



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

Dear Friends in Christ,

The preacher C.H. Spurgeon once said, "By perseverance the snail reached the ark." Sit with that for just a moment. 2020 felt to me a lot like the journey the snail undertook to the ark. So much of 2020 seemed like a slow crawl along a muddy, unknown, and uncertain path. Like the snail, we may have had days when we forgot what we were crawling toward or what the journey was all about. We may have lost track of the summons to go to the ark altogether.

But, by perseverance the snail reached the ark. This is incredible grace. This too was 2020. The 138 congregations and ministries of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin proclaimed God's Word, provided places and spaces for people to keep connecting to their community of faith, and reached out in generosity to neighbors. You persevered. Even as we felt it to be a muddy, unknown, unending path beneath us, the church kept crawling forward with the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

You are reading this report because you care about your congregation. Thank you for that care, especially this year, and thank you for attending your congregation's annual meeting. I know you have had to adapt in ways you never imagined. Thank you for persisting.

Please know that your synod, the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, is committed to being your partner in ministry. CARE-CONNECT-EQUIP are our values. In 2021 we will continue to foster partnerships that help us live out these values. We will persevere on the path together:

- With conferences, the synod council, and the office of bishop
- Among and between congregations
- Among and between rostered and lay leaders
- With ecumenical and global partners
- Between ELCA congregations, the synod and the national church

I am deeply grateful for this new calling to serve with you as bishop. I am honored to call this synod my home and believe that God is leading us forward together. Together may we find new ways to share God's grace, build community and to be Christ's presence along the path.

In Christ,

Joy Mortensen-Wiebe

Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe