

A Word from Bishop Rindy: **Abundance**

Abundance... if there is one thing Americans are used to it is abundance. This year, it is an abundance of fresh river water and rain. The past two years we experienced some of the most abundant crops and prices Midwestern farmers have ever experienced. We are used to abundance. The funny thing about abundance is that it can be good or bad depending on how it is shared or distributed.

Many of our congregations are celebrating milestone anniversaries this summer. This affords us opportunities to look back and see God's providence... **abundance**.

This summer is also a season of ordinations... *nine* of them by the end of the summer. God has raised up many exceptionally fine leaders for our church... **abundance**.

Other things can come in abundance as well. As we watch and wait with our sisters and brothers in the Devils Lake basin, Minot and the Souris valley, Bismarck and Mandan, and many other rivers, flooding had made its presence known in abundance... **painful abundance**.

There are multiple opportunities to let the abundance of God flow through us as we live out being the church. Quilts from people in Devils Lake, who are under chronic stress themselves, brought comfort to the afflicted in Minot. As we dig into our pockets, roll up our sleeves, pray, and encourage we are ... servanthood in **abundance**.

In a recent conversation with Dr. Richard Bliese, President of Luther Seminary, I informed him of the synod's planned reduction in financial support by \$20,000. While this lack of abundance is currently devastating to our regional ministries, we are hopefully looking to restore our giving in the future. Thankfully,

the 2011 Synod Assembly moved to establish an "Extra Mile" fund for these ministries. Dr. Bliese's response was, "We do not take any support for granted. Please express our appreciation for each and every dollar you are able to share" ... an **abundance** of graciousness and gratitude.

How we handle the **abundance** God has placed in our hands is not a mathematical problem. The math is so simple that it puts us to shame if we do not give generously. It is primarily a spiritual problem. It is also a matter of trust. We have been working hard to restore trust in the ministries we do together. I do not take your trust or support for granted, either. Thank you for every dollar that allows us to continue to make a difference in God's so-loved world.

One of the ways in which we are most visibly present is through our social ministry arm, Lutheran Social Services (LSS). I am thankful that Lutheran Disaster Response (a ministry of LSS) is on the ground responding to disasters all over the state. Without your trust and support, LDR would have closed up shop a year ago. Know that long after the other helping organizations have moved on, you, through LDR, will be there until the job is completed. We are also present through the Great Plains Food Bank (another ministry of LSS) in providing the network for thousands of pounds of food to be distributed to those in need.

We have far more ability to shape the future than we know. The good work we've done together for so many years can continue to help God's kingdom come and God's will be done in our part of God's earth. We are compelled, even commanded to continue to make disciples of all nations. Sometimes and in some ways, this is best done together. There are only so many things an individual or even a

congregation can do alone.

It is truly a joy to serve you and along side of you and witness God's abundance through you. There is an abundance of good ministry happening in our synod. One exiting, new ministry is the Congregational Leadership Academy (CLA) which has 26 lay people enrolled, passionate about evangelism. Please check out our website www.eandsynod.org to learn more about the CLA. It is these proactive ministries that give life to our synod. Oh how I long to spend the majority of time to continue to equip the saints of God for ministry in the world.

I have a deep sense that God is providing us a future that claims and trusts God's abundance. It is God's deep desire for us to love the Lord our God through loving the neighbor. This needs to be our primary focus. The opportunities we have to serve, pray, and support ought to get our full attention. The opportunities to roll up our sleeves, dig deeper into our pockets, and share are... **abundant**.

Abundance... as God's children, we are saved by grace, through faith, not by our works, so that none of us can boast. We face the ultimate question, as my beloved teacher, Dr. Gerhard Forde, used to ask, "Now that you don't have to do any thing to be saved, what are you going to do?" Every day has an abundance of opportunities to love, to serve, to be the church. What are you going to do with the abundance God has entrusted to you?

Why don't we find out together?



Bill Rindy
Serving as your Bishop