



Gospel Seeds...

Waiting...

The season of Advent, a season of waiting. We wait expectantly for the Savior of the world – the Christ – to return. We gather for Christmas programs, family gatherings with good food and presents. We gather with friends and co-workers and we celebrate.

This is a time to remember that God made a choice, a choice of incredible love for you, for each of us, for all the world. The choice to become fully human, in the form of an infant. One who would experience all of life, including death. So we celebrate and we await His coming again as we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus."

Guests Are Coming!

As I write this we are preparing to welcome four guests from our churchwide offices. Reverend Dr. Stephen Bouman, the Executive Director of the Domestic Mission Unit along with three Washington D.C. based staff members of the Advocacy Office will be in the synod in mid-December. They are coming to learn more about rural life and issues, as well as energy issues. This visit is about meeting faithful ELCA Lutherans who make their living from the land and how federal policy affects the work they do. Pray for this group, for safe travel, fruitful conversation and learning all around.

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton to visit...

We have just received word that Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will be with us during our Synod Assembly in Bismarck, June 1-2 as well as for our pre-assembly workshop May 31. Each year a churchwide representative is at synod assembly to talk about the inter-dependent partnership between congregations, synods and churchwide.

Remember each congregation of the synod may send at least two voting members to assembly. Once again, we will also accept visitor registrations for the assembly. More details will be shared about theme and schedules in the coming months.

"Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord..."
Luke 2:10-11

"We give Thee, but thine own..."

God has blessed us! There is no question about that fact. I want to thank those who have shared lavishly with their congregations this past year. Those who have quietly shared their time serving on committees, being confirmation mentors, church council members or worked in the kitchen sharing the gift of hospitality – well done good and faithful steward. Thanks to those who have shared their talents; those who have organized events, those who have cut, stitched, bound and quilted; those who have taught or visited or sang or play an instrument, your gifts are valued – well done good and faithful servant. I want to thank those who have shared from the financial resources God has provided them. Those who gave to their church, those who have given gifts to the synod appeal, those who have shared with the Synod Endowment Fund – your

generosity is contagious. Well done, good and faithful servant.

Ministry in Christ's name happens because ordinary people, use their time, talent and treasures faithfully. Thank You!

End of Year Giving...

You still have time to make an end of the year gift to the Western North Dakota Endowment Fund. The earnings off these funds help train up future pastors and deacons, support creative Christ centered ministries in our synod and provide funds to do the work of walking with those in discernment.

Gifts of \$5,000 or more may receive a North Dakota Income Tax credit. Check with your tax advisor for ways your gifts can benefit you come tax time. Faith Simonieg, Assistant to the Bishop for Stewardship and Generosity is more than happy to assist you with gift planning – I would love to introduce her to you.

First Call Theological Event...

One way we support first call leaders across this church is through a program called First Call Theological Education. All first call leaders in their first three years of service attend these gatherings which happen once a year, in late January. We gather to talk about the joys and challenges of ministry. We gather to worship, learn, laugh and eat together. Through these events leaders are formed for the sake of the proclamation of the Gospel. We are thankful to God for these leaders and their gifts they bring to their settings.

Rev. Mark Narum

Serving as Bishop of the
Western North Dakota Synod

