



## ***Gospel Seeds***

### ***A Monthly Update from the Synod***

#### ***This Changes Everything...***

As I write this I am sitting in Houston at the National Youth Gathering. The theme verse for this gathering of 30,000 ELCA youth and their adult leaders is Ephesians 2:8:

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.*

Jesus death and resurrection changed everything! Period! End of story! The world was changed by Christ's freely going to the cross. Through the cross God has pronounced us worthy of God's love and mercy.

#### ***Daily Themes...***

Each day of the gathering we engaged a different topic:

Day 1: God's Love Changes Everything

Day 2: God's Grace Changes Everything

Day 3: God's Hope Changes Everything

What amazes me is the intentional work that goes into the planning of these gatherings. From providing excellent study resources to help prep participants in the event, to the well thought out work projects and the opportunities for participants to think and talk about faith and daily life.

#### ***Do we believe it???***

Do we really believe that Jesus' death and resurrection has changed everything? Do we trust God's promise of ongoing, unearned and unmerited love? If we are honest the answer is, "Not always." We live in a world where "nothing is free" and so it is hard to fathom a God whose love is.

Through God's grace we are set free to love and serve our neighbors. Such service is offered with no strings attached. We are moved to love and serve the neighbor because God first loved us. This is what it means to live the Good News of Jesus Christ.

We gather weekly to worship the God who gifted us in such an incredible way. We worship to thank and praise God but also to hear God's Word of grace and forgiveness. We taste it in the meal, we hear it in the music, we encounter it as a gathered community.

Then nourished we are sent back into the world to be a witness to what God is all about. As the Holy Spirit stirs in our life we are changed, thanks be to God!

#### ***Synod Happenings...***

-We celebrate the Ordination of Kayla Hill on July 29, 2018. Kayla has been called to serve the people of United as One Parish – Powers Lake, Battleview and rural Kenmare.

-We welcome Rev. Justin Johnson who has begun a call serving the people of English Lutheran, Hazen. It is a blessing to welcome you to the Western North Dakota Synod.

-We welcome Rev. Natasha Kolles who will begin her call as Associate Pastor, Zion Lutheran, Minot in mid-August. We are looking forward to the gifts you will share.

-At the same time we say farewell to Rev. Linda Schauer who has been serving Zion, Ashley. She begins a new call in Eastern North Dakota in August. We also say farewell to Rev. Anna Haugen who has served Augustana, Underwood and Birka, rural Washburn. Blessings to both of you and thanks for sharing your gifts with the people of this synod.

#### ***Upcoming Events...***

-August 12-14 – Central African Republic Partners Meeting – Fargo. A gathering of the three synods and other ministry partners engaged in ministry in CAR.

-Candidacy Retreat – August 17-18 at Badlands Ministry. A chance for those who are engaged in theological education to connect with synod staff and members of the Candidacy Committee.

-August 29-30 – Synod Program Staff Visioning Retreat - Camp of the Cross. This time in retreat always synod staff to lay out our work for the coming year.

-September 9-11, Medora Rostered Leader Gathering

#### ***Thanks...***

I am so thankful for each congregation in this synod and the faithful way we engaged ministry together. As you share Mission Support with your synod and churchwide you make ministry happen! Thanks for supporting congregation visioning, congregational renewal, training new pastors and deacons, sending missionaries around the world and much more. Thanks for your partnership – you are a blessing.

**Rev. Mark Narum**

Serving as Bishop of the Western North Dakota Synod

