

Bishop's Road Show – March 2, 2010

The Season of Lent

Dear Friends:

This edition of the Bishop's Road Show will deal primarily with a summary of the work of Synod Council and then briefly with my travels.

Synod Council met two weeks later than planned due to 14 inches of snow that came on February 5 and 6. We met on February 20 at the Synod Office. We began with devotions with a sharing of Lents of the past compared to Lent and observances today.

Patsy Elliot was added to the Synod Committee for Youth Ministry and **Pastor Jacqueline Campbell** was added to the Appalachian Concerns Committee.

When Bishop Dunkin reviewed his activities, he noted that we would be installing three new pastors in fairly rapid succession. **The Rev. Jacqueline Campbell** was installed at Church of the Covenant, Grafton, WV on Sunday, January 24, 2010. **The Rev. Seminarian Kyle Hayes** was ordained on Friday, February 12, 2010 at Good Shepherd Lutheran, Woodstock, GA and installed as pastor at St. Johannes, New Milton, WV on Sunday, February 21, 2010. This past Sunday, February 28, 2010, **The Rev. Matthew Holbert** was installed as the new pastor at Grace, Fairmont, WV. This now leaves us with three congregations who are actively seeking to call a pastor. These three include First, Parkersburg; St. Paul, Huntington and St. Thomas, Charles Town. All three Call Committees have the names and paperwork for potential pastors and are or have been interviewing.

Three congregations wrote to Synod Council requesting the use of our budgeted item known as "Congregations with Special Needs." **Resurrection**, Weirton requested assistance with Health Care and Pension Payments from Jan. 1 – April 30, 2010 when Pastor Sharon Van Dam will retire. **Calvary**, Brandywine requested \$200 per month to assist with the travel expenses of their intern. **Cross of Grace**, Hurricane requested \$300 per month as assistance with the cost of their pastor. All three of these grants were approved by Synod Council. A fourth request was agreed upon, if it is needed, for St. Thomas, Charles Town.

The Executive Committee of Synod Council adopted the package of expenses for the 2010 Synod Assembly via e-mail. Synod Council reviewed this action, and it has already been sent out in a recent Road Show. **PLEASE NOTE** that registrations are due by April 9, 2010.

Bishop was happy to announce that the **Synod Challenge Fund** was matched and a total of \$10,525 was received. Bishop thanked **First English, Wheeling** for contributing the first \$5,000 and then for challenging us to raise the remainder to assist our seminarians. Since we met our goal of \$10,000, we were able to contribute \$525 to Community Lutheran Partners, Inc.

Synod Council reviewed the positions that are open for election, and these were e-mailed last week under the form, **NOMINATIONS**. Your nominations are needed by April 9.

The report of the **Warwood Lutheran Church Scholarship Fund** was presented. In early January, \$1,003 was used from this fund, plus a 2009 gift from St. Mark, Clarksburg and a gift from Thrivent of \$1,297 were combined to present two of our senior most seminarians with an extra gift. Synod Council voted to move \$1,000 from the Money Market Fund so we could purchase additional shares of the Balanced Fund. We now hold 3,034 shares in this fund.

The Rostered Leaders' Debt Reduction Fund brought in \$4,000 and was then combined with \$3,600 from the synod budget for a total of \$7,600 to be shared. Several of our pastors chose not to participate this year knowing that giving was down. Eight pastors completed applications for this fund and on average \$900 was paid to their lending institution in mid-January. In mid-April our fourth pastor will become debt free because of your assistance.

Within this meeting of Synod Council, a resolution was read from a congregation that had petitioned Council to be transferred to another synod. Synod Council invited the Executive Committee to meet with members of this congregation and with the neighboring synod. Also, a group of concerned members attended this meeting to advocate on behalf of a pastor of this synod. Synod Council announced they would consider a decision to this group during the April 2010 meeting.

Treasurer Matthew Riegel presented **a revised 2010 budget**. This budget is about a \$150,000 reduction from the revised 2009 budget which was reduced by the 2009 Assembly and later again by Synod Council. When Bishop Dunkin has conducted forum's concerning the 2009 Churchwide Assembly action, he often mentions the budget reductions. The pastors of this synod and members of congregations have asked to see a list of Synodical items that have been cut from the budget. The adopted 2010 budget was basically scrapped as pledges from congregations would not fund what was approved. **The list of reductions appear below:**

- 1. ELCA - \$80,000**
- 2. Synod - \$68,860 (we will use \$11,000 in savings for a total decrease of \$57,860)**
 - a. Gettysburg Seminary – decrease of \$2,037**
 - b. Thiel College – decrease of \$1,500**
 - c. Glade Run Lutheran Services - \$500**
 - d. West Virginia Council of Churches -\$360**
 - e. Synod Committees and their travel budgets - \$2,000**
 - f. Aid for Seminarians (held at \$10,000, but we might need \$15,000)**
 - g. Rostered Leaders Debt Reduction (budgeted at 1% of budget) - \$1,100**

h. Congregations with Special Needs - \$1,000

i. Camp Luther - \$2,000

j. ELCMA - \$300

k. Bishop (Salary and benefits reduced) - \$1,825

l. Office Administrator (Salary and benefits reduced) - \$969

m. Workers Comp - \$100

n. Professional Services - \$650

o. Service Contracts - \$1,500

3. The above items can be restored to the budget if we received additional gifts of \$100,841.

Synod Council will meet on Friday and Saturday, April 9 and 10 in Charleston, WV at John the 23rd as a guest of Community Lutheran Partners, Inc.

My travels for the rest of this week will find me working at home on Wednesday, March 3. For March 4 – 9, 2010, I will be attending the annual Spring Conference of Bishops meeting in Chicago. For those who need to reach me, please call the synod office or my cell phone. I will do my best to respond to your need.

On Monday, February 22, **Rev. Donald McCoid** had surgery for prostate cancer. It is our understanding that the surgery went well. Sometime today, Don will meet with his surgeon to learn if any follow-up work will be necessary. I continue to urge your prayers for Don and Sandy McCoid. **Dorcus Friedline's** knee surgery went well and last word we had was she was recuperating in New Martinsville receiving rehab therapy. This past Sunday into this morning, **Mary Lynn Bennett**, spouse to Pastor Brian Bennett, was also in the hospital. Mary Lynn was released this morning and is at home resting.

Four weeks from today, Tuesday, March 30 we are planning our annual **Chrism Mass** to be held at St. Paul's, Morgantown, WV at 11:00 a.m. We urge our clergy to mark this event on their calendar to come and worship together by renewing their ordination vows and for the blessing of the synod oils. Lunch will be provided by the synod.

God's blessings upon you all as we journey to the Cross,

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