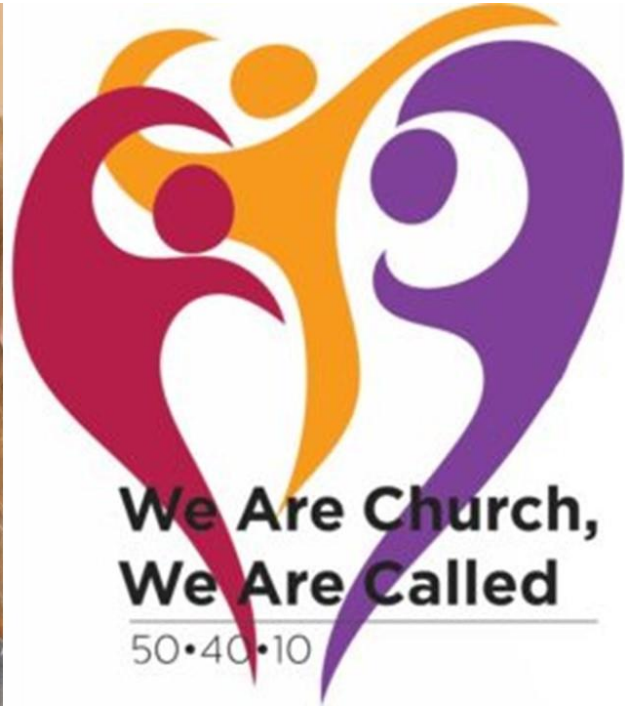


# FaithBIT



## It Takes a Village

Reflection by Dana Connett

When on church council, we were asked to share our faith stories. It was a meaningful exercise but also one that challenged me to reflect on what and who impacts my personal journey of faith. Now, in thinking about women in particular, I realize the African village metaphor of childrearing applies to "faith-rearing" also.

My mom was my first, and primary, example of faithful living. She instilled in me the value of weekly worship and Sunday school, service opportunities, and church involvement. I also witnessed her reading the Bible and a devotional every day, on good days and even on the difficult ones leading up to her early death. We always said table grace and evening prayers, and her everyday life was a godly example of kindness, humility, generosity, and compassion. Likewise, my sisters and nieces have always been, and still are, strong Christian women with whom I can share prayer requests or discuss biblical questions. As my children have grown into faithful young women, our discussions have also helped me to question, seek understanding, and grow in my faith.

I grew up attending a small country church that, over the years, called two women as pastors, something that, though new to the ELCA, I took for granted. It just WAS, and that, combined with my upbringing, led me to Concordia College in Moorhead, where I intended to pursue a pre-seminary degree. Although circumstances changed and I entered the secondary teaching profession instead, I never lost that tug nudging me toward God. Years later, Pastor Susan reawakened my interest, which is when I became a confirmation guide and joined the Wednesday morning women's Bible study. I cannot express how much this group of women has influenced my faith, my understanding of the Bible, and my personal relationship with God over the years.

It matters not the age of the women in my life nor the stage of life I'm in, for my village of mother, sisters, daughters, pastors, and Bible study women have all nurtured me, encouraged me, blessed me, and set examples I hope to emulate.