catechism come to mind almost

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daily because of news and events and reciting them mentally in times of quiet affirms the shape and skeleton of Christian life.

**List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

“We are the impostors who speak the truth, the unknown men whom all men know; dying we still live on; disciplined by suffering, we are not done to death; in our sorrows we have always cause for joy, poor ourselves, we bring wealth to many; penniless, we own the world.”

— 2 Corinthians 6:8b-10 NEB

This was a part of my Mobility Form in the ELCIC from the time we first had such things. It was in Core Convictions: (This I believe about life, theology, sense of call) and I said, “I have a strong bias to confessional Lutheran theology and preaching: a strong doctrine of the Word, the theology of incarnation (“God-with-us”), baptismal grace, the work of the Holy Spirit in creating faith, awareness of paradox in Christian life and doctrine. I became a pastor because it was the task that most needs to be done. My favourite verses for ministry (and Christian life) are 2 Corinthians 6:3-10, especially as translated in the New English Bible” (and as above, vss. 8b-10 for example).



CALLING



GATHERING



ENLIGHTENING



SANCTIFYING

2018 NALC LUTHERAN WEEK

## Melinda H. Jones

*Nominee for Executive Council*

**Name:**

Melinda H. Jones

**Address:**

Summerville, South Carolina

**Congregation:**

Advent Evangelical Lutheran Church; North Charleston, South Carolina

**Occupation:**

Pastor



**Basic Biographical Information:**

Married 27 years to James; we have two boys: Anatolie (17) and Vasile (12).

United States Army, Communications Instructor - USA Signal School 1988-1992.

University of South Carolina Aiken, BA History, 1998. Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, MAR in Biblical Studies, 2002; M.Div., 2006. Present student at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary working toward Doctorate of Ministry with Parish Focus.

My hobbies are varied, but fun, such as writing icons, singing, watching movies, camping with the family, driving my Jeep, and competitive shooting.

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position:**

I am baptized and believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior.

Serving Christ as pastor to NALC congregation, Advent, North Charleston, S.C., 2007 to present.

Serving Christ on the Executive Council of the North American Lutheran Church; Current Task Force on Structure Committee; Transitional Team for the Election of the Bishop 2019.

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Serving Christ as Chair of Nominations Committee - Carolinas Mission District, 2012 to present.

Served Christ as Executive Committee Member - Carolinas Mission District, 2013 - 2015.

Volunteer, Deputy Chaplain of Coastal Crisis Chaplaincy since 2007.

Served on the steering committee for Orthodox Lutherans — South Carolina, 2009-2012.

Working with PCUSA congregation to share Advent's worship and educational space for two years.

Currently working with the City of North Charleston to prevent/lessen teen violence and domestic violence.

### **What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

I am gifted in knowing how and when to use the resources which are available to accomplish the work/mission at hand.

I am known to be diligent, compassionate, and straightforward. I have a healthy understanding of boundaries.

I enjoy teaching as much as preaching.

I am passionate about the Word of God and the worship of God.

I also enjoy building relationships with clergy from the LCMC, ELCA, OCA, PCUSA, PCA, and Diocese of South Carolina - Anglican Communion.

### **What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

Two challenges are facing the NALC: one is the church's efforts to expand the Gospel (Traditionally Grounded) locally (Congregationally Focused) and globally (Mission Driven), but most importantly, faithfully (Christ Centered) in a world that is increasingly resistant to the Word of God. The second challenge will be the election of the new Bishop in 2019, and the need for more NALC staff

to meet the ministry needs of congregations throughout the NALC.

### **What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

That the NALC continue to live in and own its mission to be Christ Centered, Mission Driven, Traditionally Grounded, and Congregationally Focused through the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and witnessing the perfect relationship of the Most Holy God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

The priorities are to maintain congregational enthusiasm for the Great Commission and provide care for pastors.

### **What tangible actions can the NALC, its Mission Districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church body?**

Congregations in the Mission Districts would do well to stay in communication with one another and to be familiar with the gifts each has to offer and in hopes that resources might be shared to further the Gospel in the areas in which they serve.

### **Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

I experience God's grace by waking each morning to the explosive noise of family life, the work of parish ministry, encountering the indigent and needy each day at the church, observance of the daily offices, prayer, and Means of Grace, my friends, and colleagues, and the endless joy and sorrows of the people of God who come to the church and use their spiritual gifts for his glory.

### **List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

"[Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease."

— John 3:30

This verse is a reminder that the Word of God is not about me, but about Jesus. I am reminded to get out of the way of Christ and follow.

# James R. Palan

## *Nominee for Executive Council*

**Name:**

James (Jim) R. Palan

**Address:**

Tuscaloosa, Alabama

**Congregation:**

Tuscaloosa Lutheran Church  
Tuscaloosa, Alabama

**Occupation:**

Retired

**Basic Biographical Information:**

I am married to Kay M. Palan, Ph.D., since Aug 15, 1981. Kay attended Luther Seminary for two years and has done a few interim ministries while we lived in North Dakota, but she was not ordained. She is an accomplished organist and a woman of deep faith. I have three grown children (Matt, 42; Mary, 40; and Dan, 35), five grandchildren (of which we have adopted Zachary, 17; and Kayla, 12). Mary is chemically dependent and has been for 20+ years and lost her parental rights. Mary has blocked all communication with us. I probably don't need to write that this is a source of pain for me.

My education includes BSEE, M.Div., MS in Child Development and Family Science, MA in Psychology with emphasis on Marriage & Family, ABD in Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy.

I like to play golf and to fix things that are broken. I am a volunteer counselor to a few single women in Tuscaloosa who can't afford to pay for therapy. I like to read novels and watch Hallmark movies.

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position:**

I have been a committed Christian since I was 12. I was ordained in August 1976. I have served parishes in North Dakota and Minnesota. I worked as a bishop's assistant in Eastern North Dakota and served interims in North Dakota, California and Texas. I am currently working at starting a mission

church out of my home, Tuscaloosa Lutheran Church.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

I am a good listener. I like people and meeting new people. I am a traditional kind of an old school Lutheran. I am direct in most of my communication. I tend to bring a systems way of thinking about issues/problems. I have a deep sense of caring for people who are experiencing "stormy weather" in their lives. I have been interested in offering support to pastors who are burning out or have been burned out for some time. I am open to other people's points of view. I am caring, dependable, sometimes an out-of-the box thinker, an introvert, and usually gather all the information I can before making decisions.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

The NALC has multiple small parishes that cannot support a full-time pastor. We need to provide support and training for clergy to be "tent-makers" and still be able to grow their ministries. We need to fill our seminary with quality candidates and grow the number of them. Small congregations need the larger church to provide online education in the form of videos and webinars that part-time pastors don't have time to develop on their own. In some cases, lay people are leading a small congregation and need this support as well. Let's get creative in how we put the Great Commission into practice. We also need to support our pastors and congregations in supplying resources to keep us all on-the narrow path in the face of growing cultural headwinds both at home and abroad. The NALC needs to continue making disciples. We all need to communicate the difference that baptized grace-filled living makes in our lives.

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

I guess my response to the last question kind of morphed into this question. My hope for the NALC is that it grows from 450+ congregations to over

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1,000 congregations and that we become known as the people of the Great Commission, always making disciples by baptizing and teaching all people that Jesus loves them more than can be expressed and that he gave his life on the cross and rose victorious over death so that we might be covered with his robe of righteousness even though we do not deserve it.

**What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

The NALC needs laser focus on making disciples. It should be a priority to train believers, pastors and lay-people, build relationships with the people God puts into their individual lives and to communicate the Gospel in ways that bring joy and excitement into their whole being.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its Mission Districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church body?**

Mission Districts and member congregations can focus on Life-to-Life events. Listening skills can be taught and Bible studies held that focus on building relationships where faith in Jesus Christ can be strengthened and shared. Each Mission District can have an annual "Mission Festival" where fellowship and training are offered.

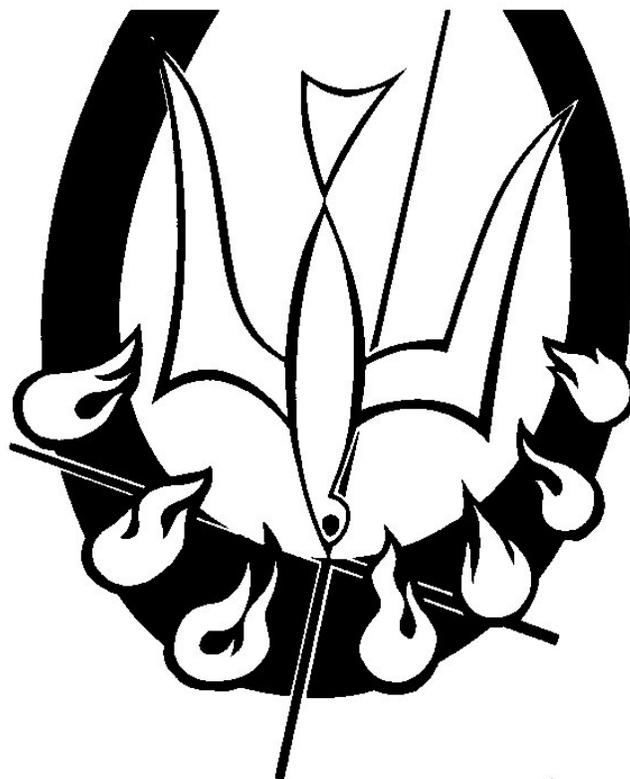
Pastors within each Mission District can work together as accountability partners to assist in staying Christ Centered and mission focused.

**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

I have been challenged with multiple health-related issues. Having been legally blind, God has restored my sight through cornea transplants. I had a stroke 12 years ago during surgery to repair a broken right wrist. Doctors told me I would never walk or talk again. I am thankful that God has blessed me with both of these abilities. I am still learning to rely on my Lord Jesus Christ for everything in life. I pray before most activities for the Holy Spirit to guide and direct me. He is with me every moment of every day.

**List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

I don't have just one verse as a favorite. The call of Isaiah text in the first part of Chapter 6 has great meaning for me because I have a cleft palate and I feel the blessing of the coal touching my lips and asking me, "Who will go for us?" I always reply with Isaiah, "Here am I, send me." I am deeply appreciative of the Philippians 2 text of Jesus humbling himself and taking the form of a servant. I try to model my life after that. And then Ephesians 2:8-9 is a cornerstone of faith and theology for me. "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." These verses speak the whole Gospel to me. I will never be able to meet God's expectations of me even though I try to live my life to glorify my Lord Jesus. Each day there is a gracious new beginning in my life.



# James Gale

## *Nominee for Court of Adjudication*

**Name:**

James Gale

**Address:**

Washington, D.C.

**Congregation:**

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church  
Abington, Pennsylvania

**Occupation:**

Attorney

**Basic Biographical Information:**

I grew up in Moline, Ill. Having grown up in congregations from the former Augustana Synod, I attended Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn., and graduated in 1983. I earned a law degree from the University of Michigan in 1987; and, in 2005, I earned a master's degree in international relations from Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies. I practiced law in Chicago and New York and now live in Washington, D.C.

In my free time, I travel as much as possible to the world's far reaches. I run daily. And I've loved the opportunity to sing in church choral groups.

I am single and wish that I lived closer to my extended family.

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position:**

I have served on the NALC Court of Adjudication since its formation. Before that, I served on the committee that drafted the NALC's provisional constitution and chaired the committee that prepared the permanent constitution. I served on a task force chaired by Bishop Spring to craft the NALC's disciplinary procedures. I contributed to the drafting of model governing documents for congregations. I have consulted regularly with pastors with questions regarding their congregation's governance.

I also have served for 18 years on the governing board of Gustavus Adolphus College. I chaired the board for three years. My experience at Gustavus has informed my understanding of good governance practices.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

My faith and spiritual discipline (prayer, Scriptural study, worship) inform my work with the NALC.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

The NALC will face challenges as it continues its transition from a new church body to a group with established practices and relationships. We all will share responsibility for being open to constant renewal even as we fix in place practices that enhance our shared ministries.

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

I hope that we remain open to the spirit of reform and renewal as we mature into an established body.

**What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

The congregations and people of the NALC must remain united in supporting one another so that our ministries are healthy and God-pleasing.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its Mission Districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church body?**

The NALC and its Mission Districts can continue to provide a means through which we all can support one another.

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**List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

I often think about Genesis 28:16-17 and the surrounding story:

*Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."*

Jacob was on the run. He had taken the birthright and blessing that rightly belonged to his brother. He was afraid of his brother and his mind was occupied with worldly concerns. He was alone. He had no sense of God's presence. As the sun set, he decided to sleep. The place was nothing special. It simply was where life had taken him. That night, God came to him in a dream. As he woke, Jacob realized God's very real presence.

I think about this story frequently when life in the world gets busy or challenging. We all regularly find ourselves in ordinary places of no special importance filled with ordinary people making their way through life. We often feel as if we're on our own in places perhaps not worthy of God's concern or attention. But Scripture tells us that any place and every place is sacred ground. Wherever we go, we are in an "awesome place," none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven — none other than the foot of the cross. When we recognize this, it transforms us and our actions in the world.

# John J. Moffett

## Nominee for Court of Adjudication

**Name:**

John J. Moffett

**Address:**

Ashland, Ohio

**Congregation:**

Trinity Lutheran Church  
Ashland, Ohio

**Occupation:**

Semi-retired; now serving congregations without pastors



**Basic Biographical Information:**

Married to Judith Moffett, retired nurse (48½ years). Two children: Julie Rine (high school English teacher) and Jodie Arreguin (CPA and manager at Cardinal Health). Grandchildren: Jamie, 13; Miquel, 5; Alaina, 1; step-granddaughter, Gabriella, 12.

**Education:**

The Ohio State University, B.A. in Social Sciences, 1969; B.S. in Education (Social Studies), 1970; Juris Doctor, 1972.  
Trinity Lutheran Seminary, M. Div., 1986

**Legal Experience:**

Admitted to Ohio Supreme Court Bar, May 6, 1972.  
Cope and Anderson, Carrollton, Ohio, Associate, 1972-1975.  
Private practice: Carrollton, Ohio, 1975-1982.  
Served on Ohio State Bar Association Ethics Committee, 1970s.  
Solicitor for Villages of East Sparta, Ohio, and Sherrodsville, Ohio, late 1970s, early 1980s.  
Member of Christian Legal Society.

**Military Experience:**

The Ohio State University ROTC Program;  
Commissioned 2nd Lieutenant, Infantry, 1969.  
Promoted to 1st Lieutenant, Infantry, 1972.  
Served with 361st Military Police Company, Canton, Ohio; 107th Armored Cavalry, Canton, Ohio,

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Honorable Discharge, Nov. 11, 1978.  
40 year member of American Legion.

**Congregations served:**

Zion Lutheran, Harwood, N.D., 1986-1989.  
Buffalo and Tower City Parish, N.D. (interim), 1990.  
Croy and Doyan Parish, N.D. (interim), 1991.  
St. Paul Lutheran, Jenera, Ohio, 1991-1997.  
Zion and St. Paul Parish, Chattanooga, Ohio, 1977-2002.  
Holy Spirit Shared Ministry (Hope, Bowling Green; St. Paul, New Rochester; St. James, Bradner), Ohio, 2002-2007.  
Stone Lutheran, Ashland, Ohio (interim), 2008-2009.  
St. John's Lutheran, North Woodbury, Ohio, 2010-2015.  
Stone Creek Parish (Zion and Salem Lutheran Churches) (long-term supply), 2016-2017.  
Faith Lutheran, Millersburg, Ohio (long-term supply), 2017-present.

**Interests/Hobbies/Honors:**

Antique Automobiles (1926 Chevrolet Touring Car, 1953 Chevrolet BelAir Convertible, 1941 Chevrolet Coup).  
Politics (state and national level); Ran for State Representative, late 1970s.  
Pro Bono Legal Work (income taxes with AARP).  
Volunteer Ombudsman, Area Agency on Aging (Liberty Nursing Home), Mansfield, Ohio.  
Sports Announcer for Parkway High School, Rockford, Ohio; Eastwood High School, Pemberville, Ohio; Crestview High School, Ashland, Ohio (for past 11 years).  
Received Ohio High School Athletic Association "Respect the Game" State Award, 2016-2017.  
Public Speaking — Memorial Day speaker, commencement speaker, after-dinner speaker.  
Public office — Carrollton Exempted Village School Board, Carrollton, Ohio, 1975-79; West Fargo School Board, West Fargo, N.D., 1988-1991.  
Hancock County Christian Clearing House, Attorney Emeritus.  
Carroll County President, East Central Ohio Heart Association, 1976-1977.

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position:**

Served on Congregational Constitution Review Committee, Northwestern Ohio Synod.  
Guided several congregations through conflicts for most of my ministry; also served as interim and "supply" pastor for several congregations helping them to adjust to changes.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

Practicing law for 10 years and then becoming a pastor of congregations in conflict taught me both good and bad processes to determine the facts. God simply is with me. I do what I can and leave the rest up to the Holy Spirit. I have also learned that "follow up" is absolutely critical for people and congregations to heal completely.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

We continue to be challenged to assist the "wounded" ELCA/ELCIC congregations coming to us. We also must continue to have outreach to Hispanic groups who want to be part of the NALC.

Probably, the biggest challenge will be replacing pastors as they retire. This includes electing a new Bishop when our current Bishop steps down. Finally, we must help congregations understand that the Church is being challenged in its beliefs and practices at the current time, especially by youth and those who espouse the philosophy of "situational ethics."

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

I see a vibrant future, especially as we develop means to connect our congregations in common missions. We will continue to grow as "situational ethics" loses its attractiveness and people desire to find a solid foundation. We can provide that in Jesus Christ.

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**What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

Mission, mission, mission! And continuing to adapt our mission to magnify its message.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its Mission Districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church body?**

We need to work with each congregation to help them develop a local mission, an overseas mission, and a mission in cooperation with other NALC congregations.

**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

God is a constant companion. I like to go on long drives in my 1926 Chevrolet touring car and just take time to "dump" on God and let him "dump" on me. And when we find agreement on what to do, I try to be his servant here to facilitate his desires for me and his world.

**List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

"Be still, and know that I am God ..." — Psalm 46:10

I am a Type A personality, so I need to work on just taking time out (see above answer) and letting the awesomeness of God soak into my soul. He never ceases to absolutely amaze me with his creation and his love (and forgiveness) for me. Enough said!

# Wendy A. W. Berthelsen

*Nominee for NALS Board of Regents*

**Name:**

Wendy A. W. Berthelsen

**Address:**

Midlothian, Texas

**Congregation:**

Hope Lutheran Church  
Cedar Hill, Texas

**Occupation:**

Pastor of Ministry in Daily Life,  
Hope Lutheran Church.



President of Call Inc. (Christian non-profit teaching mission and ministry).

Intentional Supply Pastor, Peace Lutheran Church (2012-2017).

**Basic Biographical Information:**

Married: Pastor Joel Berthelsen (35 years).

Four Children:

+ Amara (Age 30, trainer of first-year teachers; graduate student), married to Jeff (M.D.

Ophthalmologist).

+ Stefan (Age 28, math teacher, coach; law school student), married to Alexandra (teacher; graduate student).

+ Philip (Age 26, business consultant).

+ Ana (Age 22, senior interior architecture student, the University of Texas at Austin).

B.A. General Science, Gustavus Adolphus College, 1980; M.A. Pastoral Theology, Luther Northwestern Seminary, 1988; M. Div. Luther Seminary, 2005;

Senior Biomedical Research Engineer, Medtronic, Inc., Minneapolis, Minn., 1980-1988.

Hobbies: Sports fan, walking, design, sewing and creative arts, cooking, friends.

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**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position:**

First of all, I have already served on the North American Lutheran Seminary Board of Directors for the past four years. During these four years, I have intentionally tried to keep before the board the challenges of training leaders/pastors who will be effective in a culture that is increasingly drifting away from Jesus and “church,” antagonistic to the Gospel, and therefore need a “missionary” focus (see answer below).

Second, I have a lot of board experience:

- + Board of Directors, St. Paul Lutheran Seminary, 2011-2016.
- + Advisory Board, Bonhoeffer House of Studies, Houston, Texas, 2012-2014.
- + Academic Affairs Committee, Luther Seminary, 1986-1988.
- + Lutheran CORE National Steering Committee (Board of Directors), 2012-2015.

Third, I have significant experience serving Jesus and his Church and parachurch ministries:

- + 30+ years of professional ministry experience in churches: lay and ordained (2006-2018).
- + Founder and President of Call Inc. (Christian non-profit teaching ministry), 2006-present.
- + Author of four books.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

I believe that I am a prayerful visionary and creative leader who works well with others on boards and teams, seeing both the big picture, but also able to work on the details as an administrator. I am a spiritually gifted teacher and preacher of the Holy Scriptures with a strong focus on transforming, training and mobilizing ordinary people (the Body of Christ) in Jesus’ call to transform the world with the Gospel, bringing Christ Jesus’ kingdom to the mission field of their unique lives.

I have a deep concern and passion for the training of leaders and pastors: preparing them to do effective practical Gospel ministry and to meet the challenges of a missionary culture (see next answer).

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

Succinctly, the challenge is to train all followers of Jesus to be *missionaries* in all of life in a culture and society that is increasingly drifting away from living faith, the Church community and desperately in need of Jesus and the Gospel. This will require prayerful wisdom, repentance, conversion, reawakening, the Holy Spirit’s power, discipleship and the training and mobilizing of these needed missionaries.

Therefore, pastors and leaders of the church will need to be intentionally trained so that they will know how to prayerfully address and meet this challenge. The North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS) must be prepared to play a crucial role in addressing and meeting this challenge.

This “missionary” need is a significant challenge because our culture is rapidly changing from a church-going culture (50 years ago) to a wayward, lost and, as a result, disconnected-from-church culture that is increasingly antagonistic to the Gospel.

Meanwhile, many “church” people proceed as if nothing has changed and, in many cases, need to be reawakened to the Good News and living relationship with Jesus (Ezekiel 37).

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

In addition to above answer, I would add:

- + Stay grounded in the authority of the Holy Scriptures (summarized by the historical creeds).
- + Raise up the historical Lutheran emphases: God’s action, the living active Word, grace and mercy of God, centrality of the cross, salvation through faith alone, Word and Sacrament.
- + Worldwide influence and transformational kingdom impact through the Gospel of Jesus.
- + Bring awakening, renewal, revival and repentance to American churches, people and culture.
- + Maintain a small, simple and economical structure for oversight that raises up and uses the gifts and calls of all NALC leaders and followers of Jesus (bottom-up vs. top-down).

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- + Prayerful in all matters.
- + Led and filled with Holy Spirit in all matters.

### **What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

The priorities that the NALC has already pursued and adopted are the right ones.

- + Training and equipping of effective leaders and pastors.
- + Prayer.
- + Scripture, creeds and confessions.
- + Scripture as living, active Word of God and scriptural literacy: every follower of Jesus.
- + Renewal and continual repentance: every follower of Jesus.
- + Discipleship: every follower of Jesus being transformed and trained by him for kingdom work.
- Conversion, reawakening and continual repentance.
- Scripture becoming the living, active Word of God.
- Spiritual formation through prayer and Means of Grace (and other faith practices).
- Called by Jesus to his kingdom mission (24/7).
- Continual inviting and filling of the Holy Spirit.
- Equipped disciples making other disciples.
- Continual relationship with Jesus and other followers of him.
- + Mission: every follower of Jesus.
- + Wholistic Gospel mission, evangelism and church planting: every congregation.

### **What tangible actions can the NALC, its Mission Districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church body?**

NALC, as a church body, needs to train and equip leaders and pastors who, in turn, are able to train and equip the Body of Christ, adopting the priorities above and doing the following:

- + Scripture-based training and equipping at every level.
- + Intentional prayer at every level.
- + Engage discipleship at every level.
- + Encourage and engage "mission" at the congregation level.
- + Every congregation is encouraged and equipped to be a church-planting congregation.

- + Encourage and equip every follower of Jesus to engage their entire life as a mission field.

### **Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

I see Jesus alive and active in many and various epiphanies every day. I engage in various practices as a means of grace in addition to regular worship and Holy Communion:

- + Almost daily personal devotions for nearly 40 years now where I do a variety of things: surrender to Jesus, ask for filling of Holy Spirit, Scripture reading, prayer journaling, listening prayer, intercession, and sometimes other study/reading.
- + My husband and I pray every Friday night, 10 p.m. to midnight with other pastors/wives and others.
- + The Lord in his creation.
- + Regular prayer with community leaders.

### **List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

"But by the grace of God I am what I am ..."  
— 1 Corinthians 15:10a

First and foremost, every day I am aware that I am a sinner and I desperately need the grace given to me at great cost to the Father, but absolutely free to me through Jesus' dying on the cross and his resurrection, and made to be in Christ through baptism. Further, I am aware that every other "good" attribute or ability or outcome or possibility or gift in my life is a gift of grace given by a gracious Heavenly Father.

# Dennis R. Di Mauro

*Nominee for NALS Board of Regents*

**Name:**

Dennis R. Di Mauro

**Address:**

Herndon, Virginia

**Congregation:**

Trinity Lutheran Church  
Warrenton, Virginia

**Occupation:**

Pastor



**Basic Biographical Information:**

Married, three grown daughters. I hold a Ph.D. in Church History from Catholic University (2012), and am the author of *A Love for Life* (2008). I enjoy writing articles for *Lutheran Forum* and other periodicals and participating in the Younger Theologians Colloquies at our NALC Convocations.

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position:**

For the past 10 years, I have taught undergraduate and graduate religion classes at Marymount University, Washington Bible College, and St. Paul Lutheran Seminary. I know what it takes to successfully prepare a student for the pastoral ministry.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

My work as a parish pastor has always been a blessing for my teaching. Seminary training isn't just the accumulation of factual knowledge, it also includes mentoring those who are entering the office of pastor. As such, including pastoral experiences and advice in seminary instruction is crucial.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

- + Attracting strong candidates to pastoral ministry.
- + Remaining mission-focused.
- + Remaining faithful to our gospel mission as we grow.

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

I believe that all our Mission Districts should be required to plant a new mission church every three years. Educating mission planters is an important component in this effort.

**What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

- + Planting mission churches.
- + Recruiting the best candidates for ministry and tailoring their education to serve the Church.
- + Building discipleship.
- + Starting an NALC Youth Conference.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its Mission Districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church body?**

- + Hire a full-time church planter to assist with new church planting and pastoral mentoring for the whole NALC.
- + Require a class on church planting for all NALC pastoral candidates.
- + Require all Mission Districts to plant at least one church every three years.
- + Encourage first-call pastors to start church plants.
- + Assure the funding of new church plants.

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+ Require at least four intensive classes be taken at the North American Lutheran Seminary in Ambridge for all NALC candidates.

**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

God meets me in my relationships with other people, especially when I am ministering to patients in our local hospital and in our nursing homes. God comforts the suffering, and he is an amazing presence to heal and console.

**List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

“What I say to you I say to all: Watch!” — Mark 13:37.

If we purposely look for Jesus, we’ll see that he is constantly active in the world, working miracles on our behalf.

## Phillip E. Gagnon

*Nominee for NALS Board of Regents*

**Name:**

Phillip E. Gagnon

**Address:**

St. Albert, Alberta

**Congregation:**

St. Albert Evangelical Lutheran Church; St. Albert, Alberta

**Occupation:**

Pastor



**Basic Biographical Information:**

Happily married to most beautiful, patient and mostly-correct-about-everything wife, Patricia. Three children Elise, Elias and Sophie each in their 20s.

Taught (2013) at the Onesimus Nesib Seminary on the topic of exorcism and the occult in Aira, Ethiopia, and have been involved in a number of situations concerning cults, etc., past and present. Taught World Religions and New Religious Groups at Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute in Camrose, Alberta, for nine years from 1998-2007.

Chair of the counter-cult group, Christian Challenge Ministries, for three years while attending The Kings College in Edmonton. Have taught seminars on various new religious groups (cults) in Western Canada, California, and South Korea since 1989.

Wrote a book that was well received on evil and exorcism from a Lutheran perspective entitled, *Deliver Us From Evil*, taking an intensive course on the subject in Rome at the Regina Apostolorum in April 2015. Wrote other works on new religious groups, including *A Family's Guide to the Cults: Insights from the Confessions* and a novel entitled, *Where Evil Grows*, based upon a true story from experiences and conversations with a woman involved in a cult group in Saskatchewan.

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Hobbies are art and reading, and, once upon a time, earned two black belts in Judo and Yoshin Ryu-Jujutsu. I have been involved in art from an early age, from pencil drawings to pen and ink, (pointillism) and have, in the last few years, especially enjoyed watercolour and acrylics. Self taught, I always seek out opportunities and people to learn from and last year participated in a master watercolour class with Alvaro Castagnet who encouraged me to leave ministry to paint full time — not happening, at least not yet. And so, I paint for the enjoyment and find rest and peace in creating amidst the, at times, frantic pace of ministry. You'll find me, when I'm able, in my art room at home listening to 1980's music, a sip of Irish whisky at hand and in the rhythm of brush strokes — my "happy place."

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position:**

Four years as Dean of the Canada Mission District and President of NALC Canada Section. Six years as member of North American Lutheran Seminary Board of Regents.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

Looking at the big picture, discernment.

Wrote a manual on exorcism from a Lutheran perspective.

Taught at Ethiopian seminary in Aira, Ethiopia.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

Developing Houses of Study and "middle management" struggles.

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

That we meet the challenges arising head on.

**What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

Developing a culture of biblical friendship and mentorship in each other preparing us as a communion to evangelize in love and passion.

To resist the temptation to lapse back into a "better" version of the ELCA/ELCIC.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its Mission Districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church body?**

I'm not much into "programs" as I believe that each situation, location, and congregation will determine the strategies necessary to reach the world around us. The only program we ought to be concerned about and will inform whatever ways God will inspire us is to love each other as the Lord has commanded us, to walk beside those who are in need of the light and love of Jesus in that same love we are blessed to know. All that we do as a communion must be done in that same love of God and neighbour, in truth, transparency and regard for the gifts and foundation already given by the Holy Spirit in the past, our present as we stand with our brothers and sisters around the world, and the future being sensitive to the leading of the Spirit to lift up the name above all names together.

**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

In prayer/conversation all day, readings in the faith, in people's lives in their thoughts, concerns, and prayer requests.

**List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

"I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. — Philippians 1:6

He begins and ends his work in my life being faithful throughout, which leaves me with the only thing I can have and live from — gratitude.

# Kevin D. Langholz

*Nominee for NALS Board of Regents*

**Name:**

Kevin D. Langholz

**Address:**

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

**Congregation:**

Zion Lutheran Church  
Brentwood, Pennsylvania

**Occupation:**

Commercial Real Estate  
Brokerage



**Basic Biographical Information:**

Married to Katherine A. Langholz for 35 years. Children: daughter Kari Bouchlas (husband Jonathan), daughter Jaclyn Graham Langholz (husband Justin), son Dean (fiancee Ariana Winovich July 7, 2018, wedding date).

Undergraduate Capital University, Columbus, Ohio, 1979.

Hobbies: hiking, biking, swimming and golf.

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position:**

Zion Lutheran Church: Board of Deacons, Board of Property, President of Congregation, Chairperson of Restoration and Renovation of church.

President, co-owner and founder of Langholz Wilson Commercial Real Estate, 1990; Langholz Wilson Ellis, Inc., 2004; and sale of business to Hanna Holdings, 2014.

Principal of Hanna Langholz Wilson Ellis, January 2015 to present. Jefferson Regional Hospital Board of Directors and Facilities Chairperson for 14 years. Presently member of Jefferson Foundation Board of Directors and member of the Grants Committee.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

Raised within the Lutheran Church. Grandfather C.T. Langholz and many other uncles, great uncles and cousins have served as Lutheran pastors. My faith is my foundation for every walk each day. I have often said that while blessed to be a proud and successful business person, the Lord did not put me on this earth to be simply a broker of real estate. I am wanting to serve our Lord using my talents and business acumen in a positive manner and making life changes to enable myself to dedicate myself for this purpose.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

All denominational-based congregations must become more sensitive and proactive in attracting young families through the use of social media outlets and contemporary services. Without change and sensitivity, our congregations cannot withstand the loss of membership through attrition.

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

To assist the NALC with any facilities assessments, needs and counseling. To be fiducially responsible and accountable for the direction of funds available to equip our pastors and lay persons to grow a faith based scripture based ministry.

**What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

The recruitment of young and middle-age men and women for our seminary — our pastoral leaders for the next generations. Strengths in youth ministry, music, counseling and education.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its Mission Districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church body?**

Scripture-based ministry will become much sought after for in this liberal and too often social-based society.

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**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

I begin each day with daily devotionals as shared by various authors via email. I end each day with silent meditation and prayer.

**List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

— John 11:25-26

Through my daily walk, I am comforted and find support knowing and sharing that he who believes in the resurrection shall live and shall never die.



## **James T. Lehmann**

*Nominee for NALS Board of Regents*

**Name:**

James T. Lehmann

**Address:**

Fithian, Illinois

**Congregation:**

Immanuel Lutheran Church  
Thomasboro, Illinois

**Occupation:**

Pastor



**Basic Biographical Information:**

Married to Bev Lehmann, 3 sons, 2 grandsons.

B.S. Animal Industries, Southern Illinois University,  
Carbondale, Illinois.

M.Div., Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque,  
Iowa.

Hobbies: Gardening, camping, woodworking.

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position:**

39 years of ordained ministry.

Served on many boards, committees, and councils in ALC district, ELCA synod, and NALC Executive Council.

Internship supervisor for eight seminarians from two different seminaries.

Served on the Board of the Institute of Lutheran Theology.

Former Dean of the Great Rivers Mission District.

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**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

Strong interest in theological education.  
Ability to listen to different perspectives.  
Seek to develop consensus as much as possible.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

Many people, for many reasons, have found a home in the NALC. We have many different expectations and underlying assumptions. As we continue to live in the NALC, we need to recognize these differences and find a way to continue working toward a common mission.

Our four Core Values are a wonderful tool to describe who we are and what we are about. But they cannot be a slogan, they must truly bring us together and send us forward.

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

For the mission of the NALC, my hope/prayer is that we grow in faith and obedience to our Lord. I hope that God grants numeric growth, but not at the expense of faithfulness.

Repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in Christ's name to all nations.

**What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

As a candidate for the Seminary Board of Regents, ministry priorities include:

1. Solid training of pastors, both in education and formation.
2. Attracting individuals who have tools to be honed.
3. Developing a solid financial foundation to help keep seminary costs affordable.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its Mission Districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church body?**

The Lutheran Church has been blessed with many resources at its disposal. Its strong emphasis on education in the parish, Word and Sacrament worship, a sense of the Body of Christ, a passion and compassion for the world are part of who we are. Continuing to form us in these things, helps us to live out our commitments.

**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

A pastor has a sacred trust and privilege of caring for people in all aspects of life. Watching God bring new life, renewed life, healing, wholeness, comfort and strength to people as they experience "the joys and sorrows and all that the years will bring," I experience God active. That strengthens my faith.

**List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

How does one pick one? It depends on situations. The one that I keep coming back to is Acts 2:42: "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers." This verse immediately follows Pentecost. Now that 3,000 people have been baptized into the faith, what comes next? This verse gives a brief outline for Christian worship and for Christian living.

Worship must always focus on people gathering together, to be nurtured and nourished by Holy Word and Holy Sacraments, and to offer up petitions on behalf of the sacred and secular world. The Christian life is molded and guided by the Scriptures, nourished and encouraged by the presence of Jesus Christ, as regular people connect with regular people, bringing Christ's healing and peace in a troubled world. The more a person, congregation, or church body devotes itself to these four elements, the more faithfully it can bear witness to a magnificent Triune God who so dearly loves the world. God is faithful. We can depend on him!

# Troy A. Mulvaine

*Nominee for NALS Board of Regents*

**Name:**

Troy A. Mulvaine

**Address:**

Tonawanda, New York

**Congregation:**

Church of the Apostles  
North Tonawanda, New York

**Occupation:**

Pastor



**Basic Biographical Information:**

Married to Shelly Mulvaine (1985).

BFA, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio.  
M.Div., Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio.

Hobbies: Bagpipes and History.

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position:**

My own seminary experience, as well as my regular visitation with the seminary students currently at the North American Lutheran Seminary and Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pa., both have given me a great deal of insight into core seminary needs and experiencing firsthand what issues face the seminary and its students and what needs to be implemented for the seminary to spiritually move forward.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

I have been given a unique gift of discernment. It enables me to see through the current situation and uncover truths, as well as develop a vision of where we are going and what opportunities and obstacles lie ahead.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

I believe one of the greatest challenges we face in the years ahead is getting out of and moving beyond the old ELCA structure of church we have brought with us. There is a need to truly consider where we have been, what we brought with us that was good, and what would be best left behind. The Spirit is calling us to a new vision of church that will be challenging for those entrenched in old models of governance and structure.

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

I have great hopes that we will all come to see that we did not leave our former church body but were called by the Holy Spirit to grow into a church that takes the faith seriously and offers a challenging voice to the current trends of the world.

**What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

I believe there are three major priorities:

1. Developing a sense of unity and mutual support with a common identity and goals.
2. Learning to work with the current trends of smaller churches and congregations and meeting that challenge in a productive and Spirit-filled way.
3. Preparing seminary students with committed spiritual and pastoral formation that honestly prepares them for life in the church.

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**What tangible actions can the NALC, its Mission Districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church body?**

There are several:

1. Develop a strategic plan that includes every congregation. What is Christ's vision for each congregation? What does Jesus want me/us to do here?
2. Intentional catechesis that prepares every individual to share their faith. Help people answer: Why am I here? What am I called to do?
3. Become leaner. Let go of the big churches and programs model and focus on sustainable ministries centered around the individual and community. We must help each congregation be effective within the constraints of the community and situation.

**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

I feel God active through daily prayer, Scripture and fellowship. I feel it's just as important to take time and look back at what God has done with me and where he has led me. Sometimes at the moment it's not clear so we must have faith and learn how to listen, understanding his active role in our lives, whether we see it at hand or not, and having faith to trust he is leading us.

**List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

"Brothers, I do not consider myself to have embraced it yet. But this one thing I do: Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

— Philippians 3:13-14

When I started seminary, my mentor told me that the faith was about keeping your eye on the prize. At the time I wasn't sure what he meant — graduation from seminary, ordination, it was not clear. The Spirit led me to understand that in the Church we often focus on what was done in the last generation and allow it to become such an accepted way of thinking that it is unbreakable or unchangeable. In the other direction, many allow themselves to be so full of fear of what might be, which causes many to become despondent.

What my mentor was telling me was to take stock of where you are, acknowledge where you have been, and even admit your uncertainty about the future, but to do so with your eyes kept firmly on Christ. Don't allow the past to rob you of what Christ has in store for you — your spiritual growth in faith and grace. Also, remember that where you are going Christ is already there and has already gone through anything you are afraid of facing.

This Scripture passage has always allowed me not to get mired down by dissension or discord, but to keep on the pilgrimage that leads to eternal life. No matter if it is intense joy or tearful defeat, I know I'm not where Christ wants me to be yet. The way is long and only by keeping my eyes on him can I hope to arrive.



# David M. Phillips

*Nominee for NALS Board of Regents*

**Name:**

David M. Phillips

**Address:**

Watertown, Wisconsin

**Congregation:**

Immanuel Lutheran Church of  
Lebanon  
Watertown, Wisconsin

**Occupation:**

Pastor

**Basic Biographical Information:**

Married (Jessie Phillips), four children, three stepchildren, four stepgrandchildren.

B.A., Asbury College; M.Div., Union Theological Seminary (Virginia) and Asbury Theological Seminary.

Ordained in 1984.

Graduate studies (1992-1993) University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham, United Kingdom (then Cheltenham & Gloucester College; Dr. Gordon Wenham).

Hobbies: Riding my Honda Goldwing, guitar/music, wine and craft beer

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position:**

I not only love preaching, but teaching as well. In college I was a tutor of Greek and Hebrew. I teach regularly in our parochial school. I also had an opportunity to serve as an adjunct professor of Old Testament in 2004.

For five years, I worked in human resources for a small biotech company in Detroit. I was unemployed for more than one year. I treasure both experiences and firmly believe they refocused and strengthened my passion for ministry and how best to communicate the Gospel.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

I am a very effective communicator (so I'm often told) and I love the Scriptures, reading them regularly not only in English but in Hebrew and Greek. I am passionate about the theological/ catechetical instruction of the church, especially the children.

I am very compassionate and giving — ministering not only to my congregation, but to the community as well.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

There is a sense of disconnect for some congregations. Some of the disconnect seems to be the result of deliberate decisions of congregations: "Since we are Congregationally Focused, we really need to care only about ourselves." As we continue to grow, we will need more leadership staff to serve geographically, as the Deans often serve Mission Districts that are far too large. Said staff will keep us more intimately connected, as we seek to be Christ Centered and Mission Driven.

As time goes by and we get farther from the events of 2009-2010, there is a danger of losing the passion that drove the formation of the NALC. We must remain focused on the saving Gospel and passionate for the faith delivered to the saints.

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

I hope and believe the NALC will grow in numbers, in discipleship and in mission. I also hope we will become an even greater defender of historic, ecumenical, orthodox Lutheranism and a powerful example to Christians (individuals and church bodies) who are struggling to be faithful. As our culture becomes increasingly hostile to "traditional/historic/orthodox" Christian faith, we must never become discouraged. Pastors and congregations must remain steadfast in faith and ministry. We

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must “keep first things first.” When we do, the Holy Spirit will use us as his instruments to bring Christ to the lost and the lost to Christ.

**What should be the NALC’s most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

The nurture and education of those called to ordained ministry. When congregations are led and served by pastors who are strong biblically and theologically, who love Christ and the Word of God, and who are passionate about proclaiming the Gospel for the salvation of the lost and the edification of the Body of Christ, congregations will grow as disciples and will be hungry to minister to those in need.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its Mission Districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church body?**

Intensive study of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.

Increasing opportunities for theological and biblical “continuing education.” I believe the annual theological conference is one of the most important events in the life of the NALC, but not everyone is able to attend every year.

**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

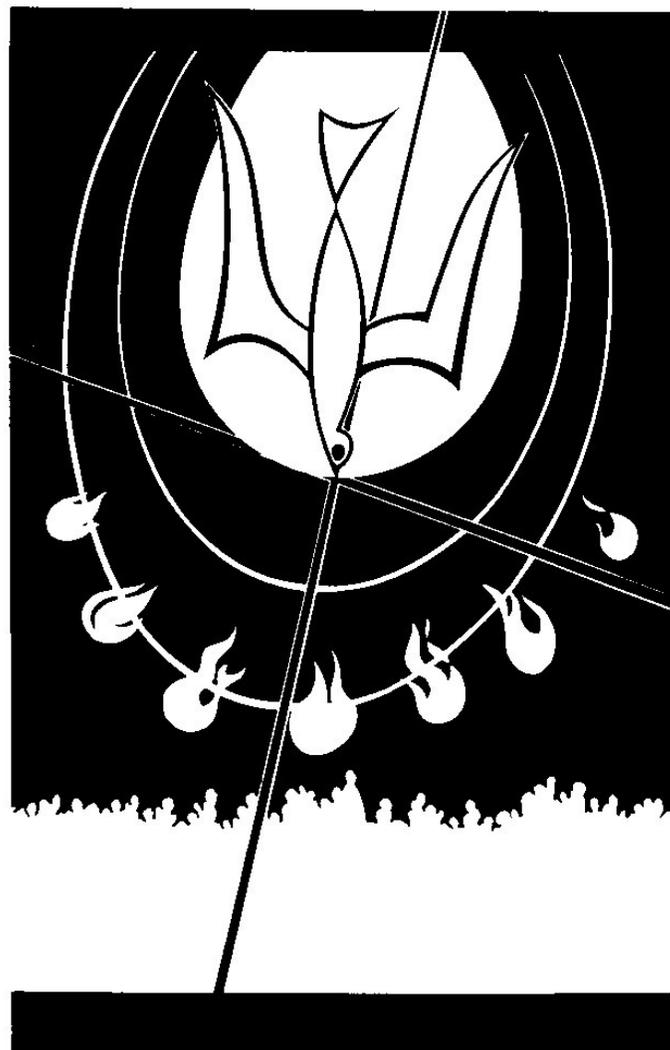
I daily read the Scriptures and seek the leading of the Holy Spirit to be shaped by them and to be driven to pray them back to God in response to his Word. In preparation for teaching confirmation three times each week, I experience the love of God in the discussions with the young men and women I am given to instruct. Constant awareness of such an awesome responsibility daily reminds me that my “thoughts, words and deeds” must bear witness to the faith I teach.

**List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?”

— Romans 6:3

Romans 6:3 (and the whole of Romans 6). This verse and passage proclaim clearly and powerfully God’s redeeming work in Holy Baptism (water + Word) by the Spirit and the life to which God calls and enables his people in Christ to live. It is a passage I turn to again and again in my confirmation classes.



# Donna Hacker Smith

*Nominee for NALS Board of Regents*

**Name:**

Donna Hacker Smith

**Address:**

Champaign, Illinois

**Congregation:**

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church; St. Joseph, Illinois

**Occupation:**

Pastor



**Basic Biographical Information:**

I am a native of Chicago, Illinois. Earned a B.A. in Secondary Education from Northeastern Illinois University, 1975. Served as a lay missionary to Japan (J-3) after college, and then returned and earned an M.Div. from the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, graduating in 1983. After ordination in the LCA in 1983, I served four congregational calls in Missouri and Illinois.

I am married to (retired) Judge Lawrence A. Smith, Jr., and am stepmother to seven adult children, stepgrandmother of 21 and step-great-grandmother of nine. I enjoy music (listening), reading, cooking, traveling, cheering for the Cubs and Illini, and doting on our grandkids.

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position:**

I am currently a member of the Board of Regents of the NALS, serving as Secretary and also as Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee. In the NALC, I have served on the Candidacy Committee, as Secretary of the Great Rivers Mission District Council, and as a member of the Board of St. Paul Lutheran Seminary.

In the past I served as Chair of the Northern Illinois Synod (ELCA) Candidacy Committee for 8+ years; on the Board of the Division for Ministry (ELCA) for six years; as a member of the Board of Directors of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg

for four years; and as a member of the NW Regional Board of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. I was a voting member of two ELCA Churchwide Assemblies.

As a pastor, I have served five congregations in full, part-time, or interim capacities.

For the Women of the ELCA, I was a writer and Bible study leader, and wrote and presented the 1993 Bible study for the Triennial Convention of the Women of the ELCA, (“God’s Gift of Hope”). I had previously written the Study Book and Leader’s Guide for the 1986 LCW Annual Bible Study, “Women Followers of Jesus.” I also conducted retreats and led Bible studies for various synodical and conference gatherings across the country.

Prior to seminary, I served for three years as a missionary to Japan (J-3), teaching at Kyushu Gakuin Junior/Senior High School in Kumamoto, Japan.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

While my pastoral experiences make me acutely aware of the needs of local congregations and individual members, my other experiences have given me a constant awareness of the mission of the larger church — regionally, nationally and globally. Both dimensions of church life color my deliberations.

I have a passion for leadership development and formation, and have enjoyed working in the NALC as the candidacy process was first evolving. It has been a privilege to be a part of the formative years of the NALS.

Personally, I bring the heart of a parish pastor, the experience of a church worker, and the faith of a sinner dependent on the grace, forgiveness and guidance of God.

I have skills in written and spoken communication, and have been advised that I am capable of bringing synthesis to group discussions. I am a good listener and can summarize the thoughts and

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actions of a group. I have a good sense of humor, which serves me well.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

To continue to maintain theological integrity and scriptural faithfulness without appearing exclusive; to engage in outreach and mission in the world while engaging in “inreach” and growth in depth of faith among members and leaders; to be future oriented and not obsessed with the past — while remembering and learning from past experiences. A great priority is developing staffing and structure that, while not becoming top-heavy or unwieldy, will help the NALC to better serve its constituency and develop for future ministry.

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

I pray that the NALC will continue to thrive as a faithful witness in a difficult cultural setting. I hope that we will continue to listen and learn from our partner churches in other countries (such as the EECMY) and also from our ecumenical companions who are seeking to walk an orthodox path in North America (such as the ACNA). With a realistic understanding of the challenges facing future leaders of our church and the congregations we serve, I hope we will develop a model of preparation that is deliberate, caring and realistic.

**What should be the NALC’s most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

To continue to maintain theological integrity and scriptural faithfulness without appearing exclusive; to engage in outreach and mission in the world while engaging in “inreach” and growth in depth of faith among members and leaders; to be future oriented and not obsessed with the past — while remembering and learning from past experiences.

A great priority is developing staffing and structure that, while not becoming top-heavy or unwieldy, will help the NALC to better serve its constituency and develop for future ministry.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its Mission Districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church body?**

The idea of fostering relationships among congregations (members, not just leaders) through area gatherings and events seems vital. Excellent communication at every level must continue to be developed and encouraged. The average member needs to be made more aware of the efforts and activities of the NALC at all levels.

The development and certification of leaders with strong Lutheran grounding and a desire to share the Gospel through a well-developed candidacy process is necessary to a thriving future for our church body. Encouraging our future leaders to study at or through the NALS is essential. There must be cooperation between the NALS and the Candidacy Committee.

While the NALC wishes to maintain as light and nimble a structure as possible, I think there will need to be constant re-evaluation of the leadership and staffing structure, so that direction and program can be maintained and developed with proper attention to the demands being placed on our leaders.

**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

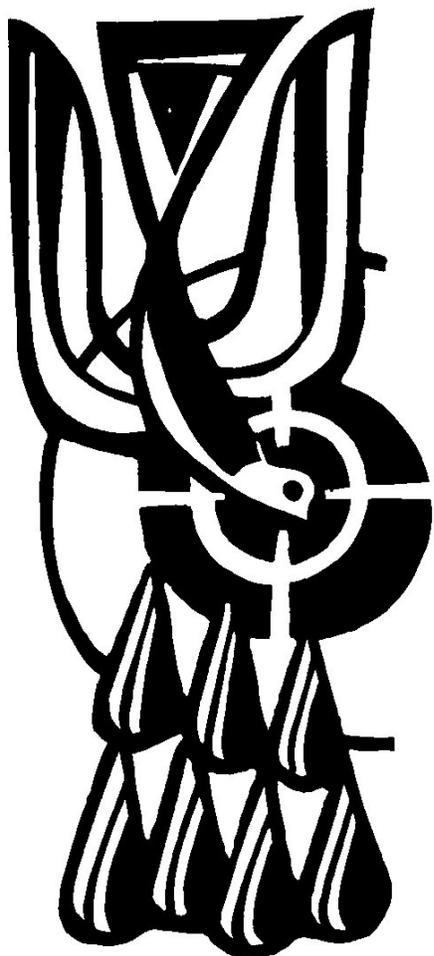
More than anything, I find that God constantly surprises me with his wisdom, mercy and goodness. When I consider my journey as a Christian and as a pastor, I can only be humbled and surprised by the blessings he continues to grant me. Humbled and aware of my dependence on Jesus Christ for all I am, all I have, and all I could ever hope to be, I find the forgiveness and grace to try and serve the Lord and his Church.

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List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.

“Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.” — Matthew 13:52

This was my ordination verse, and has always had great significance for me personally and professionally. I believe it is vital that the Church of Jesus Christ wisely steward the treasures of our tradition — our Scriptures and Confessions — while seeking appropriately innovative ways to convey those traditions in a rapidly changing world. Powered by the Holy Spirit, the Church can “bring forth the old” from our treasure in invigorating and inspiring new ways. I have always felt that, as a pastor, it has been my duty and my delight to be a “householder” in the Church!



## Norman J. Sulaica

*Nominee for NALS Board of Regents*

**Name:**

Norman Jean Sulaica Jr.

**Address:**

Three Rivers, Texas

**Congregation:**

Our Savior Lutheran Church  
Three Rivers, Texas

**Occupation:**

Pastor



**Basic Biographical Information:**

Blessings come in many forms and through common and unusual experiences. My birth and childhood centered around a loving faithful mother and family who reared me to respect people and build relationships with them. Mom exemplified a parent who worked hard to provide for her family, which offered me a template as a husband and father.

Texas Lutheran College was instrumental in honing and shaping my educational skills. I received a Bachelor of Arts degree from this fine institution in 1985. Trinity Lutheran Seminary, coupled with my theological studies at Texas Lutheran College, emphasized the importance for pastors to be theologians and equally important for pastors to be preachers, teachers, spiritual counselors, and spiritual leaders.

While in seminary, a special person entered my life, Laura. We have been married for 29 years. The Lord blessed us with four blessings: Elisabeth, Jonathan, Adrianna, and Sophia. My granddad always equated life to a roller coaster ride filled with ups and downs, turns and twists. God blesses me daily to experience this ride with my wife and young adult children. My free time is spent woodworking, reading, walking, and time with my family.

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**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position:**

NALC Candidacy Board Member (four years), Nebraska Synod Council Member (six years), Short-Term Missionary in Tokyo, Japan (one year), President of the Nebraska Synod Argentina Companion Synod Committee, Member of the Southwest Texas Synod Costa Rica Companion Synod Committee, President of Heavenly Angels Board (ministry for special-need adults), and ordained ministry (27 years).

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

Truth be told, this question makes me uncomfortable. Highlighting one's personal gifts is not in my wheel house. My grandfather raised me to serve out of love! As need arises, loving service is required. One's service should not be done for personal recognition. The heart of loving service, seeking to glorify God, is one gift I bring to the seminary Board of Regents. This loving service entails the gifts of stewardship fund raising, envisioning and implementing with lay leadership ministries to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and spiritual counseling addressing conflict.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

Our challenges are internal and external. Internally, we are still a young denomination getting our balance in the world. Attending the NALC constituting convention, the enthusiasm of the gathering led many delegates to envision great and broad opportunities for the new church body. The attempt was to tackle anything and everything. The NALC can learn from this approach. We need to be intentional and focused in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We need to encourage and equip our congregations in their community mission field. One feature of support to our congregations is the North American Lutheran Seminary. The theological and pastoral training of seminaries enables our congregations to

continue their mission journey through pastoral leadership.

The external challenges or worldly ways seek to deflect the mission of proclaiming the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. We live in an era where denominations are shifting from the message of Scripture to the message of culture. People are awaking to the reality that the world's message leaves them hollow and empty. Our steadfastness to God's Word enables us to bring the light of Christ to people who live in darkness. Our dedication to the salvation message enables each congregation, mission site, to be an oasis which quenches the spiritual needs of people who thirst for God.

**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

The NALC is a bastion for those seeking God's Word of salvation. Our commitment to the Word of God enables those who seek hope and freedom from sin, death, and the devil to find the Christ, the Savior of the World. Answering this question in the context of the seminary's role reminds us of the importance of the disciples' ministry. The disciples spent three and a half years following Jesus the Christ. The Savior of the World trained them and prepared them to continue the ministry after his death and resurrection. This training included theology, worship leadership, counseling, stewardship, evangelism, discipleship, church life, proclamation of the Word, education, and pastoral leadership. It importantly included their spiritual walk of faith — prayer, worship, scriptural study, meditation, and Christian fellowship. Our seminary continues this practice seeking to prepare those called by God to guide seminarians in their spiritual walk of faith and to equip them for Word and Sacrament. My hope is for each seminarian to have a deep spiritual faith in God and the skill set to serve God in the congregation they are called. The seminary is blessed to make this possible.

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**What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

Again, answering in the context of the seminary, it is incumbent upon the NALC to seek out future lay leaders and pastors. This feature of the NALC is a continuous need for the life of the church, and it is a short-term and long-term goal of our denomination.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its Mission Districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church body?**

The first Sunday in May is our congregation's potluck Sunday. While there, a mother confessed to me she discouraged her son from entering into ordained ministry. Her son, along with others, now serve as lay worship leaders. Her confession came on the heels of what she now sees in hindsight. Her son should have answered the call God gave him and gone to the seminary. This mother's confession is a confession I have heard again and again — people discouraging family and friends from accepting God's call. Pastors, lay leaders, Mission District Deans, assistants to the Bishop, and the Bishop are empowered by God to purposely speak about the call to ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament. These tangible actions should not be occasional, but rather repetitive. I recall a study which indicated that the average person will need to hear a message 14 times before it registers. They would need to hear the message more before they can embrace it. Seeking out future pastors needs to be intentional, and when that future pastor is found, our repetitive encouragement is crucial to guiding them to follow God's call.

**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

My daily experience of God is like a buoy, a navigational marker. Ships need these buoys, especially on foggy nights. One can only see the lite buoy in front of the ship. The captain trusts this buoy and follows it until the next buoy is seen. God places crucial buoys in my life: scriptural study, faithful Sunday School teachers, pastors, lay leaders, seminary training, the Church, worship,

mediation, Holy Communion, repetitive reading of Scripture, devotional reading, prayer, family, and much much more. In these moments, God intentionally reveals himself and guides my walk of faith, belief, and trust in Jesus Christ. I believe daily our God of Scripture engages me with the intention to build a God-with-a-believer relationship. Through Scripture, mediation, and prayer, our God seeks to do his will with me.

**List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

Given the opportunity to choose my confirmation verse by my pastor, I chose Jeremiah 25:27. I was the youth with a playful personality and a teasing sparkle in my eye. This verse reads, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Drink, be drunk and vomit." Thank you, Lord, for my pastor. He vetoed this verse and gave to me Matthew 28:19-20, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Jesus lay before the disciples the method upon which they are to minister to others. The primary verb is "make disciples" (μαθητεύσατε in Greek). Disciples are to make disciples. How one makes disciples takes action through three auxiliary participles verbs — going, baptizing, and teaching. Unknowingly as a confirmand, my pastor offered to me a pathway in life, a pathway centered in believing in God and serving him with joy.

# Roger Weyersberg

*Nominee for NALS Board of Regents*

**Name:**

Roger Weyersberg

**Address:**

Owosso, Michigan

**Congregation:**

Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Owosso, Michigan

**Occupation:**

Professor of Low Brass,  
Saginaw Valley State University; retired public  
school teacher; clinician; adjudicator.



**Basic Biographical Information:**

Married to Nadine Weyersberg. Father to Roger Weyersberg II and fiancée, Elizabeth; Robert Weyersberg and wife, Jayme; Roseanne Weyersberg and husband, David, with grandson, Asher, and granddaughter, Nadina, to be born this year.

Bachelor of Music earned at Michigan State University with post graduate work at MSU, CMU, and the Vandercook School of Music. We love to travel and camp. I am an instrumental performer on trombone, euphonium, and tuba and the originator of the Maple River Brass Quintet.

During the Christmas season, you'll find me sharing the true meaning of Christmas while embracing the role of Santa.

**Experience within the Body of Christ that has prepared you for service in this position:**

Baptized at Our Savior Lutheran Church (LCMS) in Detroit, Mich.; grew up and confirmed at Bethel Lutheran Church (ALC-ELCA), St. Clair Shores, Mich.; attended University Lutheran Church (ALC-ELCA), East Lansing, Mich.; past member of St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS), St. Johns, Mich.; past member of St. Phillip Lutheran Church (LCMS) Owosso, Mich., and current member of Redeemer

Lutheran Church (ALC-ELCA-NALC), Owosso, Mich.

At Redeemer, I have served as council president, council secretary and will soon serve as Congregational Life co-chair. I have served as member and chair of three call committees, and serve as an assistant minister and church musician. I have been a lay delegate at several ELCA synod assemblies and at the first NALC Convocation in Columbus, Ohio.

**What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?**

I believe I have been given the gift of faith. God is good and is central to my faith. This gives me the confidence in all that I know to be true because of this blessing. I believe and work to be a good steward. I believe it is important to give of our resources, our time, and our talents for the benefit of others. We have been blessed in so many ways and it is with great gratitude that we seek to give back and pass it forward. I believe I have been given the gift of leadership. To lead is not to be first, but to be last. To lead is to serve, and to help others recognize what their gifts are and how best we might collectively serve all of God's children.

**What challenges do you see facing the NALC over the next few years?**

A major challenge is going to be filling pastoral vacancies with NALC pastors. A second challenge is generating belief recognition regarding the NALC, the importance of being an NALC Lutheran and what that means biblically and in life. A third challenge is that associated with church growth. It is imperative that we work to be a church with balanced congregations, membership that reflects the demographics of communities with vitality — congregations where the cries of infants can be heard as well as the words of the mature and wise. Congregations that not only speak the messages of the Word, but live the messages of the Word.

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**What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC over the next few years?**

I hope to see congregations flourish worldwide. I hope to see youth inspired by the Holy Spirit and led by the Word to live lives of service as ministers, or in lay service side by side within the careers that best align with the gifts and talents that they have been given. I hope to see our seminary grow with adults of all ages seeking to learn with the goal of serving his people in ministry. I think it is also important to always be in tune with all that is being taught at seminary.

**What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities over the next few years?**

Everything in the world keeps changing at a geometric rate. Technology, changing international relations, changing social relationships, changing family pressures, and the list goes on and on. All change known, and yet to be known, needs to be dealt with in the context of the Word, asking, what would our Lord have us do? World view seeks to dominate our lives. It must be the mission of the Church — our mission — to work against that domination. I believe there is strength in numbers and knowledge. This leads me to the answer found next.

**What tangible actions can the NALC, its Mission Districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-Centered and Mission-Driven church body?**

Prior to becoming the NALC, members of ELCA congregations came from far and near to join together to express our concerns to leadership and fellow congregants over decisions and directives that were being made that were contrary to Scripture. When we became the NALC, we became a church that covered the same geographical area as the ELCA but with much larger expanses of geography between the newly named congregations. Though newsletters come regularly to keep parishioners informed about NALC activities, I believe there is a need for regular personal communication by a Dean or Bishop.

I believe that regular visits to congregations will positively affect attitudes and desires to grow and work together. Another avenue to pursue may be “face time” temple talks highlighting important items being addressed by the church. We must not allow our congregations to feel isolated. More personal communication will lend itself for more inspired service from all of God’s children.

**Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.**

I experience God in all of my interactions with all whom I come in contact. I am an educator and I come in contact with and interact with many people on a daily basis and have done so for decades. I may be teaching, I may be adjudicating, I may be acting or entertaining (Santa or instrumental performance) but central to all I do is the thought, “What can I do to make your life better?” and the actions that I take in response to their needs. I have been blessed with the gift of music, and I have been able to make that gift a viable career, a job that I love. I have been blessed with a loving family, wonderful friends, and unbelievable opportunities because of a Lord that loves me. I want everyone to experience all the good things I have been blessed with, and I want to share all that the Lord has given me to help me through the challenges that we all face at sometime in our lives. With him, all things are possible.

**List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.**

Seeing others grow in faith through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and with the love and grace of Jesus, what comes to mind to me often is Matthew 28:18-20 (NIRV): “Then Jesus came to them. He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end.”

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Jesus simply states what God the Father had said and continues to tell us daily: Jesus is my Son, and I give him the authority over all of heaven and over all of the earth. We are to go and share the Word, and all the details of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection for all to know that we/they might be saved by his victory and the gift of his grace. We are charged with spreading the Good News. All of us are. And we do not go about this task unarmed or unprepared. We all have the gift of the Holy Spirit, and we all have been given specific gifts so that, collectively, we will be able to serve all of God's people.

