



Eastern North Dakota Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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Dear Partners in Ministry:

At this year's assembly, I invited the assembly to pray a simple but dangerous prayer - "Come, Holy Spirit, Come!" I am thrilled to let you know about a big dream coming true for you and the other congregations of Eastern North Dakota Synod. Without a doubt, it is "of the Spirit."

Since the early 1990's, we have had an endowment supporting leaders in the synod. The largest grants were given for seminary tuition aid and seminary debt relief. Hundreds and hundreds of pastors and deacons have benefited from the generosity of those who have given to this endowment fund. If you are among those who have given to this endowment fund, on behalf of those hundreds and hundreds of pastors and deacons, I thank you!

Now, imagine a companion endowment fund for congregations! It's happening all because of the vision and generosity of a few faithful Lutherans like you who have been open to the leading of the Spirit. The new "Holy Innovation Endowment Fund" will provide matching grant dollars to fuel innovative initiatives that live out our synod's mission statement to "live in love as we serve, equip and challenge God's people." To launch this fund, one generous donor has provided \$25,000 to be given away immediately to support congregations ready and willing to be about holy innovation.

There are three tiers of grant funding available:

Serve Grants – matching dollars up to \$3,000

Equip Grants – matching dollars from \$3,000 to \$15,000

Congregations receiving "equip" grants will be asked to participate in "Vital Signs" – a two-year journey toward defining your congregations strategy for growing in life-giving relationships with God, each other, and the world.

I believe intentional engaging of the entire congregation in discerning the Spirit's work is essential in moving into God's preferred future. More information is attached.

Challenge Grants – matching dollars of \$15,000 or more

Congregations receiving "challenge grants" will be asked to participate in "Vital Signs" as well as have their rostered minister(s) participate in the synod's soon to be created leadership academy. It goes without saying, both lay and rostered leadership must be equipped to be the best and most faithful leaders as possible.

Is your congregation willing to step out in faith and try something new, bold and creative? If so, consider this your invitation to submit a "Holy Innovation" grant application by 8/31/19. I realize this is a short turnaround time. I realize it's summer. I realize you, like us, might not have this all figured out quite yet. But brothers and sisters in Christ, the time is NOW. Now more than ever, our communities need us to share God's love with the world. Now is the time for us to fervently pray that simple, but dangerous prayer "Come, Holy Spirit, Come!" It doesn't matter if your idea is big or small, simple or crazy --- it just matters that it is "of the Spirit", new and creative.

"Jesus Christ calls us to live in love as we serve, equip and challenge God's people."



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Not only will these pilot grants be used to fuel holy innovations, the stories and ideas submitted will be used to inspire donors to generously support this new congregational endowment fund. Our goal is to grow this fund to \$4 million dollars which would allow us to distribute approximately \$125,000 per year! Can you imagine!?!?

But, first things first...right now we have \$25,000 to give away!!! Attached is more about the application process.

We'll be hosting two informational conversations to answer your questions and help you brainstorm! Join us in person at the synod office or via video conference:

Tuesday July 23rd 12-1pm - <https://zoom.us/j/465565677>

Thursday August 1st 9-10am - <https://zoom.us/j/345437317>

"Come, Holy Spirit, Come!" It is a dangerous prayer because the Spirit may call us to step out of our comfort zones. The Spirit may call us to new places. The Spirit may call us to engage people we have never engaged before. Are you ready? I hope so! Come, Holy Spirit, Come!

In Christ,

Bishop Terry A. Brandt

PS: If you're not ready to act fast, I encourage you to start having conversations about holy innovations so you're ready for the next round of grant disbursements!