One of my annual rituals each spring is to walk around the yard and take stock of how the various plants and shrubs made it through the winter, especially my raspberries. The bushes I have in our garden are descended from the ones at my grandparents’ house, and they have survived several moves and a variety of winters. Though I know that raspberries are hard to kill, being rather weed-like in their tenacity, I still feel a spark of joy and excitement when I see the first buds appear, a sign that we will, once again, be enjoying sweet berries come July. This is for me a source of hope, that regardless of how much or how little attention I give them, no matter how harsh or how mild the winter is, these plants persist, life goes on, and God is in charge.

This hope sustains me as I consider life in our synod and its diverse ministries. Regardless of the strategies we use to organize our resources to strengthen and reshape our ministries, we need to remember that, ultimately, God is in charge. God is not done with us, and regardless of the challenges and obstacles we face, I am profoundly hopeful as we look to the future.

One of the ways I have experienced this hope recently is in the vibrant conversations we have been having around what God is up to in our midst. At last year’s synod assembly, we began working on a renewed statement of the vision, mission, values and practices that we hold in common. We continued this work at the Together in Mission event in February, and we are receiving comments on the latest draft on our website (milwaukeesynod.org/mission-statement-feedback).

This work is laying the foundation for another significant undertaking, the consideration of a synodical capital campaign/mission appeal. We have contracted with an outside consulting firm and crafted a document that lays out the possible priorities for a potential campaign, focusing on compassion, leadership, and innovation. We are conducting interviews with several dozen leaders this spring, and everyone who registers as a voting member to the synod assembly by May 1 will receive a copy of the prospectus via email and be invited to respond to a brief survey. We’re simply trying to learn if this is the right time for such a campaign and if these are the right priorities, and we look forward to gathering your thoughts and insights.

Regardless of the decisions we make or the paths we choose, I am hopeful. Not because we’re so smart or faithful or creative or bold, but because God the creator is in charge, Jesus is alive, and the Holy Spirit is on the loose, stirring us up and sending us out. Let’s see where love leads us.

In Christ,
Paul D. Erickson, Bishop
Transitions

Recent Vacancies:

- St. Mary, Milwaukee
- Rev. Dan Wessel, from term call associate pastor at St. Mark, Milwaukee to called pastor at Center of Grace, Milwaukee
- Rev. John Davis, from the Wisconsin Synod, to called associate pastor at Redeemer, Milwaukee to called pastor at St. Mary, Milwaukee
- Rev. David Clayton, from term call associate pastor at Spirit of Peace, Milwaukee to called pastor at St. Mary, Milwaukee

Rostered Ministers Who Have Recently Moved to On Leave from Call (OLC)

- Rev. Delaney Schlake-Kruse, from term call associate pastor at St. Mark, Milwaukee to OLC

Rostered Ministers Who Have Recently Changed Calls:

- Rev. Chad Smith, from candidate for call, to called associate pastor at St. Luke, Milwaukee
- Rev. Joshua Evans, from candidate for call, to called associate pastor at Luth., Milwaukee
- Rev. Allison Johnson, from candidate for call, to called pastor at OLC

Rostered Ministers Who Have Recently Moved to On Leave from Call (OLC)

- Rev. Jay McDivitt, from called pastor at St. Marks, Cudahy to OLC

Rostered Ministers Who Have Recently Changed Calls:

- Rev. Tim Tahtinen, from called pastor at Holy Cross, Milwaukee to called pastor at St. Mary, Milwaukee

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