**Message from Matt - Gen F**

To Those Attending the Metro Chicago Synod Assembly Workshop

“Congregations Always Being Made New” - May 31, 2013

**Matt Ammentorp, Edison Park LC, Chicago, IL - Senior, University of Virginia - 2013**

“If congregations are losing the Facebook generation, the church is losing its own future. Ed Kruse can provide the statistics, but looking in the pews one can gather from first-hand observation that people in my generation are not engaged by what organized religion is offering.

“An easy justification could be that young people today do not have room for God in their lives with too many Tweets to send, texts to answer, and blogs to read. While I'll admit that time is a hot commodity among the Facebook generation, I don't think that line of reasoning tells the whole story.

“I also refuse to believe that people my age are just not spiritual people. While I may be one among only a handful of my close peers who is open about a belief in Christ, many of my friends went to church at some point in their lives or seek a spiritual life of some form.

“In my humble but informed opinion, I think that the primary reason that young people are not active members of a church stems from a skepticism that the church's activities fail to help members sufficiently build a closer relationship with God.

“Do congregations seek members to help people grow closer to God or do they seek members to help pay the bills? Are church hierarchies in place to help further causes in which members strongly believe or to ensure several opportunities for expensive ideas to be rejected? Is the weekly service meant as an opportunity to join members together in praise or to collect income? These are some of the questions that inquisitive, skeptical members of Generation F might entertain.

“If your congregation wants to draw in this segment of the population, it will have to speak to young people. They will have to listen to young people in a way that demonstrates a sincere interest in bringing these individuals into a closer relationship with Christ.

“The congregation that successfully engages Generation F will need to meet it in the places where it already is, including but not limited to Twitter, universities, Starbucks, the local gym or basketball court, and, as the name alludes, Facebook. Gen F may not show up for worship at 8AM on Sunday morning, but it will happily meet for a frozen yogurt Wednesday night to discuss why God would create us, or get together on Saturday afternoon for a pickup game of basketball with a prayer after post-game handshakes.

“Gen F may not conform to the traditional methods of worship, but writing off young people is a death wish for today's church. A lost cause? No. Lost sheep merely seeking the right opportunity to join the fold? I believe so.”