



2005: A Synod Joined in Prayer

Praying on Vacation

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Sometimes prayer gets lost along the way in the summer. As vacations take up time in our schedules and weekends are spent at the lake, it seems that attending worship can take a backseat to that which beckons us to take a rest. Taking Sabbath time, time for rest and renewal, is important in our hectic and busy lives. However, we never take a rest from God and God never takes a rest from us. One way to remember this as you find leisure time is to spend time in prayer along the way.

As a trip begins, pray for safety and eyes with which to see the beauty of God's creation along the way. Pray for adventure or much needed rest. Pray that God be with you and renew your spirit.

During your time away, relax with times of prayer. Vacations give us time to be present with God in ways that might be impossible during a work day. Use your time of rest to not only speak, but to listen to God as well.

At the end of a vacation, thank God for all that you have received in your time away. Ask for a renewed spirit as you return to your daily routine.

Vacations can be a time to find rest and new energy. They can also give us time to be in prayer with the one who truly gives us new life.

We are a synod joined in prayer. Please remember these congregations in the prayers of the Church, and in your personal prayers. (The complete synod prayer calendar is available on the web at

www.semnsynod.org/prayercalendar.html)

July 3 (7 Pentecost): Looney Valley, Houston; Red Oak Grove, Austin; Mansfield, Alden; St. Ansgar, Cannon Falls

July 10 (8 Pentecost): St. Paul, Waterville; Mabel First, Mabel; Six Mile Grove, Lyle; Moscow, Oakland

July 17 (9 Pentecost): St. John, Northfield; St. Peter, New Richland; North Prairie, Lanesboro; South Zumbro, Kasson

July 24 (10 Pentecost): North Blue Earth, Bricelyn; St. Luke, Goodhue; St. Peter, Otisco; Our Savior, Spring Valley

July 31 (11 Pentecost): St. John, Elkton; Oakland, Oakland; St. Paul, Red Wing; Trinity, Blooming Prairie

Musicians and Worship Leaders Begin Meeting

Synod Strategic Plan Highlights, July 2005

• **Vision:** Called into God's Marvelous Light: To Be Christ-Centered Disciples

Objective: Organization of congregational worship leaders group; emphasis on worship

A group of church musicians/worship leaders from around our synod have held two organizational meetings this spring. The intent is to form a team that will not only offer support and encouragement for musicians and worship leaders around the synod, but also to serve as a worship resource for congregations in the synod. Those attending represent a variety of congregations and worship experiences, but all share a passion for the importance of worship.

The second part of the strategic plan, "To Be Christ-Centered Disciples," includes a focus on the spiritual discipline of worship. This synod unfortunately mirrors worship attendance throughout the ELCA and many denominations in our country. Less than 1/3 of our members are worshiping in their congregations on Sunday morning.

How do we lift up worship in our midst? What support can be offered to congregations which might lack the resources and musicians that other congregations possess? In a day when Christians worship in a variety of styles, what does our Lutheran heritage offer?

An initial effort is being made to identify a group of hymns that might be emphasized throughout the synod during the coming year. Conversation has also focused on how support and resources might be offered to pastors and musicians in smaller congregations.

• **Vision:** Called into God's Marvelous Light: To Be Joyful Witnesses

Objective: Natural Church Development

All Natural Church Development congregations (Central in Winona, Central Freeborn in Albert Lea, Cross of Christ in Houston, Evanger in Sargeant, Peace in Eyota, Redeemer in Alden, Salem in Albert Lea, and Trinity in Spring Grove) have received the results of their congregational surveys, and are having listening times with congregation members to identify the root causes of the survey results. The next steps include prayer and setting action plans for improvement and renewal.

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