



The Regional Council of the Ohio Mission Region of the North American Lutheran Church met on February 13, 2016, at First English Lutheran Church in Mansfield, Ohio. Attending were Don Allman, Molly King, Sherry Shaffer, Bill Maki, Don Karger, Ethel Briggs, Paul Larson, Paula Caso, Paul Gruetter, and Bob Quaintance.

Don Allman led devotions. He shared some statistics from “The State of Discipleship” (a publication of the Barna Group and Navigators) on the narcissism of this age, both inside and outside the church. He also read from Proverbs 1 and 2. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.”

Bill Maki moved, Paula Caso seconded, that the minutes from the last meeting be approved. Motion passed.

Don Karger presented the treasurer’s report. Ethel Briggs moved, Paula Caso seconded, that the treasurer’s report be approved. Motion passed.

### **Mission District reports**

North Eastern Ohio: Dean Bob Quaintance reported that pastors and professional leaders are meeting. The district currently has two congregations in the call process.

North West Ohio: The clergy are meeting every other month. The executive council meets via Skype, which has proven to be effective, and it saves much travel time. One pastor has accepted a new call in Michigan; the congregation he was serving has decided to move to part-time ministry.

Southeast Ohio: The executive board has not yet met. There are four congregations in the call process; one of these has just voted on a call.

North Central Ohio: The clergy are meeting monthly, except for summer. They have one new congregation. Trinity Lutheran in Crestline has become dual-rostered, now with membership in the NALC and LCMC. One congregation in the district is currently vacant, and is being served by an interim. The district executive council has not met.

Southwest Ohio: the district was not represented at today’s meeting, and no report was given.

### **Report from Pastor’s Retreat and Ministerium**

Bishop Bradosky reported at the Ministerium gathering in Orlando that the NALC now has over 400 congregations, 575 rostered pastors (this includes retired pastors), and 69 new mission starts. (Of these mission starts, Ohio is represented by Journey of Faith, North Ridgeville; Abundant Life, Hilliard; Oromo Evangelical Church, Columbus; and Resurrection, Wooster, a house church.

The Bishop has challenged each mission district to start a new mission every year.

Mission Director Gemechis Buba told about the school founded in Uganda, in a refugee camp, by an NALC missionary. There are now over 2000 students, and they are receiving United Nations funding.

The Bishop has been invited to Slovakia, to teach on discipleship.

Pastor David Wendel reported that 30 congregations are seeking a pastor (these are the ones actively in the call process). Many of these are rural and part-time settings. There are currently 90 pastors who have filed mobility papers.

The NALC is working on guidance for congregations, as they seek to protect themselves from discrimination claims in the wake of the legalization of gay marriage. Templates for legal protection documents should be available to congregations by April. It's important for congregations to make sure their documents are consistent, and that there are no exemptions to any group.

It was reported that the North American Lutheran Seminary now has 10 residential students, and 25 students are taking classes online.

## **Convocation**

Convocation is Saturday, May 7 at Grace, Springfield. We looked at the schedule that we developed at the last meeting. No changes were made.

Last meeting, we had compiled a list of possible ideas for workshops, and we continued that discussion. After much discussion, we reached consensus that these are the workshops that will be offered.

- Building Mission Relationships: International, Domestic, and Local. Paul Larson and Paul Gruetter will develop this workshop. Possible resources are congregations in Jackson Center and Mansfield with ongoing relationships internationally, and Montpelier with a relationship with a domestic mission.
- Discipleship. Don Allman suggested taking participants through one of the Bible studies that is used in the discipleship process. Don Allman, Bob Quaintance, and Dan Powell will develop this workshop.
- Legal issues and protections, regarding the legalization of gay marriage. Paul Larson will contact Hans Scherner about leading this workshop. It was noted that the NALC guidance on this issue should be available in time for convocation.
- Worship resources from Sola Publishing. Bill Maki will contact Susan Ryman and/or Amy Little to lead this.
- Youth Ministry. Don Allman will contact Gary and Lori Pecuch to lead this.
- Communications for Congregations. Bill Maki will contact Mark Ryman to lead this.

We will put brief descriptions of each workshop on the registration materials, in order to attract additional attendees. We will include a section for registrants to express their interests, to help us judge interest and plan room use.

Paul Gruetter will develop the registration materials. Registrations will be sent to Ethel Briggs. Paula Caso will post the materials on the Ohio Mission Region website.

Theme for the Convocation is "Cross Fit", with the theme verses of Ephesians 4:11-16. Don Allman will lead the opening session, with Bible study and announcements.

Don Allman will chair the business meeting of the Region. (Each dean will chair the business portion of their respective Mission District.) We will need nominations for Secretary. Paul Gruetter's term ends, and he is not available for another term. Don Karger will prepare the budget for the meeting, but will not be present to present it because of a family commitment. Don Allman will install the newly elected people from districts and the region.

We will ask Grace, Springfield to provide the meal and refreshments. Ethel Briggs moved, Paul Gruetter seconded, that we ask the host church to prepare and serve the food for refreshments, breaks, and lunch for around \$10 per person. Motion approved. Ethel will make arrangements for the food with the staff at Grace, Springfield.

For the closing worship, we will count on our host congregation to lead and preside. Don Allman will contact Dan Powell at Grace with this request.

We discussed display tables. In the past, Navigators, Sola Publishing, and Malawi have had displays. We will also ask the Faith Webbing team if they would like a display.

We called Dan Powell and left a voice mail, offering our prayers for his wife and mother-in-law, after their recent serious traffic accident.

Don Karger reminded us that we often designate in advance a recipient for the offering from Convocation. Sherri Shaffer moved, Paul L seconded that we designate the offerings from Convocation go to the NALC Great Commission Society Fund. Motion approved.

Expenses for the convocation would include meals, organist, custodian, and use of the building. Bob Quaintance moved, Paul Larson seconded, that honorariums for the custodian and organist be the same as last year. Motion approved.

Paul Larson moved, Bill Maki seconded, that the registration fee for all of the members of the regional council be paid by the Ohio Mission Region. Motion approved.

Bill Maki moved, Paul Larson seconded, this Continuing Resolution: For the Ohio Mission Region council members who are not delegates from their congregation, the Ohio Mission Region will pay their mileage for Convocation. Motion approved. (Secretary's note: This will be attached to the constitution, as CR 2016.01)

### **Mission, Vision, and Long Range Planning**

Concerning discipleship, how do we move forward, as we move beyond the leadership of Navigators? Navigators grants will continue for the congregations that have begun the program, but which have not yet completed the three year program. We will budget for 10 congregations this year.

The Bishop has issued a challenge to have each Mission District start one mission congregation. Will we handle this by the region, or by each district? The consensus of the council is to leave this responsibility with the districts, with the region possibly providing training.

We discussed the merits of offering a conference for pastors in the region. We don't want to compete with the annual NALC Pastor's Retreat in Orlando. Would there be benefit in having a gathering of pastors in Ohio? Some small congregations have reported that it's difficult for them financially to send their pastor to Orlando.

Sherri Shaffer moved, Bill Maki seconded, that the meeting be adjourned. Motion approved.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting will be Saturday, April 16, 2016, from 9:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at First English, Mansfield.

Respectfully submitted,  
Paul Gruetter, secretary