



FROM THE BISHOP



Greetings to all of you and may our Heavenly Father bless you richly,

Anyone feeling anxious? Nervous about the future? Of course we are. It can feel like the ground is moving underneath us as we live into a new national political leadership team, as the economy continues to try and find itself, and as our future seems uncertain. This is one time where it helps to have some gray hair and have had some experience with economic train wrecks. In recent decades we have lived through significant economic downturns in our state—the farm crisis in the 80s, the drought for most our state through the first seven years of this century, and so on. What I have found to be true within our communities of faith is that we go through an adjustment period as our people sort out their new economic reality, and then we rebound into a new level of support and participation in the life of the church.

There are two items that are important to remember. The first is that we continue to preach the Gospel in both word and deed, that our faith communities continue to be a place of respite and renewal for those who are gathered by the Living Word. Second (I will pass along words of advice that were given to me by older pastors when I was just learning the vocation of pastor), 90% of leadership is staying calm. Our Lord offers that same word when he meets with the disciples in the upper room: “Peace be with you.”

And so, in the midst of our natural and understandable anxiety, may God’s peace be with you!

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It’s pretty well agreed that a significant part of our current economic upheaval is due to debt and the handling, or mishandling, of it. A lot of that is out of our hands, but there are ways that we as individuals and small groups can learn to get a handle on debt and control it instead of the other way around. Two good programs that individuals and congregations across the synod have found helpful are Debt Savvy from Thrivent Financial Bank and Dave Ramsey’s Church Programs, including his Financial Peace University. You can learn more about them at their websites. If you’d be interested in talking with others who have benefitted from these programs, feel free to contact the synod office and we’ll be happy to put you in touch with someone from our synod.

S Information about Debt Savvy from Thrivent Financial Bank: www.thrivent.com/bank/debt/index.html

S Information about Dave Ramsey’s Church Programs: www.daveramsey.com/etc/cms/church_programs_234.htmlc

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On a totally different note, I invite our pastors and council presidents to our Public Servants Appreciation Day, January 22, 2009. After listening to our pastors’ input, we are going to expand the events of the day. In one sense it will be “Lutheran Day at the Capitol.” We will start in the morning with an opportunity to attend committee hearings on the fourth floor of the capitol. After the legislative session begins, we will send out a list of committees that meet on that day. We will gather mid-morning at Lutheran Memorial Church for a briefing on public advocacy. There will be a lunch at the church for attendees. In the afternoon you are invited to watch the Senate and House do their work. You will have opportunity to be recognized by your senator and representative at the beginning of the day’s session. Betty Oldenkamp, the president of LSS, and I will host ice-cream socials in the waiting areas behind both houses. You will have an opportunity to meet your legislator during that time when they step off the floor. That evening

at 6:00 P.M. we will again have our Public Servants Appreciation dinner at Lutheran Memorial, at which time we will present plaques to our congregations celebrating significant anniversaries during this past year. We will be informing your legislators of this presentation, which gives them another good reason to attend the evening's dinner. I hope that you can come and be a part of this special day during our legislative session.

It would be most helpful if you would let the synod office know if you and your congregational leadership will be in attendance. If you want a motel room for either evening, you will need to call soon to set up your reservation. Contact Kevin Stillson at 605/274-4011 or kstillson@sdsynod.org.

Thank you for your partnership in ministry! And again...peace be with you.



Bishop Dave



TRANSITIONS