

Northern Area – Dean’s Report 2017

*Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces,
I would still plant an apple tree today.*

Dear friends in mission,

Famously attributed to Martin Luther, the above statement, while curious and inspiring, faces the problems of the world with hope and action.

The world is a troubled place; we’ve certainly seen our fair share of news stories that broadcast the life, breath, and death of humanity and all creation. Today, more than any other time in history, we are aware of our global neighbours and creatures and how deeply we are interconnected. We are learning about systemic oppression, judgment and privilege. We worry about the world children will inherit. Worst of all, at times we feel powerless, perhaps even unmotivated, our small size and resources overwhelmed by it all.

How wonderful then to dust off the above statement of hope! Fearlessly it echoes our concerns and yet its simplicity sparks our imagination! Whether Luther actually said it or not, it is a gospel message that contradicts doomsday predictions so succinctly it’s tweetable.

What I’ve come to appreciate about this old saying is that it is participatory. There is no magic god called upon to swoop down. There’s no incantational prayer to apply. No inflated leadership to consult. The message is, grab a shovel and get digging! Find a tree, place it and pack the soil around it. Water it. Tend it. Wait. What would change in the world if we all took to heart such a call to active faith?

As our transition continues from conferences to areas this is one way to imagine a missional approach. Being a church together will take all of us getting down in the soil, out in the streets, in hospitals, skate parks, schools, downtown alleyways, polluted waterways – every place where God asks us to be the hope and change that are needed. And we can do it, one tree at a time. It’s not likely that any of us have the resources to plant a forest, but we can give one hour, one dollar, one phone call, one casserole, one hug, one *fill in the blank* at a time.

Many thanks (such an understatement) to our Northern Area Council members who have served faithfully (some for several years!): Marilyn Goebel, Cindy Schriener, Dan Bablitz, Mike Harmon, DM Sarah Rudd, Pr. David Melax, Pr., Doug Heine, Pr. Phil Penrod, Pr. Aaron Schnell. You have wonderful servant hearts!

Area activity:

- Rev. Eric Sorenson: Ordination at Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Sherwood Park, August 6, 2016.
- Rev. Lindsey Jorgenson-Skakum: Ordination/Installation at Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Edmonton, August 7, 2016.

- Rev. Jailyn Corbin: Ordination/Installation at Lord of Glory, Lac La Biche, September 2, 2017.

In Christ,
Rev. Trish Schmermund
Dean, Northern Area