

TOWN MEETINGS

From the Director of Stewardship – Cary Mangus

What is a Town Meeting? Well, that is what we have decided to call a new concept in stewardship in the Virginia Synod. I must admit, I had nothing to do with the envisioning of this new concept. One night, last June, I received a call from Glen Rosendahl, a member and former administrator of College Lutheran Church in Salem. Glen shared with me that he and Gary Sahn, the stewardship committee chair at College Lutheran, had met to discuss their stewardship initiative for the coming year. In his words – “We are frustrated at how to keep coming up with new approaches”. He asked me if I would be willing to facilitate a meeting of stewardship people from around the Roanoke Valley, which would provide a forum for sharing the ideas, the successes, and the failures of what the different churches were doing in their stewardship programs. After one blink of the eye, I said “I am your man and I am excited!” Glen contacted all the local churches and we met in June of 2007. I HAVE TO TELL YOU IT WAS ONE OF THE BEST GATHERINGS TO WHICH I HAVE EVER PARTICIPATED! We had five churches participate in this time of sharing (College Lutheran, St. John Lutheran, St. Phillip Lutheran, Trinity Lutheran, and Christ Lutheran). We shared a meal (which I covered out of my budget through the ELCA), had a devotion and prayer, participated in an “ice-breaker”, shared an overview of the different response methods that are being used, had a time for each of the churches to speak to what they were doing and what was working (and not working) for them, and shared

some additional resources that are available (Mission Interpretation, new books, new programs, planned giving, etc.). Out of this meeting, stewardship became energized! Two of these churches offered Consecration Sunday models for the first time, two churches switched the timing of their annual appeals to the spring (divorcing “giving and the BUDGET” – hallelujah! – It’s really about faith raising!), and the other church....well, that was the one that effected the changes in the other four! How beautiful is the Body of Christ! I know this is true because I saw it with my own two eyes in June of 2007!

So, where do we go with this? I am willing anywhere in this Synod. My address is 6928 Ivy Mountain Drive – Roanoke, VA 24018, my email address is cjmangus@cox.net and my phone number is 540-774-8702. All we need are a few “Glen Rosendahls” in a few places throughout this state. You know, it is all kind of biblical. “Where two or three are gathered”! Why are we surprised?