



Gospel Seeds... March 2017

A Monthly Update from Western ND Synod Staff

A Time of Listening...

I continue to learn it is just as important to listen well as it is to speak well. Friday, February 10 – about 30 people gathered at Christ Lutheran in Minot, many who serve on synod council, to listen to one another and to talk. This was the third event in our synod's *Season of Listening*. These conversations are meant to make room for people to honestly talk about issues which divide us.

In these conversations we try to provide a safe space for a variety of perspectives to be shared. It is in this sharing that we come to understand another person's point of view.

There are many things which threaten to divide us – it could be economic differences, political affiliations, racial divides, even our age groupings. What unites us is more powerful than all of these if we can confess that our first allegiance is to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the creator of all that is and all that will be. Christ died for each of us – all of us on both sides of any issue, of this I am most certainly convinced.

Issues will not go away...

I am also convinced that we will never experience a time where all of us will agree on everything. We were created unique at our very core so it stands to reason that each of us will look at the world differently.

We are the body of Christ, each in need of the other, none able to say to the other you are not needed. We are in this life together. Can we be bold enough to speak clearly what we believe and listen just as closely to the other?

GIFTS Events:

Here are a couple of upcoming GIFTS events, both with an eye toward this being the 500th Commemoration of the Reformation.

March 4 – Dr. Martin Lohrmann, Wartburg Theological Seminary

“Freedom in Christ as a Call to Serve” First Lutheran, Minot.

April 1 - Dr. Dirk Lange, Luther Seminary

“Worship as an Act of Reformation” Trinity Lutheran, Bismarck
Cost is \$15 per person. Please contact the synod office to register.

Actions Taken...

Your elected representatives who form the Synod Council gathered in Minot February 10-11. Listed below are some of the actions taken.

-Were presented with a new document synod staff uses with congregations in the call process. The document gives an update on activities engaged on behalf of the congregation, a listing of all congregations in the call process and how long they have been in process and a listing of all calls filled in the past year.

-Reported that Mission Support shared by congregations with the synod was \$1,054,000 which is above the budgeted income of \$975,000. We celebrate these gifts but also heed that the figure is a decrease of about \$28,000 from the previous year.

-Reviewed congregational giving from across the synod and engaged in discussion of giving trends and what synod council members believe will happen in the future.

-Reviewed and revised the 2017 Synod Budget. Also set a 2018 budget which will be presented to our Synod Assembly in June. After much conversation it was decided to freeze Mission Support to ELCA Churchwide at 47% of what the synod receives from congregations.

-Approved Rostered Leader Compensation Guidelines for 2018 which will now go to synod assembly for action. The guideline provides for equalized salary for all rostered leaders – Deacons and Pastors, which is in alignment with previous synod assembly actions. The guidelines are based on a 1% salary increase.

-The 2018 Proposed Synod Budget also contains a 1% salary increase for synod staff.

Excellent and Committed Synod Council...

I want you to know that your synod council is a committed group of people, willing to engage in serious discussions and provide direction for synod staff. This is a gift. They take their roles seriously, speaking on behalf of the congregations across this synod. You are blessed and I am thankful!

God Bless!

Rev. Mark Narum

Serving as Bishop of the Western North Dakota Synod



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.