

Nov.
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I-K Lutheran

Where mission meets the road

From I-K Synod Bishop Bill Gafkjen



***Empowering, Equipping and Encouraging the
People of God to make Christ Known***



I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

-Isaiah 43:19

In these early days of my time as bishop of this great synod, I find myself turning again and again to the book of Isaiah, especially the 43rd chapter. Through this great prophet God speaks promise and hope to people who have been displaced and find themselves wondering how in the world they can sing the Lord's song in a radically new and unfamiliar place (see Psalm 137).

Do you find yourself wondering the same thing these days, in your personal or family life or in the life of your congregation?

All around this synod and with a variety of individuals and groups I am engaging in "Isaiah 43" conversations and I invite you to join in.

Read through Isaiah 43 – at home, with your Bible study group, at church council or committee meetings, at the coffee shop – and allow this stirring proclamation to connect to your life right now, wherever you sense discouraging dislocation and unfamiliarity. Spend some time reflecting and discussing questions like these:

- What are the signs of exile or dislocation in and around your life and congregation?
- Where do you see signs of God's "new thing" springing forth?
- What are your hopes and fears about God's new thing?
- How might you and/or your congregation welcome, nurture, encourage, and be transformed by God's new thing? What might you need to change in order to do this?

Point out to others the new things that you see springing forth. Find ways to empower, equip and encourage one another to welcome the new things God is doing. I

if you think of it, drop me a note describing the new things you see springing forth and the ways we all might be called to welcome and nurture it.

God is making a way in the sea, sisters and brothers, giving rivers in the desert, that we might declare God's praise.

Do you see it?

Bishop Bill Gafkjen

I-K Synod Congregations Sharing Faith Stories:

A boy with Asperger syndrome is a member of our church. A second grader, he recites the sermon and liturgy to his parents during the week. On a recent Sunday after the children's sermon, the boy lost his sense of order and had a panic attack. The congregation had sung the hymn of the day before the child was ready and the pastor had begun the sermon before he was really listening. He shouted at the pastor to start over as his mother led him out of the sanctuary. With most of the congregation in tears, the pastor softly spoke into the microphone, explaining the boy has Asperger syndrome, that he loves church, memorizes what he hears, and has a strong sense of order.

He continued, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if the rest of us loved church with that passion?" After a time the pastor started the sermon again. As he preached the sermon for the second time, an usher walked in and said, "Could we please go back to the sermon hymn?" We sang "Earth and All Stars" again through our tears. The boy came back in to the front of the church, singing and ready for the sermon.

The congregation helped a boy with special needs last Sunday and we were all changed. **How is God working in your congregation to deepen your sense of community?**

Shared by Shirley Ziemer

ELCA News - ELCA Presiding Bishop: Time to Move Forward

CHICAGO (ELCA) -- In a report to leaders of the ELCA, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson said it is time for the church to move forward and get over being "timid" about mission and ministry.

"In the name of Jesus Christ our days of timidity are over," Hanson told the ELCA Conference of Bishops, ELCA synod vice presidents and ELCA seminary presidents Oct. 2. "I just think we have to say it. And we have to say it with the confidence that's implied in that declaration."

In recent months the ELCA has been affected by losses of members, declining financial resources and disagreements over sexuality decisions of the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, Hanson said.

Hanson said he has been thinking about a Bible verse featured at the Sept. 18 installation of the Rev. Wolfgang Herz-Lane as bishop of the ELCA Delaware-Maryland Synod. That verse, 2 Timothy 1:7 (NIV), says: "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline."

"I've been pondering that a lot. Have we become a timid church?" Hanson asked the ELCA leaders. A sign of a timid church is one that describes itself by what it has lost and what it lacks, he said. Such a church is one that tries to hold onto the past and preserve what was, Hanson said.

A church that defines itself by controversies and partisan divisions "will become a weary and timid church," Hanson said. A timid church has lost confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit to work through the gospel, he said. There is plenty of evidence that the church should be confident in the power of the Holy Spirit through the gospel, he said.

2010 I-K Synod Events & Opportunities



This past May, I-K South Central conference youth prepared health kits to send to the I-K Synod Assembly in Covington. They also participated in a 24-hour famine experiment at Christ Lutheran Church, Jeffersontown,

ABC Vision & Values

December 24, 2010

Service of Lessons and Carols from Historic Trinity Church on Wall Street Presented by the National Council of Churches USA

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