



Gospel Seeds...April 2011

A Monthly Update from the Western North Dakota Synod Office

Pausing at the comma...

⁷ For a brief moment I abandoned you,
but with great compassion I will gather you.
⁸ In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you,
but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you,
says the LORD, your Redeemer. Isaiah 54:7-8

It lays there, overlooked by most eyes, except for the trained English teacher or copy editor, the comma. As we read many brush past, not slowing, not giving it the pause it asks of us. Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann, lecturing on the verses above, invites us to consider the comma. The first half of each verse speaks of God's abandonment. The second half speaks of God's deep compassion. The two parts are separated by a comma. Brueggemann says we don't spend enough time in the pause between the two halves of the verses. We rush from deep pain, toward promise, not allowing time to recognize what has happened, what has been lost, relationships broken, a world changing around us, the familiar passing away. Instead, we rush forward too quickly.

Brueggemann says this is the gift of Holy Saturday. A pause, between Jesus death and the announcement of Resurrection. So I invite you pause. To bring to mind the losses you have experienced in life, to name them to God. To sit with that knowledge for a time remembering well all that was. Then, when you are ready, look forward, for God is a God of the past but also the God who has secured the future.

Sweet Deal for C.A.R...

Somewhere around 7,000 M&M tubes have been distributed throughout the synod. People are being invited to enjoy the candy, then fill the tube with quarters before returning it to the congregation. All of the tubes and coins will be collected at Synod Assembly. It will be amazing to see what ministry will be done in God's name!



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Seminary Assignments...

In the last few weeks I have been involved in the process where seniors in seminary are assigned to synods. I have been impressed with the prayerful and collaborative way in which this work is done in our church. I am glad to announce that 5 pastoral candidates and 1 Associate in Ministry have been assigned to our synod.

This was an interesting year, in that we have been assigned candidates from both The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina. We also have received candidates from Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa.

These candidates will be interviewing within the coming months. I ask that you keep all of these students in prayer, that God's Holy Spirit would lead them in the process. I ask that you pray for our congregations who are in the call process as well, that God would lead them.

Will all of these candidates receive calls in the synod? That is in God's hands. We believe that both congregations and candidates are in a prayerful discernment process. We shall see what God has in store.

Congregational & Leader Updates...

Welcome to:

- Rev. Jonathon Larson who began his call at Faith Lutheran Church in Bismarck in early March and was installed on March 20th.
- Rev. Tim Johnson who began his call as interim Senior Pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran in Bismarck.

Resignations:

- Rev. Dan Mauer, Grace, Wildrose/ Calvary, Alamo

Openings:

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| Grenora/Zahl | Bethlehem, Wing |
| Zion, Berthold/Carpio Lutheran | Trinity, Napoleon/Trinity, Kintyre |
| St. John, Dickinson | Grace, Wildrose/ Calvary, Alamo |
| English Lutheran, Hazen | Bread of Life, Minot |
| Zion, Elgin | |

God Bless

Mark Narum, Serving as Bishop