

## Bemidji Circuit Convocation

Multi-point partnerships  
Saturday, October 29, 2023

### Why the Church?

**Acts 2:42-47-<sup>42</sup>** And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> **And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.**

**Luke 24:44-47-<sup>44</sup>** Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." <sup>45</sup> **Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, <sup>46</sup> and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, <sup>47</sup> and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.**

**Augsburg Confession VII-**"Our churches teach that one holy Church is to remain forever. **The Church is the congregation of saints (Psalm 149:1) in which the Gospel is purely taught and the Sacraments are correctly administered.** For the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree about the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies instituted by men, should be the same everywhere. As Paul says, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all (Ephesians 4:5-6)." *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions. A reader's edition of the Book of Concord. P.34*

## **Hard Facts**

- a. 571 congregations in the LCMS are actively calling (5,800 churches in the LCMS).
- b. 570 churches served part-time (retired or bi-vocational).
- c. 61 Master of Divinity Graduates from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis & Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne in 2023. 130 congregations requested candidates.
- d. An average of 130 pastors retire every year in the LCMS (since 2000).
- e. 121 congregations (61%) in the MN North District are dual, tri, or part-time served parishes and growing!
- f. MN North District has 36 vacant congregations:

- |                              |                                 |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Alexandria, Zion          | 21. Evergreen, St. John         |
| 2. Bagley, Redeemer          | 22. Kimball, St. John           |
| 3. Bemidji, Trinity          | 23. Little Falls, Zion          |
| 4. Blackduck, Holy Trinity   | 24. Loon Lake, St. Paul         |
| 5. Bovey, Mt. Olive          | 25. Marble, Grace               |
| 6. Clarissa, St. Matthew     | 26. McGrath, Grace              |
| 10. Braham, St. Stephens     | 27. Menasha, Redeemer           |
| 11. Carlos, Trinity          | 28. Wolf Lake, Christ           |
| 12. Cass Lake, Immanuel      | 29. Ramey, Bethany              |
| 13. Clarissa, St. Matthew    | 30. Rice, Shepherd of the Pines |
| 14. Dixville, St. John       | 31. Royalton, St. Paul          |
| 15. Dorset, First English    | 32. Rush City, St. John         |
| 16. Eagle Bend               | 33. St. Cloud, Love of Christ   |
| 17. Elk River, Lord of Glory | 34. Swanville, St. Peter        |
| 18. Elizabeth, St. John      | 35. Vergas, St. John            |
| 19. Fergus Falls, Faith      | 36. Wolf Lake, Christ           |
| 20. Foley, St. Paul          |                                 |

## **Financial Realities**

**Cost of a full-time pastor with a family is 85,000+ (Salary, Healthcare, Retirement, Mileage, & Continuing Education)**

**I Timothy 3:4-5.** *He must manage his own household well, with all dignity* keeping his children submissive, <sup>5</sup> for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?

**"Pastors market."** If a pastor is called to a church with less pay, less insurance, more work, minimal moving cost assistance, and in an area far from family, it is difficult to evaluate the call as other churches could potentially call.

### **Qualifications for our pastors**

**I Timothy 3:1-7-**The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. <sup>2</sup> Therefore an overseer<sup>[a]</sup> must be above reproach, the husband of one wife,<sup>1</sup> sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, <sup>3</sup> not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. <sup>4</sup> He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, <sup>5</sup> for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? <sup>6</sup> He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. <sup>7</sup> Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

**I Corinthians 4:1-**This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. <sup>2</sup> Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

**2 Timothy 4:2-5** I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: <sup>2</sup> **preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.** <sup>3</sup> For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, <sup>4</sup> and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. <sup>5</sup> As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.



**Augsburg Confession XIV**-“Our churches teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church, or administer the Sacraments, without a rightly ordered call.”

### **The Role of the District**

“The Synod, under Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, shall---  
**Conserve and promote the unity of the true faith (Ephesians 4:3-6; I Corinthians 1:10)**, work through it’s official structure toward fellowship with other Christian church bodies, and provide a united defense against schism, sectarianism (Romans 16:17), and heresy;” (*Constitution of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, p.11*).

**Augsburg Confession IV**-“Our churches teach that people can not be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works. **People are freely justified for Christ’s sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake. By His death, Christ made satisfaction for our sins. God counts this faith for righteousness in His sight** (Romans 3:21-26 & 4:5)(*Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions. A Reader’s Edition of the Book of Concord, p.32*)

“In its relation to its members the Synod is not an ecclesiastical government exercising legislative or coercive powers, and **with respect to the individual congregation’s right of self-government it is but an advisory body.**” (*Constitution of the LCMS, p.14, Article VII.1.*)

### **Possible solutions**

#### **1) Parish Partnership. Where can our congregations work together?**

1. Sharing resources (treasurers, secretaries, buildings, property boards)
2. Uniting for Advent/Lenten services or high festivals.

2) **Pastoral Assistance.** As our pastors can easily get bogged down by administrative tasks, how can the priesthood of all believers help the mission.

1. Visiting shut-ins, in-actives, and others In need outside of communion.
2. Assuring that tasks outside of Word, Sacrament, and Prayer are done by the body of Christ (bulletins, care of the church building, wedding rehearsals, music preparations, and planning events).
3. Connecting with the community through mercy (Acts 6:1-7)

3) **Creation of official dual, tri, or part-time partnerships.**

- a. Smaller churches unite.
- b. Bigger churches help the smaller
- c. Find a pastor to serve part-time.

All partnerships begin at the congregational level. We are here to walk with you through the process . We have numerous examples of partnership agreements with congregations.

### **We listen to Christ**

**Matthew 9:35-38**-And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. <sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; <sup>38</sup> therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."