

Rediscover Macedonia

By Pastor Gary Hedding
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Cedar Falls

Bethlehem Lutheran Church is committed to talking about financial stewardship as a faith practice that encourages growth in faith rather than a tedious way to raise money for the congregation. We look for inspiration for generosity rather than financial need or a hefty helping of guilt. Rediscovering Macedonia has been a tremendous resource for our congregation to inspire generosity and growing giving. We used it in October 2012 and will use it again this fall.

Congregations probably have already decided on a financial stewardship program for the fall of 2013, but, as long as you are thinking about it now, I encourage you to file away Rediscover Macedonia for next year. The resources for Rediscover Macedonia have been developed by people within the ELCA who are excited about whole life stewardship as a faith practice.

The place to start is www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Discipleship/Stewardship/Macedonia.aspx. Here you will find resources that

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are centered on Paul’s appeal to the Corinthian church found in 2 Corinthians 8:1-15. He holds up the Macedonians as people who were so full of God’s grace, that even in the midst of affliction and poverty, they gave generously for ministry. They are positively inspiring.

The resources are extensive, way more than a congregation can use in the typical four week financial stewardship emphasis. In fact, Bethlehem is going back to the resources again this year because we could not use them all for one series.

We focused on the seven guiding principles exhibited by the Macedonian congrega-

tion: Gratitude, Abundant Joy, Generosity, Commitment, Sacrifice, Share, and Give Freely.

Each was accompanied by a bookmark, a Bible study, learning activities for all ages, stories that captured the principle, and guided conversations.

We found the information on building a case for supporting what God is doing in our church to be very helpful for people to see the value of giving to God through our congregation, and through the synod and churchwide expressions of the church. More than half of the “giving units” in Bethlehem increased their giving, not as an obligation, but as a response of faith to practice that faith. They were positively inspiring.



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Send news for the November issue to Marcia Hahn by Oct. 15. We welcome story ideas related to the 2013 theme, “Strengthening Ministry Networks.”

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God’s Work, Our Blog

Be sure to check out the new synod blog, *God’s Work, Our Blog*, at <http://northeasterniowasynodelca.blogspot.com>.

The blog will be updated with news every Thursday. On Tuesdays the blog will include an entry from Pastor Mark Anderson, assistant to the Bishop, on the topic of stewardship. His contributions will alternate weekly between a review of stewardship education tools and texts from Holy Scripture.