

Slow growth

By [Brian Hiortdahl](#)

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*For more commentary on this week's readings, see the [Reflections on the Lectionary](#) page, which includes Hiortdahl's current Living by the Word column as well as past magazine and blog content. For full-text access to all articles, [subscribe](#) to the Century.*

At this year's great Vigil of Easter, our congregation welcomed four new adult members: three women and one of their husbands.

The young couple who joined found our church because she remembered me from a time of sudden tragedy. She was to be a bridesmaid in her best friend's Friday afternoon wedding...but the bride's younger sister was found dead Thursday morning. Those gathering for a wedding attended a funeral instead, at which I tried to sow a word of honesty and hope.

Years later, this woman and her husband, once heartbroken for her devastated friend, found a faith community.

The second woman came four years ago, eager to be involved--then lasting only a couple of months before she disappeared. This year, just as suddenly, she has reappeared, hungry for the word and active among us, demonstrating new depth of commitment. She also insists that her agnostic husband attend with her, and I fling the word at him too. We'll see.

I saw the third woman in a neighborhood restaurant one morning six years after I baptized her newborn twins. As students in a Lutheran day school, they had started to ask her questions to which she did not have answers. So she asked me to teach her the basics of the faith, a doorway into the adult catechumenate. Then she was baptized at the Easter Vigil.

All these stories took years to develop in fallow soil, and in each there is growth yet to come. Sometimes the story takes time; sometimes the lost seed isn't lost after all.

Praise Christ, the wise sower who also comes to seek and save the lost.