



**Gospel Seeds...**

**Honest Talk...**

We have just come off an amazing Synod Assembly. Our Presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton, was engaging, witty and extremely honest. She talked openly about her 2016 statement on the Dakota Access Pipeline. Not backing away from what she wrote but at the same time saying she has come to an understanding that this is an extremely complex issue which will take her (and many others) a long time to truly understand.

Her openness to speak into this difficult subject, knowing how polarizing the topic can be was a blessing. It was a model for us to replicate – have open honest conversation about issues. One we need to address in this synod is racism, especially as it relates to how we interact with our Native American brothers and sisters. Pray that we can find ways to engage openly and honestly in these issues.

**More Honest Talk...**

We also talked openly about the finances of the synod. At the end of the past two fiscal years I have been forced to down-size staff. It meant saying good-bye to people who were valuable members of our team. However, as I look to 2020 and the election of the next bishop we need to have our financial house in order. The synod has been balancing our budget on the possibility of taking funds from reserves. We have not had to do that each year – because Mission Support from congregations has exceeded what we had budgeted. For that I say a huge thank-you.

At the same time, we need some honest talk. In cleaning our old paperwork, I ran across a report from 1993 listing the Mission Support from each congregation. Many

congregations on the list are giving close to the same Mission Support today as they did 25 years ago, meanwhile inflation has increased 65%.

We have important work to do together as the Western North Dakota Synod. There are candidates for ministry to walk with; there are congregations who need conversation partners to dream new dreams and put action plans together; there are new ministry to start, like campus ministry in Bismarck; there are faith formation gatherings to create. Mission Support makes all of this and much more possible. Bottom line, without Mission Support our ministry is restricted.

**Synod Assembly 2019:**

**June 7&8, 2019 –**

**Pre-Assembly June 6**

**A Time for Leadership...**

During our assembly I called for bold leadership. It is time for congregational members to stand up and clearly state that congregations exist for the sake of engaging God’s Mission. Congregations exist so the Good News of Jesus is proclaimed, so the sacraments can be celebrated, so the Word can be heard and studied.

It is time for each congregation to engage conversation around mission and ministry in God’s name. It is also time to stand up against petty arguing, gossip and any other actions which tear down the body of Christ. We are called to important work. We need leaders who are willing to share a vision beyond our own desires for the sake of those who do not yet know the love, grace and mercy available through Jesus.

**Videos Available for Study**

**and Conversation...**

Would you like to listen in on parts of Synod Assembly? We have now uploaded the 4 Bible Engagement Sessions, the “Dream Church” visions from 3 young adults, the “State of the Synod” address and a brief portion of the Question and Answers with Presiding Bishop Eaton (technical

difficulties prevent us from sharing the entire session). To find the videos go to Vimeo.com and search Western North Dakota Synod. An outline for using the Bible Engagement can be found on the Synod Website under the Resources Tab.

**A time away...**

We are glad to announce that Deacon Beth Anderson, Assistant to the Bishop for Candidacy, Faith Formation and Communication is now on sabbatical. Beth will be back in the office August 13<sup>th</sup>. A significant amount of her time away will be for spiritual renewal. Blessings Beth!

**Welcome...**

A new voice will greet you at the Synod Office front desk or on the phone – Laurie Jesz is our new Office Assistant. Laurie is originally from Bismarck, is a military veteran, has a background in nursing and has operated an event planning business. When you get a chance, welcome her.

**Rev. Mark Narum**

Serving as Bishop of the Western North Dakota Synod



**Memorial Fund**

Milo Englstad \$1000.00

**Building Fund**

Don Zingelman \$ 10.00  
Betty(Johnson) Mallow \$ 500.00

