



## It's time to talk turkey . . .

Bishop Duane C. Pederson, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

Last summer, when ELCA youth gathered at the New Orleans Superdome, a local jazz group featured a nine-year-old accordion player. He was phenomenal and everyone was fired up when he performed. There was also a younger child, probably five or six. Strapped to his chest, he had a metal washboard-looking instrument upon which he made a percussion sound. He, too, could really “crank it!”

It is no secret how those two little boys came to play in the Superdome in front of 37,000 Lutheran teens. **It's because music permeated their home. They were surrounded and nurtured by adults who steeped them in jazz, who placed instruments in their hands at the same time they learned to walk, who encouraged them to join in whenever music was made, and who pushed them to practice and inspired them to find joy in the song. Music was woven into the very DNA of their beings because of caring adults who made music a priority in the lives of those little boys. They became gifted musicians at home.**

Lutherans know that the home is *the* primary setting where faith is passed from one generation to the next. The missional church is intentional in **supporting faith development at home. Martin Luther writes, “Most certainly father and mother are apostles, bishops, and priests to their children, for it is they who make them acquainted with the gospel. In short, there is no greater or nobler authority on earth than that of parents over their children, for this authority is both spiritual and temporal” [LW 45:46].**

This publication is designed to get us thinking (and acting) on the challenges that lay before us as we answer the question, “How is God calling us to engage our neighbor in this time, in this place?”

**The home is sometimes called the “domestic church.” I like that label very much. It helps us remember that “church” can be understood as two-pronged—the church that gathers around Word and Sacrament and the domestic church at home.**

**Is your congregational missional? Does your congregation equip families to be a “domestic church” in the lives of their children? Does your congregation understand its crucial partnership with parents, or is “church” simply a place where kids are dropped off to get some religion? Does your congregation view the home as church?**

Faith formation is a cooperative effort between home and congregation. If we cannot be missional with our own children when it comes to forming a relationship with Jesus, how can we be missional in welcoming our neighbor into a relationship with the Lord?

Like those little boys who have been nurtured by their families in jazz, may our families **surround their children with God's grace; place the Scriptures in their hands at the same time they learn to walk; encourage them to join in whenever prayers are offered, faith stories are shared, and service in the name of Jesus is done; and lead them in spiritual practices and inspiration in the Lord's song.**

Through the domestic church, may faith in Jesus be woven into the very DNA of our children. May parents and caring adults make the music of the Lord a priority in the lives of our little ones.

Bishop Duane Pederson  
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