

# Forward Together as Communicators Discussion Guide

## Open with Prayer

### Scripture Reading – Mark 4:1-20 – Receptive Soil

#### Share Points on Communicating:

Communication is a big challenge for our church today because there are so many more ways to communicate the gospel story than ever before. There are so many different communication channels, social media platforms, devices and trying to figure out how to use those to the best of our ability can be difficult. One of the challenges is there are fewer people who know what the church is about, what being Lutheran is about, what God is about. Communicating our stories is one way we can try to bridge that gap.

Watch the video with Dan Scharnhorst asking people on the street, “What comes to mind when you hear the word Lutheran?” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU8vwPkimL8>

#### Additional video vignettes:

- Our vision: Equip congregations to tell stories <https://youtu.be/wDqmA1Cl6Cs>
- A hub of information and ideas <https://youtu.be/3YnuqllZJno>
- It’s an exciting time to communicate <https://youtu.be/8jV5XJDV-0c>

Like the ground in the Scripture reading, people in our communities are not automatically receptive to the church. “We have to stop telling people and we have to start listening to people,” says Pastor Keith Anderson. “How are they making meaning and how are they encountering God in their daily lives and how do we engage in that in all of these platforms and different ways.”

Like the sower, we must send our messages across many channels, never knowing who will respond. “Communication is necessary but it’s changing faster than it ever. We have six generations living and everyone communicates in different ways and they are changing all the time,” says Bob Fisher, assistant to the bishop for communication.

#### Communication lessons:

- Pay attention – listen, know your audience
- Be willing to adopt new things – we may make mistakes but we have to be willing to try and willing to accept that things change
- Communicate, connect and share the gospel where people are – (in social network platforms, emails, outside our church walls)

As part of the campaign, the synod wants to help equip congregations with communication, sharing their stories. One way this is being done currently is through the synod’s communication network. There will be many more opportunities as part of this campaign’s vision.

#### Reflection/Discussion Time

How does the scripture connect with the synod’s campaign vision of communicating as well as your congregation’s practices of communication with the world?

What is unique about your congregation's ministries that people would not know just by seeing your Lutheran church sign?

Our stories are no longer just printed words. It is important to share images, sounds and video, too. Is your congregation open to capturing the sights and sounds of your activities and worship? Why or why not?

What stories can your congregation share with others? What channels and media could you use to communicate those stories?

Are there current communication challenges or questions your congregation has currently that the synod's communication network could address?

**Notes – Share With the Synod Helpful Discussion Information**