



## From the Bishop:

May 2026

I am so glad that the cherry trees and magnolia trees and dogwoods are blooming. I am ecstatic to see daffodils and tulips ... and to trust that the azaleas and rhododendrons are on the way. I can almost taste local strawberries ... ones with real flavor. And the promise of juicy tomatoes is getting closer. I can feel the dirt under my fingernails as I begin to plant in my small yard and garden. There is something both ancient and new, hopeful and earthy about planting a garden.

If you think about it, one of the first images we have in scripture is of a garden. God created humans and put them in a garden. And at the very end of the Bible, in Revelation 22, we hear a description of another beautiful garden – this one with a river flowing on and on, and the tree of life on either side, bearing fruit and offering healing for all nations. It is in our bones, our hearts, our souls to be in a garden – to be grounded in abundance. To be planted by the river of the water of life, flowing from the throne of God.

Still, we might look at our communities and this world and think, “There isn’t enough. There isn’t enough care. There is a lack of justice and empathy and hope.” We might look at our congregation and lament, “There aren’t enough resources. We have so little. What can we possibly do?” We might look at our own lives and wonder if we can make any difference at all.

But while we are holding to what little we think we have, God is busy growing and creating, bringing new life from what seemed dormant. Scripture reminds us again and again that we are planted in God’s abundant garden, even when we forget it. God provides water when we feel parched. God feeds us when we are hungry. God is ripening tomatoes right before our eyes – even as we complain about the pale and tasteless ones from the grocery store.

What a gift and promise this is – from the beginning of creation to today and into God’s future: God provides. Even when we doubt. Even when we hoard. Even when we grasp for more. God still provides. God provided clothing in the garden, manna in the desert, water from a rock, oil that didn’t run out. Jesus fed 5000, and Jesus appeared to Mary in a garden. What a generous and extravagant God.

We are truly planted in God’s abundance.

And with that promise, I invite you to come to the **synod gathering on May 30 for Life in God’s Garden: Seeds of Generosity**. (Learn more and get registered here: <https://www.lutheransnw.org/events/synod-gathering/2026-05-30>) It will be a day of learning, community, encouragement, and imagining together how we live generously for the sake of the world. For we trust that through the Spirit, God plants. God waters. God brings life. And by grace, we get to be a part of it – as people rooted in God’s garden.

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## From the VEEP:

“A farmer planted seed. As he scattered the seed, some of it fell on the road, and birds ate it. Some fell in the gravel; it sprouted quickly but didn’t put down roots, so when the sun came up it withered just as quickly. Some fell in the weeds; as it came up, it was strangled by the weeds. Some fell on good earth, and produced a harvest beyond his wildest dreams.”  
– Matthew 13:3-8, *The Message*

I am not good with plants. I have whatever the opposite of a green thumb is. Don’t get me wrong, I LIKE plants and I like the idea of growing a garden. I just cannot seem to keep plants alive. When I was still teaching, I often got plants from students and their families. I was always touched by their thoughtfulness. I loved the plants so much, I knew I had to give them to someone else to tend. Luckily, my mother and mother-in-law both have the right kind of thumb and so they would nurture those plants and I would get to go see and enjoy the plants in their new home.

All this is to say that I have no way to know whether this farmer is a good farmer or not. Is he careless in the way he scatters the seed? Is he wasteful? Should he have prepared the field better so there was more good soil? Maybe this is the best tactic – sow enough so that some of it will take hold and grow. Maybe sowing it where the birds will eat it and then spread the seeds farther away is intentional. I just don’t know. It does seem that the farmer is extravagant with his supply of seeds.

Perhaps God is a generous Sower because God doesn’t need a return. God is not a subsistence farmer. God is a god of abundance. The seeds are sown for the world’s benefit, not God’s own and God is willing to risk the seeds being eaten or withered because God knows there is always a chance that they may take root and grow.

This year the synod is sponsoring a gathering with the theme **Life in God’s Garden: Seeds of Generosity**. This gathering will feature worship, a keynote speaker, and 22 breakout sessions all around the theme of generosity. How can we be like the farmer in the story and sow our seeds and grow our ministry? Where and how can we best plant our seeds of time, talents, property, and financial resources? How do we prepare the soil to give these seeds the best chance of survival? We hope you will join us as we engage with these questions. **For more information on the gathering:**  
<https://www.lutheransnw.org/events/synod-gathering/2026-05-30>

### Here’s what I or the council have been up to in April:

- The policy review team met on April 7 to continue our revision of policies and procedures regarding sexual misconduct by rostered leaders.
- Executive Committee met on April 9.
- The Synod Equity Team continued its work.

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