

Eastern North Dakota Synod's New and Renewing Mission Table

Invitation and Back-Story

Over the past couple of years a vision for Lutherans in our synod has been emerging—a vision for how we will collaborate more deeply in vibrant service to God's great mission of rescue and renewal in Jesus Christ. Disciples from the Northwestern Minnesota Synods, in partnership with our ELCA's program unit for Congregational and Synodical Mission (CSM), are engaging our mission field and exploring new avenues for partnership in the gospel. An ***Evangelizing Congregations Missional Plan*** is being established which emphasizes: **renewed** evangelizing congregations, **new** evangelizing congregations, and **missional strategies**.

Foundational to this plan being actualized in our synod is the formation of **mission tables**. *The image of "table" is like a kitchen table where people gather and are fed and dream and plan, come and go. The image of "table" is like the Lord's Table where people gather and are fed by the Risen Lord Jesus and sent out as resurrection people empowered to be participants in God's new creation and mission for the sake of the world including our neighbors & neighborhoods.*

The emergence of mission tables is taking place alongside the synod's boards and committees. **Boards and Committees** (including synod council) are constitutionally-designated groups that tend specific assignments within the corporate life of the synod as defined in the constitution and bylaws; **Tables** foster ongoing conversations around various aspects of how this synod serves God's mission. They are oriented toward producing and implementing mission action plans resulting from imaginative missional conversations with congregations, parishes and conferences in a fluid manner with tablemates who "come and go" over time.

From time to time committees and tables may form two other sorts of synod leadership groups: **Teams** address a more narrowly-focused area of the synod's life over an extended or even indefinite period of time; **Task Forces** also address a more narrowly-focused area of the synod's life, but in a more time-limited and task-focused way. Typically a task force is disbanded when it has fulfilled its charge.

In the past couple of years several tables have formed and more will form in the years to come. The New and Renewing Mission Table is one of those tables that is formed and is still forming. Mission Tables like the New and Renewing Mission Table are open groups of passionate Jesus followers who gather periodically to discern the places in our synod where God's Spirit is moving and seeking ways to join in God's work.

The New and Renewing Mission Table is an open group of passionate Jesus followers who gather periodically to:

- Discover places in our synod where God's Spirit is moving and seek ways to join in God's work.
- Cultivate missional imagination within the synod, and translate that imagination into action.
- Be formed and reformed by those pulling up a chair and joining in the work.
- Be encouragers for congregations who have begun an intentional renewal process, and to share information and resources that are available (e.g. grants, online and/or print media or human resources including coaching and leadership equipping).
- Provide renewal opportunities for congregations in the synod who seek to re-root in their identity as God's people and God's mission field
- Plant new churches for those without a faith community
- Seek "putting a spade in the ground" of a missional "test plot" (spark small missional experiments within the synod using an action reflection research model).
- Celebrate the successes and learn from failures within the synod.

There are other chairs at this table. Pull up your chair and join us.
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