



## ***Gospel Seeds - June 2019***

**A Monthly Update from Western ND Synod Staff**

### **Unleashed Imagination...**

Discerning...Dreaming...Imagining... All of these are gifts of God. They are tools which can help God's people engage ministry in this time and in this place. I believe we live in a world hungry to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. I believe people are thirsting for a word of hope, a word they can cling to in the midst of lives swirling with conflict, family concerns, health issues, difficulties making sure there is food on the table and a roof overhead and a thousand and one other issues. We have that hope in Christ. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we are called to live it and share it freely.

In a day of declining worship attendance how do we share what we have with those who might not even know what they are hungry for? There are no easy answers. No quick fix solutions or slick new programs will get us to where we need to go. Instead we are invited to engage ancient practices of prayer and Bible Study. We are invited to engage conversations with people around our communities about their lives, their hopes and dreams and if they have a faith connection.

These practices can help us discern where God's Holy Spirit might be leading us. From there we engage experiments – hoping to learn more about engaging our neighbor.

### **Faithful Innovation Summit...**

Luther Seminary has embarked on a journey to help congregations live into this changing world. This summer they are hosting the first "Faithful Innovation Summit" July 24-26. Here is what they write in their promotional material: *God is at work. The Holy Spirit is calling the church into a new future. Now is the time to discover and embody innovative ways to lead the church. The Faithful Innovation Summit is designed to help you define and address the challenges you face.*

This is an excellent continuing education opportunity for rostered leaders. It would be a way for congregational leaders to begin to engage in conversations about changing how we are church in the midst of a changing world.

To learn more about the summit and register go to:

[faithlead.luthersem.edu/summit](http://faithlead.luthersem.edu/summit)

Hope to see you there!

### **Transition Planning...**

One year from now this synod will gather to elect a new Bishop. The work of your current synod staff is not over, we will not be coasting for the next 12 months because there is still important ministry to engage.

Still we are mindful that transition is coming. Our prayer is that this is a fruitful time of conversation, prayer and discernment for the synod. As part of the process church councils will be asked in July to participate in completing a survey being conducted by the ELCA Research and Evaluation team. The survey will help define future leadership needs for our synod.

In the fall you will have the opportunity to be involved in a face to face conversation called a Synod Ministry Review – again a chance for you to have input on the current state of the synod, as well as your hopes and dreams for the future. We will get a full agenda out to you early in the fall.

Much of my sabbatical time will focus on transition as well. I am planning to spend a good chunk of time pulling information about current ministries, finances, policies and procedures so the next Bishop will be able to enter into this work as smoothly as possible.

I would ask that you would be a partner in prayer – asking God to guide this process. Pray that God's Holy Spirit would be at work stirring up within rostered leaders a willingness to serve. This is God's church and we can trust God to guide this process.

In the meantime, synod staff will continue to work with congregations interested in Mission and Vision planning. We will provide advice and guidance to church councils and rostered leaders. You can expect us to be involved in conversations with potential deacons and pastors. The work will continue.

These are exciting times! It will be great fun to see what unfolds in the months ahead.

*God Bless All! See you at Assembly.*

Mark Narum

Serving as Bishop of the Western North Dakota Synod



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.