

Report of the Director for Evangelical Mission

“But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance.” Luke 8:15

Every weekend, across the 22 counties of the Northern Illinois Synod, thousands of people gather for worship. In gatherings of every size, Christ is proclaimed, “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.”

In times of prosperity and times of scarcity, we pray, “Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen” [ELW p. 107]

The greatest privilege of my work is to be with you in worship, meetings, and conferences. Together we have all we need to find vitality in our congregations. Together we can find the endurance to proclaim Christ yet another week, another month, another year.

The two major emphases of the work of the Director for Evangelical Mission are Congregational Vitality and Congregational Stewardship/Sustainability.

Congregational Vitality

Vital congregations do three things:

- Strengthen their relationship with God
- Nurture relationships in the congregation
- Build relationships in the community and world.

Congregations striving for vitality will find the following faith practices (marks of discipleship) among the tools that make a difference:

- Worship
- Invite
- Pray
- Give
- Encourage
- Serve
- Study

Congregational Stewardship/Sustainability

Congregations thrive when people know the mission, purpose, and difference that is made through their offerings. Through stewardship education we learn the faith practice of giving “our selves, our time, and our possessions” for the sake of being the body of Christ in the world.

I am thankful to have shared another year of serving alongside Bishop Clements and the Northern Illinois Synod staff. I am most grateful to work with you and your congregation. Among my joys is working with the great people of the Outreach Committee, the Stewardship team, and the Global Mission Committee. It is my honor to work in company with the congregations of this synod to the Glory of God.

Respectfully,

Rev. Gary Erickson
Director for Evangelical Mission
Assistant to the Bishop