

3 Guiding Commitments for our Synod

by Bishop Dave



At our recent Regional Gatherings, I offered a slide with three suggested commitments for the year. It is my prayer that we as a synod can meditate on them and integrate them into our personal lives and congregational ministries. Here they are with some explanation.

Trust God

Trust is a much better translation of the Greek word *pistis* than *belief*, because trust implies relationship, commitment, and investment. Belief can be reduced to our opinions. It can keep us locked in our heads and never penetrate our hearts. But trust in God happens over time. It is born of worship, spiritual practices, and loving actions. It becomes more deeply rooted in us during times of hardship or struggle.

Love One Another

The observers of the early church commented, "See how they love one another." Jesus gave this as his only commandment: that we love one another as he loved us. In a polarized society, remaining committed to loving each other may be the most obvious gift of a Christian community. This is not about feeling something emotional; it is a commitment to one another's wholeness. It seeks reconciliation and not schism. Love includes all people and their perspectives respectfully.

Serve the Neighbor

Martin Luther wrote, "God does not need your good works, but your neighbor does." This statement clearly roots our actions in the world in good Lutheran theology. Our salvation/wholeness is a free gift. We are set free to love and serve our neighbor. We don't serve them to make them join our church—we simply address their material, social, and spiritual needs as best we can because they, too, are children of God. When we serve our neighbors in joy, the promise of scripture (and our experience) is that our lives become more meaningful. Our mission becomes clearer. Our divisions become less important.

I am convinced that if we can trust God, love one another, and serve our neighbors, we will be a faith-filled and dynamic synod. Our light will shine, and our joy will be restored!

Peace,
+Dave