



Gospel Seeds... April 2015

**A Monthly Update from the
Western North Dakota Synod Office**

Gospel Urgency...

Does it matter whether or not someone has a relationship with Jesus? That may seem like a strange question, but I would love it if you took up that question over a cup of coffee after worship some Sunday or during a Bible Study gathering. If your answer is yes, then here is the next question, Why? Why do you believe it is important for people to have a relationship with Jesus? My sense is that both of these questions could lead to great conversation, maybe even pushing a few people to open their Bibles and ponder different New Testament stories.

Let me be clear, I believe it is indeed important that people have a life giving relationship with the Risen Christ. Through this relationship comes belonging - I have a family who will never leave me, the Christian family. I have one I can be completely honest with, a place I can confess my sins and sinfulness and find forgiveness. In this relationship I am given purpose, to love and serve my neighbor. Most importantly this relationship provides abundant life. I have lots more that I could say and would be glad to say but really I want to know what you would say, how you would answer.

Now here comes what might be the toughest question of all, what are you willing to do so that someone else might have a life giving relationship with Jesus? God uses people just like you to speak the gospel, to share a word of invitation, to be a living witness. Too often we act as if we don't place much value on the Gospel, we are too timid to share it, too self-conscious to talk about our faith, too unsure of ourselves to invite another to the life we have found in Christ. So how do we recapture a sense of urgency for the Good News of Jesus Christ? How do we become passionate about sharing the best thing which has ever happened to us? I don't have a magic answer but would love to spark a conversation around this topic. Maybe a bit of talking could lead to action, one small word of invitation at a time.

First Call Assignments...

This spring the Western North Dakota Synod reported eight congregations seeking First Call Candidates for pastoral vacancies and three openings for lay rostered leaders (like Diaconal Ministers), we were blessed with the assignment of two pastoral candidates but unfortunately no lay roster candidates. The assigned candidates have begun interviewing and so we pray for the congregations and the candidates.

At the same time I am thankful to God that Kathy Nygard has accepted a call to serve First Lutheran, Granville and Norwich Lutheran, Norwich. She will be ordained on Saturday, April 25 at St. John Lutheran, Dickinson.

I invite you to pray for congregations without called leaders, that God would be preparing them to receive a new leader.

Synod Assembly...

We are working to make this year's Synod Assembly an eye opening experience to all of the ways God has blessed us. Think about how God has gifted us with redemption through the Son and sustenance through the Holy Spirit. We have the gift of air in our lungs and a warm bed to sleep in. Each of us have been given loving relationships where we are known and loved.

We will celebrate "Living in God's Abundance" with joyful worship, excellent music, through provoking presenters and a chance to engage scripture. You can also expect:

- childcare provided by Bible Camp Staff
 - a reduced cost for "Guests" so congregations can bring more people than just voting members
 - a chance to swap ideas at the Congregational Mission Fair
- Registration materials will be available soon. We can't wait to see you!

Blessings - Bishop Mark Narum



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God's work. Our hands.