



2005: A Synod Joined in Prayer

Practice Your Prayer Life

By Marilyn Carpenter

Congregational Renewal Team, Synod Council

Practice, practice, practice. Some may remember hearing those words as a child. You may have been in athletics, music, or theater. The list could go on. The truth remains that if you want to develop a skill, you have to use it.

Communication is a skill that many of us use each day. That is what prayer is: communication with God. We know that the earlier you start developing your skills, the more ability you may have as you grow.

One way that we try to encourage the development of prayer life at Our Savior's in Spring Valley is by offering Lent/Easter packets. In these packets we have included a Lenten devotional for children and adults that they can do each week up to Holy Week, and then devotionals for each day of Holy Week. These packets also include coloring pages in chronological order of Holy Week up to the Ascension.

We have found the devotionals on the Internet, by going to www.google.com and typing in Lent and Easter.

Here is a list of possible sites. Be sure to obtain permission to use any material that has a copyright.

www.cptron.org/prayer/season (this is the one we have used)

www.gbod.org/easter

As with all information out there, be sure to read and check the doctrine.

God's blessings on your Lent and Easter journeys. And keep practicing!

Please include these congregations in the prayers of the Church, and in your personal prayers:

Mar. 6: 4 Lent - First, Lake City; Le Sueur River, New Richland; First of Highland, Whalan; Grace, Austin

Mar. 13: 5 Lent - East Chain, Blue Earth; First, Red Wing; Medo, Mapleton; Fountain, Fountain

Mar. 20: Passion/Palm Sunday - Grand Meadow, Grand Meadow; East Freeborn, Albert Lea; Gol, Kenyon; Messiah, North Mankato

Mar. 27: 1 Easter - *Alleluia! He is risen!*

The complete synod prayer calendar is available on the web at www.semnsynod.org/prayercalendar.html

Natural Church Development Participants Trained

Synod Strategic Plan Highlights, Mar. 2005

- **Vision:** To Be Joyful Witnesses

Objective: Natural Church Development

Six congregations and one additional coach were trained by ELCA personnel on Natural Church Development in January. Each congregation will simultaneously be coached by a congregation and coach another congregation during 2005.

The Natural Church Development process offers an evaluative tool to measure eight quality characteristics relating to the overall health of the congregation. After the evaluation is done, the congregation then forms a "Health Team" composed of active leaders in the congregation. This Health Team then identifies ways the congregation can improve the lowest rated of those qualities for a year.

At the end of the year they again do the evaluative tool to

determine progress, and again address one quality

over the course of the next year. Each year only one quality will be focused upon.

The Natural Church Development process is not designed as a quick fix, but addresses the long-term health of the congregation through direct work by a dedicated group of people in a congregation, and a coach from another congregation provides guidance and help along the way.

For more information about the Natural Church Development process, contact Larry Iverson at the synod office – iverson@semnsynod.org, or 507-280-9457, ext. 106; or 800-426-6376, ext. 106.

For more information on the synod's strategic plan, visit www.semnsynod.org and click the "Strategic Plan" link on the left.

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Called into God's Marvelous Light

To Be Joyful Witnesses

To Be Christ-Centered Disciples

To Be Strong Leaders