

From Pastor  
Nielsen  
March  
2010



Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you to the 61 folks who filled out ballots for our 2010 congregational mission support giving. Usually the Church Council will make proposals for our mission support giving. But the Church Council felt that it would be good to invite all of our members to get involved in the decision this year.

We wanted everyone to see the great variety of mission projects that we have supported in the past and could support in the future. By giving you a ballot to vote on your priorities, we invited you to take a moment to think about and perhaps learn about the mission partners we may be supporting. And by using this ballot we learned which mission partners our members are familiar with and which mission partners we need to introduce to our members.

The number one response on the ballot (54 out of 61) was Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR). Obviously, LDR is a clear choice for many because of the earthquake disaster in Haiti. As we continue to hear in the news, the need is great. LDR is at work there through many partners in Haiti and will continue to be there for years to come. So this month \$3000 from our Sunday offerings is committed to going to LDR.

Thanks also to the folks who have submitted worship surveys. There has been some good input and comments for our worship and evangelism team to consider. Worship is a living thing that is constantly changing. God is calling us to renewal in our worship life. We should always be seeking

ways to deepen our connection with God. And we should always be seeking ways to reach out to our ever-changing world. It would appear that our worship life as a congregation has lots of room to grow to become the life-transforming experience of God's Grace that we know it can be for all kinds of people. We are still hoping to receive a few more surveys in the coming weeks. The surveys are available on the table in the overflow.

Here we are in the heart of the season of Lent. Lent comes at the time of the year when farmers begin preparing fields and gardens for the planting season. That may begin later than sooner this year with all the snow still on the ground. It's hard to plant those potatoes through the snow.

Lent is also the season for preparing the gardens of our souls for the new life of Easter. Traditionally, Lent has been a time for many Christians to renew or develop faith practices or spiritual disciplines in their daily lives. Spiritual disciplines are not self-improvement projects. They are ways that the Holy Spirit invites us to embrace faith in our daily lives.

Spiritual disciplines include practices such as solitude, silence, simplicity, fasting, prayer, meditation, confession, gratitude, journaling, and giving. Each Lent we might ask ourselves what discipline or practice the Holy Spirit is calling us to develop .

Lent is not about trying to be perfect or trying to be more spiritual. Lent is a journey. Lent is about taking a few steps toward a deeper and richer walk with Christ in our daily lives. May you find joy in the journey.

Yours in Christ Jesus, *Phil Nielsen*