



Gospel Seeds... November 2009

A Monthly Update from the
Western North Dakota Synod Office

Why Congregations Exist:

Have you read through your congregational constitution lately? I was recently at an event where the leader drew us into the congregational constitution. Why? Because nestled in that little red document is a description of the ministry of the congregation... It is a list of verbs that drive our ministry in Christ's name. Verbs that are further explained, fleshed out, intended to drive us to action. The verbs say our congregations are to be about *proclamation* of the word, *administration* of the sacraments. Congregations exist to *carry out* Christ's Great Commission and *serve* those in need. There is more in the document. I invite you to take a look at your constitution. Spend some time with others discussing whether you are fulfilling your purpose.

I Own You! Love God:

300 youth and advisors from churches of our synod gathered together in mid-October in Dickinson. We came together under the theme: "I Own You! Love God", which flows out of Isaiah 43. The whole point, God owns us, God has claimed us, marked us as His through our baptism into Christ Jesus. Together we sang, worshipped, ate, studied scripture, laughed, danced, packaged food for the hungry and elected new leadership. In one and one-half hours the youth packaged 42,000 meals for the hungry in Tanzania.

God has a future in store for us! Our youth are working to follow God's call to live the Good News of Jesus Christ. After all, it is God who *Owns Us!*



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

World Hunger:

We have been blessed with a harvest of abundance, yet in this country and in the world there is hunger! What can we do? Learn about the issues, gather food for local or regional food pantries, and collect your spare change. Through the ELCA's World Hunger Program, one quarter, 25 cents, can buy a half pound of seed. Four quarters (one dollar) buys a chick to help a family start an egg business. 600 quarters (\$125) will provide a hand water pump. Do you want to learn more about how you can share God's abundance with others? Log on to elca.org and follow the links to ELCA World Hunger.

Dry Bones:

In mid-October, people from 7 congregations in our synod gathered for the congregational redevelopment process called Dry Bones. Together we have entered into a discernment process, seeking God's guidance through the Holy Spirit, to enter into ministry in our communities. Stephen Boumann, the ELCA Director of Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission talked about the kitchen table he was raised around. A table where there was always a place for him, even when he messed up. A table where he was taught about faith in Christ and unconditional love.

Boumann says our kitchen tables are connected to the table of our sanctuaries where God's meal is celebrated, where grace is tasted. Through these connects of faith our dry bones are revived.

Mission Support Letter of Intent:

Your congregation has received, or soon will receive a letter of thanks for the mission support your congregation has shared with your synod. That letter asks each congregation to fill out a letter of intent for 2010. It carries a challenge, a challenge that I have talked publicly about for the past year. Here is the challenge – that each congregation of this synod strive to give at least 10% of the offerings they receive to our ministry together. Some congregations already give well over that, what a blessing!

Your mission support allows us to engage in ministry together that no congregation can do alone. It funds campus ministry, missionaries, hunger programs, seminaries and the development and redevelopment of congregations. I pray you will step up to the challenge!