

Health, growth, completion

Vision



New Apostolic Church USA

District News

www.nac-usa.org

Winter 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

With the season of Advent, our Church calendar began once again. As you may know, it is a generally accepted practice among many Christian churches to bring focus on various themes during the year, but especially to prepare for and highlight the Christian holy days.

It begins with the anticipation of the birth of Christ – God’s incarnation into this world. This momentous action by the almighty God opened the way of salvation and forever changed the history of the world. The celebration of Christmas is followed by Epiphany as we enter into the new year.

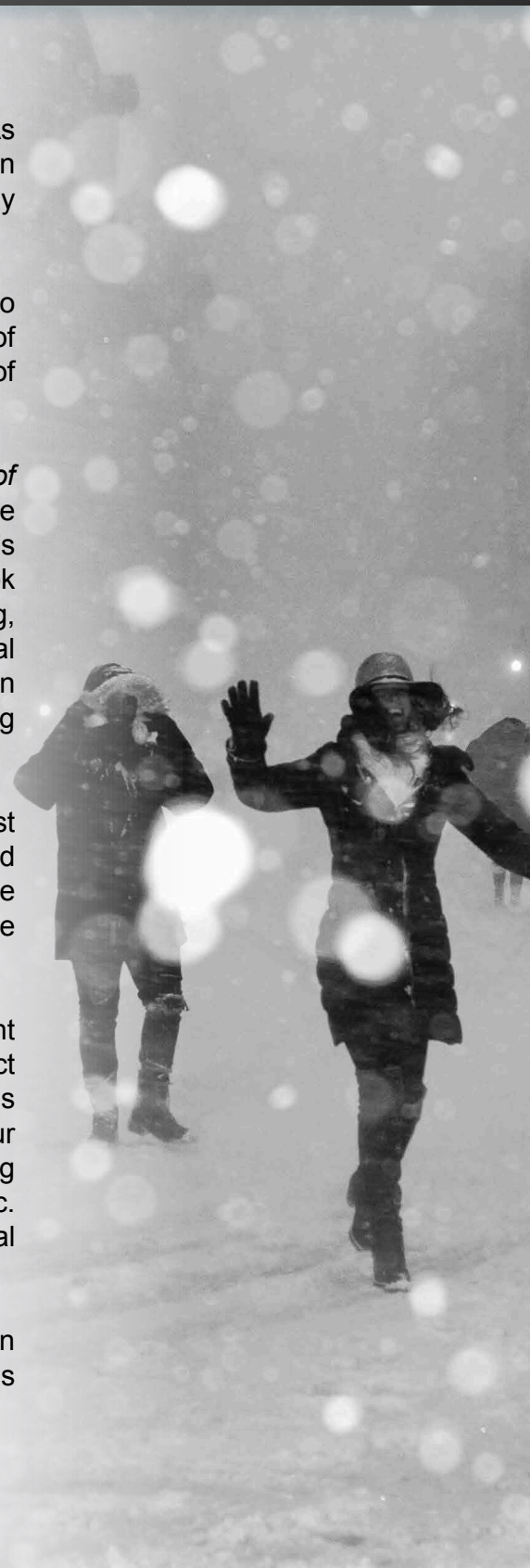
As the year unfolds, we take up the themes of *Jesus is the salvation of the world* in January and *Jesus the Teacher* in February, all leading to the season of Passiontide. During this period, our thoughts turn to Christ’s teachings leading up to His Passion, and we are inspired to especially look within ourselves as we contemplate His impending final days, suffering, and sacrifice. Palm Sunday begins our focus on Holy Week and the final days leading to the Last Supper and the celebration of Holy Communion with the disciples. The week concludes with the trials and bitter suffering of Jesus until His last moments.

The scene drastically changes as we joyfully celebrate the Risen Christ on Easter Sunday and the ensuing days of His activity in His resurrected body moving to His Ascension. Thus, we come to the final days before the establishment of His church and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the feast day of Pentecost.

Now we come to a special joy – this special holiday will be the highlight of our year here in the USA district. Our Chief Apostle and all the district apostles and helpers worldwide will be with us in Washington, D.C. for this divine service. It will be a great celebration to which all are invited! Our website will provide you with up-to-date information on this event, including service venue location, registration, arrangements, hotel availabilities, etc. Please also be aware of information in the coming months about additional activities during the Pentecost weekend.

So, you see we have a wonderful year ahead. Let’s continue to grow in our knowledge of Christ and strive to remain faithful to the One who has always loved us!

With love,





MARTIN LUTHER

GOD'S SERVANT



Who is Martin Luther? Most people know him as the one who nailed the Ninety-five Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church in Germany or as someone who initiated the Reformation. While both of these facts are true, Luther was much more, and is actually relevant to us today as Christians and New Apostolics.



Martin Luther was born in 1483 and grew up in a devout Roman Catholic home. To appease his father, Luther studied to become a lawyer, graduating with a bachelor's and master's degree by the age of 22. However, God had a different plan for him. During one of his travels, Luther found himself caught in a severe storm. Fearing for his life, he cried out to St. Anne, promising to become a monk if he was saved. And so, Luther left law and joined an Augustinian monastery. He threw himself into the study of Scripture, so much so that the other monks teased him about being a walking Bible concordance. This change to his life path led him to examine many aspects of the Catholic Church.

As Luther grew in his commitment to Christ and his knowledge of Christ's teachings, he began to notice things within the Church did not seem to fit with what he knew about Christ and the gospel. These contradictions began to affect his relationship with the Roman Catholic Church and changed his relationship with God.



After years of study, preaching, and intense prayer, Luther began to realize that the Church needed reform. Luther did not intend for his work to divide the Church; actually, his posting of the Ninety-five Theses was simply the custom used to initiate a scholarly discussion. But some of the students, unbeknownst to him, took his theses, translated them into German, and distributed them to the people. His message spoke to people and ignited the desire for extreme reform that some felt the Roman Catholic Church needed. The lower classes, who had limited worth with the Roman Catholic Church, especially identified with Luther and his concern over the sale of indulgences in the Church (indulgences were payment to reduce the amount of punishment one had to undergo for their sins). Further, Luther believed that the grace of God accepted in faith, not works, could make you righteous in the eyes of God.



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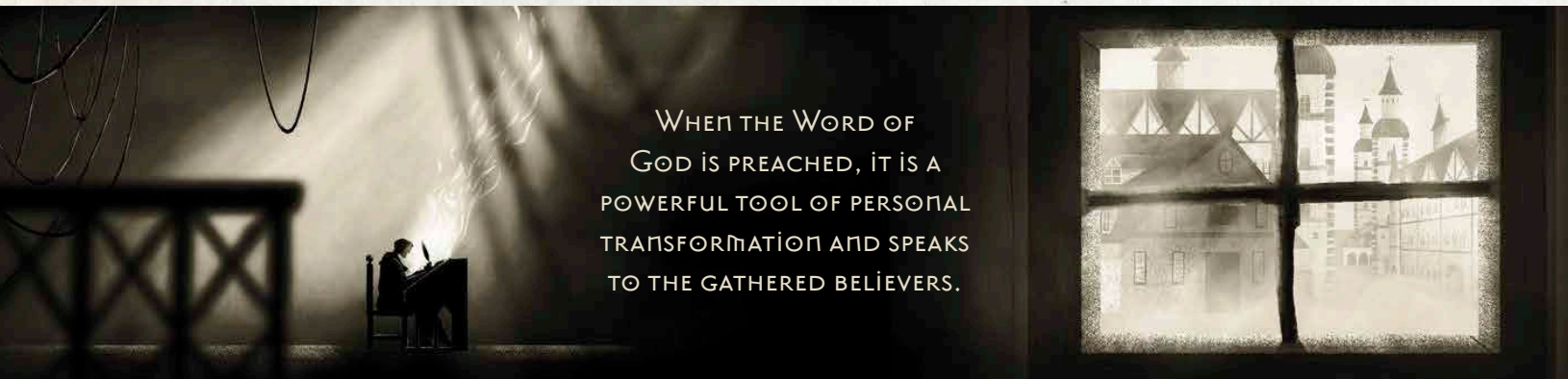
Eventually these concerns led him to write and post the Ninety-five Theses on October 31, 1517. With this document, he expounded on the abuse of power in the Church and catalyzed what would become the Protestant Reformation. After many years and many arguments with other theologians and preachers who followed Luther into the Reformation, the Church divided. Up until then, the Church had always been the Roman Catholic Church, but was now divided into many different denominations of Christianity, and even continued dividing throughout history.



“FAITH IS A LIVING,
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MARTIN LUTHER

In 1521, Luther was declared a heretic and was excommunicated from the Church because of his work. Luther was not interested in apologizing or discontinuing his work in order to get back into the good graces of the Church. He was firmly committed to exploring what Scripture taught about being a Christian.



WHEN THE WORD OF
GOD IS PREACHED, IT IS A
POWERFUL TOOL OF PERSONAL
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When Luther was in hiding after his excommunication, and into his later years, he worked towards establishing a church that was modeled after the first church we find in the New Testament. Luther knew it was essential that all believers were seen as equally valuable members of the body of Christ, regardless of status, education, and class. This belief, and further teachings and understandings from Luther, became the foundation for parts of our doctrine and have influenced the culture of our own Church.

Because Luther thought it was vital that all people have access to Holy Scripture, he translated the New Testament, and later the Old Testament and Apocrypha, into German. This was an important endeavor because before this, the Bible was only published in Latin, which was a language that

only scholars and clergy knew. With the Bible now translated into German, and with the help of the newly invented printing press, it was accessible to all people. Educated or uneducated, Christians could read the Bible for themselves in their own language for the first time. However, this did not mean that Luther gave less value to the preached Word.

Luther believed in what he called the “external Word.” This means that, not only should we read the Word of God ourselves, but it should also come to us externally through preaching, hearing it read aloud, and even through song. This allows Scripture to confront and challenge us without being immediately filtered through our sinful minds. Therefore, when the Word of God is preached, it is a powerful tool of personal transformation and

speaks to the gathered believers. Luther believed that increasing our knowledge of Scripture – both personally and even more important, corporately – was important for the Christian life.

Another facet of this church that Luther desired to establish was congregational singing. Not only did congregational singing provide time for the believers to collectively worship God, but Luther also viewed it as a valuable tool to help each believer better understand God. His thoughts about music are expressed in his statement: *“Experience proves that next to the Word of God only music deserves to be extolled as the mistress and governess of the feelings of the human heart.”* For Luther, singing was also a way for people to orient themselves to the Word of God, as many hymn lyrics are based on Bible verses. He wrote many hymns himself, including “A Mighty Fortress is our God.”

Luther’s life was not just defined by his work in the Reformation, but also by the importance that he placed on his role as a husband and a father. Not expecting to ever marry or have children, Luther deeply embraced this part of his identity. His marriage and relationship with Katharina von Bora was a display of deep love and their dependence on Jesus Christ. Regarding marriage, Luther said, *“But over and above all these is married love, that is a bride’s love, which glows like a fire and desires nothing but the husband. She says, ‘It is*

you I want, not what is yours: I want neither your silver nor your gold; I want neither. I want only you. I want you in your entirety, or not at all.’ All other kinds of love seek something other than the loved one: this kind wants only to have the beloved’s own self completely.” He expressed a deep love and tenderness towards his children, spending time in daily Biblical devotions with them, which he expressed as much a teaching for him as for them. He very publicly shared what it meant to depend on his Savior in the midst of trials as he grieved the loss of two of his daughters.

Luther was a scholar, a monk, a theologian, a husband, a father. He was also just a normal, sinful, fallen human being. Even a small study into his life reveals many faults: his anger, his sharp tongue, and some writings later in life against the Jewish people. But Luther was used by God to change the world. He inspired change in the Church that has carried through centuries. When we reflect on Luther’s life, we see how the gospel was alive in him. Let us also live our lives aligned to God’s Word and will, and be on fire for the gospel.

- KAH / VA

*Research for this was article was largely based on “Luther: A Visual Book” by Stephen McCaskell and Aaron Armstrong, and “Luther on the Christian Life” by Carl R. Trueman



A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF OUR DISTRICT APOSTLE

As experienced by M. Stegmann

In June 2017, District Apostle Kolb and Bishop Stegmann visited members in Honduras, Belize, and Peru. During this trip, Bishop Stegmann kept a travel journal to share their journey with us.



Friday 6/16: In what has become normal, we had another hold-onto-your-seat-and-grab-tight-for-a-wild-ride trip. We met at the airport in San Pedro Sula, Honduras on Friday around 6:30 pm. Apostol Yepez was there to meet us with a driver, as we had about a two and half hour trip ahead of us to the hotel where the seminars and divine service were going to be held. On the way, we convinced Apostol Yepez to stop at a pizza place to get something to eat. At that point, we were quite hungry and not stopping was not an option. It was the best pizza we ever had; maybe the hunger had something to do with that. We continued on our trip and arrived at the hotel around 11:00 pm.

Saturday 6/17: We went to breakfast in the morning and, in a conversation with some of the wives, the District Apostle invited them to participate in the seminar with their husbands. They were very happy to attend and were very involved and excited to be there. The seminars lasted the entire day, followed with a dinner with ministers and wives.

Sunday 6/18: We drove to a nearby school where service with 178 people was held in the school courtyard. There was a roof, but no walls. There were also doves flying around all over the place, but they weren't a disturbance. The children welcomed us with a wonderful song and afterwards surrounded the District Apostle and gave him a group hug. After service, District Apostle Kolb greeted everyone and many pictures were taken by the members. From there, we returned to the hotel to lunch with some brothers and sisters before they started their 4 – 8 hour journeys home. Afterwards, we traveled to San Pedro Sula to be near the airport for our early departure the next day.



Monday 6/19: We got up at 6:00 am, had breakfast, and went to the airport for our flight to Belize. We got our boarding passes and I noticed there were no seat numbers. I was a little surprised until we boarded the “plane”. It was for about 8 – 10 passengers. You could literally shake the pilot’s hand in flight. A volunteer with re Charitable Ministry picked us up at the airport and took us to the school/orphanage where the rest of the NAC volunteers were working. They showed us around and, afterwards, took us to our sleeping quarters. The District Apostle and I shared a room divided by a partial wall. I hope my snoring didn’t keep him up...



After some rest and a shower, we got ready for service in our congregation in Belize. We visited with the rector and his family for an hour before service at his home. It started pouring, and we had to cover up and walk to church. It was a good thing a car met us halfway and we could drive up the rest of the way. District Apostle Kolb held the divine service, and then the 62 people who gathered were invited back to the rector’s home for food and fellowship. We had a wonderful time together, ate delicious food, and had great conversations. After some hours, we traveled back to our rooms.

Tuesday 6/20: Tuesday was a travel day to Lima, Peru with a layover in San Salvador. By the time we got through immigration, it was about 10:00 pm. The Apostle Flores was at the airport to greet the District Apostle with a group of about 20 young people and servants.



Wednesday 6/21: The day was filled with meetings with ministers from Lima and the surrounding areas.

Thursday 6/22: On Thursday, we traveled to the jungle city of Iquitos. In the evening, District Apostle Kolb held a divine service in a rented hall in Iquitos with 477 people.

In the jungle towns during these days, the people celebrate John the Baptist. They have special feasts, dances, and celebrations. One of the customs of the day is a meal they call, "Juanes," which represents the head of John the Baptist. It's a ball of rice stuffed with chicken, wrapped in banana leaves, and then boiled. It's about the size of a fist and a little dry. Everywhere we went, we were eating this. We couldn't get away from it. They served it for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. There wasn't a hamburger to be found.

Friday 6/23: We left the hotel at 4:00 am and traveled 2.5 hours by bus to the riverside town of Nauta, where we boarded a "speedboat". This boat looked like something out of an old movie, but it was called a speedboat because it traveled about 40 miles an hour. We went down the Marañon River, which is where it joins with the Ucayali River to form the beginning of the Amazon River. This was a 3.5-hour trip, zigzagging over the water to avoid loose, floating tree trunks and vegetation. In some areas, the river was so low that there was a danger of running aground. They served us sandwiches and yes, more "Juanes." We finally arrived to the jungle town of Requena, where there are riverside homes on stilts and shacks right on the water.

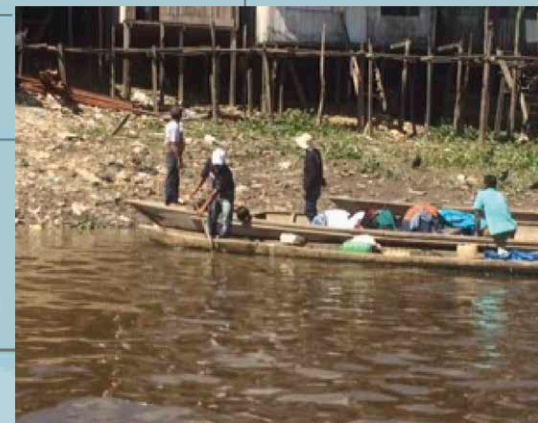
After getting off the boat, we got on motorcycle taxis that took us to a hotel where we could change clothes for service. After changing, we took the same taxis to a hall rented for the service. About 700 people were gathered. The choir was beautiful and the members were so very engaged in the service. Unfortunately, the District Apostle couldn't greet everyone because we had to get right back on the boat and travel back to Nauta before nightfall. You cannot travel on the river at night. We arrived in Nauta at about 5:00 pm and then get on the bus for the 2-hour trip back to Iquitos. When we arrived in Iquitos, we were taken to a restaurant for dinner with some ministers. A group of young people presented some local dances in costume to celebrate John the Baptist. After dinner, we went to the airport and took an 11:00 pm flight to Lima. We arrived in Lima around 1:00 am and checked in to the hotel at 2:00 am. What a day! It started at 4:00 am and ended at 2:00 am.

Saturday 6/24: A rest day! Hooray! We spent the day resting and sightseeing.

Sunday 6/25: The divine service with over 1,300 people was in a beautiful auditorium in Lima, Peru. After service, the District Apostle had lunch with the ministers and their wives, and then we all went on our way back home.

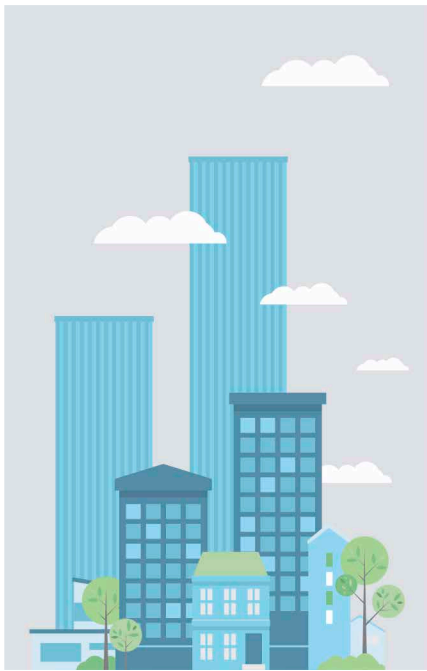
In total, five divine services and two full days of seminars. What a week!







ANNUAL REPORT 2017



BUILDINGS & RENOVATIONS

Building Renovations

Major renovations for 2017 took place in the Clifton, New Jersey and Niagara Falls, New York congregations.

New Building

The new Phoenix Metro building was dedicated on April 2, 2017 by Apostle Earl Buehner. 192 people gathered for the dedication ceremony, divine service, and fellowship. After some unforeseen delays and obstacles in the process, the result is a beautiful space for worship where the members are thrilled to gather.



PROGRAM & DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

The annual NAC USA National Synod took place from September 22 – 24. This year's format was different from previous years, allowing participants more opportunities to engage with each other and administrative staff in discussion.

Throughout the day on Friday, an exhibition hall was open for all to attend. In the exhibition were booths focused around various new resources and programs available in the NAC USA. Since the National Synod, there have been some updates to and progress with some of these topics:

- **FaithArc:** For the THRIVE youth small group curriculum, the T semester began for the youth in fall, and the H semester is now available online for facilitators to download. Children's journals for Sunday divine services are also available for order on nac-usa.org.
- **Reflections on Giving:** The "Giving is love" theme began in the fall, starting with an article in the 2017 Autumn Vision Newsletter. There is also a package of resources, including a commercial, created around "Giving is love" that is available on Minister Companion. As we begin the new year, please continue to think about "Giving is love" and how these teachings apply to you personally. The next theme, "Giving is faith," will begin in the spring of 2018.

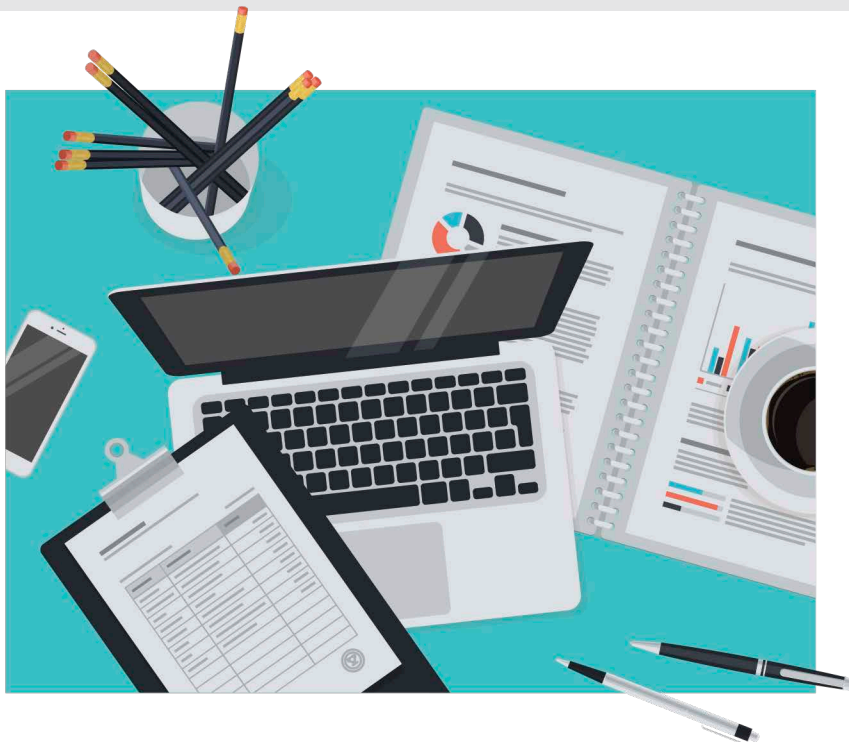


- **You're home:** This package of materials and resources is available for all congregations to use. The first level is resources for greeters in the congregation and the second level is a small group experience for guests and members to learn more about the basics of the New Apostolic Church. Both of these levels are available in English and Spanish. The third level of materials is about the sacraments, which guides the discussion with the person becoming a member so that they can understand the important aspects of each sacrament. This third level will be available in 2018 by the end of the 1st quarter.
- **Spiritual Gifts:** A new small group resource that helps a person discover their spiritual gifts is now available. This small group series is designed as an introduction to spiritual gifts and was created to help us better understand who God has made us to be and how we personally fit into His plan of salvation. It contains eight sessions, each uniquely intended to help us be more introspective and better understand God's special purpose for each of us. This book was written by the Work of Ministry Work Group, made up of volunteer members and administrative staff.

PROGRAM & DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

- **re Charitable Ministry:** There are two serving opportunities in Belize for 2018 that still have spots open for registration. The dates for the trip are June 16 – 23 and June 23 – 30, and the participation fee is \$550 + travel. Please refer to the 2017 Autumn Vision Newsletter for more information and future serving opportunities.
- **Pastoral Care for the End of Life:** This is a new course that is now available on NDI, available for those who feel called to pastorally support those who are dying and their loved ones. This video course provides guidance on the church's stance on certain medical issues, medical terminology, and, through 6 in-depth scenarios, gives direction on how to approach difficult situations that members or their loved ones may be experiencing near the end of life.
- **Information technology:** The Minister Companion website was rebuilt and went live in September. Over the next year, the NDI and Music Companion websites will also receive upgrades.

If you and/or your congregation would like to learn more about one of these topics, please speak to your district leader. If additional information is needed, you can email communications@nac-usa.org.



FISCAL REPORT

In 2012, New Apostolic Church USA for the first time published an annual financial report to increase transparency about the use – and need – for our members' offerings and donations. This information was generally welcome and periodic updates have been provided since then via the Vision newsletter.

How are my church's financial matters managed? Understanding our 'Break-Even Plus' Approach

All church activities are managed based on a 'break-even plus' approach. This means that from a planning perspective our church's operating expenses generally cannot exceed our available offerings and donations. Any possible surplus (the 'plus' in this approach) is then available as the basis of our church's major building and renovation budget (capital investments).

How did my church do financially in the past years?

The past years have seen a continued decrease in offering, reflecting many different factors. At the same time, various new, major programs like Midweek Experience, Thrive and Faith Arc were developed, prepared and made available to all our members. This required a careful approach to managing expenses, including a continued consolidation of personnel costs.

Thanks to your unwavering commitment and offerings and by the grace of our Heavenly Father, the church has been able to achieve the aforementioned goal in the past years. Small annual surpluses (see chart 'Uses of Income') of varying size also have enabled us to continue necessary building and renovation activities, albeit at times at a limited level. At this point, our church supports and takes care of more than 220 buildings, while also pursuing consolidations and the founding of flagship congregations in selected areas, requiring substantial financial means.

Annual operating surpluses have been insufficient for a number of years now in funding all necessary and planned building activities. The building budget is therefore supported, as needed, by the proceeds

from the sale of buildings, and revenue generated by the church's financial reserves.

The importance of giving and how it impacts my congregation

Understanding the spiritual value and importance of giving, whether in the form of prayer, time, or finances, is a cornerstone of every New Apostolic Christian's life of faith. Our new **Giving** series and materials take up this topic in a comprehensive and deeper form, providing insights into how giving, in all its forms, is eventually behind every activity, program and service of our church, even if not directly visible.

Many have given generously and substantially. However, in an increasing number of our congregations a trend is becoming visible that when only a few major donations are excluded, general giving levels are comparatively low. This should not be seen in a negative light. Instead, it offers all of us as 'the church' the opportunity to reflect on the many facets of giving and review how we discuss the necessary topic of finances and funding. One aspect of doing so is the new **Giving** series; other aspects include plans for increased transparency with our congregational leadership teams, guidelines and models to evaluate and understand the individual financial health of our congregations and districts, as well as concepts and support for local fundraising efforts.

Our commitment remains to manage all available resources to the 'break-even plus' approach explained at the beginning of this report and to ensure every congregation's basic needs are covered. The ability to support and carry each other is truly one of the major strengths of our church's structure!

Uses of Income (Offering & Donations)

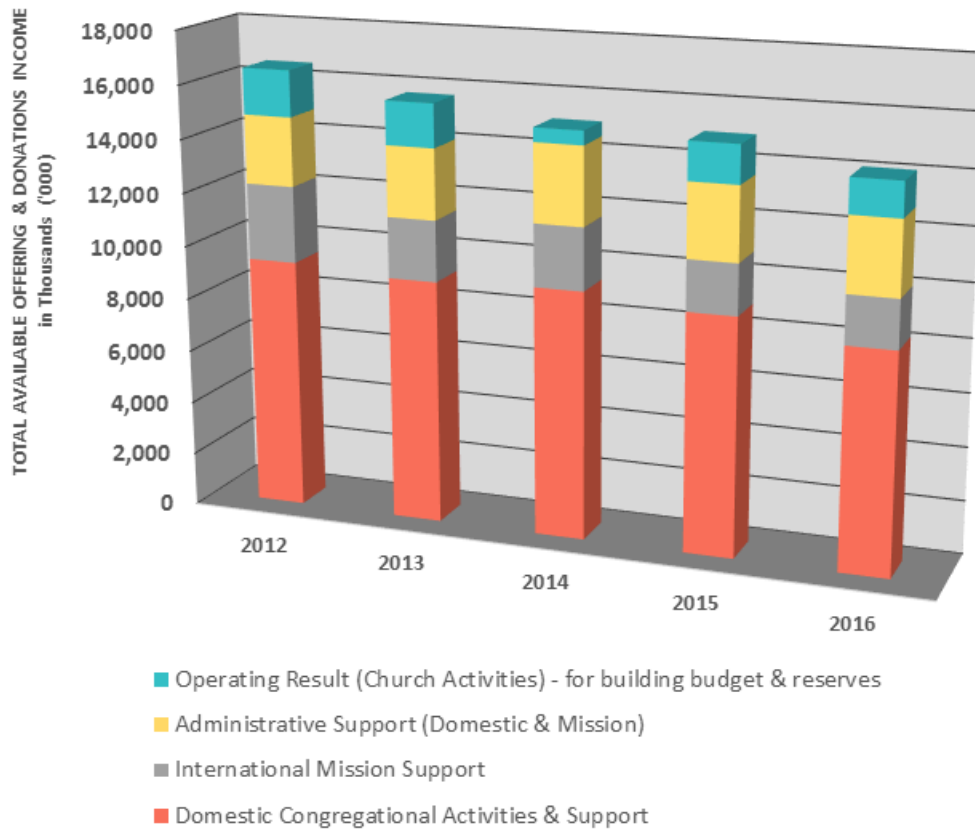


Chart Category Explanations:

Domestic Congregational Activities & Support – this category contains all expenses incurred in supporting and managing our congregations; it ranges, for example, from rent and depreciation, insurance, utilities, minor repairs, fellowship supplies, flowers, printed materials, to the cost of developing new programs, hosting Chief Apostle visits and Youth days, supporting ongoing programs like Midweek Experience and Faith Arc, to the costs of Soulcare staff.

More than 50% of the expenses in this category fall into the first four categories listed (rent, utilities, minor repairs, insurances).

International Mission Support – our church continues to support the Lords’ work internationally, among others, in the more than 30 mission countries under the care of our District Apostle (Caribbean, Central America and South America). This budget is generally set at a maximum of 15% of offering and donations.

Administrative Support (Domestic & Mission) – this category contains the expenses necessary to support more than 220 congregations and 30 countries with everything ranging from IT systems and services used by members, ministers and our congregations; necessary and required accounting and audit functions; state and local registrations; legal support; program development and training, as well as administrative staff expenses.

Operating Result (Church Activities) – the aforementioned expense categories do not include any funds spent on or required for capital investments, such as church buildings and major renovations. Our church’s building budget is primarily funded out of any annual operating surplus as well as the proceeds from the sale of church buildings and revenue generated by the church’s financial reserves. Building activities are adjusted as necessary, based on the funding available. More and more often, the church’s general funding for such projects is combined with special offerings and donations by our members to achieve and implement specific building projects.



Meditate on these things.

The universal message of the gospel speaks to our relationship to God, to one another, and to our salvation. This message is for all people and it is part of our responsibility to make sure that all people have the opportunity to come to know the gospel.

This requires that we talk to people, sometimes people we know and sometimes people we don't know. But when we approach people, to bring them this important message of the gospel, we have to first ask ourselves if we are credible witnesses of the gospel. After all, why should someone listen to us talk about the transformational power of the gospel if we don't demonstrate it and live as if we have been transformed through the gospel message? This means we have to be credible witnesses. Jesus says to His disciples in Luke 10,

He who hears you hears Me (Luke 10:16). Our actions and our words should be able to tell the people around us that we are followers of Christ. Of course, as imperfect people, this is hard to do in every single action and in every single word, but it is something for which we strive.

We must especially be cautious with what we say over social media, where it sometimes seems that we are anonymous and that our words have little effect on those who read them. Again, we are called to be credible witnesses of the gospel, even on social media, and use our words in love and humbleness. We can watch over our words and make sure they conform to the will of Christ. Following are some thoughts from District Apostle Kolb to help us watch over our words.

"These are the times that try men's souls."

So was the sentiment expressed by Thomas Paine shortly before the American Revolution. They were turbulent times. And in some regard, it may also be said today of the environment in America. There is an abundance of provocative and controversial topics being heatedly debated at every level of society. It is easy to become passionate and caught up in the maelstrom of these discussions and voice our opinion.

The social media of today creates an environment unlike anything anyone has ever experienced before in history. Because of this network, I can, almost immediately, find myself in a "bubble" of thousands of people who think in the exact same way that I do, with the exact same preferences, the exact same opinions, biases, prejudices, etc. This can create a false sense of security and sometimes may even lead to aggressive behavior to those that are unlike me. More and more, instead of unifying, people are becoming more divisive, and sometimes, less understanding, less compassionate, less caring... Open, unchecked expression, verbally or via social media, creates divisiveness in any group and I am concerned specifically for our congregations. Let us be cautious of what we "like" on this media. Galatians 3 reminds us we are one in Christ. This may mean we need to lay aside our nationalistic pride, our ethnicity, our gender, our self-righteousness for the sake of unity and peace.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Please allow me to lay before you the words written by Apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians, the fourth chapter, as a guidepost for us in these disparaging times and as a word of comfort.

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

In everything, let us start with praise and the expression of our joy in Christ! We are His!

Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

The word gentleness has a few definitions - nobility, consideration, moderation, balanced, carefulness. We understand, as God's children, that though deeply passionate for Jesus Christ, we are not radical, but rather moderate and stable in trying times, convinced of the Lord's present nearness at all times. Gentleness also means wellborn; yes, we are born of God! And so we desire to behave as such to glorify His name.

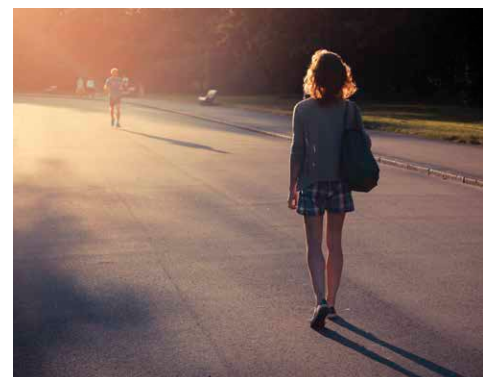
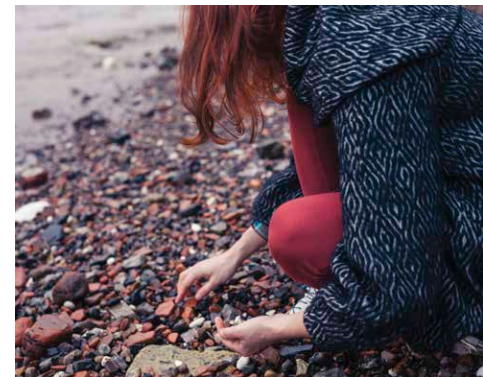
Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

Again, the admonition not to be fearful, the Lord is at hand! Knowing this, with gratitude we make our requests known to God, our Father. Not fearful murmuring, not complaining, not overwhelmed with the "tempestuous seas" around us, but with stability, confidence and the assurance that He knows everything, can do anything, and will surely care for us according to His will.

...and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus...

What creates the peace of God? It is the security knowing His omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience is far beyond anything we can comprehend. This security *guards our hearts* from fear, apprehension, overwhelming concern and *our minds* that are confused, calculating dismal projections and prophecies fueled by the constant wave of information or our own paranoia. We must allow the Lord's security in His peace to guard us! We receive this peace every Sunday in the absolution.

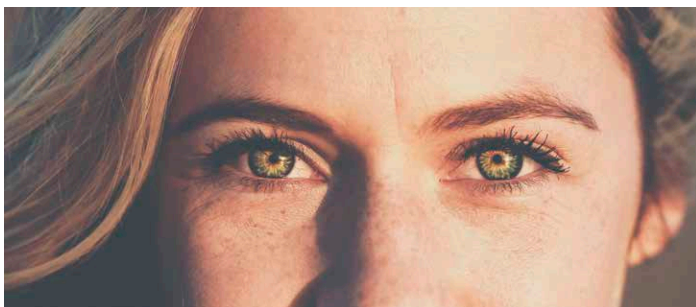
Finally, brethren, whatever things are true* [God's word], *whatever things are noble* [Jesus Christ], *whatever things are just* [God's ways and decisions], *whatever things are pure* [love of God], *whatever things are lovely* [His creation], *whatever things are of good report* [the good news, the Gospel], *if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy* [the goodness of God revealed in each other, our neighbor, in the church] — ***meditate on these things.**



In other words, instead of being caught up in the clamor of the day, let us *occupy ourselves* with the good things of God, our Father, and thus, behave in the ways that bring honor to Him.

Here the old question applies – What would Jesus do? And further, what would Jesus want me to do? We align our understandings *and views* with the Gospel and we live according to the Gospel. By aligning to the Gospel in our life, sometimes Christ's teachings may coincide with a popular view or an opinion from a certain "side of the table." We can take a firm position for what is right, not because we align with a political party or the voice of the zeitgeist, but because and only because it is the teaching of Jesus, whom we love and follow. We stand with and align with Him, the same yesterday, today, and forever!

Notwithstanding, He has not called us to be radical in standing with Him; remember the lesson in the garden with Peter cutting the soldier's ear, where he acted impulsively because of his limited understanding at that point. God has called us to proclaim the Good News in word and in our lifestyle, by showing His love and interest for all by our conduct, conversation, etc. We cannot convert anyone. This work He alone does, as it is the product of His love and remains dependent on the free will of each individual. God allows opportunities, sometimes through problematic circumstances, to increase our compassion, to deepen our faith, to shine forth our joy, to share with our neighbor. These events are a chance to behave in a way that clearly demonstrates we are His!



Further, when we encounter someone with a different view than ours, we cannot judge them. Christ is very clear on this matter in Luke 6:37 - *Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and*

you will be forgiven. Again, judgement is left up to the Almighty One, as He alone knows all there is to know about each soul.

Let us not be swayed by the attitudes of others, but keep true and authentic to our childhood in Christ. Remember the exhortation of Paul in Romans 14. He speaks of the laws of liberty, but also of love:

Therefore, let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another... It is good neither to...do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.



I do not advocate that we not participate in social media, but simply ask that we exercise caution in our communications and that we speak, even through social media, in a manner that glorifies God, our Father. Hence, self-responsibility and self-control are key factors here. Let us not act irresponsibly and thus, harm our brothers and sisters that we want to love and serve.

Yes, these are trying times, but equipped with the Gospel and the strength of Christ, we can navigate our path forward. - LRK / VA

THE NEW APOSTOLIC CHURCH IN MEXICO

On August 20, 2017, the New Apostolic Church in Mexico celebrated its 50-year anniversary. Let's take a glance into the past to explore how our church began here.

In December of 1966, District Apostle Kraus held a brothers meeting in the San Diego area, in which he asked the brothers why there were no congregations in Mexico. He encouraged them to find a way to begin serving the souls there and hoped that by the end of 1967, there would be an established congregation in Mexico.

Work immediately began to find a way to make contact with some families who lived in Tijuana. In the meantime, the local San Diego and Los Angeles congregations began to gather clothes and other items to donate to needy families in Tijuana. Early in 1967, one of the local brothers, Priest Bob Runge, who worked in a local gas station, approached one of his customers, who was very receptive to the idea of missionary work in Tijuana. The customer had family who lived near the border crossing in Tijuana. Ministers visited his family and others in the area, and even a local elementary school there helped to reach several local families.

The brothers found a local English-speaking resident who assisted with the language barriers. Visits were made every day. Many clothes were donated to these families and lots of candy was handed out to the children.

In June, District Apostle Kraus visited Mexico for the first time for a divine service in a rented space, called Monte Casino, near the border crossing. Many local residents and Americans came to that service, with over 400 in attendance. Priest Ewald Stegmann translated the service from English into Spanish.

Following that service, work really began in earnest. Over the next couple of months, more than 300 families were visited. On August 20, 1967, a permanent location, Monte Casino, was rented and weekly services began. The small handful of souls who attended was the beginning, and from there, the Church grew.

Just one year after having asked to serve souls in Mexico, in December of 1967, District Apostle Kraus sealed 98 souls and ordained 5 ministers.

During the following year, regular services were launched in five different locations in Tijuana: Colonia Marron, Colonia Aleman, Colonia Obrera, Colonia Libertad, and Colonia Francisco Villa.

In May of 1968, District Apostle Kraus returned to Tijuana for a large service in which he conducted 6 ordinations.

In September of 1968, ground was broken on the construction of the church in Mission del Sol. The church was dedicated by the District Apostle in April of 1969, along with the congregation in Colonia Francisco Villa (Pancho Villa). Over the next few years, churches in Colonia Obrera, Ensenada, and Guadalajara were built and dedicated.

The foundations that were laid in 1967 were strong and made the way for many New Apostolic Christians to practice their faith over the years.





Our Mexican Choir



Our Mexican Administration Brothers



Before the Dedication Service in Mexico



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NEW APOSTOLIC CHURCH
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NAC USA MUSEUM

In June 2017, Chief Apostle Schneider held a divine service in Tinley Park, Illinois. During the weekend, the Chief Apostle, along with many other ministers and members, took the opportunity to visit the museum of the New Apostolic Church USA located in the historical Chicago church building. The museum is an ongoing project dedicated to preserving and teaching the history of our faith in the USA.



Through the museum project, we can better appreciate the history of our spiritual family, both the events that laid the foundation for our present and help to shape our future. All can participate in helping. This can be as simple as looking through the pictures and church memorabilia you have collected throughout your life. Whatever you find, please send to the museum at the address listed below.

Right now, we are working on completing our collection of information on the history of each congregation. If members have any information

relating to the beginning of specific congregations, and the very early years of the 1900s, we would very much appreciate if you would share that with the museum. Since the Chief Apostle visit in June, some have sent pictures, jewelry, and other items, which are now part of the museum. This is a visible testimony of a rich, historical past that holds precious memories for many of us.

If you send pictures, please identify the occasion and people in each photo as best you can. Please also provide the history of any item, such as jewelry or artifacts.

If you would like the picture or artifact returned to you, please indicate that when sending it in. We will copy the document or take pictures of it and then send it back. Otherwise, we will keep it in the museum.

Please consider helping with this project. We are part of an inspiring story of faith that is worth preserving for future generations.

Contributions can be emailed to:

NACMuseum@nac-usa.org

Or mailed to:

**New Apostolic Church National Museum
3753 North Troy Street
Chicago, IL 60618-4594**