



District Apostle Kolb – 2020 Beginning of the year address transcript

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I trust that you had a peaceful entry into 2020, and hope that you have already been able to experience God's love and presence in new ways this year. I want to connect and share some exciting and important information about a few of the highlights that we can look forward to in this year.

A wonderful element of Faith Arc that will resume in 2020 is the celebration of Confirmation Sundays and the opportunity for our young Christians to make their vow to God. Written about in the Autumn 2019 VISION Newsletter, the Road to Confirmation is the process for those youth students, currently in 10th and 11th grade, that have chosen to pursue confirmation for this spring. The process also intentionally involves the student's parents or guardians, youth leader, and rector. For those that have already started this process for this year, their confirmation services will take place during Eastertide, which is the time between Easter and Pentecost. If you have any questions about the Road to Confirmation, please see the Autumn 2019 VISION Newsletter, or email youth@nac-usa.org.

As you know, one of the main objectives of Faith Arc is to develop deliberate relationships between our children and youth with the members of each congregation. I ask everyone, of all generations, to not only pray for our children and youth, but to make a conscious effort to connect with and support them in their young life of faith.

For the young adults, those 18-35 years old, I am happy to announce that a national young adult conference is in the works for this upcoming August. The last two conferences, in Chicago in 2016 and Detroit in 2018, have provided a space for meaningful learning and discussions to strengthen faith in Jesus Christ, particularly during key years of life. These weekends provide an opportunity to meet young adults from around the country, and provide strength and encouragement to each other. An exact time and location will be published on our website soon.

In a similar fashion, last year, all of the priestly ministries of the church gathered for a national priest conference. This was an unprecedented event where nearly 500 ministers from all over the United States district came together in Detroit over two different weekends in September in order to learn, grow, and strengthen their ministry. A number of different topics were covered over the teaching-intensive weekend. I encourage you to talk with the priestly ministries in your congregation, which are the priests, evangelists, shepherds, district evangelists, district elders, and bishops, about the conference, and ask them which aspect or topic of the weekend experience made the largest impact on them. As the year progresses, we will provide discussion guides based on the various teachings of the conference that can be used in minister meetings.

In order to continue in our culture of learning, I am happy to announce that a national deacon conference will take place in Chicago on the first weekend in October. Additional information, including invitations for all active deacons and travel details, will be forthcoming.

I've mentioned what is available this year for our confirmands, for the young adults, and the ordained ministers, and now, I'd like to promote the small group discussions and the midweek experience curriculum, which is for all adult members of the church. As you know, our international vision statement is, "A church in which people feel at home and, inspired by the Holy Spirit and their love for God, align



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their lives to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and thus prepare themselves for His return and eternal life.” The small group discussions provide an opportunity to learn about the gospel of Jesus Christ, and also offer a space to strengthen and support each other as we work to align our lives to Christ’s teaching and prepare ourselves for His return.

Perhaps you haven’t joined a small group yet, or maybe you joined one back in 2014 when small groups were initially introduced and your experience was not that great. Thanks to feedback from around the country and our experience over these past six years, the material that is provided has improved, and I encourage you to consider giving these special opportunities for spiritual growth and discipleship another chance. The plan for 2020 starts with a series on the creed of our church.

To enhance the overall small group experience, trainings were published at the end of 2018 on the NAC-USA Development Institute, referred to as NDI, for both facilitators and participants. I feel you may find them helpful in understanding how these discussions support us in becoming disciples of Christ. To those that facilitate small groups, if you haven’t had a chance to watch the facilitator training videos yet, please do so for the benefit of the small group experience. Anyone can request an NDI login by visiting ndi.nac-usa.org

While the training videos for facilitators and participants are on our training platform, NDI, the actual week-to-week small group curriculum is one of the many resources that are published on our NAC USA mobile app. Since its introduction at the beginning of 2015, the NAC USA mobile app has been downloaded over 10,500 times, and has had over 1.6 million impressions. We have some exciting developments coming for the app in 2020. If you’re not one of the 10,500 that currently have the app, please download this helpful tool so that you’ll be able to take some of the church’s resources with you wherever you go.

Two events I would like to highlight are the visits of Chief Apostle Schneider to our district. In July, he will visit our brothers and sisters in Jamaica, Mexico, and El Salvador, and later, in September, he will be in the San Francisco area. The service from San Francisco, which will be September 13, will be a live webcast to all USA congregations at 10am pacific time, and 1pm eastern time. The service is open to anyone that wants to attend; however, an online registration will be required. Additional details will be posted on our website and sent to the ministers via Minister Companion once they are available. During the divine service in Tijuana, Mexico, Bishop Manfredo Stegmann will be retired from his ministerial work throughout our Central American districts, primarily in Mexico. In the San Francisco service, Apostle Earl Buehner will be placed into retirement after faithful service to the Lord throughout the western region of the USA. Each of these servants has been active in ordained ministry for over 45 years. Also, throughout 2020, over 50 servants from across the country will go into retirement. Together, the Apostles are working to inspire and prepare emerging leaders in order to continue the pastoral care of our members.

I realize this is a lot of information, so a summary of these points and important dates is available on our website, nac-usa.org. If you have any questions, please feel free to email communications@nac-usa.org

All of the events and tools I’ve mentioned here are to help us grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ and inspire others to do the same. This has been, is, and will continue to be our task, as given to us by Jesus Christ. The Chief Apostle summarized this in a few words – Let us: preach the gospel, make disciples of all, and prepare for the Lord’s return.

I wish for you all the joy and strength to fulfill this mission!