



News

of the Iowa Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

May 2022

A Word from the Dean

No doubt, if you attended your local Lutheran church on Sunday, April 24th, you heard the very same Gospel reading that we have come to associate with the Second Sunday of Easter. You know the text, where we see ten of the disciples locked away in the very room where just a few days before they enjoyed the Passover with their beloved Rabbi, Jesus. And into that locked room the risen Jesus suddenly and amazingly appears, showing them His hands and side to prove that He was the same Who had been crucified the previous Friday, and then buried hastily before the Sabbath began. His word to them in that locked room was "Peace."

But even more famously, or infamously, in this passage we learn that the other remaining disciple of the original twelve, Thomas, had not been there to witness this sudden and amazing appearance. And when they told them of this sudden and amazing thing that had just happened, rather than rejoicing with them, he boldly declares, "Unless I see... and touch... I will NEVER believe." Ever after, this singular disciple has had to the moniker of "Doubting".

Like of many of you, I've always had a soft spot in my heart for Thomas. And I don't think it's simply because my dad was from Missouri, the "show-me" state. His reaction was perfectly understandable. In fact, in Luke's gospel, when the women came to the disciples with the words they'd received from the angels in the tomb that Jesus had risen, "*these words seemed to [the disciples] an idle tale, and they did not believe them.*" (Luke 24:11)

It has been basically understood that Thomas's doubts were fueled simply owing to his having missed Jesus' sudden and amazing appearance in that locked room. But I've come to wonder if his 'disbelief' was effected more by what he saw. Let me explain.

First of all, it occurred to me that Thomas' absence could itself be significant. If the disciples were so afraid that they locked themselves behind the door, why wasn't Thomas also there with them? I can't but wonder if his absence can't be explained by what happened just before our reading began. In what occurred just before, we see Mary Magdalene weeping at the tomb because it appears as though someone has stolen the body of her Lord. Thinking Him to be the gardener, she pleads with Jesus to tell her where His body is so that she can take it. But then Jesus reveals Himself to Mary by speaking her name. She then goes and tells the disciples, "*I have seen the Lord!*"

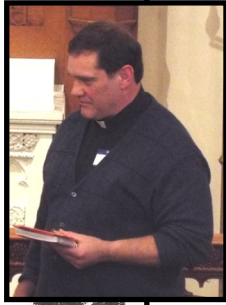
Thomas would have received this word from Mary Magdalene, along with the other disciples. Could it be that this word stirred Thomas to action? Could it be that Thomas was intent on finding the risen Jesus, even if it meant that he could be arrested as Jesus had been? It could be that his desertion of Jesus following the events in the garden had driven him to the sort of resolve that he didn't demonstrate at that time. This was the same Thomas, after all who, when Jesus told the disciples that He was going to awaken Lazarus who had died, said, "*Let us also go that we might die with him*" (John 11:16). And this was the same Thomas who, when Jesus told His disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them, and then He would come again to take them to that place and finished by saying, "*And you know the way to where I am going*" (John 14:4), Thomas said, "*Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?*" 14:5). And because he had been seeking to find the one to Whom he'd promised devotion and discipleship, he missed that which was sudden and amazing.

But even more than what he didn't see, could it not also have been what he DID see that enflamed his disbelief? What DID he see after all? He saw ten disciples who claimed to have seen the risen Lord. And where were they still even after having seen such a sudden and amazing sight? Locked away for fear. Perhaps it's what he saw, at least as much as what he didn't see that night, that drove him to disbelief. To put words in his mouth, "You mean to tell me that the words of Mary Magdalene and the very sight of the risen Lord have led you continue your fearful confinement?!? If I'd seen what you claim to have seen, the last place I'd be is locked up in some stupid room. I'd be out on the rooftops and on the street corners. I'd let the light of this truth shine like a beacon and never, ever lock it up in a room or hide it under a bushel."

And maybe, just maybe, our willingness to be a little too comfortable in our sanctuaries for an hour or so each week for fear of.... And maybe, just maybe, when the world sees how comfortable we are in our sanctuaries for an hour so each week with no seeming effect on who we are the rest of the week, we shouldn't be surprised that the world will not believe.

*Pastor Christopher Staley, Dean,
Iowa Mission District, NALC*

This and That From Around the Iowa Mission District



It's been a while since we featured any of our congregations and pastors. To the left above is Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church in rural Waterville, Iowa. Old East Paint Creek and Old West Paint Creek are served by Pastor Kenneth Kimball. Right: Pastor Renae Behrends recently began her call to serve Trinity Lutheran Church in Spencer, Iowa.



Left: Children at St. John's, Boyden, Iowa, helped the congregation praise the Lord as they celebrated Jesus' Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem. Right: Three young people celebrated the reception of their first Communion at St. John's.



Below: Pastor David Schafer is currently serving Emmanuel as Interim Pastor. From left to right: the Easter cross, a newly baptized child of God, this year's first Communion class, and display of quilts by Emmanuel's quilters. The quilts go to LWR and local charities.





The Anchor

*Pr. Kim Thacker
St. John Lutheran Church
Plainfield, Iowa*

One day some years ago now – I don't remember if it was during Vacation Bible School or Sunday School – one of the classes went on a field-trip. They travelled all the way from the basement here at Western Douglas to the sanctuary above to see all of the symbols, all of the little pictures of Christianity to be found there. The goal was to try to decipher their meanings. Particular attention was paid to the stained glass windows. In the first windows starting from the back a shock of wheat is pictured in the window on the eastern wall, and grapes are on the other side, standing for the bread and wine of Communion.

When we got to the front, it was easy to tell that the book on the western wall was the Bible. The picture on the other side was easy to figure out too. It's an anchor, but why an anchor? What does an anchor signify? That was a mystery to me too. So I had to extend the field trip by myself to the parsonage where there is a large book with blue covers and golden inscriptions, *Nelson's Complete Concordance of the Bible*. That book lists every word that is in the Bible with all of the verses where the word appears, and sure enough, the word, anchor, was there, but there were very few anchors. Apart from the 27th chapter of Acts, which contains the story of Paul's journey to Rome by boat, there is only one other instance of the word, anchor, in the whole Bible. It's in The



Letter to the Hebrews, and it reads, "*We have this [hope] as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul.*" (6:19) So the anchor signifies hope, the hope of eternal life.

Why is hope the anchor of our souls? Because the hope of eternal life gives us peace right now. Knowing that something better is coming keeps us steady and secure. It gives us confidence to face whatever a day may bring. No matter what storms my come our way, no matter how violent those storms may be, we have an anchor. We have hope. We can see the far shore in the distance and can count on arriving safely there one day.



Pastors'/Lay Ministers' Retreat for 2022 will be Monday-Tuesday, June 6-7. at Starlight Best Western Village in Fort Dodge, Iowa. We begin at noon on Monday and end at noon on Tuesday. Supper and breakfast are provided; lunches are on your own. There is no cost unless you request a private room or will be sharing a room with your spouse. In that case, there is a \$40 charge payable to the Iowa Mission District. Our speaker on Monday evening will be Chris Croghan, Assistant Professor and Co-Director of the Luther House of Study in Sioux Falls SD. Please let Pastor Staley know if you plan to attend.



Here I Stand Confession and Conviction: I Believe

One of the greatest gifts to the Christian Church through the ages is the Apostles' Creed. As I've probably mentioned at some point in my various ramblings, I grew up in a church body that had a great distrust of creeds, and I didn't really become aware of the Apostles' Creed until I was about fifteen. This encounter was an epiphany! Here, in one lovely and simply worded statement of faith, the heart of the Christian faith was presented clearly and concisely. I began to wonder why my former church body objected to it. Well—I'm still wondering.... Although the Creed was not written *by* the Apostles, it gathers up the teachings *of* the Apostles as they had learned the faith from their own Jewish heritage, the teachings of the Lord Jesus during His earthly ministry, and the work of the Holy Spirit in their ministry following the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. If anyone asks, what do Christians believe? Here it is, simply and clearly.

Luther's explanation of the Creed in the Small Catechism is also a gift to us. In his explanations, Luther "unpacks" these simple statements and takes us more deeply into the heart of our faith. In the catechism the explanations are introduced with the question, "What does this mean?" I would suggest that "What does this mean *for me*?" is closer to Luther's intention. He says: "*I believe that God has created me...given me and still preserves my body and soul....*" "*I believe that Jesus Christ...is my Lord. He has redeemed me.... He has done all this in order that I might be his own....*" "*I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel...*" We do not have a "clockwork god" who created everything and then backed off to see how

things would turn out. We have a Lord who is intensely interested in us, loves us more than we could ever fathom or deserve, and walks with us through all the ups and downs, and ins and outs, of life. To state the "facts" of the Christian faith without understanding that these statements are both a claim on our lives and our "lifeline"—for this world and the next—is to miss the point.

We all know people who are more concerned about getting all the statements right without seeing in them any particular connection to their daily lives. We also know people who are more connected to their feelings but who have a tendency to want to re-create the Lord in an image with which they are more comfortable or one who doesn't make any particular demands on them. The Creed acts as a corrective to both these tendencies. We are called into a relationship—a covenant—in which the King of kings and Lord of lords has crashed into our sinful and death-filled world to call us out of our graves and give us life—in all its fullness—and beyond all boundaries of time and space.

"*Jesus loves me, this I know....*" We teach this song to our children and sing it at the bedside of the dying who have lived a long and full life as children of God in Christ. This is the heart of God, and the heart of our faith, and it is the reality that undergirds all Christian teaching and the articles of faith we find in the creeds of the Church. As we prayerfully ponder the statements of the Apostles' Creed and Luther's explanations in the Small Catechism, may we do so with hearts turned to the Lord—remembering His great love, His claim on our lives, and His call to live day by day in His grace.

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

Disaster Response Warehouse Update

Thank you for your continued support of the Iowa Mission District (IMD) Warehouse located just north of Chatfield, MN as well as the national NALC Disaster Response. Your support is greatly appreciated especially by the recipients of your donations.

A fully stocked warehouse has 500 of each of the items: Bibles, Flood Buckets, Health Care Kits, Quilts & Blankets, and School Kits (500 *each* Elementary and High School). At this time, the IMD Warehouse does not have any Health Care Kits or School Kits! How can you help restock the warehouse? If each congregation in the IMD could commit to putting together 15 Health Care Kits, 15 Elementary School Kits and 15 High School Kits, we can restock our warehouse rather quickly!

What happens once you have your kits ready to go? You can either mail them to the warehouse (11530 Highway 52 SE, Chatfield MN 55923) or contact me (Betty Burkhalter 815.323.9999 – call or text) and I will come pick them up and get them to the warehouse for you! Not able to put the kits together? You can make a financial donation to this project by mailing a check to me and I can purchase the items and assemble the kits for you. Financial donations for this project can be sent to Mission In Christ, Attention Betty Burkhalter, 312 E Mission Street, Strawberry Point IA 52076). Make your check payable to Mission In Christ with a note in the memo IMD Warehouse Kits

I have estimated each Health Care Kit and School Kit, fully assembled, comes in around \$15 per kit.

One more request! It would be great if each congregation had a Disaster Response contact! By having a contact, I would know who to reach out for future needs of the warehouse.

Betty Burkhalter
Disaster Response Coordinator

What's in a kit? Here is the link to the listing from The NALC's website:
https://thenalc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/NALC-DR-Kits_rev_Feb2021.pdf



Announcements

Upcoming Events

June 6-7, 2022—Pastors/Lay Minister's Retreat, Best Western Starlite Village in Ft Dodge, IA. We begin at noon on Monday and ending at noon on Tuesday. There is no cost unless you want a private room or will be sharing a room with your spouse. The cost for that is \$40, payable to the Iowa Mission District. Supper on Monday and breakfast on Tuesday are provided. Noon meals are on your own.

July 25—August 1, 2022—Youth Mission Trip to southern Louisiana for hurricane relief. Youth who have finished one year of confirmation through grade 12 are eligible to go. Cost is \$400 per youth with non-refundable deposit of \$150 to reserve a seat on the bus due by April 1. Every congregation sending youth must send an adult—one adult per five youth. More information is in the article on the second page of this newsletter. Trip organizer, Pastor Tony D. Ede—tonyede@gmail.com.

August 27, 2022—Iowa Mission District Convocation at Zion Lutheran, Ruthven, IA. The registration form can be found near the end of this newsletter. Nominations are also needed for Mission District Secretary, lay Council member and Clergy council member. That form is also found near the end of the newsletter.

October 8, 2022—9 am—Iowa Mission District Council meeting.

Please Pray for:

Pastor James Puotyual who is awaiting a kidney transplant.

Pastor James Glesne who is undergoing treatments for Multiple Myeloma.

Amy Cooper and her family as she continues to deal with cancer.

The family of Pastor David Steffenson (his wife, Julie, and their children) Pastor Dave was gathered into the arms of his Lord on April 28th. His final message was sent out by Julie on April 29th and is shared on the next page of this newsletter.

The family of Sheldon Bieri (his wife, Linda, and their children). Sheldon was a former member of the Mission District Council and instrumental in getting the web site going. He was gathered into the arms of his Lord on April 24th.

When sending **correspondence** to the NALC please use the following address:

NALC Office
2655 Innsbruck Drive, Suite A
New Brighton, MN 55112-9304

Please send **donations** to this address:

North American Lutheran Church
PO Box 860565
Minneapolis, MN 55486-0565

Donations and Correspondence

Checks sent to the Mission District for support should be made out to the ***Iowa Mission District, NALC***, and mailed to Pastor Gary Burkhalter at **312 E Mission St, Strawberry Point, IA 52076**.

Correspondence for Mr. Craig Lease, Mission District Secretary, should be sent to **405 7th St. N., Northwood, IA 50459**

Items for the Mission District newsletter (pictures, news, etc.) are best sent via e-mail to Pastor Barbara Wills at barbaramwills@gmail.com.

Iowa Mission District Dean, Pastor Christopher Staley, shared this final message from Pastor David Steffenson—sent out by Pastor Dave's wife, Julie. Pastor Dave joined the Church Triumphant on April 28th. He was a faithful servant of Christ whose trust in the Lord and continuing concern for others—even as his earthly life neared its end—is reflected in his final message. Funeral arrangements are pending, and we will share those with you when the decisions have been made.

4:31 – Prayer Time (April 29, 2022)

First Word: II Timothy 4:1-8 – *“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. As for me, I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, & I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.”*

Today: This will be my final 4:31. As the LORD allows, you will be in my heavenly prayers. The time of my departure has arrived. **I lived for this day.** The LORD has called me home. The LORD is my eternal home (Psalm 90). Julie is sending this out to you. Jesus promised to prepare a place for me. The place is ready. *Bios* (the temporal) has been swallowed up by the eternal (*Zoe*). St. Paul passed the baton on to his beloved Timothy. I pass the baton on to you. The world has lots of people with itching ears. Some people only want preachers who tell them only what they want to hear. I have tried to listen to God's Word and to proclaim it faithfully and confidently. I trust the promises of God and I know that you do too. Jesus would not have said, “I'm preparing an abiding place for you,” if it were not so. Jesus would not have said, “I know my own and my own know me and no one can snatch one of my lambs out of my hands,” unless it were true. He who began a good work in us will surely bring it to completion at the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus! I am sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. “O love that will not let me go!” Death has been swallowed up in victory. “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” The promising Word of God—the forever love of Jesus—holds us tight!

“As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” As for me... the time of my departure has come. Departure means arrival. Throughout my journey with cancer, God gave me the grace to cling to Christ like a burr on a velvet dress. I have shed plenty of tears (liquid prayers), but I never lost my confidence in Christ and His promising love for me. Julie and I didn't focus on what was being taken away, but instead we celebrated what has been given. God is so good. “Grateful” became our word for each day. When I think of Paul's words to Timothy, I am mindful that the fight is really a fought. The victory was won when Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. The race is finished only when Jesus carries us across the finish line. And the saving faith we have is the work of God, not the effort or decision making of a fallen sinner. It's all grace; abundant and overflowing; 100%. The Righteous Judge has a crown of righteousness which He chooses to mercifully place on our heads. “My hope is built on nothing less, Than Jesus' blood and righteousness; No merit of my own I claim, But wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand.” No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that ROCK I'm clinging. Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth. How can I keep from singing! I'm spending eternity with Jesus. “The Lord was there to hear my Morning Cry. He rejoiced the day I was baptized. When the evening gently closes in, and we shut our weary eyes, the LORD is present with just one more surprise. Not really a surprise, because Jesus is the guarantee of the promised THIRD DAY! If you're spending eternity with Jesus, then guess what? I'll see you again.

Final Word: “But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, “You are my God.” My times are in your hand”—Psalm 31:14-15a. “Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.” – Psalm 31:5

I Am Prayerfully Yours, Pastor Dave

Iowa Mission District Convocation Registration

Saturday, August 27, 2022
Zion Lutheran Church, Ruthven, Iowa

The 2022 annual Convocation of the Iowa Mission District will take place at Zion Lutheran Church, Ruthven, Iowa, on Saturday, August 27, 2022. Our theme is “Hope”, and we are pleased to have Eric Riesen, North American Lutheran Seminary President as our keynote speaker. The Convocation is our opportunity to gather as brothers and sisters in Christ for the purpose of fellowship, worship, learning and sharing of ideas and to hear up-dates on the work and mission of the NALC. We also will have a business session to conduct the necessary business of the Mission District. As you prepare for the convocation, please be thinking of nominations for *Secretary (either Clergy or Lay), Lay representative and Clergy representative*. Each is for a three year term. A nomination form will be included in this month’s Iowa Mission District News. Please get permission from the nominees before submitting their names. The nominees will need to complete the nomination form and mail it to Mission District Secretary, Craig Lease (405 7th Street N., Northwood, IA).

Please Note:

According to Article 4.01 of the IA- MD Constitution: “***Delegates with voting privileges at a Convocation shall be the ordained ministers of the NALC within the territory of this Mission District and [two] lay delegates from the member congregations***”. In addition, we strongly encourage congregational participation beyond the delegates—visitors are welcome! There is no cost for the event other than a free-will offering for lunch. A worship offering will also be taken and designated to a worthy domestic or international cause. The day will begin at 8:00 am with registration and a time for fellowship with coffee and refreshments. A service of Holy Communion will begin at 9:00, and the closing of the convocation will be at 3:45 pm.

Junior High and High School youth are also encouraged to attend the convocation. It is hoped that we can have youth attendees on a regular basis to promote their interest and involvement in the Church beyond their home congregations.

To help with planning, and so that we may have appropriate name tags for **delegates and visitors**, we ask that you fill out the registration form below and mail to **Kathy Scharnhorst, Registrar, at 1594 Garden Avenue, Waverly, IA 50677**. It is most helpful in keeping track of registrations if each person being registered is listed on a separate sheet. If you wish to submit your registrations via email, please fill out the form and send the information as an attachment to **kscharnhorst51@gmail.com**.

(Please fill out a separate form for each person.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone and/or email: _____ / _____

Congregation & Town: _____

Clergy _____ Lay Delegate _____ Visitor _____ Youth _____

Biographical Information of Nominee

Name: _____ Date: _____

Position for which you are being nominated: _____

Congregational Member at: _____

City: _____

Occupation: _____

Tell us something about yourself (*family, hobbies, etc.*)

How do you understand your faith?

How have you been active in the church?

Please list one of your favorite Bible verses and tell why it has meaning for you.

Please sign below to indicate you are willing to serve if elected and mail this completed form to:

*Mr. Craig Lease, Secretary
Iowa Mission District, NALC
405 7th Street N.
Northwood, IA 50459*

Signature

Congregations of the Iowa Mission District

Ackley: **Our Saviour's**, Dan Buhs, Lay Minister
Avoca: **Trinity**, Call Process
Badger: **Badger Lutheran**, Pr. Scott Meier
Boyden: **St. John**, Pr. Mark Jamison
Des Moines: **Unity Evangelical Lutheran**,
Pr. Donna Joseph; Pr. Diane Joseph
Dorchester: **Waterloo Ridge**,
Pr. Bill Odermann; Pr. Diane Odermann
Eagle Grove: **Evangelical Lutheran**, Pr. Jason Cooper
Eagle Grove: **Samuel Lutheran**, Call Process
Ellsworth: **Trinity**, Pastor Jon Rollefson
Emmons, MN: **Emmons**, Pastor Ryan Henkel
Gilmore City: **First**, Tracy Nerem, Lay Minister
Grafton: **Emmanuel**, Call Process
(Pr. David Schafer, Interim)
Greene: **St. John (Vilmar)**, Call Process
Gunder: **Marion**, Pr. Marshall Hahn
Harlan: **Bethlehem**, Pr. Ronald Rasmussen
+Huxley: **Shepherd of the Prairie**,
Scott Licht, Lay Minister
Irwin: **St. Paul**, Pr. Ronald Rasmussen
Laurens: **Bethany**, Pr. David Klappenbach
Manchester: **First**, Pr. Tony D. Ede
+Monona, **Faith**: Pr. Mel Harris
Northwood: **Peace**, Pr. Barbara Wills
Palmer: **St. John's Lizard Township**,
Marlene Nimke, Lay Minister
Plainfield: **St. John**, Pr. Kim Thacker
Readlyn: **St. Matthew**, Pr. Jean Rabary
Readlyn: **Zion**, Pr. Jean Rabary
Robins: **Servants of Christ**, Call Process
+Rochester, MN: **Emmanuel**
Ruthven: **Zion**, Eric Patten, Lay Minister
St. Ansgar: **First**, Pr. Christopher Staley
+St. Charles, MN: **Trinity**, Pr. Douglas Hedman
St. Olaf: **Norway**, Pr. Marshall Hahn
Sheldon: **St. Paul**, Pr. Dan Baker
Spencer: **Trinity**, Pr. Renae Behrends
Strawberry Pt.: **Mission in Christ**, Pr. Gary Burkhalter
Thor: **Ullensvang**, Pr. Darryl Landsverk
Waterville: **Old East Paint Creek**, Pr. Ken Kimball
Waukon: **Old West Paint Creek**, Pr. Ken Kimball

+ indicates mission congregation



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cbstaley@netins.net
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pdlease@gmail.com
Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer—
pqburkhalter52@hotmail.com

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bettyburkhalter@hotmail.com

Mission District Registrar

Kathy Scharnhorst
kscharnhorst51@gmail.com

Mission District Communicator

(newsletter editor/web master):
Pastor Barbara Wills—
barbaramwills@gmail.com

*The Iowa Mission District
has 37 congregations.*

Pastors available for pulpit supply:

Pastor James Glesne—563-380-8110
Pastor Jack Miller—507-798-2408
Pastor Paul Weeg- -641-381-0675
Pastor Mike Wikstrom—480-203-1556 (LCMC)
Pastor Solveig Zamzow—641-903-9416

Pastor Tim Nappe is also available for pulpit supply. His primary focus is his ministry with "Reaching the Unreached", and he will share information about this mission work whenever he does pulpit supply for a congregation. Contact information: 712-331-4245. Or email at pastortim.milford@gmail.com

The Iowa Mission District website may be found at: www.iowamissiondistrict.com. If your congregation has a web site, and you would like to have the web address linked to your church name on the Mission District web site, please send the web address to me, Pastor Barbara Wills, at barbaramwills@gmail.com.

