

The Season of Epiphany

January 26, 2012

Dear Friends in Christ:

Some of you are quite aware of what a Blog happens to be. Some of you will no longer be able to say that you have never read a blog. Below you will find in print a blog.

A good friend of this synod, Mr. Robert Sitze, writes a blog for THE LUTHERAN. The address of his blog is, www.thelutheran.org/blog/simpleenough. The blog in question is dated January 3, 2012. Please read on:

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Simple enough: Career shifting

An encouraging thought occurred to me awhile back, at a leadership event in a synod that includes significant portions of Appalachia. There may be a connection for you here, especially if your career isn't all that manageable.

These men and women are pastors of mostly smaller congregations. A fair number of them serve multiple parishes scattered among the hamlets, hills and hollers. A significant portion of these folks pursued other vocations earlier in their lives. They were successful as teachers, gerontological nurses, lawyers, dentists, epidemiologists, emergency medical technicians, civil engineers, scholars and entrepreneurs. What characterized the group was maturity, wisdom, honesty and humility.

And satisfaction too. They seemed content with their lot in life, one largely chosen at the time of their career change. The small parishes they serve sounded like manageable enterprises, the scope of congregational programming something they could handle, the depth and influence of their relationships deeply satisfying, and their priorities focused.

How about you? What if, in places like these, being a pastor — in its richest and truest forms — is a simpler vocation than the one you're trying to hold together right now? Imagine what it might feel like for you to go through a period of discernment about your present career track, take up rigorous theological education and move forward into the relative simplicity of serving God's people in the calling of word and sacrament ministry.

Yes, I know. Being a pastor is tough work wherever it takes place. But in watching these rural pastors, I came to see that there could be deep fulfillment for you in this calling, especially in the places and times when it could be responsive to your hopes for a life well-lived.

Or perhaps you're already satisfied with your vocation? Then I'm sorry I pushed this button.

You need to know two things. First, the synod Bob describes and her pastors is this very synod. I know because Bob told me so. He was with us last fall to serve as our presenter for our Continuing Education event. Second, he "claims" he would have said more good things about us except that a blog is only 300 words. I have provided this article as I thought you deserved to read good news about our pastors. My sincere thanks to Bob Sitze and his words of hope to us.

Within this Road Show I have been asked to share with you Pastor Randy Richardson's E-mail address. For those of you who normally write to him his computer was destroyed by a virus. He is now attempting to rebuild his contact list. Please write to him at revdolfesq@gmail.com.

Pr. Randy Nairn and his family have moved to Grantsville, MD. Their new address is 127 Main Street, Grantsville, MD 21536. Their home phone number is 301-895-5351. His E-mail address is the same as it has been.

Finally, a note of joy and sorrow. Pastor Ron Schlak has received and accepted the call to serve as the Assistant to the Bishop of the Delaware-Maryland Synod effective March 1, 2012. Pr. Schlak has served Trinity for the last 17 years. He has been very active in the life of this synod. The faithful at Trinity and those on Synod Committees will surely miss him. I will surely miss him and Vickie. At times Ron has functioned as if he were an assistant to me. Just last weekend he assisted one of our congregations as they are attempting to heal from a difficult ministry. We wish Ron and Vickie Godspeed. His last Sunday at Trinity will be that of February 19.

Yours in our Lord's service,

+ Ralph