



## **Gospel Seeds ....**

As I write this (mid-January) a group of people from Western North leave for the Central African Republic. We hope to share word from these witnesses of the Gospel in coming months.

Rev. Janis Sloka, Executive Director of Camp of the Cross has a long standing relationship with Campamento Luterano Eduardo Roig near Dorado, Puerto Rico. He along with seven others who have a connection to Camp of the Cross made the trek to help with hurricane recovery work. We thank God for their efforts and look forward to learning more from them.

Meanwhile, Rev. Taryn Montgomery, Bread of Life, Minot is spending a little over a week visiting our companion church – the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic. Through her visit she will get a chance see the ministries partner with in CAR. We look forward to learning more from her upon her return.

### **Plan to Attend...**

Unhealthy conflict in a congregation undermines the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ, that is a fact. One of the ways to avoid unhealthy conflict is to be clear about your congregation's purpose, according to Rev. Dr. Peter Steinke. Steinke has

spent his career working with congregation's in conflict, writing about creating healthy congregations and teaching around these areas.

We are glad to welcome Dr. Steinke to Western North Dakota for an afternoon workshop at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Bismarck on Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup> from 2:00pm until 5:00pm. The cost is \$10 per person. This is an incredible opportunity to learn from an excellent teacher – we hope to see you there.

### **Synod Council to Meet...**

Your synod council meets February 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> at Christ Lutheran in Minot. If there are issues you want discussed please let me know. Also, a reminder – the deadline for submitting resolutions for this year's synod assembly is March 31<sup>st</sup>. Contact Faith Simonieg if you have questions about the process of bringing forward resolutions.

### **Staffing Reorganization...**

Some changes are in the works for the structure of synod staff. A decision has been made to outsource much of the bookkeeping work for the synod. This move is being made to reduce staffing costs within the synod but will result in loss of long time employee Monroe Madson.

Monroe has faithfully served as the synod's Financial Administrator – always doing his best to oversee the gifts shared with the synod from individuals and congregations. He will continue to work in the office through mid-February. I am thankful for his servant's heart.

This means that duties will shift within the office and that we will be bringing on a new part-time position. As with any change there will be a learning curve and we ask that you be patient with us as we engage this new staffing pattern.

At the same time staff is looking closely at the synod's budget to make sure that we are best positioned to continue to provide for face to face contact with congregations. While Mission Support has been consistent it has not kept pace with inflation and rising costs.

### **What am I reading...**

From time to time I am asked what I am reading. Here is what I am spending time with now:

-Original Blessing: Putting Sin in its Rightful Place by Danielle Shroyer. In this Fortress Press book, Shroyer argues that the concept of original sin was an add on to the Christian faith several hundreds years after the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Instead she argues that scripture instead speaks of original blessing, being beloved one of God.

-The Agile Church: Spirit Lead Innovation in an Uncertain Age by Dwight Zscheile. Written by a Luther Seminary Professor, this book does an excellent job of describing the sociological changes impacting the church today.

### **Rev. Mark Narum**

Serving as Bishop of the Western North Dakota Synod

