



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

– John 3:16

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

John 3:16, perhaps one of the most quoted passages in the New Testament, hangs on bed sheets in football stadiums; it is almost ubiquitous. It is also true. If God so loves the world, we should too. Lutherans show up – as Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and as The Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

We are church for the sake of the world.

In our congregations we address hunger and poverty through food pantries and community gardens, in health care clinics and job training programs. We foster unity among the children of God in relationship with our ecumenical and inter-religious partners. Together, with our companions in Central America, we are working with unaccompanied minors and the conditions in their countries of origin that force these children to flee. Through LWF, we support Syrian refugees in Jordan who are living in Za’atari camp, provide education and child protection assistance to Sudanese refugees, and offer specialty care at the Augusta Victoria Hospital for Palestinians.

We have surpassed our fundraising commitment to eradicate malaria and bring about lasting change. *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* will emphasize ELCA World Hunger this year to support our comprehensive approach to solve challenges that perpetuate hunger and poverty. All of this good and hard, sometimes dangerous, work is the work we are able to do because we are church abiding in Christ – God’s beloved people gathered around word and sacrament.

We are church for the sake of the world.

In preparation for the 500th anniversary observance of the Reformation, I encourage you to visit ELCA500.org for more information and resources. One of the featured events for the 500th anniversary is the Grace Gathering in conjunction with the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. Come experience a churchwide assembly, be centered in God’s word, participate in experiential learning, hear Nobel Peace Prize winner Leymah Gbowee, attend workshops to equip you in observing the 500th anniversary in your local ministry setting and much more! You can register today at ELCA.org/GraceGathering.

On Sept. 11, our country will be remembering the lives lost and the lives forever changed by the tragic events 15 years ago. The events affected all of us, and it will be an important moment for us to be together as a church and with all people of faith. Part of our “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday on Sept. 11 is a chance for us to show up as Lutherans, freed and renewed in Christ, to serve and love our neighbor.

We are church for the sake of the world.

As we gather in our assemblies, let us be a faithful witness to God's work in our local communities, across the country and around the world. I am hopeful that our time together in assembly will be an opportunity for us to get to know each other and come together as a church. This is a good time for us to talk about the priorities and future directions of the ELCA.

I will be leading a process endorsed by the ELCA Church Council and the Conference of Bishops to discern in faith the future of the ELCA. Through an initiative titled Called Forward Together in Christ, we'll be assessing where we are as God's people and working to understand what God has in store for us. I am inviting you to take part in a conversation about the future of this church. For more information or to get involved, visit ELCA.org/future.

Thank you for your continued prayers and encouragement. As I am out and about in my travels, I am reminded that no one of us does God's work alone, and I am grateful for the opportunity to be a partner with you in that service. Thank you for your leadership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

God's blessings to you as you gather as the living body of Christ. May you be guided by the Spirit as you do God's will for God's people.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton".

Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



2016 Report of the Bishop to The South Dakota Synod, ELCA

Deuteronomy 10:11

The Lord said to Moses, "Get up, go on your journey at the head of the people, that they may go in and occupy the land that I swore to their ancestors to give them."

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

First, I know that I'm not Moses and I don't believe we are being invited to occupy a new land, but I do believe we are being invited into a future that is held by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, just as it was for those who have gone before us. Since we were last together I have caught glimpses of that future in my travels across South Dakota, and as I have traveled across this faith community that gathers together around the world, called the ELCA.

It was my privilege to worship with the fine people at St Paul, in Java, SD on their mission festival recent where, although small in number, they still have a passion for sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with brothers and sisters around the world through their gifts and offerings.

My wife LaDonna and I rejoiced and worshiped with 30,000 young people in Detroit during the ELCA Youth Gathering last summer. It was heartwarming to work with kids from Custer Lutheran Fellowship, alongside young people from across America in cleaning up the yard of the oldest home in Detroit.

During my time in Atlanta at the Worship Jubilee last July, I was blessed by hearing fine preachers of the Gospel, multiple invitations to participate in glorious music, and witnessed worship leaders from across the church being renewed and energized. We had the privilege of listening to Mrs. Mary Harris Gurley, who sung at the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's funeral. Though she was frail in body, she still had a voice that could fill the sanctuary with such sweet sounds.

I could see the old country that we were leaving behind and touch the future as we celebrated 25 years of being a faith community for the folks of The Lutheran Church of Faith and Hope in Nicaragua. I was honored to be invited to preach and then delighted to participate in multiple ordinations of pastors that will be serving the church in the future. The children told the history of the church through a play that they had written and performed for us. I so enjoyed our time in Nicaragua with Herman and Jeanette Fink; Carla Borchardt, our Vice President; Susan Marone, AIM; and the Rev. Natanael Lizarazo, our Companion Synod Coordinator. It was heartwarming to see how projects that we are participating in bear such fruit at Cedro Galan. We anticipate a future where we have a new mission coordinator in Nicaragua working with the synod office, the churches of the ELCA, and the Church of Faith and Hope.

I was invited by a group called Fair Witness to travel to Israel and spent eight days meeting Palestinian and Israeli leaders from various walks of life. From the twenty-three year old grandson of a Palestinian farmer born in a refugee camp in Bethlehem, to the founder of the Palestinian Stock Exchange, to the retired Colonel who directed the building of the wall, to a Major in the Israeli Defense Force, we listened to the voices of the those who can only hear their narrative of a future being thwarted by the narratives of those around them. We also heard the voices of those who everyday are striving to bring about a future where there is room for all those gathered into the Land we call Holy.

It was a joy to lead a group of twenty-four to Germany this past November as we explored the lives and ministries of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther, Cranach the Elder, Frederick the Great, Katherine von Boren and other key players of the Reformation. What I always appreciate about the Reformation is the confluence of many individuals who were striving to regain the centrality of Jesus Christ as the center of the church and what that meant for their life together.

We will continue that exploration of what the Reformation has meant and will mean for us, as we gather at our Synod Assembly this June. We will hear from the Rev. Dr. Olaf Roynesdal, the Rev. Henrique Fleming, and the Rev. Ruben Duran exploring from what the future of the Reformation will mean for us, each from their own perspective. We have teams preparing materials that congregations and pastors will be able to use starting this fall. Our speakers for our Fall Theological events in 2016 and 2017 will also focus on the Reformation and its ongoing impact on our lives and communities of faith. I will be leading a group of those who are interested in September 2017 to Germany. We hope to conclude our observance of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation on November 1, 2017 with a synod-wide worship service.

I want each of you to know how appreciative I have been of those Pastors, AIMs and congregational leaders that have faithful and adeptly served the church. However, they continue to retire from active leadership and we continue the need to replace them with leaders for now and the future. We just concluded our First Call retreat at Joy Ranch and I am encouraged by the faithfulness and ability of those who are arriving to serve in South Dakota. The work of recruitment, education, and support is not finished; the future of the church continues to unfold. Our campaign "Listen God is Calling, Never Be the Same" has been successful but it is not done. As part of the fulfillment of the campaign I will ask that the Synod Council approve the hiring of a full time recruiter, whose job it is to invite men and women into the process of becoming pastors for this church, yet this year.

We continue to explore and test new ways of providing pastoral leadership to the congregations of South Dakota. We have seven individuals in the Kairos program serving seven rural parishes across South Dakota as they are educated and trained at the Sioux Falls Seminary through the Luther House of Study.

As I finish this report, I do so on the day that I was privileged to baptize our eighth grandchild. We gathered with family and friends, surrounded by the good people of St. Mark's Lutheran, Sioux Falls who are ably led by the Rev. Lori Hope. It was a celebration of the promises that our Lord and Savior made to that little girl and that He has made to us. The promises that death does not win, that life in Jesus Christ is possible because Christ offers it as a gift, and that no matter what, He will never stop loving her or us. I invite all of us to do what each of us can so that those who have not yet heard of Jesus might have the same gift of a faith community centered in Jesus Christ surrounding them.

Yours in Christ,



The Rev. David B. Zellmer
Bishop of the South Dakota Synod, ELCA

CONGREGATION ANNIVERSARIES and ROSTER CHANGES

(as of 5/11/16)

Anniversaries and Dedications

125th Anniversary

Zion Lutheran Church, Garretson

100th Anniversary

First Lutheran Church, Claire City

Salem Lutheran Church, Mount Vernon

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mud Butte

50th Anniversary

Resurrection Lutheran Church, Pierre

25th Anniversary

St Dysmas Of South Dakota Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls

Commissioning

05/30/2015

Tom Martin, AIM

Installations

05/17/2015

Christie Meier, AIM, Tea, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran

05/29/2015

Rev. Karen Ressel, Pine Ridge Retreat Center

05/30/2015

Tom Martin, AIM, Rapid City, Calvary Lutheran

06/21/2015

Maria Cabello-Salomon, TEEM, Sioux Falls, Pueblo de Dios

07/11/2015

Rev. Sami Wertz Johnson, Sioux Falls Our Savior's Lutheran

08/09/2015

Rev. Michael Mortvedt, Brookings, Ascension Lutheran

08/16/2015

Rev. Bryan Taffe, Willow Lake, Good Hope Lutheran

08/23/2015

Rev. Josh Johnson, Sioux Falls, Eastside Lutheran

08/30/2015

Rev. Warren Lahammer, Rapid City, Faith Lutheran

09/13/2015

Rev. Tera Lowe, Bison, American Lutheran

09/27/2015

Rev. Cheryl Rondeau-Bassett, Claire City, First Lutheran

10/11/2015

Rev. Lando Anderson, Hartford, Zion Lutheran

10/11/2015

Rev. Nicholas Collins, Sioux Falls, Holy Cross Lutheran

12/06/2015

Rev. Dr. James Fowler, Vermillion, Trinity Lutheran

12/13/2015

Rev. Cassandra Lamb, Warner, St John Lutheran

01/10/2016

Rev. Mindy Ehrke, Florence, Goodhue Lutheran

02/07/2016

Rev. Alan Blankenfeld, Colman, Colman Lutheran

02/14/2016

Rev. Henrique Fleming, Rapid City, Woyatan Lutheran

05/01/2016

Rev. Debora Grismer, Hermosa, Our Savior's Lutheran

Necrology

09/08/2015

Rev. Judeen Johnson

09/09/2015

Rev. Harold Verhulst

10/08/2015

Rev. Alden Hovda

10/18/2015

Rev. Noble Kile

12/11/2015 Rev. Marjorie Hershey
04/05/2016 Rev. Donald Niedringhaus

On Leave from Call

06/1/2015 Rev. Nancy Hong
07/11/2015 Rev. Janice Wiersma
12/1/2015 Rev. Katie Johnson
02/1/2016 Rev. Rhonda Hanisch
04/1/2016 Rev. George Ekeren-Moening

Ordinations

05/22/2015 Rev. Tera Lowe
05/23/2015 Rev. Karen Ressel
06/06/2015 Rev. Samantha Wertz Johnson
06/11/2015 Rev. Joshua Johnson
06/17/2015 Rev. Warren Lahammer
06/19/2015 Rev. Cheryl Rondeau-Bassett
06/20/2015 Rev. Bryan Taffe
09/11/2015 Rev. Lando Anderson
01/23/2016 Rev. Alan Blankenfeld

Resigned from Roster

03/05/2016 Rev. Daniel Ostercamp

Retired

07/01/2015 Rev. Francis Bunk
07/01/2015 Barbara Bunk, AIM
07/01/2015 Rev. Obed Nelson
09/01/2015 Rev. Karen Rupp
09/15/2015 Rev. Tryphine Schruba
01/01/2016 Rev. Glen Enright

Transferred Into South Dakota

05/17/2015 Rev. Peter Strommen, 3I SE Minnesota
12/06/2015 Rev. Dr. James Fowler, 4F TX-LA Gulf Coast

Transferred Out of South Dakota

09/01/2015 Alan Saatkamp, AIM, 4B Central States
09/21/2015 Rev. Adam Butler, 3F Southwestern MN
09/21/2015 Rev. Frank Philipp, 2E Rocky Mountain
12/13/2015 Rev. Andrew Nelson, 5E Western Iowa
12/15/2015 Rev. Laurie Jungling, 1F Montana
12/16/2015 Rev. Kristin Ostercamp, 3D Northwestern MN
02/01/2016 Rev. Dr Rolf Svano, 3I Southeastern MN
02/08/2016 Rev. Patrick Hahn, 9B North Carolina
02/16/2016 Rev. Charles Meyer, 5E Western Iowa
02/17/2016 Rev. Lyle Rossing, 2D Grand Canyon

Report of Pastor Bill Tesch, Director For Evangelical Mission 2016 South Dakota Synod Assembly

¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation...
2 Corinthians 5:17-18

Thank you for calling me to partner with the people and congregations of our synod these last eight and a half years. It has been such a gift to be a witness and to have a role in the ways that God is using us to reconcile the world through Jesus Christ. God's work of making a new creation among us was powerfully evident in 2015-16.

Growing in Faith Together (G.i.F.T.): This is our revised program of transformational ministry training. Through this new four-part training congregational teams learn to guide their congregation through a season of renewal. The results are that members deepen their followership of Jesus Christ and their relationships with each other and the wider community. Through tools intended to facilitate listening, the congregation reveals God's purpose for them in their time and place. They then design guiding principles and a plan to help the congregation move forward with renewed energy and greater focus. Sometimes congregations apply for and receive grants to fund their plans and to create greater accountability. This year we had our first cohort of five congregations complete the training. We will hope to have at least two cohorts undertake this training this year.

Ventures in Growing Stewards: This four-part training guides a team of leaders and the pastor toward implementing a holistic year-round plan for growing Christian stewards. The results are that congregations regain a faith perspective on this often-difficult area of ministry and almost always see greater and more joyful generosity. We now have had 20 congregations complete this training and our goal will be to have 15 more this year.

New Congregational Development: One of the greatest joys and also challenges of my work is accompanying our newest congregations and worshipping communities on your behalf. This year our newest congregations have seen important developments.

- *Pueblo de Dios* – the tireless work of Pastor Jeanette Clark and TEEM candidate Maria Caballo Salmon and the people of this ministry are bearing great fruit in growing worship attendance and growing disciples. 70+ children hear and experience God's love in the Logos program. Five key leaders have begun Christian leadership training through Agora – a partnership that provides training to immigrant ministries.
- *Woyatan* – Pastor Henrique Flemming has been called as the mission developer to this vital congregation, and a guiding coalition of leaders from the Rapid City area is coming together to plan the new retreat center or multi-cultural center made possible by our "Listen God is Calling" appeal.
- *First Lutheran African Ministry* – This ministry among West African immigrants continues to thrive. The next stage of their development will see Abraham Gayetaye beginning his seminary education to become their pastoral leader.
- *Table of Grace* is One of our newest church starts. Pastor Jess Daum has gathered a team of leaders and is reaching out to the community in the Harrisburg School District

in many creative and effective ways. The emerging congregation expects to have preview worship services this spring and begin worship next fall.

- *Church on the Street*: Rebel Hurd out of Peace Lutheran in Sioux Falls is leading this newest worshipping community of our synod. The plan is to share the word and celebrate the sacrament among people who struggle with homelessness right on the street where God is already at work among people who attempt to live in corners, boxes and alleys and shelters of the city of Sioux Falls. Congregation partners will gather with the emerging worshipping community and relationships will be formed across this socio-economic divide.

AN INVITATION -- Area Strategy Tables are a fruitful way for congregations who share a mission field or live in somewhat close proximity to come together, listen to God and each other and then imagine and plan the ways that God is calling them to work together. This has been effective this last year in a small rural community where three congregations wanted to strengthen their witness to their community and in our state's largest city where 17 congregations developed five initiatives including two new congregations, and addiction ministry, a social service ministry among Spanish speaking immigrants and an evangelism ministry. *What about you and your congregation?* What can you do together with area congregations that you could not do alone? Let's begin a journey of listening to God, each other and your surrounding community in order to discover your church's next faith adventure. Give me a call. I'd love to work with you on an Area Strategy Table designed just for your context.

Gratitude: I am grateful for the partnership I have with Bishop Zellmer, Susan Marone, all of our great synod staff, and all our churchwide partners. This work would not be possible without their collaboration and amazing competency.

Military Deployment: I have shared with Bishop Zellmer that I will likely be deployed in my role as a Chaplain for the South Dakota Air National Guard for 6 to 8 months in 2017 somewhere over seas. I crave your prayers during this time, especially for my family.

Thank you again for your partnership in the Gospel!

Soli Deo Gloria!



Pastor Bill Tesch

Synod Assembly Report, May 2016
Submitted by Susan Marone, MA, LPC, AIM
Associate to Bishop Zellmer

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

It continues to be a great honor and privilege to serve on the SD Synod Staff! I feel very blessed to be part of a talented, gifted and supportive team of colleagues and working with the many fine rostered and lay leaders of our synod!

This year was filled with congregational visits, conducting Parish Studies for congregations with Rostered Leader vacancies, and accompanying candidates in the candidacy process. One of the great joys of this work is working with newly called rostered leaders! Newly ordained pastors of the SD Synod include:

Pastor Tera Lowe, 3-pt, American/Indian Creek/Rosebud, Bison
Pastor Karen Ressel, Pine Ridge Retreat Center
Pastor Sami Wertz Johnson, Our Savior's Lutheran, Sioux Falls
Pastor Josh Johnson, East Side Lutheran, Sioux Falls
Pastor Warren Lahammer, Faith Lutheran, Rapid City
Pastor Cheryl Rondeau-Bassett, 3-pt, First, Claire City/Faith, New Effington/Our Savior's, Veblen
Pastor Bryan Taffe, 4-pt, Prairie Star Lutheran Parish, Bryant/Vienna/Willow Lake
Pastor Lando Anderson, Zion Lutheran, Hartford
Pastor Alan Blankenfeld, Colman Lutheran, Colman/Midway Lutheran, Flandreau
Pastor Josh Knudsen, 3-pt, First, Artesian/Trinity, Carthage/Immanuel, Iroquois
Pastor Bob O'Connor, Gloria Dei, Sioux Falls

Commissioned as Associates in Ministry include: Tom Martin, AIM, Calvary Lutheran, Rapid City.

I continue to enjoy working with the Candidacy Committee as we accompany 43 candidates in responding to a call to ministry in the ELCA. The annual Candidacy Retreat was held in April and we had 34 attendees including the committee. We are piloting a new program called Kairos with Luther House of Study, Luther Seminary and Sioux Falls Seminary. Candidates have the opportunity to serve in their congregations as Synodically Authorized Ministers and continue their seminary education at the same time. We presently have 6 people enrolled in the program.

I had the exciting opportunity to serve as the keynote speaker for Fall Theological on the topic of "Emotional Intelligence." We then sponsored a 5 day workshop on the topic at Joy Ranch and 12 of our rostered leaders attended. I also spent 10 days in Germany in November on a "Luther" tour and thoroughly enjoyed the educational experience!

I continue to grow and thrive in my call to synodical ministry and am grateful for our ministry together!

Peace,
Susan Marone, MA, LPC, AIM



2016 Report Lutheran Lakota Shared Ministries

Greetings from Pine Ridge,

The ministry at the Pine Ridge Retreat Center (PRRC) can be divided into two broad areas. The first is responding to a knock at the door from the people in the community. These threshold ministries can be thought of as projects. And the other is providing hospitality and cross cultural immersion between visiting teams and the people living in the community. This ministry focuses on relationships.

Threshold Ministries: Coffee & sandwiches, quilts & blankets, hygiene kits, and baby diapers & wipes. In addition, the after school Sanctuary Program for children provides a safe place to play and worship. We have challenged ourselves to discover ways to shift the focus from providing the material items to ways of helping folks find the ability to provide for themselves and their families. As a result, some exciting new ministries are emerging:

- The energy assistance program was expanded to include a matching fund. People in the community provided \$3,450 for themselves, and through the generosity of our funding partners, the program provided \$7500 to provide heat for 42 households that included 105 adults and 154 children. Our partner AMEND provided energy assistance for 10 of those households.
- Through a generous grant from Thrivent we have begun the Takoje Wachi Oyate (Grandchildren's Dance Society). Kelly and Susie Looking Horse are teaching traditional dance and drumming to the youth who come to the Sanctuary program. Everyone who is interested is invited to practice during Kids' Time and we will have ten children that will receive regalia and dance at three pow wows this summer.
- A new partnership with the SuAnne Big Crow Youth Center will be launching this summer. Planning is underway for our visiting teams to provide a day camp for the children in the community Monday through Friday during the summer vacation. (This partnership is also supported in part by the Thrivent grant.)
- Finding ways to provide gainful employment is critical to helping people in this community to learn life skills and support themselves and their families. We are currently employing two individuals to do the janitorial and general maintenance of our building. A Day Labor fund is in the planning phase and we are hoping that it will be up and running soon.

Immersion & Hospitality Ministries: Hosting visiting faith based and academic groups in cross cultural immersions. This ministry includes programming and presentations that strive to provide space for mutual conversation and greater understanding of each other. Although there is a service project element included, the focus is on creating healthy, mutually respectful relationships. We strive to address and break down barriers that are supported by negative stereotypes to open the door to deeper appreciation for each other.

Visiting groups attend worship at various local congregations and time is spent discussing the similarities of our faith traditions. Very often there is a blending of traditions and embracing the beauty of diversity in those traditions is part of our evening Talking Circles as well as other questions or concerns that may have been experienced during the day. These Talking Circles provide a time of open, honest dialog.

We have opened our facility to other groups to provide a meeting space for learning and healing. We are partnering with Thunder Valley to host a financial literacy training for the people of the Pine Ridge Village. A grief support group held their meetings this past winter in our building. We are hosting an Art Show during the weeks when we have visiting teams that have been very successful in creating healthier boundaries and conversations between the community and our visitors. We will continue to be open to opportunities to support local groups in their work and ministries.

As the new pastor and director of the Lutheran Lakota Shared Ministries I have been invited to share the vision of this ministry in presentations and educational forums. I am forever grateful for these opportunities and your interest! Financial, material and prayerful support is provided by many individuals and congregations across the country who are partners in this ministry! Special thanks to my colleagues in the Bear Butte Conference, the Steering Committee, our Ecumenical Partners, Bill Tesch, Bishop Zellmer, the Synod Staff & Council for the words of encouragement, prayers, and support. We are truly servants together!

Mitakuye Oysin!

Rev. Karen Ressel (Pastor Kay)

Director of Native American Ministry, South Dakota Synod of the ELCA

Faith Formation/Youth Ministry Synod Coordinator
Suzanne Hansen AIM

This year, 2016, is a year of looking ahead to what can be helpful to congregations in the South Dakota Synod in helping to continue to impress the importance of faith formation. The newest is the forming of a Children and Family Ministry Network that meets once a month to continue to connect with each other. Milestones Ministries is a topic that is continually talked about along with ideas about Sunday School and Bible School.

The ELCA Youth Gathering was held last July in Detroit and was a huge success. The South Dakota Synod had over 1,000 High School Youth attending. South Dakota Synod had the most Youth attending of all the 65 Synods. This year is a “tweener” year for the Youth, so attending the Lutheran Outdoors camps and mission trips are the focal point for the youth in South Dakota. It is important that we all keep in mind the great ministry that the young adults and the adults that help with the Youth Ministry do for this Synod in spreading the word of Jesus Christ in their words and service.

Thanks for all the support that is given by the South Dakota Synod.

Leadership & Mission Appeal South Dakota Synod ELCA

2016 Assembly Report

I was pleased to report to the 2015 assembly that with gifts received at the assembly the appeal reached \$600,000. As of the writing of this report, gifts to date have reached \$1,872,388 and more gifts are anticipated to be received before the assembly. My thanks for your generosity are expressed in the words of the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians: "I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy for all of you." Thanks to God for your generous response.

The Leaders Gifts and Rostered Leaders Gift phases of the appeal are completed and work continues on the Major Gifts and Congregation Gifts phases. We are so grateful for all the volunteers who have assisted with the appeal. Over 165 volunteers have worked in leadership roles in the appeal and I am so grateful for their work. If we continue our efforts during this last year of the appeal we can certainly reach our basic goal and move closer to the stated over all need of \$4,000,000.

IS YOUR CONGREGATION INVOLVED IN THE APPEAL?

- Every congregation in the South Dakota Synod is invited to:
 1. Participate in the appeal
 2. Appoint a congregation appeal leader(s)
 3. Set a congregation goal for the appeal
- When your congregation has appointed the appeal leader, contact the appeal office so that materials and training can be provided for your appeal leader.

I rejoice every time I have the privilege of signing thank you letters for the hundreds of donors who have supported the appeal. Thanks again for your generous support.

If you would like more specific information about the appeal, contact the appeal office.

Rev. Robert Hansen, Appeal Director



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

– John 3:16

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

John 3:16, perhaps one of the most quoted passages in the New Testament, hangs on bed sheets in football stadiums; it is almost ubiquitous. It is also true. If God so loves the world, we should too. Lutherans show up – as Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and as The Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

We are church for the sake of the world.

In our congregations we address hunger and poverty through food pantries and community gardens, in health care clinics and job training programs. We foster unity among the children of God in relationship with our ecumenical and inter-religious partners. Together, with our companions in Central America, we are working with unaccompanied minors and the conditions in their countries of origin that force these children to flee. Through LWF, we support Syrian refugees in Jordan who are living in Za’atari camp, provide education and child protection assistance to Sudanese refugees, and offer specialty care at the Augusta Victoria Hospital for Palestinians.

We have surpassed our fundraising commitment to eradicate malaria and bring about lasting change. *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* will emphasize ELCA World Hunger this year to support our comprehensive approach to solve challenges that perpetuate hunger and poverty. All of this good and hard, sometimes dangerous, work is the work we are able to do because we are church abiding in Christ – God’s beloved people gathered around word and sacrament.

We are church for the sake of the world.

In preparation for the 500th anniversary observance of the Reformation, I encourage you to visit ELCA500.org for more information and resources. One of the featured events for the 500th anniversary is the Grace Gathering in conjunction with the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. Come experience a churchwide assembly, be centered in God’s word, participate in experiential learning, hear Nobel Peace Prize winner Leymah Gbowee, attend workshops to equip you in observing the 500th anniversary in your local ministry setting and much more! You can register today at ELCA.org/GraceGathering.

On Sept. 11, our country will be remembering the lives lost and the lives forever changed by the tragic events 15 years ago. The events affected all of us, and it will be an important moment for us to be together as a church and with all people of faith. Part of our “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday on Sept. 11 is a chance for us to show up as Lutherans, freed and renewed in Christ, to serve and love our neighbor.

We are church for the sake of the world.

As we gather in our assemblies, let us be a faithful witness to God's work in our local communities, across the country and around the world. I am hopeful that our time together in assembly will be an opportunity for us to get to know each other and come together as a church. This is a good time for us to talk about the priorities and future directions of the ELCA.

I will be leading a process endorsed by the ELCA Church Council and the Conference of Bishops to discern in faith the future of the ELCA. Through an initiative titled Called Forward Together in Christ, we'll be assessing where we are as God's people and working to understand what God has in store for us. I am inviting you to take part in a conversation about the future of this church. For more information or to get involved, visit ELCA.org/future.

Thank you for your continued prayers and encouragement. As I am out and about in my travels, I am reminded that no one of us does God's work alone, and I am grateful for the opportunity to be a partner with you in that service. Thank you for your leadership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

God's blessings to you as you gather as the living body of Christ. May you be guided by the Spirit as you do God's will for God's people.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton".

Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



2016 Report of the Bishop to The South Dakota Synod, ELCA

Deuteronomy 10:11

The Lord said to Moses, "Get up, go on your journey at the head of the people, that they may go in and occupy the land that I swore to their ancestors to give them."

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

First, I know that I'm not Moses and I don't believe we are being invited to occupy a new land, but I do believe we are being invited into a future that is held by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, just as it was for those who have gone before us. Since we were last together I have caught glimpses of that future in my travels across South Dakota, and as I have traveled across this faith community that gathers together around the world, called the ELCA.

It was my privilege to worship with the fine people at St Paul, in Java, SD on their mission festival recent where, although small in number, they still have a passion for sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with brothers and sisters around the world through their gifts and offerings.

My wife LaDonna and I rejoiced and worshiped with 30,000 young people in Detroit during the ELCA Youth Gathering last summer. It was heartwarming to work with kids from Custer Lutheran Fellowship, alongside young people from across America in cleaning up the yard of the oldest home in Detroit.

During my time in Atlanta at the Worship Jubilee last July, I was blessed by hearing fine preachers of the Gospel, multiple invitations to participate in glorious music, and witnessed worship leaders from across the church being renewed and energized. We had the privilege of listening to Mrs. Mary Harris Gurley, who sung at the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's funeral. Though she was frail in body, she still had a voice that could fill the sanctuary with such sweet sounds.

I could see the old country that we were leaving behind and touch the future as we celebrated 25 years of being a faith community for the folks of The Lutheran Church of Faith and Hope in Nicaragua. I was honored to be invited to preach and then delighted to participate in multiple ordinations of pastors that will be serving the church in the future. The children told the history of the church through a play that they had written and performed for us. I so enjoyed our time in Nicaragua with Herman and Jeanette Fink; Carla Borchardt, our Vice President; Susan Marone, AIM; and the Rev. Natanael Lizarazo, our Companion Synod Coordinator. It was heartwarming to see how projects that we are participating in bear such fruit at Cedro Galan. We anticipate a future where we have a new mission coordinator in Nicaragua working with the synod office, the churches of the ELCA, and the Church of Faith and Hope.

I was invited by a group called Fair Witness to travel to Israel and spent eight days meeting Palestinian and Israeli leaders from various walks of life. From the twenty-three year old grandson of a Palestinian farmer born in a refugee camp in Bethlehem, to the founder of the Palestinian Stock Exchange, to the retired Colonel who directed the building of the wall, to a Major in the Israeli Defense Force, we listened to the voices of the those who can only hear their narrative of a future being thwarted by the narratives of those around them. We also heard the voices of those who everyday are striving to bring about a future where there is room for all those gathered into the Land we call Holy.

It was a joy to lead a group of twenty-four to Germany this past November as we explored the lives and ministries of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther, Cranach the Elder, Frederick the Great, Katherine von Boren and other key players of the Reformation. What I always appreciate about the Reformation is the confluence of many individuals who were striving to regain the centrality of Jesus Christ as the center of the church and what that meant for their life together.

We will continue that exploration of what the Reformation has meant and will mean for us, as we gather at our Synod Assembly this June. We will hear from the Rev. Dr. Olaf Roynesdal, the Rev. Henrique Fleming, and the Rev. Ruben Duran exploring from what the future of the Reformation will mean for us, each from their own perspective. We have teams preparing materials that congregations and pastors will be able to use starting this fall. Our speakers for our Fall Theological events in 2016 and 2017 will also focus on the Reformation and its ongoing impact on our lives and communities of faith. I will be leading a group of those who are interested in September 2017 to Germany. We hope to conclude our observance of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation on November 1, 2017 with a synod-wide worship service.

I want each of you to know how appreciative I have been of those Pastors, AIMs and congregational leaders that have faithful and adeptly served the church. However, they continue to retire from active leadership and we continue the need to replace them with leaders for now and the future. We just concluded our First Call retreat at Joy Ranch and I am encouraged by the faithfulness and ability of those who are arriving to serve in South Dakota. The work of recruitment, education, and support is not finished; the future of the church continues to unfold. Our campaign "Listen God is Calling, Never Be the Same" has been successful but it is not done. As part of the fulfillment of the campaign I will ask that the Synod Council approve the hiring of a full time recruiter, whose job it is to invite men and women into the process of becoming pastors for this church, yet this year.

We continue to explore and test new ways of providing pastoral leadership to the congregations of South Dakota. We have seven individuals in the Kairos program serving seven rural parishes across South Dakota as they are educated and trained at the Sioux Falls Seminary through the Luther House of Study.

As I finish this report, I do so on the day that I was privileged to baptize our eighth grandchild. We gathered with family and friends, surrounded by the good people of St. Mark's Lutheran, Sioux Falls who are ably led by the Rev. Lori Hope. It was a celebration of the promises that our Lord and Savior made to that little girl and that He has made to us. The promises that death does not win, that life in Jesus Christ is possible because Christ offers it as a gift, and that no matter what, He will never stop loving her or us. I invite all of us to do what each of us can so that those who have not yet heard of Jesus might have the same gift of a faith community centered in Jesus Christ surrounding them.

Yours in Christ,



The Rev. David B. Zellmer
Bishop of the South Dakota Synod, ELCA

CONGREGATION ANNIVERSARIES and ROSTER CHANGES

(as of 5/11/16)

Anniversaries and Dedications

125th Anniversary

Zion Lutheran Church, Garretson

100th Anniversary

First Lutheran Church, Claire City

Salem Lutheran Church, Mount Vernon

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mud Butte

50th Anniversary

Resurrection Lutheran Church, Pierre

25th Anniversary

St Dysmas Of South Dakota Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls

Commissioning

05/30/2015

Tom Martin, AIM

Installations

05/17/2015

Christie Meier, AIM, Tea, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran

05/29/2015

Rev. Karen Ressel, Pine Ridge Retreat Center

05/30/2015

Tom Martin, AIM, Rapid City, Calvary Lutheran

06/21/2015

Maria Cabello-Salomon, TEEM, Sioux Falls, Pueblo de Dios

07/11/2015

Rev. Sami Wertz Johnson, Sioux Falls Our Savior's Lutheran

08/09/2015

Rev. Michael Mortvedt, Brookings, Ascension Lutheran

08/16/2015

Rev. Bryan Taffe, Willow Lake, Good Hope Lutheran

08/23/2015

Rev. Josh Johnson, Sioux Falls, Eastside Lutheran

08/30/2015

Rev. Warren Lahammer, Rapid City, Faith Lutheran

09/13/2015

Rev. Tera Lowe, Bison, American Lutheran

09/27/2015

Rev. Cheryl Rondeau-Bassett, Claire City, First Lutheran

10/11/2015

Rev. Lando Anderson, Hartford, Zion Lutheran

10/11/2015

Rev. Nicholas Collins, Sioux Falls, Holy Cross Lutheran

12/06/2015

Rev. Dr. James Fowler, Vermillion, Trinity Lutheran

12/13/2015

Rev. Cassandra Lamb, Warner, St John Lutheran

01/10/2016

Rev. Mindy Ehrke, Florence, Goodhue Lutheran

02/07/2016

Rev. Alan Blankenfeld, Colman, Colman Lutheran

02/14/2016

Rev. Henrique Fleming, Rapid City, Woyatan Lutheran

05/01/2016

Rev. Debora Grismer, Hermosa, Our Savior's Lutheran

Necrology

09/08/2015

Rev. Judeen Johnson

09/09/2015

Rev. Harold Verhulst

10/08/2015

Rev. Alden Hovda

10/18/2015

Rev. Noble Kile

12/11/2015 Rev. Marjorie Hershey
04/05/2016 Rev. Donald Niedringhaus

On Leave from Call

06/1/2015 Rev. Nancy Hong
07/11/2015 Rev. Janice Wiersma
12/1/2015 Rev. Katie Johnson
02/1/2016 Rev. Rhonda Hanisch
04/1/2016 Rev. George Ekeren-Moening

Ordinations

05/22/2015 Rev. Tera Lowe
05/23/2015 Rev. Karen Ressel
06/06/2015 Rev. Samantha Wertz Johnson
06/11/2015 Rev. Joshua Johnson
06/17/2015 Rev. Warren Lahammer
06/19/2015 Rev. Cheryl Rondeau-Bassett
06/20/2015 Rev. Bryan Taffe
09/11/2015 Rev. Lando Anderson
01/23/2016 Rev. Alan Blankenfeld

Resigned from Roster

03/05/2016 Rev. Daniel Ostercamp

Retired

07/01/2015 Rev. Francis Bunk
07/01/2015 Barbara Bunk, AIM
07/01/2015 Rev. Obed Nelson
09/01/2015 Rev. Karen Rupp
09/15/2015 Rev. Tryphine Schruba
01/01/2016 Rev. Glen Enright

Transferred Into South Dakota

05/17/2015 Rev. Peter Strommen, 3I SE Minnesota
12/06/2015 Rev. Dr. James Fowler, 4F TX-LA Gulf Coast

Transferred Out of South Dakota

09/01/2015 Alan Saatkamp, AIM, 4B Central States
09/21/2015 Rev. Adam Butler, 3F Southwestern MN
09/21/2015 Rev. Frank Philipp, 2E Rocky Mountain
12/13/2015 Rev. Andrew Nelson, 5E Western Iowa
12/15/2015 Rev. Laurie Jungling, 1F Montana
12/16/2015 Rev. Kristin Ostercamp, 3D Northwestern MN
02/01/2016 Rev. Dr Rolf Svano, 3I Southeastern MN
02/08/2016 Rev. Patrick Hahn, 9B North Carolina
02/16/2016 Rev. Charles Meyer, 5E Western Iowa
02/17/2016 Rev. Lyle Rossing, 2D Grand Canyon

Report of Pastor Bill Tesch, Director For Evangelical Mission 2016 South Dakota Synod Assembly

¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation...
2 Corinthians 5:17-18

Thank you for calling me to partner with the people and congregations of our synod these last eight and a half years. It has been such a gift to be a witness and to have a role in the ways that God is using us to reconcile the world through Jesus Christ. God's work of making a new creation among us was powerfully evident in 2015-16.

Growing in Faith Together (G.i.F.T.): This is our revised program of transformational ministry training. Through this new four-part training congregational teams learn to guide their congregation through a season of renewal. The results are that members deepen their followership of Jesus Christ and their relationships with each other and the wider community. Through tools intended to facilitate listening, the congregation reveals God's purpose for them in their time and place. They then design guiding principles and a plan to help the congregation move forward with renewed energy and greater focus. Sometimes congregations apply for and receive grants to fund their plans and to create greater accountability. This year we had our first cohort of five congregations complete the training. We will hope to have at least two cohorts undertake this training this year.

Ventures in Growing Stewards: This four-part training guides a team of leaders and the pastor toward implementing a holistic year-round plan for growing Christian stewards. The results are that congregations regain a faith perspective on this often-difficult area of ministry and almost always see greater and more joyful generosity. We now have had 20 congregations complete this training and our goal will be to have 15 more this year.

New Congregational Development: One of the greatest joys and also challenges of my work is accompanying our newest congregations and worshipping communities on your behalf. This year our newest congregations have seen important developments.

- *Pueblo de Dios* – the tireless work of Pastor Jeanette Clark and TEEM candidate Maria Caballo Salmon and the people of this ministry are bearing great fruit in growing worship attendance and growing disciples. 70+ children hear and experience God's love in the Logos program. Five key leaders have begun Christian leadership training through Agora – a partnership that provides training to immigrant ministries.
- *Woyatan* – Pastor Henrique Flemming has been called as the mission developer to this vital congregation, and a guiding coalition of leaders from the Rapid City area is coming together to plan the new retreat center or multi-cultural center made possible by our "Listen God is Calling" appeal.
- *First Lutheran African Ministry* – This ministry among West African immigrants continues to thrive. The next stage of their development will see Abraham Gayetaye beginning his seminary education to become their pastoral leader.
- *Table of Grace* is One of our newest church starts. Pastor Jess Daum has gathered a team of leaders and is reaching out to the community in the Harrisburg School District

in many creative and effective ways. The emerging congregation expects to have preview worship services this spring and begin worship next fall.

- *Church on the Street*: Rebel Hurd out of Peace Lutheran in Sioux Falls is leading this newest worshipping community of our synod. The plan is to share the word and celebrate the sacrament among people who struggle with homelessness right on the street where God is already at work among people who attempt to live in corners, boxes and alleys and shelters of the city of Sioux Falls. Congregation partners will gather with the emerging worshipping community and relationships will be formed across this socio-economic divide.

AN INVITATION -- Area Strategy Tables are a fruitful way for congregations who share a mission field or live in somewhat close proximity to come together, listen to God and each other and then imagine and plan the ways that God is calling them to work together. This has been effective this last year in a small rural community where three congregations wanted to strengthen their witness to their community and in our state's largest city where 17 congregations developed five initiatives including two new congregations, and addiction ministry, a social service ministry among Spanish speaking immigrants and an evangelism ministry. *What about you and your congregation?* What can you do together with area congregations that you could not do alone? Let's begin a journey of listening to God, each other and your surrounding community in order to discover your church's next faith adventure. Give me a call. I'd love to work with you on an Area Strategy Table designed just for your context.

Gratitude: I am grateful for the partnership I have with Bishop Zellmer, Susan Marone, all of our great synod staff, and all our churchwide partners. This work would not be possible without their collaboration and amazing competency.

Military Deployment: I have shared with Bishop Zellmer that I will likely be deployed in my role as a Chaplain for the South Dakota Air National Guard for 6 to 8 months in 2017 somewhere over seas. I crave your prayers during this time, especially for my family.

Thank you again for your partnership in the Gospel!

Soli Deo Gloria!



Pastor Bill Tesch

Synod Assembly Report, May 2016
Submitted by Susan Marone, MA, LPC, AIM
Associate to Bishop Zellmer

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

It continues to be a great honor and privilege to serve on the SD Synod Staff! I feel very blessed to be part of a talented, gifted and supportive team of colleagues and working with the many fine rostered and lay leaders of our synod!

This year was filled with congregational visits, conducting Parish Studies for congregations with Rostered Leader vacancies, and accompanying candidates in the candidacy process. One of the great joys of this work is working with newly called rostered leaders! Newly ordained pastors of the SD Synod include:

Pastor Tera Lowe, 3-pt, American/Indian Creek/Rosebud, Bison
Pastor Karen Ressel, Pine Ridge Retreat Center
Pastor Sami Wertz Johnson, Our Savior's Lutheran, Sioux Falls
Pastor Josh Johnson, East Side Lutheran, Sioux Falls
Pastor Warren Lahammer, Faith Lutheran, Rapid City
Pastor Cheryl Rondeau-Bassett, 3-pt, First, Claire City/Faith, New Effington/Our Savior's, Veblen
Pastor Bryan Taffe, 4-pt, Prairie Star Lutheran Parish, Bryant/Vienna/Willow Lake
Pastor Lando Anderson, Zion Lutheran, Hartford
Pastor Alan Blankenfeld, Colman Lutheran, Colman/Midway Lutheran, Flandreau
Pastor Josh Knudsen, 3-pt, First, Artesian/Trinity, Carthage/Immanuel, Iroquois
Pastor Bob O'Connor, Gloria Dei, Sioux Falls

Commissioned as Associates in Ministry include: Tom Martin, AIM, Calvary Lutheran, Rapid City.

I continue to enjoy working with the Candidacy Committee as we accompany 43 candidates in responding to a call to ministry in the ELCA. The annual Candidacy Retreat was held in April and we had 34 attendees including the committee. We are piloting a new program called Kairos with Luther House of Study, Luther Seminary and Sioux Falls Seminary. Candidates have the opportunity to serve in their congregations as Synodically Authorized Ministers and continue their seminary education at the same time. We presently have 6 people enrolled in the program.

I had the exciting opportunity to serve as the keynote speaker for Fall Theological on the topic of "Emotional Intelligence." We then sponsored a 5 day workshop on the topic at Joy Ranch and 12 of our rostered leaders attended. I also spent 10 days in Germany in November on a "Luther" tour and thoroughly enjoyed the educational experience!

I continue to grow and thrive in my call to synodical ministry and am grateful for our ministry together!

Peace,
Susan Marone, MA, LPC, AIM



2016 Report Lutheran Lakota Shared Ministries

Greetings from Pine Ridge,

The ministry at the Pine Ridge Retreat Center (PRRC) can be divided into two broad areas. The first is responding to a knock at the door from the people in the community. These threshold ministries can be thought of as projects. And the other is providing hospitality and cross cultural immersion between visiting teams and the people living in the community. This ministry focuses on relationships.

Threshold Ministries: Coffee & sandwiches, quilts & blankets, hygiene kits, and baby diapers & wipes. In addition, the after school Sanctuary Program for children provides a safe place to play and worship. We have challenged ourselves to discover ways to shift the focus from providing the material items to ways of helping folks find the ability to provide for themselves and their families. As a result, some exciting new ministries are emerging:

- The energy assistance program was expanded to include a matching fund. People in the community provided \$3,450 for themselves, and through the generosity of our funding partners, the program provided \$7500 to provide heat for 42 households that included 105 adults and 154 children. Our partner AMEND provided energy assistance for 10 of those households.
- Through a generous grant from Thrivent we have begun the Takoje Wachi Oyate (Grandchildren's Dance Society). Kelly and Susie Looking Horse are teaching traditional dance and drumming to the youth who come to the Sanctuary program. Everyone who is interested is invited to practice during Kids' Time and we will have ten children that will receive regalia and dance at three pow wows this summer.
- A new partnership with the SuAnne Big Crow Youth Center will be launching this summer. Planning is underway for our visiting teams to provide a day camp for the children in the community Monday through Friday during the summer vacation. (This partnership is also supported in part by the Thrivent grant.)
- Finding ways to provide gainful employment is critical to helping people in this community to learn life skills and support themselves and their families. We are currently employing two individuals to do the janitorial and general maintenance of our building. A Day Labor fund is in the planning phase and we are hoping that it will be up and running soon.

Immersion & Hospitality Ministries: Hosting visiting faith based and academic groups in cross cultural immersions. This ministry includes programming and presentations that strive to provide space for mutual conversation and greater understanding of each other. Although there is a service project element included, the focus is on creating healthy, mutually respectful relationships. We strive to address and break down barriers that are supported by negative stereotypes to open the door to deeper appreciation for each other.

Visiting groups attend worship at various local congregations and time is spent discussing the similarities of our faith traditions. Very often there is a blending of traditions and embracing the beauty of diversity in those traditions is part of our evening Talking Circles as well as other questions or concerns that may have been experienced during the day. These Talking Circles provide a time of open, honest dialog.

We have opened our facility to other groups to provide a meeting space for learning and healing. We are partnering with Thunder Valley to host a financial literacy training for the people of the Pine Ridge Village. A grief support group held their meetings this past winter in our building. We are hosting an Art Show during the weeks when we have visiting teams that have been very successful in creating healthier boundaries and conversations between the community and our visitors. We will continue to be open to opportunities to support local groups in their work and ministries.

As the new pastor and director of the Lutheran Lakota Shared Ministries I have been invited to share the vision of this ministry in presentations and educational forums. I am forever grateful for these opportunities and your interest! Financial, material and prayerful support is provided by many individuals and congregations across the country who are partners in this ministry! Special thanks to my colleagues in the Bear Butte Conference, the Steering Committee, our Ecumenical Partners, Bill Tesch, Bishop Zellmer, the Synod Staff & Council for the words of encouragement, prayers, and support. We are truly servants together!

Mitakuye Oysin!

Rev. Karen Ressel (Pastor Kay)

Director of Native American Ministry, South Dakota Synod of the ELCA

Faith Formation/Youth Ministry Synod Coordinator
Suzanne Hansen AIM

This year, 2016, is a year of looking ahead to what can be helpful to congregations in the South Dakota Synod in helping to continue to impress the importance of faith formation. The newest is the forming of a Children and Family Ministry Network that meets once a month to continue to connect with each other. Milestones Ministries is a topic that is continually talked about along with ideas about Sunday School and Bible School.

The ELCA Youth Gathering was held last July in Detroit and was a huge success. The South Dakota Synod had over 1,000 High School Youth attending. South Dakota Synod had the most Youth attending of all the 65 Synods. This year is a “tweener” year for the Youth, so attending the Lutheran Outdoors camps and mission trips are the focal point for the youth in South Dakota. It is important that we all keep in mind the great ministry that the young adults and the adults that help with the Youth Ministry do for this Synod in spreading the word of Jesus Christ in their words and service.

Thanks for all the support that is given by the South Dakota Synod.

Leadership & Mission Appeal South Dakota Synod ELCA

2016 Assembly Report

I was pleased to report to the 2015 assembly that with gifts received at the assembly the appeal reached \$600,000. As of the writing of this report, gifts to date have reached \$1,872,388 and more gifts are anticipated to be received before the assembly. My thanks for your generosity are expressed in the words of the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians: "I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy for all of you." Thanks to God for your generous response.

The Leaders Gifts and Rostered Leaders Gift phases of the appeal are completed and work continues on the Major Gifts and Congregation Gifts phases. We are so grateful for all the volunteers who have assisted with the appeal. Over 165 volunteers have worked in leadership roles in the appeal and I am so grateful for their work. If we continue our efforts during this last year of the appeal we can certainly reach our basic goal and move closer to the stated over all need of \$4,000,000.

IS YOUR CONGREGATION INVOLVED IN THE APPEAL?

- Every congregation in the South Dakota Synod is invited to:
 1. Participate in the appeal
 2. Appoint a congregation appeal leader(s)
 3. Set a congregation goal for the appeal
- When your congregation has appointed the appeal leader, contact the appeal office so that materials and training can be provided for your appeal leader.

I rejoice every time I have the privilege of signing thank you letters for the hundreds of donors who have supported the appeal. Thanks again for your generous support.

If you would like more specific information about the appeal, contact the appeal office.

Rev. Robert Hansen, Appeal Director