

Mission Moment
“I Love to Tell the Story”
Congregation Council Devotions
South Carolina Synod Video

This devotion is a gift from the South Carolina Synod Office of the Bishop for you and your council leaders. We are asking each of our congregational councils to take 20 minutes in an upcoming Congregation Council meeting to share in this devotion together. We are very interested in what our congregations are experiencing and would like to know how to pray for the ministry of your congregation. Please send us a summary of your prayer requests in section III so that we can hold in our prayers the specific things happening in your ministry setting right now. We feel truly blessed by the partnership we share with you and our brothers and sisters across the synod as, together, we live out the gospel of Jesus Christ in our various locations. May God bless all that we do together in the name of Jesus.

I. Scripture Reflection (written by Bishop Virginia S. Aebischer)

“Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.” Joel 1:3 (*New Revised Standard Version*)

I love to tell the Story. Tell the story of Jesus and his love! I heard a person make this comment: “I want to know that I am connected and part of something bigger than myself; something that goes beyond my inner circle of family and friend”. As a Christian, as congregation and as synod, Jesus calls us into a ministry partnership to spread his word and his love throughout the world. Whenever we work together to do this, we make a tremendous difference in this world and in the lives of God’s beloved children. This is one of the truly wonderful things about being synod – we walk together in ministry, and we can do more together to make a difference in the world sharing the love of Jesus than we ever imagined possible. We love to tell the stories of ministry made possible through mission support dollars. Stories of life changing work are happening as we walk together in the South Carolina Synod with congregations, institutions of the church and synodical partners. Stories of ministries are happening in our communities and across the globe. Stories are happening in places where people have felt welcome to share in community and share God’s gift of grace with one another. Stories of how the ministry in and through your congregation is vital to the lives of others and makes a tremendous difference.

In this video you will hear just a few of the stories of Jesus’ love being shared, such as at Holy Grounds, a local ministry of hospitality and welcome where people can come to “fill their cup”. You will hear about your historic connection to the Lutheran Church in Japan and the way we continue to support and connect with one another from halfway around the world. You will hear the story of outreach to special needs students and your ministry of inclusion and care for people who are differently abled. You will discover that your ministry extends to women who are in recovery through a partnership with the South Carolina Synod, Lutheran Services Carolinas and the ELCA at Restoration Chapel and Kinard Manor. This ministry is helping to bring new life to individuals who are hungry and ready for the love of Jesus.

Thank you for your partnership in God’s mission and for all the other stories you are telling and living through your local congregation. We are so thankful for you, and we are blessed to walk together in this ministry, as we tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

In groups of 3-4 people or as a total group pick 2 of the questions below to discuss

- What is your favorite story of your congregation’s extension of Jesus and his love?
- Where have you seen others telling the story of God’s love?
- Share how God’s love in Jesus has made a difference in your life.

(See next page or reverse side)

II. South Carolina Synod video: “I Love to Tell the Story” Joel 1:3

Preparation: Test the video link or flash drive well in advance of your meeting. Secure a laptop computer to show the video. Make sure sound, projector or TV are working well in advance. The video is available on YouTube:

English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTkGYhDRIWU>

Spanish: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuhaBC5ZO2I>

After showing the video ask the group the following questions:

- Is there one story that inspires you that you would want to share with others?

- In the video Bishop Virginia Aebischer talked about several ways a congregation can take a step toward tithing or increasing their Mission Support? Please take the time to share with one another which of these ways applies best to your context at this time.
 - (A) Give 10% of Regular Giving by Members or
 - (B) Taking a step toward tithing by adding 10% to the dollars given last year.

III. Prayer Requests

What are some of the prayer requests that the bishop and the synod staff can be praying for your congregation? List?

Please have one person summarize your prayer requests in section III and mail or email to:

Bishop Virginia S. Aebischer
South Carolina Synod
1003 Richland Street
Columbia, SC 29201
Email: ginny@scsynod.com

or

Rev. Ozzie Herlong, Director for Stewardship
South Carolina Synod
1003 Richland Street
Columbia, SC 29201
Email: ovherlong@aol.com
Cell: (803) 360-1877