

## We Are All So Blessed



Shirley Gangstad  
Synod Vice President

Greetings!

This has been a wonderful fall. We have had wonderful warm, clear weather; a bountiful harvest being completed before bad weather sets in; beautiful fall colors that have lasted an unusually long time. When we consider the difficulties of so many people in other parts of our country and in other areas of the world – hurricanes, floods, mud slides, wars – we are all so blessed.

We have celebrated Reformation Sunday and given thanks for Martin Luther and other reformers who followed their visions with courage and faith. We give thanks for the Holy Spirit who guided and supported them and who still guides and supports us today. We are all so blessed.

We have celebrated All Saints' Day and remember those saints who have gone before us – some recently departed, some long ago. We marvel at the world they created

for us; the congregations they built for us; the legacies of faith they gave us. We are all so blessed.

We celebrate our time of bounty and Thanksgiving with hymns of Bach and Luther, Herb Brokering and Marty Haugen. The music moves and uplifts us and gives full praise to God. We are all so blessed.

As we anticipate gathering with our families and/or friends for meals during this holiday season, let us make a special point of sharing the bounty of our blessings by doing something particular to help others less fortunate – perhaps a donation to Lutheran Disaster Response, World Hunger, or Habitat for Humanity; giving blood to the Red Cross; or providing dollars or food to our local food shelf. Such a gift would bring a double blessing – one to the receiver and one to the giver!

Blessings and thanksgiving in Christ,

*Shirley*

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## A Night in a Cardboard Box Opens One's Eyes

By Larry Iverson  
Synod Minister

On Friday, October 21, I had the unique experience of sleeping in a cardboard box overnight at Soldier's Field Park in Rochester. Local organizations sponsored a "Cardboard Box City" where they encouraged groups or individuals to pay for their cardboard boxes to sleep out overnight as a fund-raiser and homelessness awareness experience.

The hard ground was uncomfortable.

Although I was toasty in my sleeping bag, the temperature had dropped so much by morning that I could see my breath. I managed a few hours of sleep, and part of the time I just lay on my back and looked up at the beautiful stars. The good part was that I could get up in the morning, go home, take a shower and crawl into a nice, comfortable bed for a few hours.

I take more out of this experience than a lack of sleep and a sore back. Too often, we take for granted that we have safe, comfortable places to sleep at night – while many in this country go without.

It is the season we hear the story of a baby born away from home, not in a cardboard box, but in a manger. In Matthew's birth account they were warned to flee to Egypt, so in fact our Lord was "homeless" or at least a "refugee" for a few years of his life.

Jesus always called for concern for the poor and needy. This Christmas consider the condition of those who are homeless, poor, or in need. While you count your blessings, share those blessings with others as well, and remember to advocate on their behalf.

In Christ's love,

*Larry Iverson*

