

Report of the Director for Evangelical Mission  
Pastor Philip C. Hirsch, Assistant to the Bishop

*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 1 Corinthians 3.6*

I have been doing a lot of planting and watering this year with many of you and a trusting in God for the growth. Most of the highlights are below and in the reports of the New and Renewing Missions Table and The Stewardship and Mission Support Table.

1. Website Report. In an effort to help every congregation think about how it is being perceived online, we have completed a survey of every congregation's website in the Metro DC Synod. A very special THANK YOU to Lori Pitts who has been working on our Synod Staff to complete this work. **Every pastor and Synod Assembly voting member should have received a copy of your congregation's report.**
2. New Start Initiative. At a joint meeting of the New and Renewing Missions Table and the Stewardship and Mission Support Table a new effort was commissioned in our synod to start 6-8 new congregations in the next 3-5 years. A small group, appointed by the Bishop, will begin planning for this effort this year. Look for more information in January, 2015. Please pray for this effort.
3. Together in Mission: Thanks to Pastors Kate Davidson and Mike Gutzler who helped reimagine a Tedx like event for sharing ministry ideas that make a difference. All of the talks are at <http://timmetrodc.org>
4. Best Practices for Growing Congregations is a talk I gave at the TIM event. It is available in a Powerpoint on the blog post section of the Synod Website. <http://metrodcelca.org/2014/02/best-practices-for-growing-congregations/>
5. How to welcome guests is a blog post with practical tips to help your congregation develop authentic and effective ways of welcoming people, not just to worship but into the life of the community. <http://metrodcelca.org/2014/04/no-such-thing-as-a-friendly-church/>

Notes on Congregations and Ministries in our Synod:

+ Our Savior's Temple Hills and Saint Michael's Truth have voted to merge into one new congregation with shared staff and leadership.

+ Epiphany Lutheran Church, Burtonsville MD has extended an agreement share a part time pastor (Matt Pensinger) with Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Gaithersburg, MD. Pastor Dave Sonnenberg is the Senior Pastor at Good Shepherd and is stewarding this effort.

+ Good Samaritan Lutheran Church, Lanham MD voted to become a redevelopment and are receiving Bethany Funds to support this effort. Pastor Gloria Cline-Smythe is leading this work.

+ Pastor Leila Ortiz began work at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Herndon, VA as a part time Pastor in Residence focusing on ministry among 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation immigrants and finishing work on a PhD. (with \$10,000 from Bethany Funds).

+ ELCA Campaign (As LSS winds up their capital campaign at the end of 2014, the Synod will continue to raise money and attention for the Malaria Campaign as a part of the overall Campaign for the ELCA in 2014 and will focus on new congregations in the Metro DC Synod and beyond in 2015.

I continue to be grateful for the partnership with each of you and especially for those with whom I work in the Synod Office: Bishop Graham, The Rev. Amy Thompson Sevimli, Amy Acland, Lori Pitts, John Handley and Karen Kruger.

In Christ,

Pastor Phil Hirsch