



## **Gospel Seeds...**

### **Who will serve?**

Ministry is not a numbers game, it is all about relationships. Ministry happens as people of God gather around Word and Sacrament working to connect the Holy with everyday life. Ministry happens in worship on Sunday, around the dinner table on Monday and in faithful work any day of the week. Ministry happens as people share their hopes and dreams, their fears and their failings. Ministry can happen anywhere or at any time. Ministry is the work of all of God's people.

Some people though are called or set aside for specific roles of ministry within the community of faith. Pastor or Deacon, even Synodically Authorized Ministers in training for ordination are set aside to serve. Who will step into these roles in the years to come?

### **Troubling Numbers...**

We have gone through the spring assignment process – Western North Dakota was blessed to receive 2 candidates. We are thankful to God for these individuals however we reported 12 congregations or parishes in need of a first call candidate.

Across the entire church, we are dealing with a declining number of individuals entering seminary. Many of those who are entering seminary are not from rural places, so the thought of serving in a rural setting is unsettling for many.

### **What shall we do?**

Whether or not your congregation has an opening at this moment should not matter, because we are in this together. The truth is that in the last 5 years 65% of our congregations have been or are in the call process. This is our issue together; both town and country churches have openings. Some have been waiting up to three years for the right candidate.

All of us can keep our eyes open for people whom we believe have the gifts for service within the church. Pray for them and encourage them to consider serving the church as a pastor or deacon. We all can financially support those who are in seminary, as concern over educational debt is one of the hurdles facing candidates considering seminary.

### **Discernment Retreats...**

We are noticing that the more we talk about the need for qualified candidates, the more people begin to ask questions. We are in conversation with a number of people about the possibility of entering into theological education.

Our next Discernment Retreat is scheduled for June 23-24 at Camp of the Cross. At this event individuals will have a chance to ask questions, talk with others who are wrestling with a call to ministry, as well as worship and pray together. This is a cooperative effort of the synods in North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota. For more information, call the synod office 701-223-5312 or email

[beth@wdsynod.org](mailto:beth@wdsynod.org).

### **Synod**

### **Assembly**

### **Announcements:**

Registration is now open for the 2017 Western North Dakota Synod Assembly, visit [wdsynod.org/synod-assembly](http://wdsynod.org/synod-assembly) for complete details. Here are a few things you should know:

-Register before May 15<sup>th</sup> and you will save \$20 per person.

-Pre-Assembly Workshop is June 1 from 10:30 to 3:00 with Rev. Dr. Sam Giere – “In Faith, For Faith: Reclaiming the Heart of Salvation”, cost \$15 which includes lunch.

-Tickets for Thursday evening's Annual Mission Gala are also available, cost \$30/ticket

-A number of resolutions have been submitted this year. We are going to try something different to allow people to hear the issues behind the resolutions. We will have open discussion on the various resolutions during the Friday plenary. This will allow voting members to hear the issues, discuss the issues and have time to think about them before they are brought to the floor for consideration and action on Saturday.

-We invite you to bring your “Sweet Deal for CAR” funds with you to assembly, which marks the beginning of collecting funds to support ministry priorities in our companion synod church.

### **Rev. Mark Narum**

Serving as Bishop of the Western North Dakota Synod

