

North American Lutheran Church is constituted

A new Lutheran denominational body was born on Friday, Aug. 27, as Lutherans from throughout North America voted overwhelmingly and enthusiastically to form the North American Lutheran Church (NALC).

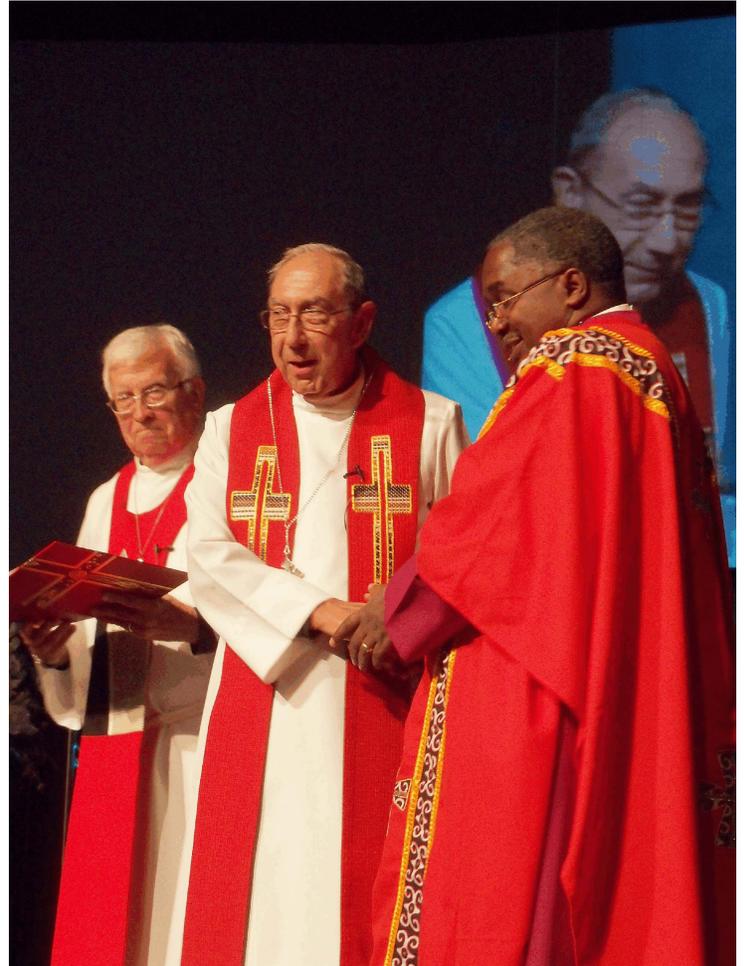
The decision to form the new church body was made at the annual Convocation of Lutheran CORE which attracted more than 1,100 Lutherans Aug. 26-27 at Grove City Church of the Nazarene in the Columbus suburb of Grove City, Ohio. Thousands more watched the Convocation online.

The Convocation adopted a constitution and elected provisional leaders for the NALC. The Rev. Paull Spring of State College, Pa., was elected as provisional bishop of the NALC. Spring served as the bishop of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) for 14 years.

Spring and other church leaders were elected for one-year terms. Those congregations that join the NALC will elect their own leaders at the church body's first annual meeting next year. Spring has said that he will not be available for reelection.

"The North American Lutheran Church is now launched on its mission — to proclaim the good news of Christ to all people. We pray that God will be by our side and with our congregations as we move forward in His name," said Spring.

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Bishop Paull Spring is greeted by Bishop Benson Bagonza of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania following his installation as bishop of the North American Lutheran Church. Bishop Kenneth Sauer, who presided at the installation, looks on.

"The NALC will embody the center of Lutheranism in North America."

— Pastor Mark Chavez



More than 1,100 people attended the Lutheran CORE Convocation which gave birth to the North American Lutheran Church.

‘We have a great opportunity before us’

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“We have a great opportunity before us. We not only want to look back toward the past, but to look ahead to the mission God has given us — to confess Christ faithfully, to witness to others, and to grow in God’s mission. This is our opportunity now in Lutheran CORE and in the North American Lutheran Church,” he said.

“The NALC will embody the center of Lutheranism in North America. The NALC will uphold confessional principles dear to Lutherans including a commitment to the authority of the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions. Members and congregations of the NALC will have direct involvement in the decisions and life of the NALC,” said the Rev. Mark Chavez of Landisville, Pa., director of Lutheran CORE.

The new church body was approved with no opposition. Some of those in attendance asked to sign a document noting their assent to the creation of the NALC. Many waited for more than an hour

to do so because they wanted to formally note their involvement in the historic action.

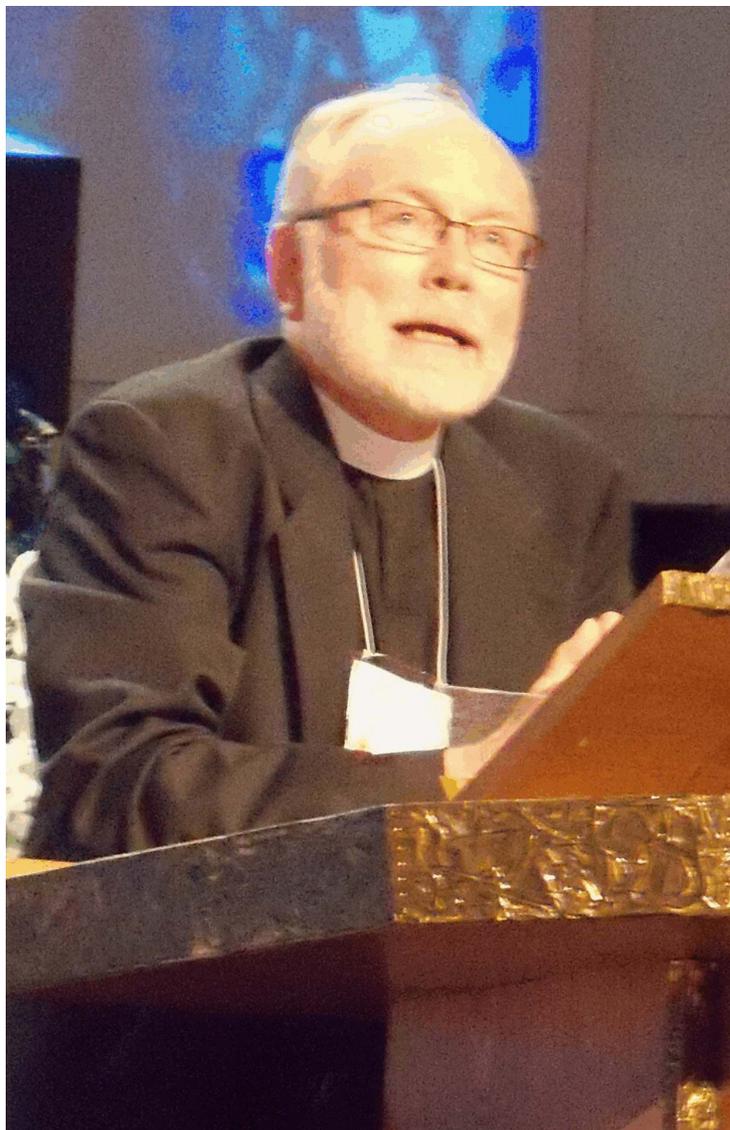
Lutherans around the world celebrated the creation of the NALC. Two of the largest Lutheran churches in the world sent official representatives to the Convocation.

Representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus told the Convocation of the support of their church bodies for the NALC. These two church bodies from Africa are the second and third largest Lutheran churches in the world, each with 5.3 million members. They reported that Lutherans throughout Africa were praying for the Convocation and for the NALC.

“May God bless Lutheran CORE and the vision of the NALC,” said the Rev. Francis Stephanos, president emeritus of the church in Ethiopia and a former vice president of the Lutheran World

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Lutheran CORE to be unity movement



Pastor Paul Ulring, Moderator of Lutheran CORE

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Federation. "One cannot put the word of Scripture to a vote. . . . The churches of the South will choose Scripture over the mighty dollar."

The Rev. Dr. Benson Bagonza, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania's Karagwe Diocese, preached for the closing worship and participated in the installation of Bishop Spring.

"The presence at our convocation of so many ecumenical and international guests is very significant," said Spring. "Their presence among us is a reminder that we are not alone in our

ministry and that we intend to forge strong ties and relationships with other Christian communities as we go forward in the North American Lutheran Church."

The Convocation voted to request membership in the Lutheran World Federation for the NALC as a part of the church body's commitment to an ongoing relationship with faithful Lutheran churches in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe.

The NALC is also committed to a close partnership with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC), an association of congregations that was formed in 2001. More than 320 congregations have joined LCMC since August of 2009.

"As you make your stand today, I pledge that your siblings in LCMC will stand beside you," said the Rev. Larry Lindstrom of Farmersville, Ohio, chair of the LCMC Board of Trustees.

"I anticipate many congregations will choose to join both LCMC and the NALC," he added.

The Anglican Church in North America was represented by four of its bishops. The Rt. Rev. Ray R. Sutton of Dallas, Texas, bishop co-adjutor of the Diocese of Mid-America and chair of ACNA's Ecumenical Relations Task Force, addressed the Convocation on behalf of Anglicans.

A way to move forward together

In addition to creating the NALC, Lutheran CORE's 2010 Convocation approved proposals designed to provide a way for Lutherans who uphold Biblical teaching to move forward together.

Lutheran CORE will continue as "a confessional and confessing unity movement for all Lutherans regardless of church body."

"The NALC and Lutheran CORE will link us together as confessional, faithful Lutherans," said the Rev. Paul Ulring of Columbus, Ohio, who was

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Provisional leaders to guide NALC for first year

Lutheran CORE's Convocation elected "provisional" leaders who will guide the North American Lutheran Church through its first year. The congregations that join the NALC will elect their own leaders at the church body's first annual meeting in 2011.

The Rev. Paull Spring of State College, Pa., was elected as the provisional bishop of the NALC. Bishop Spring has served as chair of the Lutheran CORE Steering Committee. Bishop Spring has said that he will not be available for re-election.

The following people were elected to the Executive Council, which will lead the NALC between convocations, and the Court of Adjudication, which will work with issues of conflict and discipline and develop standards and procedures:

Executive Council

The Rev. Donald R. Allman, senior pastor of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Grove City, Ohio.

The Rev. N. Amanda Grimmer, co-pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Abington, Pa.

James Hansen, Charleston, W.Va., an expert in statistics. He worked for 27 years in the Applied Statistics Group for Union Carbide.

The Rev. Victor C. Langford III, pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Seattle, Wash. Langford has served on the Lutheran CORE Steering Committee since 2007. He served as a military chaplain in the Army National Guard for nearly 30 years. He was the first African American to achieve the position of Assistant Chief of Chaplains for the Army National Guard. He retired from military service in 2001 at the rank of Brigadier General.

Carol Lattier, parish administrator of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Tyler, Texas. Before retiring, she worked for 20 years as a financial analyst at the Johnson Space Center.

The Rev. Jim Lehmann, pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Thomasboro, Ill.

Ryan Schwarz, Washington, D.C., a partner and managing director of a private investment firm. He has served on the Lutheran CORE Steering Committee since 2006, most recently as vice chair. He was chairman of the Vision and Planning Working Group and Constitution Task Force. He was also runner-up in the 2009 election for vice president of the ELCA.

Kay Weaver, Vale, N.C., Data Manager / Registrar for the Fred T. Foard High School in Newton, N.C. She is a Sunday School teacher, youth leader, worship leader, and women's group leader for New Jerusalem Lutheran Church in Hickory, N.C., and a member of the Steering Committee for Lutheran CORE — North Carolina.

Court of Adjudication

Richard Currey, a staff attorney at the Air Academy Federal Credit Union in Colorado Springs, Colo. He served in the U.S. Air Force before retiring at the rank of colonel.

Jon Evans, an attorney in Pittsburgh, Pa., practicing primarily in the areas of corporate and real estate law. He serves on the Western Penn CORE Fellowship Steering Committee.

Jim Gale, a business litigator in Washington, D.C. He has served as chair of the Gustavus Adolphus College Board of Trustees and has expertise in the structuring of nonprofit corporations and in drafting governance documents that establish the desired structure. He served on Lutheran CORE's Constitutional Task Force.

The Rev. Dr. Jeffray Greene, pastor of American Lutheran Church in Rantoul, Ill. He earned a Ph.D. in church administration with a focus on the development of the constitution in American Lutheranism. He was a leader of the Fellowship of Confessional Lutherans and served on Lutheran CORE's Advisory Council.

The Rev. Ralph Kempinski, Aiken, S.C., bishop of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the Lutheran

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Lutheran CORE Convocation

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elected as the moderator of Lutheran CORE. “We believe that God is at work, so these are wonderful times ahead.”

“Lutheran CORE’s actions at this convocation and the launching of the NALC are significant progress in forming a community of confessing Lutherans that crosses denomination lines and national boundaries,” Chavez said.

“Our Lord’s reconfiguring of the Lutheran landscape not only in North America, but worldwide, is breathtaking and exciting. We pray that Lutheran CORE and the NALC will faithfully follow Him and in all things give glory to our Heavenly Father,” said Chavez. “It has been wonderful to witness the joy and hopeful excitement of so many Lutherans to move forward and do the main thing — proclaim Jesus Christ and His Gospel to make disciples.”

“The future that we envision for confessing Lutherans in North America is one that is centered on the absolute truth of Christ Jesus and committed to making disciples for Him,” said Ryan Schwarz of Washington, D.C., chair of Lutheran CORE’s Vision and Planning Working Group. “Both Lutheran CORE and the NALC will stand in continuity with the tradition of the Christian Church over the past 2,000 years and will orient their activities primarily for the support of congregations in their ministries.”

“Lutheran CORE and the new NALC are two pathways for faithful, confessing Lutherans in North America to remain connected to each other and to the vast majority of Lutherans and Christians globally,” added Schwarz, who was elected to serve on the NALC’s Executive Council.

The NALC is a member of Lutheran CORE and will do much of its mission and ministry in conjunction with Lutheran CORE to help maintain unity among confessing Lutherans and to carry out mission and ministry efficiently.

Lutheran CORE’s 2009 Convocation in Fishers, Ind., asked that a proposal for the “reconfiguration of North American Lutheranism” be prepared and brought to the 2010 Convocation. In response, “A Vision and Plan for The North American Lutheran

Church and Lutheran CORE, a Community of Confessing Lutherans” was released in February.

“The North American Lutheran Church places great emphasis on congregational ministry and congregational renewal,” Spring said.

“We know that the congregation is not the sole form of ministry in the church. But the congregation is surely the chief community of faith for ministry and renewal. We are hoping that our congregational focus will be evident in the way we carry out our ministry.”

“We are inspired by the groundswell of congregations interested in joining the NALC, as well as the other Lutheran and Christian church bodies interested in discussing fellowship and shared ministry opportunities with the NALC,” Schwarz said.

“Our common commitment to Christ’s Great Commission — making disciples of all nations — is a firm foundation for continued growth of the NALC, broader unity through Lutheran CORE, and building of church-to-church relationships in coming years.”

NALC provisional leaders

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Church in America 1979-1987 and of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the ELCA 1987-1998. He was a representative of the ELCA Board of Pensions 1998-2004. He served on the Lutheran CORE Ministerial Policies working group.

Carolyn Nestingen, an attorney in Minneapolis. She has practiced law for more than 30 years, focusing on employee benefits, pension, and trust law. She was a member of the Lutheran CORE Vision and Planning Working Group which prepared the design for the NALC and the ongoing ministry of Lutheran CORE. She is married to popular Lutheran scholar the Rev. Dr. James Nestingen.

The Rev. Dr. Ron Warren, Grove City, Ohio, bishop of the Southeastern Synod 1995-2007. He was a member of the Lutheran CORE Vision and Planning Working Group which prepared the design for the NALC and the ongoing ministry of Lutheran CORE.

Provisional regional deans are announced

The North American Lutheran Church has announced the appointment of 18 provisional regional deans who will serve with NALC Bishop Paull Spring in providing pastoral care to NALC congregations and pastors.

At its Sept. 27-28 meeting, the NALC's Executive Committee authorized Bishop Paull Spring to appoint the deans to serve the NALC during its initial year.

The immediate appointment of the deans was necessary to serve the large number of congregations and individuals who are considering the possibility of joining the NALC.

Regional deans also will provide information and pastoral care to individuals and congregations that are considering joining the NALC.

The provisional deans are a part of the transitional organization of the NALC. The deans will serve for the first year of the NALC until their successors are elected by congregations in the area they serve.

The current leaders of the NALC are serving the church body provisionally for its first year. They were elected by Lutheran CORE's 2010 Convocation. The congregations that join the NALC will elect their own leaders at the NALC's first convocation in 2011.

The NALC constitution explains the role of deans as to "support the work of the bishop by conducting similar functions in their respective areas. Deans shall serve as pastor to pastors, their families, and congregations and will conduct a ministry of teaching and visitation with pastors and congregations."

Conversations are in process to find deans for other areas. Additional deans will be announced as appointments are made.

The following regional deans have been appointed:

California, Hawaii and Nevada — The Rev. Daniel Selbo, San Jose, Calif.

Caribbean and Spanish-speaking Ministries — The Rev. Eddy Perez of Miami, Fla.

Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico and Utah — The Rev. David Wendel, Colorado Springs, Colo.

Florida — The Rev. Rebecca Heber, Lake Mary, Fla.

Illinois — The Rev. James Lehmann, Thomasboro, Ill.

Iowa — The Rev. Kenneth Kimball, Waterville, Iowa.

Northern Minnesota — The Rev. Timothy Lundeen, Erskine, Minn.

Montana, western North Dakota, western South Dakota, and Wyoming — The Rev. David Baer, Whitewood, S.D.

North Carolina — The Rev. Jason Sigmon, Newton, N.C., and the Rev. Carl Haynes, Salisbury, N.C.

Ohio — The Rev. Ronald Warren, Grove City, Ohio.

Eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey — The Rev. Michael Tavella, Abington, Pa.

Western Pennsylvania — The Rev. Eric Riesen, Pittsburgh, Pa.

South Carolina — The Rev. Ralph Kempinski, Aiken, S.C.

Northeastern Texas and Louisiana — The Rev. Mark Braaten, Tyler, Texas.

Southwestern Texas — The Rev. David Priem, Fredericksburg, Texas.

Washington and Oregon — The Rev. Victor Langford, Seattle, Wash.

West Virginia — The Rev. Richard Mahan, Charleston, W.Va.

Hope does not disappoint us

“Hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”

— Romans 5:5

A few weeks ago I asked a group of pastors in Texas to share one hope that each has for the North American Lutheran Church. In their own words:

“That we will always remain faithful to the Bible and the Confessions in preaching and teaching . . .

“That we will offer a faithful, traditional, Biblical, and moderate option for Lutherans . . .

“That we will strive to express the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, in a struggling world . . .

“That we will base our mission on the Bible as the authoritative Word of God . . .

“That we will be a Biblically-based church which is serious about the Great Commission . . .

“That we stay centered on the Scriptures and the Confessions and reach out to our communities and world . . .

“That we not get bogged down in sideline issues, but stay focused on ministry . . .

“That we will delight in the opportunity to mature as Christian disciples and prayerfully strive to make Christian disciples . . .”

There is a common theme that connects these different hopes and expectations. The hope is that



Bishop Paull E. Spring

the North American Lutheran Church shall be firmly rooted in the Biblical faith to the point where we engage vigorously in mission, growth, and evangelism.

My hope for our new church is very much like the ones voiced by the pastors in Texas. My hope is that we will be so Christ-centered, so tradition-grounded, and so congregationally-focused, that we will be truly mission-driven.

Several years ago I was being interviewed by a call committee as part of the congregation’s process for calling me as their pastor. The first question to me was a rather typical one for such an occasion, “Tell us something about yourself; share with us who you are.”

For some reason, I took the question in rather ultimate terms. I saw it as an opportunity to profess my faith. I took a deep breath and replied to the question, “Who am I? I am a person who believes in Christ’s resurrection from the

dead. I find my identity in this person who died on a cross, whom God raised from the dead.”

This confident hope in the resurrection is what sustains all of us in the North American Lutheran Church. We have all emerged from a struggle that has shaken and distressed us to the core. Many of us continue to bear the *stigmata* of that struggle. What sustains us, as we begin a new chapter in our Christian life, is the story, the true story of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead and the hope that God has given us.

This hope will not disappoint us, because it is rooted in an event that truly happened. “God’s love has been poured into our hearts,” writes Paul. In this hope and into the future we go forth, trusting in the words, “If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him” (Romans 6:8).

This hope is what empowers and emboldens us to “make the good confession in the presence of many witnesses” today (1 Timothy 6:12). With God’s help we want to make the connection between our Biblical faith in Jesus’ resurrection and God’s call to us to follow the Great Commission.

So let us resolve to pray for one another. I pray daily for our North American Lutheran Church and for our vocation within the one Church. I am deeply humbled by the assurance that so many of you are praying for me and for our church. Let us continue to do so. “The prayer of the righteous person is powerful and effective” (James 5:16). God sustain us in our hope and set us forth for his work and mission.

NALC is experiencing rapid growth

Nearly 60 congregations have voted to join NALC in first two months

The North American Lutheran Church has been experiencing rapid growth since it was constituted on Aug. 27.

The NALC has received 37 congregations during its first two months of existence. Seven are new mission start congregations.

At least five additional congregations have voted to join but their formal reception into membership is pending final action by the NALC Executive Committee.

Another 16 congregations have passed a congregational resolution indicating their intention to join the NALC upon completion of their departure from their current church body.

Many more congregations are expected to vote to join the church body in the coming weeks and months.

North Carolina has the most NALC congregations of any state at this early point in the life of the new church body. Ohio, Texas, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota and Virginia each already have multiple NALC congregations.

To join the NALC, a congregation votes according to the procedures specified in its own constitutions and bylaws.

The resolution to join the NALC should include the congregation's acceptance of the constitution of the North American Lutheran Church and the decision to become a congregation of the North American Lutheran Church. The vote required is whatever is specified in the congregation's governing documents; normally, a majority vote of those members present is sufficient for adoption of the resolution.

Following favorable action on the resolution, a letter is sent to the Bishop and General Secretary of the North American Lutheran Church on church letterhead. This letter will indicate the congregation's decision. The letter should be signed by the congregation's pastor(s) and its president or vice president.

The current list of NALC congregations is available online at www.thenalc.org. It is updated as new congregations are received each week by the Executive Committee.

If you are looking for a NALC congregation and do not see one in your area, please contact the NALC office. We will provide information on congregations in your area that are considering joining the NALC or connect you with others in your area who are considering forming a mission congregation.

Here is the current list of NALC member congregations:

Colorado

St. Luke's Lutheran Church
Colorado Springs, Colo.

Florida

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
Dade City, Fla.

Oasis Church
Lake Mary, Fla.

San Pedro Lutheran Church
Miami, Fla.

Georgia

Christ the King Lutheran Church
Evans, Ga.

Word of God Lutheran Church
Peachtree City, Ga.

Illinois

First Lutheran Church
Kirkland, Ill.

Iowa

Mission in Christ Lutheran Church
Strawberry Point, Iowa

Michigan

Redeemer Lutheran Church
Owosso, Mich.

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NALC Congregations

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Minnesota

Immanuel Lutheran Church
Crosby, Minn.

Grace Lutheran Church
Erskine, Minn.

Riverside Lutheran Church
Wannaska, Minn.

Missouri

Trinity Lutheran Church
Ava, Mo.

New York

Nile Lutheran Mission
Rochester, N.Y.

North Carolina

** Mount Calvary Lutheran Church
Claremont, N.C.*

New Jerusalem Lutheran
Church
Hickory, N.C.

** Trinity Lutheran Church
Landis, N.C.*

Grace Lutheran Church
Newton, N.C.

Christiana Lutheran Church
Salisbury, N.C.

St. Matthew Lutheran Church
Salisbury, N.C.

North Dakota

** First Lutheran Church
Washburn, N.D.*

Ohio

St. John Evangelical Lutheran
Church
Grove City, Ohio

Oakland Lutheran Church
Mansfield, Ohio

Resurrection Lutheran Church
Port Clinton, Ohio

** Trinity Lutheran Church
Springfield, Ohio*

Pennsylvania

Holy Trinity Evangelical
Lutheran Church
Abington, Pa.

Dunmyer Lutheran Church
Johnstown, Pa.

One in Christ Lutheran Mission
Telford, Pa.

South Dakota

American Lutheran Church
Castlewood, S.D.

** Trinity Lutheran Church
Lake Norden, S.D.*

First Lutheran Church
Philip, S.D.

Immanuel Lutheran Church
Whitewood, S.D.

Tennessee

Faith Lutheran Church
Chattanooga, Tenn.

Word of Life Lutheran Church
Maryville, Tenn.

Texas

Holy Ghost Lutheran Church
Fredericksburg, Texas

Our Savior Lutheran Church
Three Rivers, Texas

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
Tyler, Texas

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Yorktown, Texas

Virginia

Lebanon Lutheran Church
Lebanon Church, Va.

Advent Lutheran Church
Winchester, Va.

West Virginia

St. Timothy Lutheran Church
Charleston, W.Va.

Wisconsin

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran
Church of Nekimi
Oshkosh, Wis.

Wyoming

** Christ the King Lutheran
Church
Newcastle, Wyo.*

** These congregations have
completed their voting. Their
request to be received into
membership is pending
Executive Council action.*



NALC

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