



Gospel Seeds...March 2011

A Monthly Update from the Western North Dakota Synod Office

Welcome to the Prairie...

It was a joy to welcome Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson and his wife Ione to the synod in mid-February. With Bible in hand, he led those who gathered into deep discussions about a life of faith. Bishop Hanson says now is a time for all Lutherans to be involved in 3 deep listening:

- *Listening to God – through study of God’s Word; we are a Book of Faith church after all
- *Listening to our Community – this would mean slowing down enough to listen to the deep concerns and needs of those outside the walls of our congregations, many of who are involved in no congregation – what are their impressions of the church? What are their deep concerns? What do they see as needs in the community?
- *Listening to each other – talking honestly and openly about our faith, praying together about God’s mission in our local community

Nostalgia or Memory...

Bishop Hanson invited people to consider the difference between these two words. He said nostalgia often romanticizes the past, glossing over the less than perfect parts, recalling only the positive. Memory on the other hand, realistically recalls former events and provides a springboard toward the future. So is you’re a congregation gathered around nostalgia or memory? Do you focus only on the “Good Old Days” or do you wonder what God is leading you to next?

Ash Wednesday & Lent...

At mid-month we enter the season of Lent. Ashen crosses will be drawn on our heads as these words are spoken, “From dust you come, and to dust you shall return...” A word of honesty, we are mortal; a word of hope, as we remember that God is our creator. God created all including the dust of the earth. I pray that you can make time in your busy schedule for the Lenten practice of mid-week worship.



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Synod Council News...

Your synod council met in early February, here are some of the highlights:

- spent several hours in conversation around God’s mission and the ministry God might be calling us to. With that in mind, they agreed to do a Virtual Walk About the synod. The Walk About is intended to hear what is happening in this part of God’s world from clergy, lay people and those outside the church.
- developed a synod budget for 2012 which will be presented for your consideration during the synod assembly.
- approved a Synod Mission Grant to Heart River Lutheran, Mandan as they work to develop a ministry for offenders at the State Youth Correctional Center, which will provide supportive relationships as the youth return to their home communities.
- approved a \$5,000 Synod Mission Grant for Living Water Lutheran, Mandan. The congregation has worshipped in a school for many years and is about to embark on a building project.
- heard a presentation from Rev. Kari Williamson about Campus Ministry at Minot State University, how congregations in the area have partnered to provide a soup lunch each Tuesday, how a Thursday night worship service is being developed and how Christ-centered relationships are being built with students and staff.

Pre-Assembly Mission Fest...

Mark your calendars for a great evening of Global food, music, displays and mingling. All of this is planned for Thursday evening, June 2nd at Trinity Lutheran Church in Bismarck. Part of the fun of the evening will be a silent auction to raise funds for the Synod Mission & Ministry Trust Fund.

Thank You...

The Western North Dakota’s fiscal year ended January 31st. Giving to the synod was down about 5.5% compared to last year. We are thankful for your mission gifts, through this new pastors are being trained, call processes are happening, campus ministry is being funded, the hungry are being fed, missionaries are being supported and much more. It is a blessing to be a partner in ministry with you and your congregation.

God Bless,

Mark Narum, Serving as Bishop