



## Gospel Seeds

### A Monthly Update from the Synod

#### A Year that is New...

One of the gifts of the New Year is the chance to “start anew.” We enter January as an artist facing a blank canvas – white, fresh, clean. The possibilities ahead are infinite. What colors will fill in the background? What is the subject of the painting? Where will the brush move us?

As I sat in worship recently we sang Marty Haugen’s “Gather Us In.” My imagination took ahold as I sang the words at the end of the second stanza, “...give us the courage to enter the song.” I began to wonder about the new beginnings offered at this time of year. What would it mean to enter the song? Where might courage push me?

I invite you spend time pondering Haugen’s words, his invitation to pray for courage to be the Good News of Jesus in a new or different way this coming year. I am not certain what that would look like in your life; my guess is that it would be different for each of us. But what if in the midst of our daily routines we looked for opportunities to let the Gospel sing through our words and deeds. No matter where we work, or reside, or wander, or shop, or live – each of us have opportunities to “enter the song” by truly loving others.

It seems to me our faith in Jesus is not lived out through extraordinary acts of self-sacrifice, as much as it is lived out through the very ordinary and mundane daily tasks which show we love others. Opportunities to be Christ’s love

come to us often. May you keep your eyes to notice them and then have “...the courage to enter the song.”

#### Assembly...

As you prepare for your annual meetings a reminder: each congregation of the synod is invited to elect at least two people (larger congregations may send more depending on membership). Assembly this year will be at The Grand in Minot. June 6 is pre-assembly and June 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> is the Assembly. We will gather under the theme:

The Kingdom of God is Like: Dreams – Desires – Demands.

Assembly is a time of worship, Bible Study, faith-filled conversations and more. Plan to attend now.

***A deep word of appreciation to all congregations who generously shared Mission Support this past year. We are able to be in ministry together because of your generosity.***

#### LSS of ND Celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday in February!

Every congregation in the Western North Dakota Synod is a part owner of Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota. Our Social Ministry organization is turning 100 years old in February. Here is an invitation from LSS: *On February 24, 2019, we’d like to invite congregations to continue their long support and partnership with us by simultaneously hosting a celebration potluck meal in each church after services. This mass breaking of bread (or lefse!) seems like the ideal way to celebrate a century of partnership in bringing healing, help and hope to our neighbors.*

If you would like to have an LSS staff or board member present with you on this special day call LSS.

You can be proud that over the past 100 years your social ministry has helped with adoptions, cared for senior citizens, provided in-patient mental healthcare for youth, done in-home coaching for young parents, resettled refugees and much more.

#### GIFTS Event...

What opportunities is God providing for your congregation to be the Gospel in your community? In what ways are we being called to engage ministry differently today? What experiments are needed to test our hunches? These are some of the questions that Dr. Dwight Zscheile will help us engage during our next GIFTS event on February 2 at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Bismarck.

This would be an excellent event for any church council. A way to wonder together about making Gospel-sized plans for your congregation.

#### A Couple of Quick Notes...

-Now is the time to fill out the annual parochial report. Check the synod website for a link. It the responsibility of the congregation pastor ensure this report is filed.

-It is also time to send your Bishop’s Report. This is a chance for us to hear how ministry is going in your place.

-If you have GIFTS members in your congregation, please help them get their annual tuition paid now. Many congregations cover this expense as a way of helping build up lay ministry within their congregation. GIFTS helps build stronger lay leaders.

**Rev. Mark Narum**

Serving as Bishop of the Western North Dakota Synod

