

Dwelling in the Word - March, 2018

1) **Setting the Context for the Reading**

Within the first century church (like the church in our time), ministry and leadership needs were in constant flux. There was a **constant need** to envision what God was calling the early church to do next. And there was a **constant need** to call forth new gifts and abilities and leadership. In today's passage, we get a snapshot of one such visioning process, along with the subsequent calling forth of new leadership gifts from among the followers. To envision what God is calling our church to do next, and what gifts and abilities need to be called forth from among all of us, including a new bishop, involves conversation and prayer.

2) **Dwelling in the Word** - Acts 5:42-6:7 (20 minutes)

(Hand out Bibles so all can follow along. Appoint two different people to read, once with a male voice and once with a female voice. After the lesson is read the first time, ask the following questions)

- a) Where did you find yourself stopping? What words, phrases or ideas stuck out for you??
- b) What stood out for you as you heard about this process of visioning and choosing new leadership?

(Have the passage read a second time)

- a) What things in our present way of doing ministry are beyond the present capabilities of our congregation? Of our synod?
- b) What present ministry priorities do you believe God is calling us to let go of, and what ministry priorities (new) do you believe God desires to be MNO Synod's focus for the next 1-6 years? *(Keep a list of these ideas for your April meeting and pray about these priorities over the next month)*
- c) What do leaders in "good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" look like in our time?

3) **Close with Prayer** *(discuss what thanksgivings and what concerns need to be lifted up in your congregation at this time. If comfortable, ask the individuals to give voice to these things in your prayer time. And then conclude with prayers for the discerning process using these or similar words).*

O God, as your church throughout the ages used conversation and prayer to discern the vision and call forth new leadership, bless your church at this time and place as we discern your vision for us and as we call forth new leadership. We pray this in Jesus' Name. Amen.