



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

North/West Lower Michigan Synod

2900 N. Waverly Rd.

Lansing MI 48906

T 517-321-5066

F 517-321-2632

www.mittensynod.org

February 20, 2012

In the beginning was the Word John 1:1a

Dear Members of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod,

I write this during the time (January 30-February 22) when we have asked all congregations to complete and submit the six-question Discernment Process Response Form. I have been praying that the Holy Spirit will guide you in articulating your congregation's particular giftedness and mission potential. I have been praying too that the Spirit would quicken your imagination about our life together as a synod, what it would be like at its best.

Your contribution in this process will inform and help to paint a picture of who we are and who we are becoming in witnessing to God's grace and truth revealed in Jesus, the Word made flesh. At the joint Synod Assembly, May 17-19, voting members and visitors from your congregation will hear and see the composite result of the responses from up to the 240 congregations in the North/West Lower Michigan Synod and the Southeast Michigan Synod.

We will gather at this Assembly around the words many congregations now hear after the reading of the Lessons in our weekly liturgies: "Word of God, Word of Life." Through the Word, written, spoken, and incarnate, God imparts life. John 1 and I John 1 beautifully express the mystery of God speaking us and all of creation into being. We will gather at the Lansing Center with our sisters and brothers from Southeast Michigan, to give praise and thanks for this life-giving Word.

We'll hear from the lips of Jim Mauney, bishop of the Virginia Synod, of the power and ultimate joy of the Word, expressed in law and gospel. Jim has been deeply influenced by the witness of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, forged in the fires of Nazi Germany. Through two Bible studies, Jim will witness to the centrality of Christ, our very real and great hope.

Through the congregational offerings your members bring we'll launch a bold endeavor to participate in raising \$15 million in the next three years through the ELCA Malaria Campaign, our part of a world-wide effort to prevent, treat, perhaps even eradicate this disease which takes away the life of another child every 45 seconds. We'll also give through a second offering an encouraging boost to our newest mission start, Advent Lutheran in Lake Ann. Advent is poised to break ground for their first ministry facility this fall.

Things we'd like you to know:

- Requests to lead a workshop at the Assembly should be received by March 1.
- Resolutions and Nomination Forms by March 15.
- Requests for Table Displays by April 16. Registrations by April 16
- *See the Assembly Overall Instructions document (posted on our website) for more details.*

Bishop Don Kreiss and I look forward to seeing and greeting the 700 or so disciples who will gather in May. We look forward to what God will do.

~ Bishop John