

Dear Saints of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin,

By the time you read this, one major event in our synod will have been completed and the next one will be just around the corner. The completed one will be "Walking Together" when 400+ folks will have gathered to learn, to laugh and to walk together toward a new future. The "around the corner" event will be our annual Synod Assembly in April. But, both events will be tied together by the theme: "**BOLDLY Invite...ONE More!** With the symbol of a big RED door, emblazoned with Luther's seal, we will be challenged to get the word out about Jesus!



But, here's the Easter connection. When we were picking a theme verse for the events the verse we chose was from Mark 16:15. In this verse, Jesus says "Go into all the world.." And, seemingly, the women and even some men did just that!

As we were picking this verse, we also were laughing, because it comes from what is called "The Longer Ending of Mark." The ending of Mark that is from the oldest manuscripts says this, "So they (the women) went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; *and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.*"

I often refer to this last verse as the "Lutheran Ending" of the gospel of Mark. "They said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid."

We are Lutheran, and we need no longer be afraid! We live in a culture where our neighbors are hungry for good news, they are hungry for life, and they are hungry for love. Our churches can give them all of those things. The day is over when we can silently leave the empty tomb at Easter and tell no one. So this is my Easter challenge to every one of you who takes the time to read these words: "**BOLDLY invite...ONE more!**

This year, before Easter, you, and everyone in your family, invite one person to come and worship with you. If you have family who live somewhere else, but who do not have a church, encourage them..."I sure hope you can find a church for this Sunday!" Be BOLD. What's the worst that can happen? Let the *amazement* overcome the *fear*.

We have the amazing privilege of getting up on that Sunday morning and worshipping the God of Easter! I for one will make sure I share that with not just one person, but I commit to sharing it with everyone that will give me the opportunity. What's the worst that can happen????

BOLDLY, Invite...ONE More!

Bishop Rick Hoyme
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