

# I-K Lutheran

## *Where God is doing new things*

August 2018

*I love to tell the story of unseen things above,  
of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love.  
I love to tell the story, because I know it's true;  
it satisfies my longings as nothing else would do. (ELW #661)*



The congregation's pastor and I processed toward the "back" of the worship space as we all sang the old hymn with vigorous familiarity: "I love to tell the story," the story "of Jesus and his love." When we reached the back pews and turned again toward the gathered folk for the liturgy's final blessing and sending, in my mind's eye I was transported back over decades and distance to another Sunday when I was serving as an acolyte for worship with First Lutheran Church in Columbia Heights, Minnesota, the congregation that first formed me in faith. I could see and sense my gangly, slightly long-haired early-teen self standing next to Pastor Joe, who had just finished preaching about our call to tell the Jesus story anywhere and always, to anyone and everyone. Echoing through the years I could still hear his strong, somewhat gravelly, always off-pitch voice rising above the voices of the few hundred folk gathered for worship. I could hear again the conviction in his voice and see the gleam of joy in his eyes as he sang: *I love to tell the story, because I know it's true; it satisfies my longings as nothing else would do.*

"Go in peace; serve the Lord!" snapped me back to the present time and place to join the congregation in responding with our own conviction and joy, "Thanks be to God!" And in that moment, I remembered anew how much I do love to tell the story of Jesus and his love ... and I realized how seldom I actually tell it outside of my role as pastor and bishop.

It is one thing to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love in settings related to my role as bishop, like preaching, teaching, leading meetings, and pastoral conversations. It's another thing altogether to tell others about Jesus and his love in the various moments and relationships of my life outside that role, with family, friends and acquaintances, in the neighborhood where we live, during encounters with folks in stores or at events or across the table at some social gathering.

In the years since that long-ago Sunday at First Lutheran, I seem to have moved a little more toward the approach to telling the story of Jesus and his love captured in this quote sometimes attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: "Preach the gospel at all times; use words if necessary." Yet, the bible teacher, Walter Brueggemann reminds us that

*The noun "gospel," which means "message," is linked in the Bible to the verb "tell-the-news" (one word, *bissar*, in Hebrew). At the center of the act of evangelism is the message announced, a verbal, out-loud assertion of something decisive not known until this moment of utterance. There is no way that anyone...can avoid this lean, decisive assertion which is at the core of evangelism.<sup>i</sup>*

It is crucial that I live in ways that reflect the storied self-giving love of Jesus. The ELCA tag line, "God's Work; Our Hands," is so true and important for us to lean into. But scripture and the witness of our forebears in faith also invite us to lean into something like "God's Work. Our Voice." After all, if I really do trust that the story of Jesus and his love is true and believe that this love satisfies my longings as nothing else would do, why would I not share this good news with others who might need it as desperately and find it as satisfying as I do?

*By your word, eternal God, your creation sprang forth, and we were given the breath of life. By your word, eternal God, death is overcome, Christ is raised from the tomb, and we are given new life in the power of your Spirit. May we boldly proclaim this good news in our words and our deeds, rejoicing always in your powerful presence; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Amen. (ELW p. 75)*

+ Bishop Bill Gafkjen

<sup>i</sup>Brueggemann, Walter. Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism: Living in a Three-Storied Universe (p. 14). © 1993 Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.



# Indiana-Kentucky Synod

## *StewardFest*


Saturday, August 25, 2018  
Christ Lutheran Church  
3401 S. Dixon Road  
Kokomo, IN 46902

### Agenda:

8:30am Registration  
9:00am Gathering Worship  
9:15am Plenary with Bishop Gafkjen  
10:15am Break  
10:30am Workshops  
11:30am Workshops  
12:30pm Lunch  
1:15pm Workshops  
2:15pm Break  
2:30pm Mission Ambassador Plenary  
3:15pm Sending Worship

### Available Workshops:

Spiritual Gifts  
Personal Finance  
Treasurer Training  
Ministry Funding Plan  
Capital Campaigns  
Care of Creation Ministry  
Congregational Stewardship  
Self Care/Family/Relationships



Cost for the event is \$5 per person (lunch included), with a maximum cost of \$20 per congregation. Please bring payment to the event with you. Checks should be payable to "IK Synod" with StewardFest in the memo line. Please register at <https://conta.cc/2HHhquY> by August 17th. If you have questions, please contact Carol Webb ([cwebb@iksynod.org](mailto:cwebb@iksynod.org)). Come and see. We are looking forward to seeing you at StewardFest!