



Western North Dakota Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Report of the Bishop to the Assembly - 2016

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Genesis 12:1-3

We are a blessed people! Gifted by God in various ways - some to teach, others to listen, still others to build, another one to organize, someone else to heal and the list goes on - endlessly. God has provided an **Abundance** of gifts so that the Good News of Jesus Christ might be made visible in this world.

We gather for the second year around the theme "**Living in God's Abundance**" with a special emphasis on how God, through the power of the Holy Spirit has gifted individuals. Some people are aware of their gifts, others are working to discern or understand how they have been gifted and how these gifts are to be used.

Here is what I know, your gifts are needed. Whatever those gifts are, they are needed for the sake of all of God's creation. You have been gifted for a reason, so that neighbors and creatures and creation can be cared for. You and your God given gifts are the answer to someone else's prayer. God's world needs people just like you who are willing to give of themselves - freely and generously and in doing so the gospel is lived, proclaimed and experienced.

As a synod, a group of people and congregations who walk together, we live out of God's incredible abundance. As your staff, through a series of conversations with rostered leaders and synod council we have identified five primary areas of work:

Hospitality: Welcoming people whether it is to your synod office or through congregationally based activities like "*Dishin' With the Bish*" we seek to share Christ's love. It is through hospitality that relationships are built allowing ministry in Christ's name to flow.

How might we together become more hospitable, getting to know our neighbors deepest needs, worries or dreams and in the process being able to share our faith in Christ?

Faith Formation: Growing in faith and faithfulness is our work together. These efforts will be enhanced through a churchwide grant to help us gather families to study Luther's Small Catechism and through hands on activities to teach families how to nurture the faith of those closest to them.

How do we together take seriously the baptismal promises we have made to nurture others in their faith?

Raising Up Leaders: God's church needs leaders, for today and for the future. We need members of congregations willing to prayerfully lead their congregations to visions beyond themselves, where neighbors are served in Jesus name. We need leaders raised up to serve within God's church as Pastors, Diaconal Ministers and Associates in Ministry.

The question before us is how do we, together, raise up new leaders, equipping them for Gospel ministry - ministry in daily life and ministry within the congregation?

Stewardship: All that we have is a gift from God, faithful stewards recognize that and seek ways to faithfully care for and share what God has given them. At its heart stewardship is all about discipleship, being a faithful follower of Jesus.

How do we live this counter-cultural message, that we are stewards and not owners? How might engaging conversations around being a steward deepen our faith?

Congregational Renewal: This is God's church. It is God who has a mission and it is God's Holy Spirit who invites us to be participants in that mission. Congregational Renewal is grounded in Bible Study and Prayer seeking God's guidance in faithfully worshipping and serving.

What does it mean to seek new ways of reaching beyond ourselves? What does it mean to listen closely to our neighbor? How might listening and building relationships open the door for us to share our hope in Christ?

As I have said before, God has blessed us Abundantly. We give thanks for the abundance while at the same time pondering the ministry God is calling us to engage. There is a lot to be thankful for and a lot to think about. Stop by for a cup of coffee and conversation some time.

God Bless

Rev. Mark Narum

Serving as Bishop of the Western North Dakota Synod

2016 Anniversaries

25th – Rev. Karen Edwards
25th – Rev. Kirsten L Frantsvog
25th – Rev. Lisa Ahlness
30th – Rev. Chris Montgomery
30th – Rev. Norman Paskowsky
30th – Rev. Rebecca L. Johnson
35th – Rev. Curtis Hanson
35th – Rev. Sara B Akre
40th – Rev. J. B Johnson
40th – Rev. Mark L Nygard
45th – Rev. Dean R Bakken
45th – Rev. Duane C. Danielson
45th – Rev. William F Wagner
50th – Rev. Gayler L. Korsmo
55th – Rev. James R Stenslie
55th – Rev. Oliver F Dewald

2015 Ordinations, Consecrations, and Commissionings

Rev. Susan Anderson – 11/22/2015
Rev. Martha Harrison – 5/23/2015
Joan Lorenz, AIM – 12/3/2015
Rev. Joseph Natwick – 5/30/2015
Rev. Kathleen Nygaard – 4/25/2015
Rev. Mary Wiggins – 9/26/2015

2015 Installations

Rev. Norman Paskowsky
Rev. Lisa Lewton
Rev. Brian Knutson
Rev. Dana Holter
Rev. Susan Anderson
Rev. Mary Wiggins
Rev. George Schuessler
Rev. Martha HarriSon
Rev. Joseph Natwick

2015 On Leave from Call

Rev. Renita Eidenschink
Elizabeth Fox, AIM
Rev. Travis Gerjets
Rev. Stephanie Swanson

2015 Retired

Rev. Karen Edwards
Rev. Robert Edwards
Rev. Charles Galloway
Rev. Calvin Oraw
Rev. Mary Peterson
Rev. Jim Reeb
Rev. Kay Reeb

2015 Transfers

Rev. Kirsten Frantsvog from Eastern North Dakota Synod
Rev. Travis Gerjets from Minneapolis Area Synod
Rev. Brian Knutson from Oregon Synod
Rev. Benjamin Loven to Southeastern Minnesota Synod
Rev. Steven Olson from East Central Synod of Wisconsin
Rev. Adam Roberts to East Central Synod of Wisconsin
Rev. Rachel Simonson to Northwestern Minnesota Synod
Rev. John Simonson to Northwestern Minnesota Synod
Rev. Charles Swanson to Southwestern Minnesota Synod

2015 Deaths

Rev. Marvin Holje
Rev. Duane Sorum

2016 Congregational Anniversaries

1916 Duck Creek – Hettinger
1916 Our Savior's – Mercer
1916 English – Tuttle
1941 Grace – McClusky