

Health, growth, completion

Vision



New Apostolic Church USA

District News

www.nac-usa.org

Summer 2017

Dear brothers and sisters,

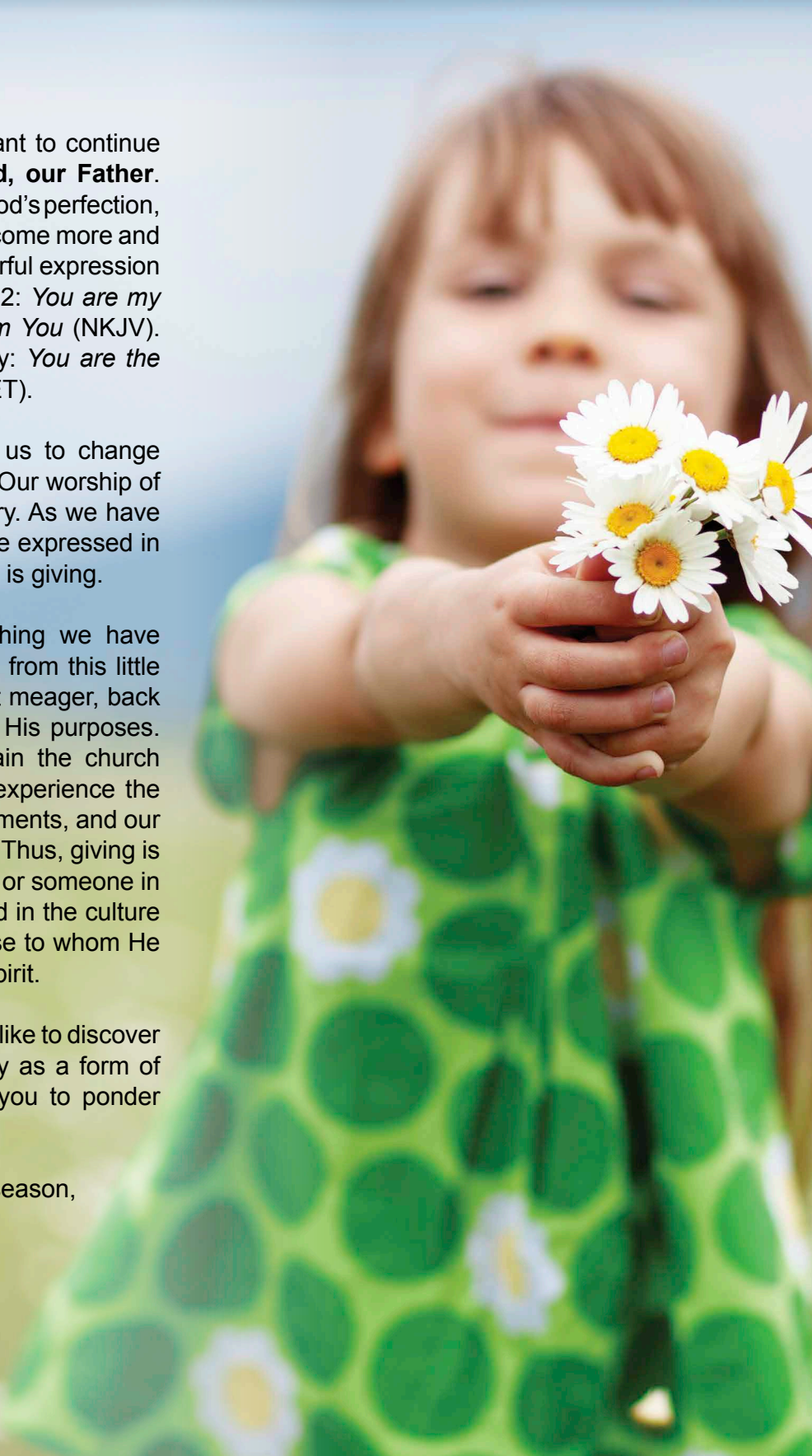
As we move forward in this year, we want to continue exploring our theme - **Glory be to God, our Father**. Recall that as we become more aware of God's perfection, love, and peace, we are humbled and become more and more thankful. The psalmist had a wonderful expression as he realized these things in Psalm 16:2: *You are my Lord, my goodness is nothing apart from You* (NKJV). Another translation expresses it this way: *You are the Lord, my only source of well-being* (BET).

Such movements in our soul motivate us to change our behavior in a way that glorifies God. Our worship of Him is one behavior that brings God glory. As we have discussed in past articles, worship can be expressed in a multitude of ways. One form of worship is giving.

In giving, we acknowledge that everything we have comes from Him, the Creator of all. And from this little we have, we want give something, albeit meager, back to our Father so that it can be used for His purposes. Such giving helps advance and maintain the church as a place where people can see and experience the glory of God through His word, His sacraments, and our communal expression of worship to Him. Thus, giving is not simply a kind gesture to our neighbor or someone in need, nor a nice offering. Giving is rooted in the culture of those that love and worship God; those to whom He has given His life in the gift of the Holy Spirit.

As we continue to step forward, we would like to discover the deeper aspects of giving, specifically as a form of worship to God, our Father and I ask you to ponder these ideas personally.

With best wishes for a blessed summer season,



We are very excited to share with you enhancements to the Sunday School curriculum that will begin this Fall 2017! You may recall some Children's Ministry changes that were introduced in the Next Steps webcast from last October, and now that Fall is quickly approaching, we wanted to outline the specific changes and how they will impact children, parents, and teachers.

WHAT IS CHANGING?

- The Sunday School calendar year will now align to the academic school year calendar, and children will begin Sunday School the year they enter kindergarten. The curriculum will provide lessons from September to June. Congregations can make local decisions for the months of July and August, but are encouraged to consider a VBS type of experience during one of these months.
- The new Sunday School curriculum will be organized into a K-5th grade curriculum and a 6th-7th grade curriculum:
 - The K-5th grade curriculum is a 6-year curriculum comprised of faith-based topics, concepts, and Bible stories that were previously taught via the "Beginner" and "Primary" lessons. The lessons have been updated and will include new learning material from the NAC International group.
 - K-5th grade Sunday School children can be taught in one class OR divided into multiple classes, according to grade levels and/or the number of children in your congregation. *For example, you may group children into two classes, K-2nd graders and 3rd-5th graders. Larger congregations may have three or more classes, depending on the grade levels and/or number of children and teacher volunteers in your congregation.*
 - The *Getting Started*, *Activities*, and *Journaling* sections of each lesson provide suggested ways to differentiate the lessons for the different age children in your groups. These suggestions will be identified as for:
 - All Ages
 - Grades K-2
 - Grades 3-5



- The 6th-7th grade curriculum will serve as the curriculum for Religious Instruction and will continue to use the current Religious Instruction lessons.
- We have incorporated the new FaithArc logo into the formatting of our lessons. (All “Children” components of the FaithArc will continue to be represented with the color purple.)



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THESE CHANGES?

- Teachers and congregations have more flexibility in deciding how to group children into classes.
- Teachers of the K-5th grade curriculum can plan together, share ideas with one another, and teach together.
- A family with children in K-5th grade now only has one lesson to prepare and share at home.
- The newly organized curriculum allows for older and younger children to experience and discuss lessons together, which will foster a “mentoring” atmosphere among our children.

WILL THERE BE ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHERS AND LEADERS?

- In an effort to better equip and communicate with the Children's Ministry teachers and leaders, we will be utilizing our church's administrative management system (iMIS) to communicate regularly with our Sunday School and Religious Instruction teachers.

- In order for the system to be effective, all Sunday School and Religious Instruction teachers will need to ask their rector or iMIS administrator to identify them as a “Children's Ministry Teacher” in iMIS.
- In addition to communicating with you about Children's Ministry developments, we will use the iMIS system to create the necessary access for future online trainings and background checks.

FaithArc 

- Instructions on how to add someone as a “Children’s Ministry Teacher” were sent to all rectors and district leaders via the Minister Companion website. **Please ask your rector, or the person in your congregation responsible for iMIS, to add you to the “Children’s Ministry Teacher” committee in iMIS.**

WILL A CHILDREN’S JOURNAL BE MADE AVAILABLE THIS YEAR?

- In recent years, the Children’s Work Group has created a children’s sermon journal that had the Sunday sermon Bible verse, as well as some questions and activity prompts that were specific to the topics for that day or month. Starting this year, a new type of journal has been created that will promote active listening and engagement for the children.
- The new sermon journal encourages children to listen for key words or phrases from the sermon, and to think about how they can pray for others. This is yet another tool that parents can use to engage in conversations with their children about the sermon to help keep the Sunday messages alive and applicable.
- These sermon journals will be available for order on our website in August so children have them in time for the Fall semester’s Sunday School Kickoff in September.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

- If you have further questions or need assistance in deciding how to best incorporate these changes into your congregation, please send an email to wgchildren@nac-usa.org and indicate **Fall 2017** in the subject line of your email.

Thank you for all that you continue to do for our children and families.

WG Children



PICTURE THIS

MATTHEW 19:14

THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM

What books are currently filling up your bookshelves or devices? How many of them have been written by the One and only Creator of all things? The Bible is a testimony of the revelation of God. Its words should be read, studied, and utilized daily by all who have the desire to know God and are striving to become more like Jesus. No matter where we store our books, our copy of Holy Scripture should be opened each day and its words should be allowed to come alive in our hearts.

HAVE YOU EVER ASKED YOURSELF, WHAT IS THE BIBLE AND HOW DID IT COME TOGETHER?



Over the course of many centuries, human experiences of God's revelation and His acts in the course of the history of salvation have been recorded in writing. Already in the time after the Babylonian exile, that is, in the centuries before Christ's birth, the writings concerning God's acts, promises, and commandments were accorded great authority in Judaism, and were also called "Holy Scriptures" in the epistles of the New Testament. The second epistle to Timothy emphasizes that these Scriptures are based on divine revelation: "... *that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*" (2 Timothy 3: 15–16).

The term "Bible" is derived from the Greek word *biblia*, meaning "books, scrolls." The Bible is a collection of books from Old Testament times, which came into being over a span of more than 1,000 years, as well as books from the New Testament period, which were composed over a span of about 70 years.

The author of Holy Scripture is God, while its writers were human beings whom the Holy Spirit inspired (2 Peter 1: 20–21). God made use of their abilities to commit to writing that which was to be passed on in accordance with His will. Although the contents of the biblical books have their source in the Holy Spirit, they bear the mark of their respective writers and their perceptions of the world, in terms of style and form of expression. We trust that God has ensured that these texts have remained unadulterated over all this time.

HOLY SCRIPTURE IS A TESTIMONY OF THE REVELATION OF GOD WITHOUT CLAIMING TO BE A COMPLETE ACCOUNT OF ALL OF GOD'S DEEDS (JOHN 21: 25).

The Bible is comprised of two main parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The term "Testament" derives from the promise of the "new covenant" recorded in Jeremiah 31: 31–34. While the writings of the Old Testament refer to the covenant that God made with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, the writings of the New Testament testify of the new covenant, which God initiated with the sending of His Son. Both the Old and New Testaments testify of God's plan of salvation for mankind and therefore are linked to one another. The designation, "Bible," for the Old and New Testaments has already been in use since the ninth century.

The term "canon" (meaning "standard" or "guideline" in English), which was borrowed from the Greek language, is used to describe the collection of holy writings that have been binding on all Christendom since the middle of the fourth century.



The Christian canon of the Old Testament is based on the Hebrew canon of Judaism. Even by the time of Jesus and the early Apostles, Judaism did not yet have a firmly defined canon. Although there was a basic collection of holy writings (the Torah, the books of the prophets, and the Psalms), there were also other books which were accepted as holy by some Judaic groups, but rejected by others. The scope of the Hebrew canon was conclusively defined by the end of the first century AD. At that point in time, the Christian canon of the Old Testament was far from complete. To this day, there is no uniform canon of the Old Testament that is binding on all Christian churches.

For the early Christian congregation, today's Old Testament comprised the actual Bible. In addition, the recorded "words of the Lord" (logia) soon came to be given special regard. The logia were at first passed on verbally. Even before any accounts of Jesus' activity were ever recorded in writing, the congregations had various creeds and hymns in which the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ were professed. These also found their way into the writings of the Apostles. The oldest early Christian writings handed down to us are the letters of Apostle Paul. These were read aloud in the divine services and then passed along to neighboring congregations.

After the epistles of Paul, the Gospel of Mark is the oldest written testimony of Christian belief. The content and structure of the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke are closely related to it. In order to preserve the apostolic tradition, pass along its teachings, and distinguish it from false doctrines, it became necessary to prepare a collection of New Testament writings that would be binding upon the church. An Easter letter from Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria, dating from the year AD 367, lists all 27 writings of the New Testament as binding. This canon was ultimately ratified by the synods of Hippo Regius (AD 393) and Carthage (AD 397). The Old and New Testament canons did not come into being on account of human contemplations alone, but most of all through the will of God.

There are several other Gospels that were written that were not included as part of the New Testament canon. They contain various teachings or beliefs that are legendary and/or incompatible with the claims of the canonical Gospels. These writings, such as the book of Thomas, the book of Mary, and the Gospel of Philip, to name just a few, are not recognized in our church or

in any other major organized Christian church because they were not accepted by the church councils of the past. The canonized Scripture provides us with enough teaching to keep us occupied and continually learning.

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS ARE INTERCONNECTED AND TELL ONE UNIFIED STORY ABOUT GOD AND HIS LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE.



Throughout the writings of the Old Testament, we see evidence of Jesus, and then in the New Testament, we see how everything came together in the sacrifice and resurrection of the Son of God. This is why it is important to look at the Old Testament through the lens of the Gospel. Jesus Christ is the focus of Scripture and so we base our doctrine and beliefs on those texts that are consistent with the Gospel. We can focus on these statements and learn from Scripture when we are inspired by the Holy Spirit and allow Him to help us interpret what we find in the Bible. The Spirit also helps us to interpret a Bible verse based on its context, which is essential to its meaning. When we read Scripture with the Holy Spirit, He reveals to us God's will and reminds us of the words of Jesus, so we can find relevance and meaning in passages with context that may seem out of touch with our own world.

AS YOU READ THROUGH THE DIFFERENT BOOKS OF THE BIBLE, ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTION - WHAT IS THIS STORY TEACHING ME ABOUT JESUS?

Invite the Holy Spirit to read the Scripture with you each time you open its pages and experience how the words written thousands of years ago come to life and are relevant for today. - MB

What does it mean to truly serve someone? There are many different expressions our serving can take when we try to help someone who needs it. The idea of serving someone is not just a religious ideal. Many people who are not religious see the need to serve those around them because it is the morally right thing to do or because it promotes unity and love among people. As Christians, our motivation to serve others can also touch on doing the right thing and promoting unity and love, but there is also a deeper element to it: we serve because of Christ.

Christ came to earth as the ultimate servant. His motivation? To do His Father's will to offer salvation to all people. When we serve others, we also want to have Christ's motivation; that we make God's offer of salvation known to them and that they experience the love of Christ. Jesus was able to stay true to His Father's will because of His love for the ones He came to save. His love for all people is pure. One of the greatest examples of His pure love is when He is hanging on the cross and asks His Father to forgive those who persecuted Him. In order to truly serve those around us and to live our lives according to God's will, we must also have pure love in our hearts. An example of such a servant was noticed by one of our members. Recently, one of our sisters passed away due to cancer. During her life, she touched many people, but made a special impression on one particular person. This person was inspired to reach out to her family to let them know the impact she had on him. His testimony is shared below:

She is a mother to me. The many sacrifices she made through the many years are so significant that I can't imagine our lives if it was not for her kindness and love. Her actions and examples, without lectures or preaching, restore my faith continuously even in the most difficult times. I owe the life that I know to her. Many wonderful people have touched my life, but none as decisively as she has. I love her, not because of what she did, but because of who she is. A true mother. My tears are of gratefulness for what goes way beyond what can be seen.

We can see that the way this sister lived her life and served those around her made such an impact on this man's life, that he is forever changed because of her. Through this man's testimony, we can see the result of what it means to be a true servant to those around us. The love she had for others and her love for Jesus Christ filled her completely. When we serve others, we also want to have pure love in our hearts as we strive to do our Father's will.

What if love isn't our motivation? Some may think that one of the results of our serving others is to bring them into our congregation, to hear the divine Word and partake in the sacraments. While this is always a nice outcome, this result cannot be our motivation.

The success of our serving is not defined by the number of people we encourage to come to our church. Whether one accepts our invitation to come to church or not, we are called to love them regardless. This love shows that we are not focused on visible success, such as an increase in people who come to our church. Rather, we are focused solely on serving others.

Sometimes God tests us and wants to see if we really love others as He does. When we serve others, we hope that maybe they will come to experience God in our church. But if we do not see this outcome, we may start to cast blame – on ourselves or the people we are trying to serve. This is proof that our love is not sincere.

We are maybe only looking for success, or glory, or self-satisfaction. The true focus of our serving must always be love, so that we love others no matter what happens, no matter what the outcome is, no matter if we never see them again.

When our motivation is our Father's will and the love of Jesus fills us, then we can serve others out of His love so that they may also be filled. We want others to experience what we have experienced and so we share Jesus with them, knowing that He is the one who has the power to transform their lives.

**This article is based on thoughts from Chief Apostle Schneider.*



OUR MOTIVATION

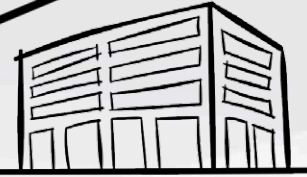
A BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT OUR ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

The NAC USA Church district has its main administrative offices in Chicago and Erie, with 26 employees to help run and manage the different projects and responsibilities that happen in these two offices.

There are also support offices in Panama, Venezuela, and Peru that help to manage the Linked International Districts in Central and South America. Let's take a look behind the scenes at some of the different tasks that occur in each office.



CHICAGO OFFICE



ERIE OFFICE



LID OFFICES

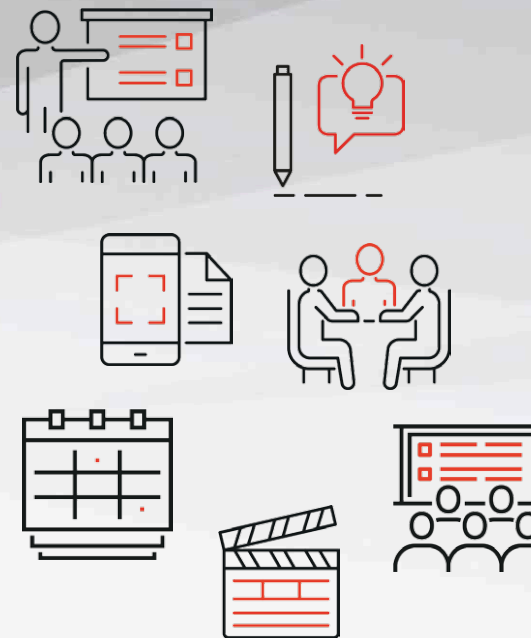
The **CHICAGO OFFICE** mainly houses the financial, legal, and operational departments of the Church. Along with that, member services and the National Building Office are also found in this office.



THE ACCOUNTING, LEGAL, AND FINANCE TEAM mostly work behind the scenes supporting our more than 220 congregations on a weekly basis. This ranges from helping with payments, preparing donor tax receipts, to handling insurance needs and dealing with legal and regulatory matters that all churches have to abide by. In doing so, we strive to assist our congregational teams in whatever they might need, fully recognizing their volunteer role and contribution. Financial assistance and management of funds for the Linked International District are also supported in the Chicago financial department. In addition, the team is currently working on new ways to support the local and national leadership of the church with ongoing strategic reports that can help in managing each congregation's affairs in a consistent, congregation-centric way.



PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT produces programs and resources for all of our congregations. Its goal is to connect the various congregational ministries and efforts of the Church and discover ways to encourage spiritual growth in children, youth, and families in their congregational life. This department provides information, training, support, and follow-up on issues that affect ministers and members in reference to national programs. Some of these resources that the department creates are the Vision Newsletters, the Midweek Experience Curriculum, FaithArc material, Effective Preaching courses, website and app content, and much more. The department also handles the translations of these materials. The Erie office also has a small recording studio where much of the Church's video content to support these resources and programs is filmed and edited.

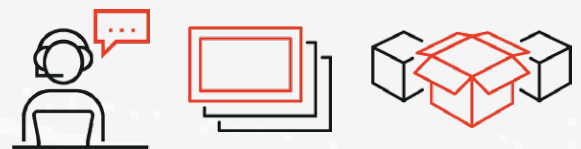
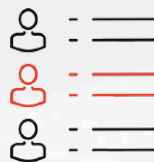


The **ERIE OFFICE** is mostly made up of the Communications and Program Development departments, along with a few other elements that are necessary to the running of the Church.



The staff responsible for managing the **REAL ESTATE** of the Church are located in the Erie office. They connect with the National building Office in Chicago to take care of property purchases, sales, and investments, and also handle any building leases that the Church has.

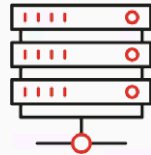
HUMAN RESOURCES is also located in the Erie office.



MEMBER SERVICES covers three main areas: printing, distribution and logistics, and statistics. These different areas involve handling the printing of monthly periodicals, shipping and mailing services, and managing inventory and fulfilling orders. The member database, iMIS, is managed and updated in the Chicago office and allows for international and domestic reports to be run.



THE NATIONAL BUILDING OFFICE manages all of the buildings and properties that the Church owns and rents. This year, the office is focused on breaking ground for the new congregations in Buffalo, NY and Garner, NC; searching for different buildings or properties that can be renovated for seven congregations around the country; and tackling 20 – 25 “repair and maintenance” projects, ranging in severity, at different congregations.



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY for the Church has some impact on almost every aspect of the church administration and congregational activity. This includes computers, phones, websites, several technology resources that assist our volunteer leaders to efficiently manage congregational administration (e.g. websites like NDI, Minister Companion, and NACStat, OneCallNow communications tool), and technology resources to communicate to and assist our members and guests (e.g. websites like nac-usa.org and NAC USA Online for Internet-based service broadcasts). Some important projects for the year include:

- upgrading our membership database called iMIS
- upgrading the website used by congregational delegates and rectors to update the iMIS database called NAC Stat
- upgrading the main server in our Chicago office
- updating all of our websites so they will be simpler to use and friendlier with smartphones and tablets

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

NAC USA FACEBOOK PAGE
 NAC USA YOUTUBE PAGE
 @NACUNITEDSTATES ON TWITTER
 RE CHARITABLE MINISTRY FACEBOOK PAGE
 DISTRICT APOSTLE KOLB FACEBOOK PAGE

PRINT

QUARTERLY COMMUNITY MAGAZINE
 QUARTERLY VISION NEWSLETTER
 CONNECTED NEWSLETTER FOR RETIRED MINISTERS
 THRIVE MEMBERSHIP BOOKLET

STAY CONNECTED WITH US...

ONLINE

WWW.NAC-USA.ORG
 WWW.MUSICCOMPANION.ORG (WORSHIP & A/V)
 WWW.MINISTERCOMPANION.ORG (ORDAINED MINISTERS)
 WWW.NDI.NAC-USA.ORG (TRAINING AND COURSES)
 WWW.NAC.TODAY/EN (INTERNATIONAL NAC NEWS)

ON OUR APP

CA AND DA SERMON CLIPS
 MIDWEEK EXP VIDEOS/GUIDES
 FOR YOUR JOURNEY VIDEOS
 IN FOCUS BLOG
 WORD OF THE MONTH BLOG
 WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS
 USA CONGREGATION LOCATOR

NATIONAL YOUTH LEADER CONFERENCE

JUNE 2017

Over the Pentecost weekend at the beginning of June, district youth leaders and local youth leader representatives from around the country came together in Florida to discuss the youth ministry component of the Faith Arc. Through presentations and brainstorming breakouts, this group of 43 leaders discussed topics such as:

- Goals of youth ministry
- Youth THRIVE small group curriculum
- Youth leader online training
- Take 5 - monthly YL communications
- Engaging parents
- Spiritual disciplines
- Budgeting and evaluations
- Young adults

The points from Saturday's meeting were reinforced during the Pentecost service when Chief Apostle Schneider encouraged the global congregation to concern themselves with the salvation of the next generation and that we should love our young people as Christ loves them. Knowing this is a great task, the Chief Apostle went on to explain how the circumstances of our time are not an excuse and don't diminish our responsibility to relationally invest in others and allow them to see the effects of the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

If you're involved in youth ministry and are not receiving the monthly youth leader communication, Take 5, on the third Thursday of the month, please contact your rector, district leader, or district youth leader to be added to the youth leader committee in iMIS. - TL



SMALL GROUP THEMES FOR AUGUST & SEPTEMBER

IF YOU'RE NOT IN A SMALL GROUP, TALK TO YOUR RECTOR!



PAUL

SMALL GROUP THEME
FOR SEPTEMBER



Fruit of the Spirit

SMALL GROUP THEME FOR AUGUST

During the year, we have many opportunities to worship together as a congregation around different holidays. Each moment of worship is special because it allows us to express to God what He really means to us. When we worship as a congregation, we not only grow closer to God, but closer to each other.

As we enter the second half of the year, where worship evenings for Thanksgiving or Christmas will be planned, we thought it might be helpful to expound on some ideas for worship that may fit with your congregation.

Most of us are familiar with the days of Christmas programs. These programs were a way to heighten the celebration of Christmas in the congregation, especially for the children. Over the years, the Christmas program seemed to evolve into more of a performance than a time of worship, with children memorizing poems, singing songs, and doing skits with costumes and scripts. The same things can still be done, but with a focus on worship, instead of performance. District Apostle Kolb encourages that the Christmas program is renewed in congregations, so that it is a moment of heightened worship where we share with God our joy and gratitude in sending His Son to earth. This is a time for us to focus our attention on the love of God that is expressed in the Christmas story and express to Him through Bible readings, songs, music, and spoken word what has been given for us.

You may also consider another idea for Christmas. This year, Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, and while there will not be a divine service on Christmas Eve (only on Christmas Day), it could be possible to use this as a time to come together and worship. One idea to consider could be a Christmas Eve worship evening held in the evening with expanded worship pointing to the calm and stillness of night, and the anticipation of what is to come. The Christmas Day morning service would be filled with carols that express our joy

at the glory of God, coming to earth as a child. We should strive to make each service in the Advent and Christmas seasons unique expressions to God of our thanksgiving and worship.

Other ideas for holiday worship throughout the year might include involving the local community in some way, caroling around the town, candlelight vigils, or a night of prayers focused on thanks and praise to God. Some of these ideas can also start in the Thanksgiving season, with a worship evening focused on thanksgiving and the Creation, or decorations in the church that inspire our congregation to share their thankfulness with each other.

No matter what holiday it is, we can always find ways to worship together as a congregation. In our worship, families are brought together, generations are brought together, community and church are brought together. Worship contributes to our holy responsibility to invest in our relationship with God and with those around us. Let our times of celebration, especially around holidays, also be times of worship.

- VAA / KAH

MOMENTS OF WORSHIP





NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF THE
NEW APOSTOLIC CHURCH
3753 N. TROY STREET
CHICAGO, IL 60618-4594

NON PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE PAID
HICKSVILLE, NY
PERMIT NO. 842



BELIZE: UPDATE & TRIP INFO

A big thank you to everyone who donated, supported, participated, and prayed for our 2017 Water Project for the King's Children Home. The project was a success! Look for a full report on our Facebook page in the coming month. www.facebook.com/re.Charitable.Ministry

Also, our next participation opportunity is around the corner. We will be heading back to Belize from **January 13-20, 2018** to continue our work at the King's Children's Home. Please visit our webpage recharitableministries.weshareonline.org to find out more. Registration and trip fees, along with donations, can be made via this page. The registration fee for January will again be \$550. If you would like more information or an application form, please email re.charitableministry@nac-usa.org