

## **AN EXERCISE FOR THINKING ABOUT VISION AND VALUES IN THE ALASKA SYNOD**

### **Start with prayer**

L: Good and gracious God, you are the author of life and it is your image that guides and shapes who we are as people. So, speak to us through the power of your Holy Spirit so that we hear you speak in ways that help us better remember and envision who you call us to be at our best. As we read from scripture and reflect on our life together, help us to discern those things that will shape us and mold us in ways that give us insights about what is most important as we do ministry together and prepare to elect a new bishop in the coming year. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

### **SOME KEY BIBLE TEXTS**

These are some great texts for mission in the church. But if you want to look at others, that's OK as well. Just be sure to use scripture first before thinking about your values lists – the bible is our “source and norm” and an important place to start our work!

#### **Galatians 5:22-26 – “The Fruits of the Spirit”**

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

#### **John 20:19-23 – “Continuing the Ministry of Jesus”**

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

#### **2 Corinthians 5:16-21 – “Ambassadors of Reconciliation for Christ”**

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view;<sup>[a]</sup> even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we no longer know him in that way. So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

## Luke 4:16-22 – “Life for the hurting”

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to set free those who are oppressed,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is this not Joseph’s son?”

## Romans 10:14-17 – “The call to tell about Jesus”

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” But not all have obeyed the good news, for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Assign small groups of no more than 4-5 people to each one of the texts above. Have them discuss the text and the following questions in the group and then present back to the larger group.

1. As you look at the lessons above, what are some key values that you see your lesson emphasize?
2. When you think about core values you want your synod to embody, what values would you list as most essential in addition to those listed in the lessons above?

*Note: It can help to have individuals write their own thoughts on this first for a few minutes and then use those to share – more creativity and less competition for floor time!*

3. When you think about these and how you want your synod to function, as a group, which values would you want to emphasize – **make a list of 5-7 values that your small group wants to share.**

### ASSIGNMENT FOR YOUR LARGER GROUP

*Have each small group report and share their list of 5-7 values. Then work together to combine your all the lists and make a final composite list of **no more than 7 values** that you think should be in place as we do our ministry together. Write them on a piece of paper/easel paper and prepare them to present and turn in. Prepare this single list from your congregation as best as you can to share with the synod. Then send it in to the synod by email at [AlaskaVisionELCA@Gmail.com](mailto:AlaskaVisionELCA@Gmail.com) or load them into a Google doc by going here <https://forms.gle/ctKFErKnbhpryDT98>*