

Stewardship Joys and Goals

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

Objective: Increasing generosity in stewardship

Have you noticed the gray box usually found on page two of the last few issues of River Crossings? This financial update was one of the things the synod has done in the last year to increase awareness of the financial status of the synod. Other projects include a charitable gifting initiative supported by the synod, Good Earth Village, and Thrivent and a series of *The Bridge* that focused on informing people about how the synod uses its financial resources.

Thanks to the generosity of the congregations in Southeastern Minnesota, the synod exceeded projected income for 2006 and was able to share that surplus with some of the ministry partners whose budgets had been cut and with other mission projects as determined by the synod council.

So where do we go from here? Please continue to pray about your own personal financial stewardship and pray as a congregation about the congregation's support of the synod and other ministries. God asks us for our first fruits because our first fruits reflect where our concerns really lie. There are more ministry opportunities the synod could begin or strengthen, but only with the help of the people and congregations that make up the synod.

Another aspect of increased stewardship is time and talents. There are many opportunities to participate in synod activities, committees, conferences, and other events. Continue to watch River Crossings and the weekly E-News for ways you can get involved. By investing your own time, you benefit by learning more about the mission of the church in the world and you support that mission.

* To get copies of *The Bridge* series on how the synod spends its financial resources, go to www.semnsynod.org and click on the link to *The Bridge* on the left menu. Those issues are April through August, 2006.

You can also get the issues by contacting Katie Butler at the synod office at 507-280-9457, 800-426-6376 (MN only) or butler@semnsynod.org

2007: A Synod Sharing Our Faith Stories

Sharing Our Faith Stories ...a Forgotten Art?

By Rev. Jim Ahlquist
Congregational Renewal Team

As grandpa lies dying in the nursing home, the family expresses their frustration, "Why didn't we write down his stories? No one could tell them quite like Grandpa, and now it's too late." During this Lenten season of sharing



faith stories, we encourage you to write them down, pass them on through scrapbooks, cards, and letters. Tell the stories on video and computer technology, so those that come after us can share the faith.

When is the last time you wrote an "old fashioned" letter? In your own handwriting, without help from Microsoft? Those love letters we found stored in the footlocker downstairs will no longer be. Our e-mail stories will be wiped away with the touch of a key. How will we remember those inspirational stories and pass them on to our children? The stories of how God was there in our lives every step of the way.

Not only do we encourage you to "tell" your faith stories, but write them down, put them in the church newsletter, record them, and avoid the frustration of missing out on the faith journeys of those who have gone before us. After all, hasn't the greatest faith story of all, the story of Jesus, been around for over 2,000 years?!



Called into God's Marvelous Light

To Be Joyful Witnesses

To Be Christ-Centered Disciples

To Be Strong Leaders