



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

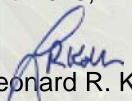
Happily, we are leaving the cold of winter and entering into Spring! God's creation begins stirring again and we feel naturally rejuvenated. May this season of change also cause inner stirrings to our ongoing spiritual development.

Serving our Bridegroom the Lord Jesus is truly the greatest privilege we are permitted in this life. We are inspired to this out of an inner calling stimulated by the Holy Spirit. He gives us an awareness of God's greatness and His goodness which then compels us, out of thankfulness, to honor and serve Him with our life's actions, words, and lifestyle. This calling is much more than volunteering because it is never completed nor fully achieved; nor is it limited to a prescribed time period. Rather, it constitutes a lifetime quest for ways to serve Christ by serving others in our families, congregations, and communities. This dynamic opens for us a joy that transcends anything this world can offer, as it results in finding our Father's good pleasure and blessing. The true reward is not on this earth, but will be the opportunity to be with the Lord forever.

Come, dear ones, I encourage you to continue your journey of discovery to find your God given gifts using the tools provided by your rectors so that we all may engage them in the Lord's service. I cannot imagine anyone belonging to the Bride of Christ who did not learn to serve Him in some way during their life. This must be a prerequisite because in serving, we grow and our nature changes to become more and more like Him.

United with all the apostles, I wish for us all a wonderful season of renewal as well as moving experiences during this Passion Week and Eastertide celebration. May the inauguration of the new "young lions of faith" into our congregations at Confirmation cause much excitement and joy.

With love,


Leonard R. Kolb

Palm Sunday to Pentecost

We are quickly approaching the Easter season. Much as we celebrate an entire season of advent preceding Christmas, so we can celebrate Passion Week, the period of time that stretches from Palm Sunday through Easter, and then Eastertide, the time period beyond to Pentecost. Within this 6 week period we find the most extraordinary and impactful events within God's plan to offer salvation to mankind: Events that should not be confined to the pages of the Bible but must come alive within us and be experienced anew within our congregations in a most contemporary and relevant manner.

We also are witnesses within this season to another extraordinary and life changing event. Our young adults experience the wonderful transformation of their Confirmation and make one of the most impactful and far reaching decisions of their lives. But I would suggest that we can be more than witnesses. Perhaps this is an opportunity for all of us to be a strong and positive influence within the lives of our young people as our Chief Apostle advised us on New Year's Day.

So my dear brothers and sisters, as we approach Passion Week, let me ask you to do three things:

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EASTER SUNDAY | VICTORY

Jesus overcomes death and is raised from the dead. He talks to Mary at the tomb and appears to the disciples.
(Luke 24: 1-9)

SUNDAY

REST

The women and disciples returned home and rested as they observed the Sabbath.
(Luke 23:52 - 24:1)

SATURDAY

GOOD FRIDAY | THE TRIAL AND CRUCIFIXION

Jesus is tried and condemned. Peter denies Him three times. Jesus is scourged and beaten, mocked, made to carry His cross and then crucified between two thieves. He dies and is buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.
(Matthew 27: 3-10, 51-56, Mark 14: 43-65, 15: 16-17, Luke 22: 66-71, Luke 23, John 18: 12-27, 19: 31-42)

FRIDAY

THE LAST SUPPER | A NEW COVENANT

Jesus washes His disciples feet and eats the Passover meal with them. He blesses bread and wine as His flesh and shares it with His disciples, instituting the sacrament of Holy Communion. Jesus and the disciples then go to Gethsemane to pray, where He is arrested.
(John 13: 1-30, Mark 14, 22-26, John 17)

THURSDAY

BETRAYAL

Judas bargains with the Jewish rulers to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.
(Luke 22: 3-6, Matthew 26: 6-16)

WEDNESDAY

TEACHING

Jesus teaches in the temple and is challenged by the Pharisees. Mary anoints Jesus at Bethany. He also traveled to and preached on the Mount of Olives.
(Luke 20: 1-8, Matthew 25, 25, Mark 13, John 12: 2-8)

TUESDAY

CLEANSING

Jesus cleanses the temple in Jerusalem, chasing away the moneychangers and vendors.
(Mark 11: 15-19)

MONDAY

PALM SUNDAY | PRAISE

Jesus triumphantly enters Jerusalem and is greeted by the people with Hosannas!
(Mark 11: 1-11)

SUNDAY

• Firstly, let us intentionally and purposefully grow deeper in our personal understanding of this season; the mystery of God's love for us, the magnitude of Christ's sacrifice and victory, the power of the Holy Spirit, the wonder of our redemption and ultimately the hope for Christ's return.

• Secondly, please make this season come alive today in a joyous and worshipful celebration within each congregation.

• Lastly, create a warm and on-going relationship with the newly confirmed young Christians in your congregation.

Enlivening the Gospel

We find varying accounts of this time period from the different perspectives of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as well as the first two chapters of the Acts. Beyond the well known portrayal of Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter, let us dig deeper to enhance our understanding of the nuances of God's plan for our salvation and to gain insights that will help us in our life of faith today.

For instance, within the accounts of the Last Supper we can find much illumination. We see how Christ dealt with disappointment (the knowledge of Peter's denial) and betrayal (Judas). We find His description of the costs, the requirements and the rewards of dis-

* Portrayed above is a conventional timeline of events. Some publications may contradict what is depicted above.

ipleship. We learn how to serve one another in humility by His washing of the disciple's feet. Christ reveals the coming of the Comforter and the knowledge that He and His Father will love those who keep His commandments and will make their home with them. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34, 35). We are also disciples of Christ.

Are our congregations characterized by love one for another and thus a testimony that we follow and serve Him?

At numerous junctures, we see how the perfect Son of God struggled continuously with the weakness of His human form. We can learn much from His intense life of prayer. At many points He reconfirmed His decision and calling to make the supreme sacrifice that we might find salvation from our sins and a victory over death and separation from our Heavenly Father.

Do we consider the magnitude of His sacrifice and our redemption every day? This is cause for endless worship.

Between the despair and grief of Good Friday and the joy of Easter Sunday lies a Saturday of much uncertainty for the disciples. Those that stayed near the Lord during their time of anxiety and fear experienced the wonders of His resurrection; even Thomas's doubts could be patiently assuaged.

Everyone experiences moments of disappointment and anxiety; but do

we stay near the Lord during times of tribulation and stress?

How useful and comforting for us today! We can continue to deepen our understanding by delving into the wonders of Ascension Day and Pentecost in the same manner.

Celebrate within our congregations

It will be to our greater joy and spiritual development if we also share these moments of discovery with each other within our congregations. Here are some suggestions:

Please consider the introduction of a Passion Week worship evening. This is an informal gathering dedicated to music, Bible readings and personal reflection and experience. It is designed to heighten our understanding and share our feelings of love and appreciation toward our Heavenly Father and His Son. Samples of worship evening format and content may be found on the Minister Companion and the Music Companion websites.

Also, please consider the use of Easter banners, preprinted song bulletins and invitation cards. They are available for order from the Minister Companion website as well.

Lastly, please utilize the Devotional. It contains weekly thoughts taken from the words of our Chief Apostle and has been organized according to the Christian calendar.

Confirmation

Our confirmands are approaching a unique, spiritual mile stone very similar to the caterpillar's transformation to a butterfly. These are our children who we love dearly! They are now

emerging from the safe chrysalis of their adolescence within the shelter of the congregation and are stretching their wings of faith. Is it not a joy to celebrate the unique and beautiful colors of their wings and support them as they take flight?

How can we make this memorable for them? Again, here are a few suggestions:

Confirmation services have been scheduled throughout the Eastertide season so that friends and relatives may travel easily and attend all the congregational celebrations for these young people. This would not be possible if every confirmation was held on Palm Sunday or Easter.

Build a friendship: Perhaps there is a young person in your congregation with whom you have not formed a relationship. It's not too late to start! To make an investment of love and friendship is a positive act of strength and good courage that may have life-long, if not eternal effects on a young soul.

I wish you a joyous and enlightened journey through Passion week and the Eastertide season. -LRK

CONFIDENTIAL

Perspective: Confidentiality

The relationship between church members and ministers is central to one's life of faith. At the heart of this relationship is the Obligation of Confidentiality under which all ministers, and people in leadership positions, should be acting. Simply stated, it should be possible for a soul to have the confidence that the things they share with a minister (or person in a leadership position) will remain private. This concept is laid out in the new constitution that was recently adopted for the USA District Church and is also part of a document that all ministers are required to sign upon ordination.

Although the concept appears to be simple, there is some confusion surrounding it. In years past, the understanding was that a minister should not disclose confidential matters to anyone, with the exception of a higher office holder. However, in recent years some individuals have come to understand this concept to mean that what they share with a minister will be shared with no one – including higher ministry bearers without explicit approval.

The key in this entire matter is that assumptions cannot be made by either the individual or the minister. Assumptions will lead to disappointment. For example, a rector might assume that he should not disclose confidential information to a higher office bearer. At some later date the individual may encounter their apostle, assuming that he already knows about their problem. Upon discovering that the apostle has not been informed of their situation, the individual may feel that their rector has failed them. On the other hand, we can take the same scenario where the rector assumes that he should share the confidential information. In a subsequent meeting with the apostle, he might ask the individual

about their problem. Upon discovering that he has been informed against their expectations, the individual may well feel that their confidence has been breached.

When an individual shares confidential information with a minister, the individual should overtly give the minister permission to share this with a higher office bearer. One may also specify which higher minister the information may be shared with, ie 'I don't mind if you mention this to the apostle or bishop.' The minister may also ask the individual for permission to disclose the information to a higher office holder. This would be done with the intention of opening the way that this higher office holder can pray and/or give council, regarding the matter.

Therefore, I ask that both members and ministers take note. Please do not make any assumptions regarding confidential matters. Ministers, when an individual speaks with you and it is a weighty matter in which you feel you would wish to refer to a higher office bearer, ask permission before doing so. Members, when you speak with a minister, tell him explicitly what your expectations are relative to confidentiality. In this manner, proper respect will be shown to the souls who seek council and support, and the relationship between individuals and their ministers can be strengthened.

Written by Apostle John Fendt

District Wide Strategic Planning

The NAC-USA district is currently engaged in a district wide strategic planning initiative. Your apostle, bishop and district leader are working as a team to analyze our needs and make recommendations regarding our future structure. Using a standardized decision making template, they will be developing the direction of the congregations for the next decade. All decisions must fit within our central objective of building healthy, growing congregations prepared for the return of Christ.

The process will be completed in a thorough, thoughtful and objective manner and tentative decisions may take the better part of 2011 to become fully formed and complete.

Your district leader has spent a great deal of time and effort in 2010 to gain insights into the conditions within each congregation at all levels. We know that good implementation of these decisions may take years to complete.

This process will also be transparent. Please be confident that all preliminary plans will remain tentative until they can be fully communicated and discussed with the congregations affected. Especially when they involve creating a new congregation via a merger or when existing church property modifications are required. Ultimately, we face the same pressures as all not for profit organizations and especially traditional Christian churches: We have finite resources that must be allocated in the most efficient manner possible and must make decisions that we believe are ultimately in the best interest of the church and its members. -LRK

Introduction to the New Catechism

As you may be aware, a project group of NACI (New Apostolic Church International) has been working on the New Apostolic Catechism for a number of years. We are happy to report that this extensive document is now in its final stages and in the initial roll out phase worldwide.

We have recently sent a team to Germany to participate in the initial training and have reviewed the first installment of this document and the training materials that accompany it. Clearly, this is a comprehensive body of work designed to provide a much deeper and clearer understanding of our doctrine and beliefs. It will provide the foundation for our future teaching (Sunday school, confirmation and religious instructions).

Specifically, let us address the following points:

- The term Catechism may have a somewhat distinctive connotation

in the USA that is not shared by the rest of the world. Let us clarify in advance that it is not a Catholic term (however, many of our adolescent Catholic friends may have gone to Catechism school). In reality, the term comes from a Greek word with a rough translation of "teaching". Many churches have a Catechism and ours will be the definitive word on our New Apostolic teaching.

- This document is challenging. It provides much more detail than we have experienced previously and will inspire a deeper level of spiritual understanding.

- In the NAC-USA district, we will work closely with the NACI project group to conduct training for ordained ministers and those who teach our children and youth over the course of the next year.

- The initial training material focuses on three excerpts from the Catechism. The full book will be available to all members in English in 2012. ■



To our children and youth

In the early 1960s, the Bishop William Fendt communicated with the parents of our Sunday school children and suggested that they provide their children with piano lessons. This wise advice led to an entire generation of future organists within our congregations; a development that brought much joy to our brothers and sisters across the entire USA. During their tenure, the District Apostles Wagner and Freund also promoted the further development of musical training to support our concert choirs and orchestras.

Let us revisit and expand on these themes! I strongly encourage our parents to open ways for their children to discover their musical talents. Many have suggested that early lessons in leadership and team building can be learned from participating in sports and athletics. I see a similar advantage within musical training. It can produce a lifelong source of joy for the individual and is a unique expression of worship. It can also be a source of joy to share with others within our congregations.

Likewise, I would suggest that the pursuit of languages and Biblical studies within higher education can be a similar goal for our children and youth that will create much benefit within our congregations in the future. Clearly they will contribute to a more enriched life with a broader perspective for the individual. And they will be wonderful gifts to share with fellow brothers and sisters that will enhance their joy and improve the quality of the divine service experience within our congregations. -LRK

Youth Days

In 2011, we will be having regional youth days across the country. Below is a list of the various locations and dates. Please see your youth ministers for more information as the events grow closer.

Jasper, GA | May 20-22

Georgia, Carolina, Detroit, Florida East, Florida West, Florida Spanish

Virginia | July 22-24

Virginia, South Bend, New Jersey, Cincinnati

Los Angeles, CA | June 24-26

Los Angeles

Erie, PA | July 15-17

Buffalo, Erie, Cleveland, and Canadian districts

Stevens, Pennsylvania | July 15-17

New York, New England, Upstate, Pennsylvania, and Canadian districts

Olympia, WA | August 26-28

Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, and Canadian districts

Carlinville, IL | August 5-7

Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis, Texas, and Canadian districts

Denver, CO | July 8-10

Denver, Kansas City, Billings, and Canadian districts