

AUGUST

NEW
SCANDINAVIA
LUTHERAN
CHURCH
AUGUST NEWSLETTER 2023

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. 1 Corinthians 12:27-31

Some years ago, maybe 2006, I was a voting delegate to the Northern Great Lakes Synod assembly. I was excited because I had come to realize that I was a church “nerd” and to be a part of the operation of the church was pretty cool. I had already been a member of my church council and taught Sunday School (at a variety of churches) and my pastor thought maybe this would be fun. As part of the assembly, there were workshops that focused on different classes offered in the lay school of that synod.

Before I go on, let me address a church word that may be foreign to you. When I speak of a lay person or the laity, I am speaking about a person(s) in a church who are not ordained (ordained as pastor or Deacon). So, as you look around the sanctuary on Sunday morning, most, if not all the people in the pews would be considered lay people.

When the time came to attend one of the classes during the assembly, I immediately chose history/Lutheran Confessions. I mean, why wouldn't I as I love history. When the mini class ended, I turned to my friend with excitement and was shocked when they thought it was boring. What was wrong with them? By fall of that year, I found myself making the weekly hour and 15-minute drive from my home in Marinette, WI to Gladstone, MI. I was hooked.

It was great to gather with my new friends every week to explore what it means to live into our vocation as baptized members of Christ. And while it was this step that pushed me further into hearing my call to ordained ministry, that was not the path for all my classmates. There were two others that took a different path to ordination and all the others took the classes simply for curiosity's sake. I know some of them have gone on to lead worship services at their home congregations in a pulpit supply role. Some have taken their knowledge to positions on councils or Sunday School committees. Some people weren't called to “go out” but find their education useful in their small bible study

groups. Like Paul's passage above, we are all given different gifts to use as God sees fit.

Thirty years ago, under the leadership of Dick Bruesehoff (assistant to Bishop Knutson) a group of pastors (Greg Kaufmann, Don Wisner, James Homme, and Dick) gathered to envision a program in the Northwestern Synod of Wisconsin that would take seriously our belief in the ministry of all the baptized, and of life long learning. It was believed that to meet the varied ministry needs of the coming millennium, the Synod needed to equip all its ministers (the baptized) in a very intentional way. The Lay School of Ministry grew out of that conversation.

The Lay School of Ministry is an ongoing educational opportunity for all those interested in learning about the Lutheran faith. The Lay School of Ministry emphasizes the baptismal vocation of all Christians. Courses are designed to help students develop a deeper understanding of the Bible, Worship, Spirituality, Christian History and Lutheran Theology.

I am excited to announce that United Lutheran's own Addyson Micheels submitted her application to being her learning process and I am honored to be her mentor through these two years of classes and beyond. What does this mean for Addyson and the church? Who knows? Ok. God knows. Truth is, I doubt Addyson knows at this point. But I know that God continues to call the baptized to positions throughout the church and Addyson is heading that call. It's not easy to step forward and say "I was wondering" but I'm glad she did and hoping others might follow in her footsteps.

If anyone else thinks this might be interesting, come speak to me and we will see what can be done. Otherwise, I ask that we all keep Addyson in our prayers as she jumps into this, not knowing what will come out of it.

It is here that I can't help but think of one of my favorite "transitional" prayer. I encourage you to use this in your personal prayer time for all who are discerning what God is calling them to do and be.

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Go get 'em, Addyson.

God's peace be with you always.

Pastor Sara

P.S. This is not just about Addyson but an opportunity for anyone within our congregations. If this might seem interesting to you, please reach out to me and we will explore this opportunity together.