

From NALC Bishop John Brodasky, regarding Lutheran World Federation

August 29, 2012

Dear Pastors and Lay Leaders of the North American Lutheran Church,

Please accept my sincere thanks and praise to all who contributed to our 2012 Convocation and Theological Conference by offering their time, talents, gifts and presence. It was good to be together.

I am writing to address some of the concerns raised in the discussion regarding our application for membership in the Lutheran World Federation. The Commission for Theology and Doctrine has already met and is working on a document to address these important issues. It should be available for your consideration by September 15, in accordance with the motion you approved at the convocation.

After presenting the resolution to join the Lutheran World Federation, a spirited discussion, the close of the debate and the vote, we announced the results. While the resolution had the required super-majority necessary for passage, the margin was very narrow. Instead of sleeping, I spent more time praying that night and decided to offer a statement the next morning expressing my deep concern. Most who were in attendance heard my remarks but I was asked by many to share them in written form.

On Friday morning, August 17, I made the following comments:

"I want you to know that I was troubled by our vote last evening. There is little joy when something this significant in our life together passes by the narrowest of margins. There is no joy in the knowledge that nearly a third of our delegates opposed the resolution. The term 'no joy' is military code for 'I've been unsuccessful.' Perhaps I was unsuccessful in providing you with the information you needed. Perhaps I was unsuccessful in the process used to discuss the issues surrounding the resolution. Perhaps I was unsuccessful in determining if we were ready to make such a decision. As I mentioned in my report, I am certain to make many mistakes. For my failures I can only ask for your forgiveness and work with you to find the best way forward.

"First, I want you to know is that in our conversations with LWF we have been bold in telling them the truth regarding our relationship with the ELCA and would not say we were in altar and pulpit fellowship with them. While the NALC had not made any determination regarding such fellowship with other church bodies, should we be asked to do so, we would probably not consider ourselves to be in altar and pulpit fellowship with a number of other members of LWF. It was the NALC representatives that raised the issue of the requirements of the LWF constitution, asking the question if it was pointless to apply given our position. We were told that neither our position nor the reality of our severely compromised relationship with the ELCA would impede our application for membership. The LWF representative told us that altar and pulpit fellowship among all members was a goal but not reality. At no point did we ever try to hide the truth regarding our identity, our values or the consequences resulting from the formation of the North American Lutheran Church, nor would we compromise our integrity for the sake of being perceived as politically correct.

"Second, I want to be clear that this is not an agenda that your leadership is trying to push through without regard to the concerns raised by our delegates:

- The consideration of this resolution is the result of the motion passed at our 2011 Convocation to pursue membership in the Lutheran World Federation. Your staff was following through on the motion passed by delegates the previous year.
- Our staff asked for questions and provided the most accurate information available to us, offering you copies of the most frequently asked questions and answers. We responded to every concern brought to our attention.
- While I am certain the LWF does good work through its initiatives and ministries throughout the world, we are not aligned with many of their agendas and therefore could not support them. Some believe that the ELCA and those aligned with them are using the LWF as another platform to influence an even larger audience regarding their political agendas, resorting to bullying and power politics.
- Our participation in LWF would be for the purpose of supporting the good they *are* doing and aligning ourselves with other member churches who are trying to move LWF in a direction that is more consistent with the witness of Scripture and our confessional heritage. Nations in Africa, Asia, sectors of Europe, as well as others, are trying to gather support to do so. Some of those leaders have encouraged our membership and support for a change of direction in LWF. They believe an additional voice from the west through direct involvement would assist them in this struggle of moving LWF from being agenda-driven to being obedient to Jesus' command in the Great Commission and strengthening the church world-wide for the bold proclamation of the Gospel.
- In our deliberations we must pray for those working for these changes within LWF. They have paid dearly for their stand in the loss of support from member bodies with whom they disagree. In spite of this cost, yet they are bold enough to proclaim publicly that they will not be influenced by money, power, or political pressure.
- We believe there is a chance for these member nations to succeed in changing that direction as these are the church bodies that are growing and becoming increasingly influential, while those currently setting the direction represent member church bodies that are shrinking or dying.

"These are important discussion questions in our dialog:

1. Is it possible to join the LWF without compromising our faith, identity, values and integrity?
2. Is our participation a way to produce positive change within the LWF?
3. Is the effort of faithful Lutheran churches within LWF to change direction worthy of our support?
4. Is this effort an appropriate way to expand our witness to the world?
5. Is it better to have a place at the table and speak out in opposition or avoid the opportunity and forgo the chance for influence?
6. Is LWF involved in anything worthy of our support?
7. Is our participation a way to encourage others to boldly confess Christ?

"I do not claim to have the answers to those questions. These are issues I believe our congregations will have to wrestle with, pray over, discern and decide regarding the faithful response of the North American Lutheran Church. I trust in the work of the Holy Spirit and in our ability to make an appropriate decision.

"We will attempt to provide more information and engage in meaningful dialog regarding the concerns individual leaders and congregations raise. The process is not completed yet. We continue to encourage discussion and prayerful deliberation. While some think we are not capable of wrestling with complex decisions like this one, I trust the ratification process, I trust the faithfulness of our leaders and most of all I trust the work of the Holy Spirit among our people. Sooner or later we have to test our structures by using them. If we wait until every decision is certain to pass we make the ratification process a rubber stamp and prevent our congregations from engaging in legitimate deliberation.

"For those reasons, if you do not approve this resolution in the ratification process I will certainly understand, support you in that decision and help our partners to understand the concerns and issues that prevent us from partnering with them in LWF. On the other hand, if you decide to approve this resolution in the ratification process you have my commitment that no one representing the NALC will compromise our integrity, witness or understanding of the authority of the Word of God as the norm for all matters of life and faith, our understanding of the Lutheran Confessions or the values that shape our life together.

"This is your decision. It is not my decision or that of any member of our staff. The delegates and our congregations will make the final decision about this matter. My sincere prayer is that you gather whatever information you need, pray fervently, seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and come to an agreement that expresses a more definitive response regarding this resolution so we move forward together with far greater unanimity."

As you engage in congregational discussion and discernment, please let us know what further information you desire and what other questions we might be able to answer. We wish for this to be an open and honest process with complete transparency and full sharing of questions, answers and information as we are able. Please feel free to contact any of us in the NALC office with your questions, comments or concerns. For simplicity, you can direct all inquiries to Pr. David Wendel, Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry and Ecumenism, at dwendel@thenalc.org.

It is good to be with you following Christ Jesus,

Bishop John Brodasky

SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL RALLY DAY: SCS Rally Day will be Sunday, September 9th. We will kick off Sunday School with breakfast in the fellowship hall at 9:00am. If you are not currently attending Sunday School, please plan to join us. Classes are available for all ages.

Worship Service in the Union Church: On Sunday, September 23rd, our 10:30 Worship Service with the Sacrament of Holy Communion will be held in the Union Church.

YOUTH FAMILY FUN NIGHT! Youth and Parents are invited to attend an afternoon of games, crafts, and more on Sunday, September 9th from 4pm - 5pm. Come help us kick off our fall youth season with lots of fun and fellowship! Hope to see you there!

Vacation Bible School was held at Grace July 29th - August 2nd. The theme this year was “Babylon”. We are thankful for Stephanie Speagle Ratts, Katy Speagle, and Nancy Leonard for their leadership in putting together our VBS. All the volunteers are greatly appreciated. The kids really had a great time. We could not do it without all the help of the volunteers and help of the parents with getting the children to VBS. We can’t wait to see everyone again next year.

Homecoming was held at Grace on Sunday, August 26th. Our guest preacher this year was Rev. Gene Bruce from Salisbury. Pastor Bruce was at Grace from 1974 to 1972 (18 years). Attendance was 191. **Thank you** to Harvey & Helen Leatherman and Gary Leatherman for trimming bushes, pressure washing and other cleanup for Homecoming. **Thank you** to Jimmy Jarrett, Doug & Jackie Jarrett, Don Jarrett, Lorene Heavner, and Eric Martin for setting up and cleaning up after Homecoming.

Choir Practice and Evening Prayer: We invite members of the congregation to join the choir this season as practice begins for Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas. Practice is held each Wednesday at 6:30pm for approximately 45 minutes. Evening prayer is held each Wednesday at 7:30pm.

If you have a favorite hymn that was not sung during the recent Hymn Sing, let a member of the Worship/Music Committee know, and the hymn will be included during a regular Sunday morning service.

October Hymn Sing: There will be a Hymn Sing in the Union Church on Sunday, October 21st at 4:00pm.

PRACTICE SESSIONS FOR CANTORS – This fall several practice sessions will be held for potential new Cantors to help with the service. Both men, women, and youth volunteers are welcomed. Cantors will be able to remain at their regular seats in the congregation when performing the Cantor duties. The organist will play the lines of music along with the cantors in order to simplify the process. Perfect voices not required!

The Cantor is really chanting – Chanting can be described as being halfway between talking and singing; it is musical but not music. One or two notes only are used in chanting, and the chanter reads the words to these notes at a steady rhythm. The notes and rhythms used vary according to what the occasion is, but generally chanting is relatively low-toned and steadily rhythmic creating a calming sound. Chanting not only is conducive to a calm and elevated state of mind but also allows chanters to read through large portions of texts (particularly Psalms) more clearly and quickly than possible with normal speech while also conveying the poetry in the words. That is the essential reason for chanting. Worship at its heart is a song and is beautiful. “Wikipedia. Christian Music”

The Flower Chart for September is:

September 2nd - Brenda McConnell

September 9th - Tim Eckard

September 16th - Katy Speagle

September 23rd - Carl & Glennie Beam

September 30th - Christine Norman

The Grace Adult/Seniors Activities Group schedule resumes on Wednesday, September 19th, at noon. The menu will be assorted sub sandwiches, chips, dessert, and drinks. Games will follow. Join us for a time of fun and fellowship!

The Ushers for September are Harvey Leatherman, Herb Travis, David Wilfong and Jack Wilfong. Joe Momier is the Communion Assistant. Stephanie Fulbright is the Greeter. Lorene Heavner and Lynette Momier care for the Communion Ware. Elizabeth Frye conducts Children’s Church and Donna Biggerstaff conducts Children’s Bible Study. Nursery Attendants are Ann Campbell and Jo Doris Frye. Joanne Heavner is the Lector for September.

The Fred T. Foard Senior Citizens will meet on Wednesday, September 5th at Grace at 12:00 noon.
The Women of Grace will not meet in September. The next meeting will be Sunday, October 7th.

First Sunday Lunches will resume in October.

Memorial Garden Brick Project: The following names of Pastors of Grace Lutheran Church will be included in the Memorial Garden Brick Project:

Rev. Johann Gottfried Arndt, Rev. Philip Henkel, Rev. Henry Graeber, Rev. Adam Miller, Rev. Polycarp C. Henkel, Dr. Alfred J. Fox, Dr. R.A. Yoder, Rev. M. L. Pence, Rev. J. P. Price, Dr. L. L. Lohr, Rev. R.M. Carpenter, Rev. W. H. Roof, Dr. B. S. Brown, Rev. Hoke Ritchie, Rev. Harry L. Gruber, Rev. Curtis K. Wise. These Pastors served the Grace Congregation during the years of 1797-1959. Donations towards memorial bricks for these Pastors would be welcomed. Designate on checks "Pastor's Memorial Bricks".

Bricks are already reserved for the following Pastors. Rev. Dr. William M. Johnson, Rev. Dr. J. Luther Mauney, Jr., Rev. John F. Taylor, Rev. Gene W. Bruce, and Rev. Dr. J. Larry Yoder. Please note there can be duplicate bricks in the Memorial Garden.

Family Reunions in September:
September 16th - Cline Reunion at 1:00pm.

Woman to Woman Conference: The Woman to Woman Conference will be held at the Hickory Metro Convention Center on Friday, Feb. 8 and Saturday, Feb. 9, 2013. The times are Friday 7:00pm till 9:00pm and Saturday 9:00am till 4:30pm. Lunch is included on Saturday. The guest speakers are Ann Graham Lotz and her daughter Rachel Ruth Wright. Tickets are available for a discounted price of \$39.99 before September 10. Tickets after September 10 will be \$49.99. If you are interested in attending or have any questions please contact Jo Doris Frye or Nancy Leonard.

New Address: You may have recently received an e-mail with the new address for Essie Reinhardt. Essie has moved again since that e-mail and her current address is:

Essie Reinhardt
Homeplace of Burlington, Room 205
118 Alamance Road
Burlington, NC 27215 Cards to Essie would be most welcome.

Items for the Recreation Building: If special items are needed for events in the Recreation Building, please contact Jackie Jarrett with your requirements. Jackie has volunteered to assist with purchasing items as needed.

Children's Choir Sign-Up: Sign-ups are still available for Youth Choir. Only a few children have expressed an interest to date. If transportation to and from practice is a concern, please contact Joy Heavner.

Communion set up/break down: We could use a few more people to help with communion set up and break down. Please contact Joy Heavner if you can assist or if you have any questions.

Note on bulletins: As new names are added to the prayer list each week they will be underlined for the 1st week only to note them as new additions to the list.

Treasurer's Report

**July
2012**

YTD

General Fund	
Beginning Balance	24,157.50
Deposits	15,442.26
Expenses	11,300.80
Transfer to Mini-Bus	0.00
Ending Balance	28,298.96
Memorial Fund	
Beginning Balance	21,039.84
Deposits	0.00
Expenses	0.00
Ending Balance	21,039.84
Building Fund	
Beginning Balance	1,241.03
Deposits	743.00
Expenses	7,395.00
Ending Balance	-5,410.97
Mini-Bus Fund	
Beginning Balance	0.00
Deposits	0.00
Transfer From General Fund	0.00
Total of Deposits and Transfer	0.00
Expenses	0.00
Transfer to Cemetery	0.00
Loan Balance to Cemetery	0.00
Ending Balance	0.00
Union Church Restoration	
Beginning Balance	2,981.20
Deposits	0.00
Expenses	26.09
Ending Balance	2,955.11
Playground Equipment Fund	
Beginning Balance	3,109.52
Deposits	0.00
Expenses	0.00
Ending Balance	3,109.52
All Funds	
Beginning Balance	52,529.09
Deposits	16,185.26
Expenses	18,721.89
Ending Balance	49,992.46

General Fund	
Beginning Balance	22,239.89
Deposits	100,619.99
Expenses	9
Transfer to Mini-Bus	94,560.92
Ending Balance	0.00
Memorial Fund	
Beginning Balance	21,421.01
Deposits	535.00
Expenses	916.17
Ending Balance	21,039.84
Building Fund	
Beginning Balance	-11,056.59
Deposits	34,114.12
Expenses	28,468.50
Ending Balance	-5,410.97
Mini-Bus Fund	
Beginning Balance	0.00
Deposits	0.00
Transfer From General Fund	0.00
Total of Deposits and Transfer	0.00
Expenses	0.00
Transfer to Cemetery	0.00
Loan Balance to Cemetery	0.00
Ending Balance	0.00
Union Church Restoration	
Beginning Balance	3,250.96
Deposits	0.00
Expenses	295.85
Ending Balance	2,955.11
Playground Equipment Fund	
Beginning Balance	3,109.52
Deposits	0.00
Expenses	0.00
Ending Balance	3,109.52
All Funds	
Beginning Balance	38,964.79
Deposits	135,269.11
Expenses	1
Ending Balance	124,241.44
Expenses	4
Ending Balance	49,992.46

September Birthday List

1st- Larry Jarrett
Donald Leatherman
3rd- Sue Fulbright
Joshua McConnell
4th- Gene Crouse
Brenda Jarrett
Mike Pisko
Ted Whisnant

8th- Todd Jenkins
11th- Kevin Dietz
12th- Elizabeth Frye
13th- Debbi Pisko
15th- Kathy Leatherman
16th- Haley Russell

24th- David Wilfong
25th- Joe Momier
26th- Nelson Fulbright
Kristina Powell
27th- Kandra Johnson