



Thanks...

I want to start the New Year by expressing deep appreciation for all of the ministry which happens because of each of you. If you serve on a church council or have agreed to serve in the coming year, I want to say thank you. I ask that in the year ahead you make sharing the Good News of Jesus the central part of your council work. If you serve as a church school teacher, I want you to know how thankful I am for your ministry. You are helping our young people know who Jesus is and that they are beloved; this is vital work. If you are a quilter or gather items for health kits or school kits, please know my deep appreciation for your work. You are living out your faith through this important work.

Look around you, there are countless people within your congregation who are using their God given talents for the sake of the Gospel. I give thanks for each of them. Would you also tell them how important their work is? Thank you is a powerful word which can never be used too much!

Even More Thanks!!!

Remember "synod" is a Greek word which roughly means "walking together." There is a long list of people who help with this journey and a huge thank you is in order for each of them. Those who serve on Synod Council help set the

direction of our ministry together, and they help manage the finances. I am so thankful for their creative and faithful work. We are blessed to have an excellent Candidacy Committee who walks with those who are discerning a call to ministry or who are engaging theological education – thank you for your work. We are blessed with seven Conference Deans who organize activities within their respective conferences and serve as a sounding board for Synod Staff - Thanks!

There are even more people to thank. The Lutheran Youth Board are a creative group of people who coordinate the annual youth gathering; you all are a blessing. The Synod's Women of the ELCA are always looking for new ways to share the Good News of Jesus through word and deed; thank you for the partnership. This list is incomplete without the GIFTS Committee and the Synod Teams; you all are a blessing. Thanks.

Calls Accepted and Ordinations...

It is with great joy we announce the following:

- Bill Dodd was ordained and installed to serve United at Almont and Skandinavian at Sims.
- Sue Lynn White has been ordained and will serve the people of Oak Valley Lutheran, Velva.
- Beth Walch has been ordained and will serve the people of Lord of Life Lutheran, Bismarck as Associate Pastor.
- Rev. Brandy Gerjets has accepted the call and been installed as Lead

Pastor of First Lutheran, Minot.

- Rev. Brian Knutson has accepted the call to serve and has been installed as Senior Pastor of First Lutheran, Williston.
- Deacon Anna Dykeman has accepted the call to serve as Campus Minister at Minot State University.

Educational Opportunities...

At the end of the month, rostered leaders in their first three years of ministry will be gathering at Metigoshe Ministries for First Call Theological Education. This is a way for leaders to grow in their skills through workshops and mutual conversation.

Life Keys is the next GIFTS event. This workshop will help participants discern their God given gifts. The workshop is scheduled for First Lutheran, Minot – February 3rd. Register now, please.

End of Year...

The end of the fiscal year for the Western North Dakota Synod is January 31st, 2018. I want to thank all of our congregations and individuals for the gifts they have shared to help support our ministry together. Your Mission Support allows your Synod to have staff who help in the midst of call process, leading congregations in Mission Planning, raising up future leaders and helping in the midst of congregational issues. We could not do what we do without your partnership.

Rev. Mark Narum

Serving as Bishop of the Western North Dakota Synod

