

Health, growth, completion

# Vision



New Apostolic Church USA

District News

[www.nac-usa.org](http://www.nac-usa.org)

Spring 2019

Dear brothers and sisters,

We have entered into the season of Passiontide, the 40 days leading up to the Passion of Jesus Christ. It is a time acknowledged by most Christian churches for reflection, meditation, fasting, and prayer. Let's look at these four ways to experience this unique and interesting season.

**Reflection** – This is taking time to think and consider the incarnation and life of Jesus, and the wonder of God's plan to deliver us and have open access to eternal fellowship with Him. Perhaps some additional reading of the Gospels would enlighten and deepen our understandings of God's plan for mankind, and for you and me.

**Meditation** – Once we have looked deeper into the story of Christ, this discipline is where we purposefully and intentionally set aside time to ponder what we have learned and comprehended. As the hymn writer, Elizabeth Clephane, expressed in "Beneath the Cross of Jesus": *Upon that cross of Jesus, mine eye at times can see the very dying form of One who suffered there for me; and from my smitten heart with tears two wonders I confess – the wonders of redeeming love and my unworthiness.*

**Fasting** – This discipline is the voluntary "giving up" of or abstaining from something in order to "liberate" oneself from that which is mundane, in deference for something greater or of more importance. It can be healing and regenerative, and also lead to a deeper sense of repentance.



**Prayer** – We must always return to this beautiful gift of communication with our God and Father. Truly, it is not only meant to express our wishes and concerns, but moreover, it is a spiritual dialogue wherein we can perceive the thoughts of Him who loves us. *The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much* (James 5:16). Perhaps if our prayers contain more praise and wonderment of God's works and our thankfulness, we can have a deeper sense of being in dialogue with Him.

And so, dear ones, as we draw nearer to the holy days of Passion week, may we also move inwardly toward a deeper, more profound and holy celebration of Christ's sacrifice and resurrection; it is the foundation of all that we believe.

With love,





  
**Rich**  
 as a  
 disciple  
 of  
**Christ**  




Once again, the motto for the year will prove to be an abundant resource of spiritual thought and consideration. Already in the opening-of-the-year divine service, we learned of the wealth of God, the Father, Jesus Christ, the facilitator of this wealth, and the teaching activity of the Holy Spirit on how we can obtain it. We received a clear outline, that to receive the riches of God one must:

Believe in Jesus Christ and then, in humbleness,

- Follow His word and teachings,
- Use our gifts to serve,
- Give up what is not necessary for the kingdom,
- Bring our offerings in gratitude and trust, and
- Accept those whom He has sent.

Now let us merge this together with what the Chief Apostle's opening statement was in an interview about our church strategy:

***We want to make people disciples of Christ!***

The above actions also exactly align with the pathway to become a disciple of Christ. Thus, by striving to become a disciple of Christ, one can also avail themselves of His wealth.

But the story continues. As His disciples, we enjoy a certain lifestyle that is a rich benefit of the wealth that Christ shares with us. In this lifestyle, we see the characteristics of a true disciple of Christ. He or she:

- More deeply knows and understands God and His ways.
- Is confident they are loved by Christ, inspiring their courage.
- Recognizes the greatest advocate they have in Christ, as He was willing to take upon Himself the punishment from their sin and guilt.
- Enjoys contentment and serenity, whether naturally rich or poor.
- Appreciates their rebirth out of water and Spirit as a pledge of their inheritance.
- Delights in the support of those who surround them in the congregation.
- Is sure of the guarantee that they will be given everything they need to obtain the goal of faith.

Equipped in such a way, true disciples of Christ prove their discipleship by living according to the impulses they have learned from their example, Jesus, and as they were taught by the Holy Spirit. They have a necessary urge to share the riches they have received, just as Christ did, with their contemporaries and neighbors – doing good works, forgiving those who have caused them pain and sorrow, helping the needy, and sharing the ever-relevant gospel of Jesus. This they do because as disciples, they are confident that in giving out the riches of Christ, they will never become poorer, but only experience His joy and fulfillment in their lives and in the life to come. - **LRK**



*It's good to see you.*

# Chief Apostle Visit

CHARLOTTE, NC - FEBRUARY 2019





***It's good to see you.*** With these words, our Chief Apostle welcomed us to the divine service in Charlotte, NC on February 10. Not only the approximately 700 in attendance seated in the hall, but all of the congregations across the USA and many in Central and South America connected online received this greeting. These opening words of the service brought with them the assurance that, to Jesus Christ, everyone is important; He forgets no one! The Chief Apostle encouraged us to show the same feelings to those around us – that they matter to us and we are thankful for them.

From this welcoming thought, the Chief Apostle proceeded to walk through the sixth chapter of John, pointing out the activity of Jesus and the people seeking Him. Those that followed Jesus had different motives; to be helped and healed, to be ruled by Him and freed from the Romans, to create a better society by following His teachings. None of those things were inherently wrong, but the true reason Jesus came to earth was to overcome sin and offer eternal life. And that was the reason that the small group of disciples stayed with Him, which they said so clearly when questioned by Jesus – “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). The disciples

didn't stay with Jesus because of His deeds, but rather because of who He was. Our Chief Apostle encouraged us to check our motivations for coming to Jesus, and also taught us what it means to be a disciple of Christ and how to point others to Him.

District Apostle Michael Ehrich from South Germany served along, and Apostle Reinhard Hecht was given the opportunity to serve once more before being placed into retirement. The Chief Apostle characterized him as being a man on fire for Christ. Apostle Hecht has been active in the apostle ministry since 2001, serving in Tanzania and the southeast quadrant of the United States, including the Carolina, Georgia, Florida West, South Florida, and Detroit districts. To ensure the continued care of these congregations, District Evangelist Ferguson, from Raleigh, North Carolina, was ordained into the apostle ministry.

All of the apostles and bishops from the United States were invited to participate in the weekend, and took part in a meeting with the Chief Apostle on Saturday morning. It was the first time Chief Apostle Schneider visited the “the deep south” of the United States, and he enjoyed the warm hospitality of the members there.

# Why do we come to Jesus?



*Taken from the divine service Chief Apostle Schneider held in Charlotte, NC on February 10, 2019.*

Dear brothers and sisters, it's important for us to know for what reason we come to Jesus.

For sure, we can come to Jesus to get His help, and many people do that. They come to Jesus and they think, "If I go to church, if I'm a faithful believer, if I pray in the right manner, and if I do what I have to do, then Jesus will help me in my life. He will solve my problem." Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. We are aware that even if Jesus helps us with something in our daily life, that doesn't solve the whole problem. His help will last for a moment, but we will get sick again, we will have to face other problems. It's just a short-term solution when Jesus helps us with these things. We are also aware that He is just one way to solve these problems. There are many other ways. Other people, they do not believe in Jesus Christ, they do not pray, they are not faithful, and they live at least as good as we live. They just have other solutions. They have other ways to solve their problems. So, if we just come to Jesus to get some help, we come for the wrong reason.

Other people, like the Jews of His day, want Jesus to rule the country and society. The Jewish people wanted Jesus to become their king, and they thought, "If He is our king, He will deliver us from the domination of the Romans. He will settle our problem. We will be a free people again, and we can live according to our faith and traditions." This is also a way of thinking in our society today. Many people think that if they live according to the gospel, if they respect the commandments of God, if they do what Jesus tells them to do, then life and society will be much better. And they consider

the Bible as a code of ethics. If the whole society would live according to the principles of the Bible, then life would be better. Again, we are aware this is also just valid for a short period because it is not the root of the problem.

All of us are sinners. We are imperfect human beings, and whatever we do, we will remain sinners. And because we are sinners, that will be the problem for us and for our neighbor. We live under the domination of the evil one since the fall into sin. And even if everybody lives according to the Bible, that won't solve the origin of the problem. We will remain sinners. The origin of the problem is the fall into sin, the domination of the evil one. The problem is our weaknesses.

Jesus came not just to solve our problems in daily life. Jesus didn't die for people to have a better life or to rule countries. Jesus came to offer eternal life. He wants to solve the whole problem. He knows the origin of our problem is the domination of sin. He has overcome evil, and He wants to deliver us from it. He wants to lead us into eternal fellowship with God. He wants man to live as the new creation where evil no longer exists. He is the solution for this problem. There is no other solution.

Jesus came to provide eternal life, to live in communion and fellowship with God in His kingdom where everything is pure and holy. There is no place for evil. This is His solution. This is what He came for, what He died for.

**So, why do we come to Jesus?**



*Hallelujah, What A Savior!*

*"Man of Sorrows!" what a name, for the Son of God, who came  
Ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah! What a Savior!*

*Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned He stood;  
Sealed my pardon with His blood. Hallelujah! What a Savior!*

*Guilty, vile, and helpless we; Spotless Lamb of God was He;  
"Full atonement!" can it be? Hallelujah! What a Savior!*

*Lifted up was He to die; "It is finished!" was His cry;  
Now in Heav'n exalted high. Hallelujah! What a Savior!*

*When He comes, our glorious King, all His ransomed home to bring,  
Then anew His song we'll sing: Hallelujah! What a Savior!*

Philip P. Bliss

Scripture Reference: Isaiah 53

**Today, meditate on Jesus' agony during His last moments on earth. Reflect on the fact that He knew fully what awaited Him at the cross but still submitted to the Father's will. Then spend the rest of your day worshipping and thanking Him.**



## CHANGES TO NAC USA ONLINE

### FINDING COMMUNITY IN CHURCH

## CONNECTING TO THE VISION AND MISSION

The vision and mission guide all that the Church does. To reach our vision, we follow our mission. The first step, teaching all people the gospel of Jesus Christ, is crucial in being able to follow the rest of the mission. Many projects or programs are aimed at reaching out to all so that people may hear the gospel and come to be baptized with water and Spirit. We've put a lot of focus on this phase of reaching and teaching, but this is not the only part of the mission. We cannot stop once this part is done. Reaching out to people is just one aspect of a relationship with others. In a divine service from 2017, Chief Apostle Schneider said, "We have to go to the people. The transmission of the gospel needs personal contact."

We have to do more than just reach out to people to teach them something; we have to connect with people. When we are connected together, we are creating a church in which people feel at home. Only with a connection, can we truly provide soul

care and cultivate a warm fellowship. Only with a connection, can we fully share God's love with others and help inspire joy in serving.

**NAC USA Online** – a place where people can listen virtually to the sermon every Sunday – aims to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. There are some genuine reasons as to why people need online services in order to hear the gospel. For these people, NAC USA Online is a solution that allows them to connect in some way. But this is not the full experience. The solution of NAC USA Online only speaks to the first part of the mission of reaching out to teach the gospel, and falls short of the other aspects of the mission. The complete connection, soul care and fellowship and sharing God's love with others, is lacking when one only attends services using NAC USA Online. Due to this, we encourage our members to live their faith with a community of believers within the church.



*...the fellowship  
of the believers  
gathered in the  
worship and  
praise of God.*

## THE NEED FOR COMMUNITY FOUND IN CHURCH

Jesus was often teaching in crowds; and His apostles often preached to crowds, which we can see evidence of in their letters. Their letters were not just addressed to one Ephesian or one Corinthian, but rather to the Corinthian and Ephesian congregations. In these instances, we can see how community can help people learn and grow. We find this community in the church. Not a virtual community, but a physical congregation. A divine service is essentially made up of several components – worship, sermon, sacrament, fellowship, and blessing. Broadcasted services can only provide the sermon and blessing element. The other components are diminished when experienced outside of the congregation.

### WORSHIP

The Catechism offers one definition of divine service as the fellowship of the believers gathered in the worship and praise of God (CNAC 12.1.5.3).

While our individual worship is crucial in our relationship with God, we also want to make time for corporate worship, where we come together as believers and praise God. So, even when one individually worships God while connected to an online service, it is not an equal alternative to the corporate worship that Christians experience together in church. Corporate worship gives us an opportunity to publicly declare our love for Him. There is a certain feeling of wonderment and conviction when people are gathered in one place to praise God, and this feeling cannot be fully grasped when experienced from a screen.

### SACRAMENT

Holy Communion is the sacrament we are able to experience every divine service. Holy Communion is a meal of profession. The profession of the death, resurrection, and return of Jesus Christ is part of the profession of the Christian faith. When



*Fellowship is when, united by the fellowship of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the community of believers shares their lives with one another.*

one is watching service online by themselves, this element of profession in Holy Communion is diminished because they are only professing their belief to themselves. While a personal profession is powerful, there is significance in publicly professing one's faith to other believers (cf. Matthew 10:32).

Holy Communion is also a meal of fellowship. The presence of the Lord's body and blood establishes our fellowship with Him and other believers. In this fellowship of the Lord's Supper, the true nature and true form of the church of Christ are clearly revealed. It is very difficult to feel this important sense of fellowship in Holy Communion when separated from the congregation.

### **FELLOWSHIP**

The fellowship experienced in other elements of the divine service experience are also lacking when viewing services only through NAC USA Online. True Christian fellowship is closely related to Holy Communion, where we experience fellowship with Jesus Christ. This connection to Christ is the basis

for our fellowship with other believers. Fellowship is when, united by the fellowship of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the community of believers shares their lives with one another. It is more than just gathering together in one area or sharing a meal with each other. And it is more than just the congregation waving to the camera in their church so that those connected via the broadcast feel included. In the congregation, we are prompted to engage with other people, and God wants this. If we don't engage with other people, then we cannot serve them as we are called to do. To share the grace of God, we have to step forward and join the fellowship of believers.

## **CONCLUSION**

In September 2018, logins were introduced for NAC USA Online. Everyone was allowed access to live broadcasted services if they obtained a login. This change was a step in the direction that NAC USA Online will take over the coming year. We know that there are very real reasons as to why people need online services. And for these reasons,



*Without the church,  
it is impossible to  
be a Christian.*

NAC USA Online will continue broadcasting live services from specified locations. Starting in mid-2019, there will be one broadcasted service per time zone and one Spanish service.

These reasons for viewing live broadcasted services on NAC USA Online include:

- Congregations with few or no altar servers
- Linked Members and/or shut-ins

If these members cannot experience the true fellowship and community only felt through actual presence at a divine service, they can at least hear the preached Word. For all other people, members or guests, actually being in a divine service is what we offer and what we encourage.

There may be a few other reasons why one would use NAC USA Online – members with short-term illnesses, members who are traveling, etc. Members who use NAC USA Online for one of these reasons tend to have more of a choice in deciding if they will be able to attend divine service in a physical church. Because they have this choice,

and because we know that the divine services experienced only through NAC USA Online are lacking in multiple aspects, we encourage these members to go to church when possible and, when not possible, to log into NAC USA Online to access divine service clips from the Chief Apostle and District Apostle, also available on the New Apostolic Church USA app. We hope that this will help equip each one to have a maturing faith.

NAC USA Online cannot replace coming to church if one is able. Christians throughout the ages have professed belief in the “church.” This makes it clear that the church is not an external or trivial thing, but is an essential element of Christian faith. Without the church, it is impossible to be a Christian (CNAC 6.4).

It is in the presence of a community of believers that the Spirit reveals Himself. And when we gather with this community, we give the Holy Spirit an opportunity to use us to serve others. This service, towards others and towards God, is what will bring us closer to our vision and ultimately, the goal of our faith.



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



# PRIEST CONFERENCE

SEPT 6-8 / SEPT 20-22 IN DETROIT, MI

*Please contact [communications@nac-usa.org](mailto:communications@nac-usa.org) if you have not received information.*