

Bishop's Road Show - August 11, 2010

The Season of Pentecost

Dear Friends:

After nearly a week of struggles with E-mail due to the massive windstorm that came through some of this synod last Thursday, we seem to be back on-line. Being without electric for two days moved me to go to McDonalds to make use of their free Wi-Fi so I could stay in touch. Yesterday at the Synod Office, we realized that with the changeover to Frontier from Verizon, work needed to be done on my computer so I could be on-line at the office. That work was completed today.

Since I last wrote to you, we have had three congregations take congregational votes related to **leaving the ELCA**. Please keep in mind, that when a congregation takes a vote to leave the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, they are also taking a vote to leave the West Virginia - Western Maryland Synod. This question has come up concerning who will fill their pulpit. A vote to leave the ELCA means that you are cutting yourself off from this synod, our pastors and our Bishop's Lay Worship Leaders. I have said to congregations considering a move of this nature, to contact the church body that you wish to join to see if they have a mobility process or a call process in order that congregations do not strand themselves by a vote that is not well thought out.

To date we have had four congregations take votes. **Holy Trinity Memorial, Sharpsburg, MD** took their first vote in November of 2009. This vote failed as the majority of the congregation voted to stay in the ELCA. In March and again in July, **St. Timothy, Charleston** took their two votes to leave the ELCA. Both votes were successful and St. Timothy plans to join the North American Lutheran Church (former CORE) on August 27. **Zion, Letart** voted on July 25 to leave the ELCA with a vote of 9 favoring and 5 against. Zion will take a second vote on November 14, after a consultation that same morning. For Zion, Letart this vote means that if the second vote is successful, they too will be leaving not only the ELCA, this synod, but also the Mason-Jackson Lutheran Shared Ministry. **Zion, Baker** was our latest congregation to hold a congregational meeting for a vote. This vote failed 32 in favor and 22 against. At Zion, Baker's request, Pastor David Twedt is working with a new task force at Zion attempting to assist them in coming to some consensus.

Eleven days from now, **Pastor Lee Brumback and St. Thomas Lutheran Church, Charles Town, WV**, will celebrate the beginning of their new ministry together with the Service of Installation taking place at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 22. The color of the day is Green, and all clergy of the Potomac Conference are invited to join us in the procession. We encourage members of our sister congregations of the Potomac Conference to join us in this celebration. There will be a fellowship time to follow worship. Knowing St. Thomas as I do, there will be plenty of good things to eat.

From the 2010 Synod Assembly, a resolution was adopted to offer opportunities for conferences (meaning pastors and laity alike) to have the opportunity to review the proposed **Social Statement on Genetics**. The Synod Committee for Church in Society has been working to secure sites and leaders for these events. To date we have the following commitments for events:

August 24, is the date for the Genetics Statement Social Hearing in **Petersburg, WV** at **Grace Lutheran Church** at **6:30 p.m.**

September 12, is the date for the hearing in **Wheeling, WV** at **Edgwood Lutheran Church** at **6:00 p.m.**

September 25, is the date for the hearing in **Clarksburg, WV** at **St. Mark's Lutheran Church** at **7:00 p.m.**

A fourth hearing could be held in Charleston, WV as early as August 27.

When it comes to my travels, I have completed last weekend by meeting with the Synodical Women of the ELCA and their fine retreat that was held in Wheeling at Paul VI. On Sunday, I covered for Pastor David Westphal who is enjoying a Sabbatical. This week I will return to the Synod Office tomorrow. On Friday, I am making a trip to Snowshoe to see where we will be for the 2011 Synod Assembly. Following this trip, I will be on vacation through Thursday, August 19. I will return to the Synod Office on the 20th. On Sunday the 22, I will be at St. Paul, Aurora and St. John's, Red House, MD. From there I will drive to Chares Town for the Service of Installation for Pastor Lee Brumback.

I invite you to keep all of these plans and events in your prayers.

Yours in our Lord's service,

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