



South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



December 12, 2017

Dear Partners in Ministry,

As you gather for your annual meetings, I want to express my deep appreciation for our ongoing partnership in this good gospel work to which we have been called.

We in your synod office continue to focus on our mission of *caring for, connecting, and equipping the congregations of our synod to be the heart and hands of Jesus*. Following are just a few of the ways we have carried out this mission with your support in the past year.

- 2017 was a year to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. Ecumenical events were held around the synod to demonstrate our commitment to walking with our fellow Christians on the way from Conflict to Communion. For too long we have focused on what divides us from one another. Now we look with gratitude at the faith that unites us. **We are Church!**
- At LEAD (Leadership Education and Development) our keynote speaker, Dr. Kurt Hendel, reflected on the historic roots of the Reformation and the Spirit of Reformation we carry into the future. This year's LEAD event is scheduled for March 10, 2018, and in addition to the usual opportunities for workshops and worship, Rev. Ruben Duran, Director of ELCA New Starts, will be joining us to present on opportunities for innovative new ministries as we move into the future. **We are Lutheran!**
- At our Synod Assembly in 2017, we were blessed to have Mark Tidsworth, the author of *Shift*, with us as we learned about three big moves the 21st century church needs to make as it moves into the future. If you missed the Assembly, I encourage you to read and discuss his book in your congregations. Our God is always on the move and Mark Tidsworth offers insights to congregations on how to get moving as well. In 2018, in addition to the Bishop's election at our Synod Assembly, we have invited our Partner Synod Bishop, Felipe Lozada, and his wife, Ana, to join us. He will bring us greetings from our siblings in the Caribbean Synod, and provide updates on hurricane recovery in Puerto Rico. **We are church together!**
- Thank you for your contributions to Puerto Rico relief efforts. To date, your donations through our synod office to the Caribbean synod office, total \$14,542.27. We are also aware that some of our congregations have personal connections to congregations in Puerto Rico, and are providing direct assistance as well. Through the Campaign for the ELCA, we also have contributed to scholarships to raise up and train leaders in our church, ongoing congregational renewal, global mission work, disaster response, feeding the hungry, providing clean water, and so many other ways of reaching out with the love of Jesus. Don't forget your *Million Dollar Mission Jars* which we will be bringing in to our 2018 Synod Assembly. **We are church for the sake of the world!**

As always, the synod staff is privileged to be involved in the lives of our congregations in many ways: We celebrate times of joy and new beginnings with you; work with you in times of pastoral transition; guide you in reviewing the ministry God has called you to in your community; provide you with resources for navigating change and the anxiety that can produce; visit in your faith communities to build relationships of mutual trust and respect. Thank you for welcoming us into your faith homes.

Thanks so much for your partnership in this ministry. It is because of you, and the resources that you share with the larger church, that we are able to do this work together. As our synod enters a time of discernment and anticipates the election of a new Bishop, I want to express just what an honor and a privilege it has been to serve in ministry with you.

By your hands may love be shared,
By your voice may peace be spoken,
By your eyes may beauty be seen,
By your ears may truth be heard,
And by your life may the Song of Christ be sung!

God's Peace,

Bishop Mary Stumme Froiland