

2006: A Synod Joined in Bible Study

Happy New Year!

By Pastor Cindy Fisher-Broin
Congregational Renewal Team

The coming of Advent invites us into a new church year. As the year progresses, we find ourselves celebrating and experiencing events which span Jesus' life, his death, his resurrection and his continued life among us. As we begin this new year, our focus is a time of waiting for the Savior to come as a baby born among us.

This new beginning is a wonderful time to begin or to continue a study of Jesus' life among us. Some ways to do this might be to choose one of the gospels to study during the coming year, or begin with a study of the birth of Christ from the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Look for similarities and differences in the stories and look for how each tells of God's love. As the year progresses, study different events in Jesus' life from the different accounts of the gospels.

Individually or as a group, whether it is done formally or informally, Bible study opens us to hear God's Word of love, given to us in God's Son, and we are changed. What a great way to begin the new year!

The Congregational Renewal Team, in an effort to keep Bible study before the people, has decided to add one verse from the weekly Psalm in the lectionary to the 2005-2006 Prayer Calendar. This calendar is available online at www.semnsynod.org (click "2005: A Synod Joined in Prayer" on the left).

Dec. 4 (2 Advent): Bear Creek in Grand Meadow; Bear Lake Concordia in Albert Lea; Cannon River in Welch; Bethlehem in Mankato

Righteousness and peace shall go before the LORD.
Psalm 85:13

Dec. 11 (3 Advent): Bethlehem in Lanesboro; Bethel in Rochester; Bethany in Frost; Christ in Faribault
The LORD has done great things for us. Psalm 126:4

Dec. 18 (4 Advent): Calvary in Rapidan; Cedar Valley in Houston; Christ in Byron; Bethel in Scarville, Iowa
Your love, O LORD, forever will I sing. Psalm 89:1

Dec. 25 (Christmas Day): Joy to the world!
Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad. Psalm 96:11

Lay School of Theology To Offer Bible Study Opportunities

Synod Strategic Plan Highlights, Dec. 2005

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

Objective: 2006: A Synod Joined in Bible Study

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod Lay School of Theology, whose mission is "to equip the baptized children of God for ministry in their congregations and in their daily lives," announced they will be offering up to ten different sessions around the synod in 2006, including four that were already planned for the year.



As part of the 2006 focus, "A Synod Joined in Bible

Study," these day-long sessions will give participants a chance to engage in an in-depth Bible study, and offer participants the tools to present those Bible studies in their home congregations if they wish to do so.

"Since part of the strategic plan involves encouraging Bible study, we're using an existing program and adding up to six additional sessions in 2006, in a variety of locations around the synod, to give as many people as possible a chance to participate," said Larry Iverson, synod minister.

"These sessions will be excellent opportunities for people to engage in Bible study across our synod, in addition to what congregations are already offering," said Iverson.

Specific details on the sessions are forthcoming – watch *River Crossings* for registration information!



Called into God's Marvelous Light

To Be Joyful Witnesses

To Be Christ-Centered Disciples

To Be Strong Leaders