

Synod set to receive Macedonia Project grant

By Pastor Judy Converse
First, Northwood

Before I had even unpacked the moving boxes in my new office, he was at the door. Pastor Mark Anderson was in the area and stopped by to welcome me to the Northeastern Iowa Synod—and to recruit me.

“So ... what areas of ministry are you interested in?” he said. I replied that I had a strong interest in stewardship—the ways in which we respond to God’s extravagant grace in our lives.

Well ... within 24 hours, I found myself signed on to the Northeastern Iowa Synod Stewardship Network, and because of that connection, I traveled last week to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) headquarters in Chicago to learn about the Macedonia Project. The Macedonia Project (not to be confused with “Rediscovering Macedonia,” a set of resources that Pastor Gary Hedding wrote about in the *October Star*) began with a large donation from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans a few years ago. Thrivent’s purpose for the gift was to encourage generous and faithful stewardship throughout the ELCA, and it took the name, Macedonia Project, because of the example set by the newly established church in Macedonia, as described by the Apostle Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians.

“We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; ²for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth

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of generosity on their part. ³For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, ⁴begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints.”

The Macedonia Project provides funding to synods via grants of \$10,000. Each synod that receives a grant must present a proposal for use of the funds, updates while the plan is being implemented, and a final self-evaluation when it is complete.

And the good news is that the Northeastern Iowa Synod is lined up to receive a grant of \$10,000 this coming year!

During my time in Chicago, I had the opportunity to see and hear from people who have already made use of their grant money. For instance:

- folks in Southern Ohio came up with an approach which they called *4G Networking—God + Grace + Gratitude + Generosity*;
- the Indiana-Kentucky Synod developed a retreat for leaders on stewardship;
- the Rocky Mountain Synod plan is called *The Generosity Project: Our Table is Ready* and revolves around a simple workshop

which can be replicated in congregations across their synod to teach about stewardship;



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- the South Carolina synod is training “shepherd callers” to contact lay leaders in nearby churches to pursue a conversation with their council on missions.

The people who came from all corners of the ELCA are excited about the work they have begun and the positive changes that are happening in congregational and synodical giving.

It was a most energizing discussion to be a part of!

I hope you’ll keep your eyes and ears open for news about the Northeastern Iowa Synod’s approach to the Macedonia Project—coming in 2014!

Scholarship honors Bishop Hanson

A named endowed Fund for Leaders seminary scholarship is being established in honor of Bishop Mark and Lone Hanson. Checks may be written to the ELCA Fund for Leaders with a designation for Bishop Hanson Scholarship. Send checks to ELCA, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631-4101.