



Gospel Seeds... March 2010

A Monthly Update from the Western North Dakota Synod Office

A Wonderful Visit:

It was a joy to have Rev. Andre Golike, President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic, visit the Western North Dakota Synod. His visit reminds us that we have brothers and sisters in Christ spread all around this globe.

Here are a few facts about faith life in C.A.R. The average pastor serves 10 congregations. There are few good roads, so many walk from church to church. Each congregation has a catechist who is in charge of leading worship much of the time. At least once a month the pastor gets to each congregation to preside at communion and baptize.

The Village Education Project is the top priority of the Lutheran Church in C.A.R. This project helps provide schools and teachers in places where they do not exist.

The Western North Dakota Synod's proposed budget for 2011 contains a \$10,000 line item to support the ministry of the ELC-CAR. That budget will be voted on at the upcoming synod assembly.

Speaking of the Synod Assembly:

Your chance to hear about our ministry together in Western North Dakota is June 4th and 5th in Dickinson. We will meet at Trinity High School. The focus of our assembly will be on Mission in Christ's name and what that looks like in each of our communities. You will also have a chance to ask questions and learn about ministries in our synod and beyond.

Fill the Barnyard:

I recently visited St. Olaf, Grenora. At the back of the sanctuary Thomas Field has built a barnyard, complete with cows and chickens to help promote God's Global Barnyard. So far the congregation has collected enough money to buy 20 chicks, 1 duck and they are now working on raising funds to purchase a pig.

We are encouraging all congregations to bring their collection of coins to the synod assembly so we celebrate what we can do together in God's name.

How's Your Prayer Life?:

Prayer is our connection to God, our life line. Prayer is our chance to say "Thanks, Lord!" Prayer is our time to cry out in grief. Prayer is a time to sit in silence, waiting upon the Spirit's guidance. So how is your prayer life?

In her book, Unbinding the Gospel, Martha Grace Reese takes a look at the state of the mainline protestant church (ELCA Lutherans are part of this group). Reese uses an in-depth study of churches to come to the conclusion that congregations steeped in prayer are often healthier than those which are not. She says, "Prayer is the way to stay in love with God. Prayer is the way that individuals, small groups and congregations grow and become vivid."

So how's your prayer life? Steeping our people and congregations in conversation with God is how we remember whose we are, why we are here, and what we are called to be.

Login and save your congregation some dough!!!

To improve the health of rostered leaders of the ELCA the Board of Pensions continues to offer a discount on health premiums. What's the catch? We need to have at least 65% of our rostered leaders log onto the Mayo Clinic web site and take a health assessment.

The deadline to take the assessment is April 30th. This includes all plan members and their spouses. If we can make the 65% goal there will be a 2% reduction in health insurance premiums. The other bit of good news, ELCA plan members are showing improvements in their overall wellness.

What's the status of the ELCA:

Some are asking, how many congregations are leaving the ELCA? Here are the latest stats from the churchwide offices.

As of February 3, we have been advised that 220 congregations of the 10,396 congregations of the ELCA have taken votes to leave the ELCA. In 156 congregations, the first vote passed; in 64 congregations the first vote failed. 28 congregations have taken a second vote, all of which passed.

In Western North Dakota 5 congregations of our 191 congregations have held first votes to leave the ELCA. In 3 congregations the first vote passed, in 2 congregations it did not pass. Currently I am working with the councils of the 3 congregations in planning meetings prior to their second votes.

God Bless

Mark Narum – Serving as Bishop



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.