

God in Full View in North Dakota

... *encouraging and hopeful stories in and around the Eastern North Dakota Synod*



Much of the work of the EaND Synod of the ELCA is to “plant seeds”. Often we are unable to see the fruit of the seeds planted. Every now and then, we get an opportunity to see God’s tending to those seeds blooming in full view.

*Thank you to those of you who have shared stories with us. We encourage all of you to share an **encouraging story of mission or ministry** within your congregation. Please email them to Kristi at kristi@eandsynod.org*

All around this synod and beyond we recognize there are many stories of “hope”. This is an attempt to share short stories in eEquip. We will also include more stories in our quarterly newsletter.



Rev. Dan Faust, serving as interim pastor at Zion Lutheran Church, Oriska, is a farmer! Photo: Dave Wallis, The Forum

A Harvest of Giving: Valley City State students help farmer pick over 28 tons of produce for food bank reprinted with permission, Amy Dalrymple, The Forum, 09/28/11

Dan Faust raved Tuesday that he had a problem every farmer dreams about. Faust had a squash harvest so plentiful that he ran out of boxes. The 28 tons of produce – which he donated to the Great Plains Food Bank on Tuesday – took less than two hours to harvest with the help of more than 200 Valley City State University students and other volunteers. “If I had known that you were going to be as efficient as you were, I would have planted twice or three times as much,” Faust told the students. Faust, a 76-year-old retired pastor, decided three years ago that he would grow extra squash for the Great Plains Food Bank after hearing about an increased demand at North Dakota food pantries. It started with Faust hauling a few pickup loads of squash to the food bank. The next year, he expanded his project and planted an acre of squash on his farm north of Valley City. Friends and volunteers harvested about 10 tons of produce for the food bank. Last winter, Faust

called the food bank and asked “What’s the limit? How much can you handle?” After hearing there was no limit – and getting a pledge that Valley City State University would help harvest – Faust doubled his project and planted two acres of squash. He chose squash because he knew it grows well at his farm and because it can be stored for months. “Picking is the bottleneck,” Faust said. The students worked in teams led by “crew bosses” to comb the field for squash. Many used an assembly line method with some students picking the vegetables while others tossed and stacked them. “It’s fun,” said freshman Kelsey Awender of Oakes. “It’s only a couple hours of our time, and it helps other people out.” Bobcats loaded the 1,100-pound boxes into three trucks from the Great Plains Food Bank. The students also harvested potatoes, onions, carrots, beets and cabbage that Faust grew. The produce will be available for nearly 300 agencies in North Dakota and Clay County, with enough left over to share with Minnesota, said Linda Sailer, director of product resources for the food bank. Freshman Bridget Walsh of Big Stone City, S.D., said she was impressed with Faust’s efforts. “He’s amazing to grow all of these,” Walsh said. The freshmen are part of a curriculum called Living to Learn/Learning to Live that involves a large community service project. “There are a lot of powerful learning opportunities that go along with this,” said VCSU President Steve Shirley. Local volunteer group Faith in Action of Mercy Hospital helped organize the effort. Sailer reminded students to think about the people who need the squash they harvested. “The communities being served are where a lot of these students were from,” Sailer said.

Harvest by the numbers

57,423: Total pounds of produce 54,255: Pounds of squash 2,755: Pounds of pumpkins 413: Pounds of mixed vegetables
201: Students 2: Hours of harvesting 273: Agencies served 99: Communities benefiting
