

September 19, 2009

Dear Friends:

Grace and peace be unto you during this spirit-filled season.

This Road Show announces a "Challenge Fund," my travels, when I will be in the office, synod news and a request concerning my op ed piece.

Today the Synod Vice President, Treasurer and I meet with the Synod Committee for Stewardship. The Church Council of First English Lutheran Church has put together a **Challenge Fund** for this Synod. In June I wrote to a few Church Council's noting that our synod budget was going to be more than tight in 2009. In several of our congregations giving is down primarily due to the economy. I also expressed that we probably would not have any money for our seminarians.

The Council at First English, Wheeling, would like to challenge you to contribute to our seminarians. For every two dollars that you donate, First English will contribute one dollar. This means that if we raise \$10,000, it will be matched by First English's gift of \$5,000. Please submit gifts to the Synod Office with **Challenge Fund** in the subject line. We will count all gifts between now and December 15 towards this goal of giving to each of our seminarians (\$1,000 to our full time students, and \$500 for those on internship). If we raise the full \$15,000 any excess will be shared with Community Lutheran Partners, Inc.

Tomorrow my travels will take Terry and I to **Cross of Grace, Hurricane, WV**. There I will assist Pastor Jerry Kliner with worship, preach and share an open forum / discussion concerning the recent Churchwide Assembly decisions. Later that afternoon we will head north to Ravenswood, WV to meet with the **Mason-Jackson Shared Lutheran Ministry Council** to discuss a call process. Pastor Sherrie Hofmann will complete her ministry in this parish on October 15, 2009. The Hofmann's will be moving to new call in Rockwood, PA.

When we return home tomorrow evening, I will officially begin a **week of vacation**. My vacation will cover the dates of September 21-27. I will return to the office on Monday, September 28. On the 29th I will be flying to Chicago for the Fall Assignment Process and then the Conference of Bishops' gathering which covers the dates of Oct. 1-6.

In October my calendar will be dominated by Special Anniversaries. On **October 11 Christ Lutheran, Wheeling** will celebrate her 100th Anniversary; **October 18 Trinity, Charleston** will celebrate her 85th Anniversary; and on **October 25 St. Luke, Beckley** will celebrate her 50th Anniversary.

Last week, Maureen Corrigan our Office Administrator E-mailed an Op Ed piece that I wrote at the request of two congregations that desired to see **something positive about Lutherans** in their local newspaper. Maureen E-mailed this piece to 20 newspapers across the territory of this synod. We E-mailed it to the pastors of this synod as well. If you see my article on the Editorial page of your local newspaper, please E-mail me or Maureen and report this sighting. For all of you in Garrett County I can report that my article was in the September 17 edition of "The Republican." If another week goes by and you do not see my editorial, please contact our synod office and we can send it again.

I invite you prayers for all who are struggling because of the Churchwide Assembly decisions related to sexuality. I invite your prayers for Pastors Christine Olson, Karen Erskine-Valentine and Fred Soltow as they lead two round table discussions on this topic on September 23 and 27 in the Eastern Panhandle. Should you wish to attend one of these events or both and do not know where they are being held, please phone one of these pastors.

Finally, I invite your prayers for **Ellen Nairn**, spouse of Pastor Randy Nairn. Ellen will have total hip replacement surgery on Wednesday, September 23.

Yours in our Lord's service,

+ Ralph