

Report of Twin Ports Ministry to Seafarers

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On behalf of our entire organization, I wish to thank you and all members of the Northwestern Wisconsin Synod for your partnership in our ministry to and with seafarers.

The gospel of Luke, chapter 5, describes Simon Peter's call to fish for people. On that day, Jesus asked him to put out into the deep for a catch. In spite of the prior night's "caught nothing", Simon agrees, "At your word we will put down our nets."

What happens next is important. There were so many fish that 1. Their nets began to break and 2. They called to their partners in the other boat to join them, lest they sink under the weight of all those beautiful fish.

You know what comes next. Jesus hears a sinner's confession and then calls him to - from now on- be a fisher of people.

In our seafarers ministry, one "small boat" (seafarers' center) is not enough. One ship visitor is not enough. One small group of volunteers is not enough. One women's circle, one men's square, one youth group, one congregation, one conference, or one synod - is not enough. Our Lord has a larger vision.

Our ministry has been productive over the last 41 years, because men, women, children, congregations, and church-wide partners have answered God's call. Together we have become a large and strong "net" for welcoming those whom our Lord knows are ready to be caught.

Jesus showed that God cares about people, wherever they are, be they stranger or sojourner. And it is God who sends Simon and Simon's church to catch and care for seafarers too.

2009 has been a year of changes in our patterns of support and fellowship with the wider church. Where some synods have needed to cut back on their financial support, this change has not meant a diminishing of their spiritual encouragement or expressions of appreciation that we are still in this ministry together.

Several congregations, individuals, and maritime related donors have increased their support this year, an answer to prayer.

We have been blessed with increased occupancy in our center's guest rooms, by students (local and international) and gifted, yet underemployed individuals. They have also volunteered and added to the richness of our community.

By the end of the year we came very close to meeting our financial goals.

Representing the Northwestern WI synod, Rev. Darrel Kyle has served on our board. We are grateful for him and pray for him and the men and women in his care as a chaplain.

In 2010 we are hoping to welcome two or three additional ship visitor volunteers, and five or six center volunteers who can help with welcome and hospitality.

We welcome your involvement, prayers, and financial support in this shared ministry. We are hoping for an invitation to speak at your congregation on a Sunday or at a weekday event.

We thank God and you for all you have done to help keep this ministry renewed and vital. Our seafaring guests, from many nations, thank you.

Tom Anderson, director

