

## Advent Challenge

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

**Objective:** An emphasis on sharing the faith

As this year's synod strategic plan poster (included in the November *River Crossings*) and this month's column from the Congregation Renewal Team state, this year our synod is joined in sharing our faith stories.



A portion of this is a challenge from the Congregation Renewal Team to the clergy of the synod. That challenge is that each pastor preaching on the first Sunday in Advent would share a little of his or her own faith story.

In order to introduce this challenge, Bishop Usgaard demonstrated for those gathered for worship on Tuesday, November 7 at the synod Theological Conference. During his sermon, he shared several stories about where he saw Christ. He told us how he learned grace from his father, how he saw the neighborhood "queen" recognize Jesus while on her deathbed, and how he learned the meaning of serving others from an 82-year-old nun in Colombia.

If you are a pastor preaching on the first Sunday in Advent, you are challenged to use your faith story in worship that morning. If you are a pastor not preaching, encourage your colleagues to do so. If you are a member of a congregation, encourage your pastor to do so. If you come across this challenge after the first Sunday in Advent you have not failed, simply pick up the challenge late - start now!



*Called into God's Marvelous Light*

*To Be Joyful Witnesses*

*To Be Christ-Centered Disciples*

*To Be Strong Leaders*

## 2007: A Synod Sharing *Our Faith Stories*

## The Beginning of a New Year - How Will We Share Our Faith Stories?

By Beth Krehbiel

Congregational Renewal Team

The Congregation Renewal Team has given careful consideration of the 2007 goal: Called into God's Marvelous Light - A Synod Sharing Our Faith Stories. We hope to support you in your ministry with suggestions for how to implement this goal in your ministry and your congregation. Throughout 2007 our *River Crossing* articles will focus on ways to encourage faith sharing stories in your congregation. We hope that the context our of articles will give you "easy to implement ideas or suggestions." Probably one of the first barriers to overcome is helping every member realize that they have a valuable faith story to share and how in sharing their "story", they are witnessing and encouraging others in their faith journey.

These faith stories can be as simple as one or two sentences at the beginning of a meeting answering the question, "where have you found God today?" to a more organized sharing of faith stories as a sermon in a service. Our team would also welcome any ideas that you have found work well in your ministry - so we can get them out to the rest of the synod. On behalf of our team we look forward to supporting you and your congregation sharing your faith stories throughout the year.

## Share Your News

Do you have something to share? Congregations can submit the following for publication on the synod website:

- **Events** - anything happening that you'd like to invite others to attend
- **Job openings** - any non-pastoral position can be posted free of charge
- **News** - share information about exciting things that have happened or will be happening in your congregation.

Send information to Katie Butler at [butler@semnsynod.org](mailto:butler@semnsynod.org) or call her at the synod office at 507-280-9457 or 800-426-6376 (MN only).