

I-K Lutheran

Where God is doing new things

September 2018

When it grew late, his disciples came to Jesus and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; send the crowd away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat." But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?" And he said to them, "How many loaves have you? Go and see." When they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish" ... Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people...And all ate and were filled. [Mark 6:37-44]



When the first followers of Jesus see people who were hungry, their immediate instinct was to tell the crowd to run to the nearest McDonalds® and feed themselves. Before they can shoo the crowd away, however, Jesus simply says to them, "You give them something to eat." The disciples protest. What?! Are we supposed to spend our own money to purchase hundreds of loaves of bread to feed thousands of hungry people? We don't have that much money! Another simple response from Jesus, a question that points beyond their protest and turns their attention in another direction: "How many loaves do you have? Go and see."

Those early disciples are us. When faced with significant need of almost any sort, even (and maybe especially) when we sense Jesus calling us to do something about it, our inclination is to immediately assume and assert that we don't have what it would take to address the need. It happens in our personal lives and it happens in our life together as communities of faith. Pause for just a moment to think about the last time in the face of some discovered need you heard someone say, heard yourself say, or remembering thinking, something like, "I/We don't have the money, people, youth, time, energy, _____ needed to address that."

More often than not, our eyes glaze over in a fixed stare into what we don't have, we are paralyzed, do nothing, and we find ourselves muttering all sorts of reasons why we can't act on Jesus' command, to "give them something to eat."

Thankfully, through stories like this one the ancient writer Mark tells, occasionally Jesus reaches out to jar us out of our stupor by turning our attention in a different direction and encouraging us to do an inventory of what we see: "So, what do you have? Go and see."

What do you suppose would happen if every time we were faced with some need and sensed the Spirit calling us to do something about it – to "give them something to eat" – rather than first assuming and asserting that we don't have what we need to follow that call, we, instead, assumed and asserted that God has already given us what we need in order to do what God is calling us to do and then went looking for it? Of course, we don't assume that we have *everything* needed (life is rarely an all or nothing proposition). Rather, we trust that God has given us *something* and that at least part of that something might be relationships with or proximity to others who also have something to contribute.

Here's the amazing thing about all this: When we have done the inventory that God has given us – what we do have – we can offer it to Jesus (alongside what others offer him) and, as with the five loaves and two fish that our ancestors in faith discovered in that deserted place centuries ago, Jesus promises to bless it, break it, and give it back to us to share with others trusting that God will add what others offer and multiply it so all will eat and be filled.

What do you have? Go and see. Bring it to Jesus, who will bless it and break it, give it back, and multiply it in the sharing of it.

Thanks be to God!

+ Bishop Bill Gafkjen

INDIANA-KENTUCKY SYNOD



MIDDLE SCHOOL GATHERING

6th – 8th Graders and Adult Mentors



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 – SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2018

GROW

CONNECT

DISCOVER

Held at Waycross Conference Center and Camp in Morgantown, Indiana, students and adult mentors are invited to take part in this gathering which focuses on the Sacraments, helping students identify their unique gifts, faith formation, and building connections for middle school youth from across the synod. There will be experiential learning sessions, a hands-on service project, and time for recreation and fun. Worship will be held on Sunday morning.

The registration cost is \$100 per person which includes lodging, food, and programming.

For more information, to register, or to be part of the planning team, contact Pastor Dan Fugate, Assistant to the Bishop for Discipleship, at dfugate@iksynod.org or 317.253.3522. The deadline to register is Friday, September 14, 2018.



Indiana-Kentucky Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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