



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Spring 2015

“Oh, to grace how great a debtor daily I’m constrained to be; let that grace now like a fetter bind my wand’ring heart to thee. Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love. Here’s my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts above.”

– Evangelical Lutheran Worship 807, verse 3

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are church. As members in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), we are found by and abiding in Christ; we are God’s beloved people gathered around word and sacrament. Every week you gather in your congregations to hear God’s word and to share in the Lord’s Supper, to know Christ crucified and Christ risen. My hope and prayer is that through our spiritual practices and our worship we are drawn closer to and are more aware of the love of God shown through Jesus’ death and resurrection.

As we gather in Christ’s name at our synod assemblies, I invite you to pray, with me, for one another and the work we do together across this church. Remembering the words of the apostle Paul: “So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another” (Romans 12:5).

In my international travels earlier this year, it became clear to me that the ELCA is part of the body of Christ that spans the globe and the centuries. When we consider issues such as the ecclesiology of a global church, or a unified Word and Service roster, or ministry to and with same-gender families, it is never, nor can it ever be, a conversation just among us.

This past fall, we entered the season of celebrating five years of our full communion partnership with the United Methodist Church. In late May, we join our Catholic sisters and brothers in Washington, D.C., to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the U.S. Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue, which over the years has produced 11 substantial reports. We continue our work in strengthening all of our ecumenical and inter-religious partnerships.

We also are accompanying our brothers and sisters globally. We have visited with unaccompanied migrant children and families fleeing their homes in the Northern Triangle countries of Central America. Companions in the region have shared about their struggles, root causes of this migration and avenues for ELCA response. ELCA members, synod bishops and churchwide staff have borne witness to and talked about ELCA plans for strategic engagement.

Through The Lutheran World Federation, we work with refugees and internally displaced people in Syria, Cameroon, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Kenya, Jordan, Ukraine, Iraq and many other places. We have made significant progress in controlling malaria and treating Ebola. We are developing a social statement on the social issue of women and justice. These are just a few of the ways that we are church for the sake of the world.

This summer brings two wonderful events. Both the ELCA Youth Gathering in Detroit and the Worship Jubilee in Atlanta will give us an opportunity to ask: How is God calling the church

today, and what does God's work mean for our service to our community and the world? These events will be a time for rich conversation, faith formation and renewal of worship for the sake of the gospel and for the life of the world.

Good progress continues to be made on the ELCA's observance of the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. Two communication platforms recently debuted: www.ELCA500.org and the "ELCA Reformation 500" Facebook page. The theme for the 500th anniversary observance is "Freed and Renewed in Christ," with the tagline, "500 Years of God's Grace in Action." This will also be the theme for the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. You are invited to come to the "Grace Gathering" in New Orleans, which will be held concurrently with the Churchwide Assembly on its last four days, Aug. 10-13, 2016. The goals of the Grace Gathering are for personal renewal in faith, to be equipped for meaningful observances of the 500th anniversary, and to increase the number of ELCA members who will take part in service-learning activities in New Orleans as part of the Churchwide Assembly. Please come!

Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA is off to a good start with more than \$48.4 million in generous gifts and commitments toward the campaign priorities. This year we are seeking support for new and renewed congregations in *The Campaign for the ELCA*. The impact of the campaign will go far beyond the nearly \$200 million goal. It will establish a strong culture of stewardship in which this church will be well-positioned to do God's work in Jesus' name throughout the world for decades to come. Thank you for your support and prayers for this good work.

This coming Sept. 13, we will continue our tradition of a dedicated day of service. "God's work. Our hands." Sunday is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor.

God's blessings to you as you meet, discern, pray, vote, worship and sing together. This is a wonderful church, and I am honored to serve in it with you. Thank you for your faithful witness to the gospel.

God's peace,



Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



South Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

It has been a year of significant transitions both for me personally and for our South Dakota Synod. This past fall my father, The Rev. Bruce Zellmer passed away and so now both of my parents are no longer with us. Dad lived a wonderful life, rich in opportunity to serve our Lord as a parish pastor, a CPE Supervisor, a hospital chaplain and as a husband and father. I miss him and mom but also give thanks for the love and blessings that both of them bestowed on my family and I.

As a Synod, we reached our goal of raising money for 25 Church Roofs in Cameroon. The money has been sent and roofs are going up. Thank you to all the congregations that participated in meeting this challenge. In addition, the money that was raised from South Dakota to rebuild and expand the hospital in Garou Bouli has had an unintended benefit. Because of the violence in the Central African Republic (Cameroon's neighbor to the east), 250,000 refugees have come across the border. Without the expanded hospital, we would have had an even greater humanitarian crisis. Thank you to the individuals and congregations that worked to make it happen.

The most impactful transition that is effecting out congregations is the retirements of our pastors. During the recession retirements stopped but in the past 18 months retirements have started to happen early and many of them are leaving our state because of family. We have normally had 5 to 9 first call openings but recently we had 21 first call openings. The Holy Spirit has been doing its work, people and congregations have been answering the call to ministry. We are in the process of beginning 6 TEEM candidates who will serve congregations as they go to school. In this year's spring assignment we received 7 names of individuals who are coming to serve. That however still leaves 9 congregations where we do not have a name to send them.

This shortfall leads me into the importance of our mission campaign "Listen God is Calling" Never be the Same. It is primarily about the invitation, recruitment, development support and retention of leaders for the church in South Dakota. Your participation in the campaign will impact the future of the Church in significant ways.

Items for the future. At this assembly we will be electing people for the 2016 Churchwide Assembly in New Orleans. It will be our first assembly in our new triennial schedule. September 13, 2015 has been designated as "God's Work. Our Hands" Sunday. This summer I will be attending our Youth Gathering in Detroit with 1100 young people from across South Dakota. Later in July, I will be participating in the 25th Anniversary of our companion synod "Church of Faith & Hope" in Nicaragua.

I continue to be richly blessed by the love and support of my wife LaDonna, our children and grandchildren. You and I are well served by the Synod staff that works everyday to support the ministry of the congregations of the South Dakota Synod.

Thank you for your proclamation of the Good News in Jesus Christ and for making disciples to follow Jesus. Thank you as well for the opportunity and privilege of serving as your Bishop.

Yours in Christ,

Bishop David B Zellmer
South Dakota Synod, ELCA

CONGREGATION ANNIVERSARIES and ROSTER CHANGES

Anniversaries and Dedications

125th Anniversary

Kennebec Lutheran Church, Kennebec
Good Hope Lutheran Church, Willow Lake

100th Anniversary

Christ Lutheran Church, Salem

75th Anniversary

Grace Lutheran Church, Parker

50th Anniversary

Peace Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls
Our Savior Lutheran Church, Wessington Springs

Commissioning

09/15/2014 Penny Steinken, AIM

Installations

06/08/2014	Rev. Michael Johnson, Flandreau, Our Savior's Lutheran
06/08/2014	Rev. Heidi Kvanli, Mitchell, First Lutheran
06/08/2014	Rev. Dr. Lonny Kvanli, Mitchell, First Lutheran
07/01/2014	Rev. Margie Hershey, Piedmont, Piedmont Valley Lutheran
07/27/2014	Rev. Trisha Boese, Harrisburg, Shalom Lutheran
07/27/2014	Rev. Lisa Heffernan, Chamberlain, Trinity Lutheran
08/24/2014	Rev. Durk Thompson, Arlington, Trinity Lutheran
09/07/2014	Rev. Daniel Nelson, Brandon, Brandon Lutheran
09/14/2014	Rev. Heidi Binstock, Sioux Falls, WestSide Lutheran
09/15/2014	Penny Steinken, AIM, Rapid City, Trinity Lutheran
10/15/2014	Rev. Rhia Strohm, Aberdeen, Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran
01/25/2015	Rev. Katherine Olson, Sioux Falls, First Lutheran
08/03/2014	Rev. David Piper, Rapid City, Calvary Lutheran
08/31/2014	Rev. Arlyn Rusche, Lyman County Parish
09/14/2014	Rev. Daniel Nelson, Brandon, Brandon Lutheran/Split Rock
09/28/2014	Rev. Becky Senner, Zion, Canova, Bridgewater/Immanuel Lutheran
10/15/2014	Rev. Rhia Strohm, Aberdeen, Bethlehem Lutheran
10/19/2014	Rev. Jonathan Steiner, Rapid City, Atonement Lutheran
11/09/2014	Rev. Dwight Stensgaard, Sioux Falls, Gloria Dei Lutheran
12/07/2014	Rev. Janet Miller, Watertown, Grace Lutheran
12/14/2014	Rev. David Lund, Hartford, Christ Lutheran
02/28/2015	Rev. Becky Piper, Rapid City, Calvary Lutheran
04/19/2015	Rev. Erin Heidelberger, Zion, Aberdeen Lutheran
04/26/2015	Rev. Chris Strohm, Bristol, Bethesda Lutheran/Butler, Butler Lutheran
05/17/2015	Rev. Peter Strommen, Sioux Falls, First Lutheran

Leave from Call

06/11/2014	Alan Saatkamp, AIM
08/01/2014	Rev. Amber Marten Bergeson
10/27/2014	Rev. Deborah Grismer

Necrology

05/04/2014	Rev. Arthur Olsen
06/21/2014	Rev. Burnell Lund
06/28/2014	Rev. N Fred Hallstrom
09/05/2014	Rev. Donald Sneen
11/30/2014	Rev. Bruce Zellmer
04/10/2015	Rev. LeeRoy Eikanger

Ordinations

06/07/2014	Daniel Nelson
06/21/2014	Arlyn Rusche
06/28/2014	Lisa Heffernan
07/26/2014	Jonathan Steiner
08/24/2014	Durk Thompson
10/15/2014	Rhia Strohm
04/18/2015	Chris Strohm

Removed from Roster

10/13/2014	Rev. Jacalyn Griffin
02/15/2015	Sonja Nelson, AIM

Retired

05/01/2014	Rev. Carroll Marohl
06/01/2014	Pat Eidsness, AIM
09/01/2014	Rev. Lance Lindgren
01/01/2015	Rev. David Larson
02/01/2015	Rev. David Peterson
03/01/2015	Rev. Barbara Wangsness
03/01/2015	Rev. Linda Jorgensen
05/01/2015	Rev. Gary Anderson

Transferred Into South Dakota

06/08/2014	Rev. Michael Johnson
06/03/2014	Rev. Charles Berdahl
03/24/2015	Christie Meier, AIM
01/25/2015	Rev. Katherine Olson

Transferred Out of South Dakota

04/02/2014	Rev. David Astrup, 3D NW MN
05/01/2014	Rev. Anne-Marie Maldoon, 2E Rocky Mountain
05/05/2014	Rev. Molly Sasser-Goehner, 1F Montana
08/16/2014	Rev. Kent Narum, 1D E WA-ID
08/24/2014	Rev. Dana Lockhart, 6C Indiana-Kentucky
09/16/2014	Rev. Kirstin Kellaher, 5H NW Synod of WI
10/01/2014	Allen Sasser-Goehner, AIM, 1F Montana
10/10/2014	Rev. Wanda McNeill, 5B Northern IL
11/14/2014	Rev. Joann Conroy, 3H Saint Paul Area
12/01/2014	Rev. Rebecca Freeman, 3I Southeastern MN

2015 Report of Pastor Bill Tesch, Director for Evangelical Mission

In Acts 10, God comes to the Apostle Peter while he is praying/meditating and commands him to break a biblical rule – to kill and eat “unclean” animals. When Peter awakens, people are at the door pleading with him to come and share the news about Jesus with the worst kind of gentile sinner – a Roman! Peter’s slowness of mind is well documented in the Gospels, but in Acts his brain functions better. He immediately realizes that God has called to him to step outside his comfort zone and attempt something previously thought impossible, ill-advised - even forbidden! God is still doing that. This document is largely the report of that activity: how God through prayer has called people of the SD Synod to attempt new and previously inconceivable endeavors so that more people will hear and believe the gospel.

- 1) The Sioux Falls Area Mission Strategy Table: People have been gathering, dwelling in the word, listening to each other and praying in an effort to discern God’s will. Here is what is emerging:
 - a. A Ministry to Solve the Disease of Addiction in our congregations and community. This is in partnership with “Face it Together.” The outcome will be a set of deliverable services and products that will be modeled in the SF area but which can be transported anywhere.
 - b. A new worshipping community valuing and celebrating uniqueness and differences within two historic protestant traditions: Lutheran and Presbyterian. Martin Luther and John Calvin will be working together in the fastest growing area of our state – the west side of the Harrisburg School District – to form a completely new kind of congregation. (different than a federated ministry, such as we have in Kimball)
 - c. A ministry addressing the urgent needs of people who have no access to basic human services due to their immigration status.
 - d. A ministry engaging the homeless.
 - e. A network of geographically co-located congregations engaging in relational evangelism.
- 2) Standing Rock Indian Reservation Area Mission Strategy Table: I will be convening congregations within and around the reservation to explore ways they might work together to build relationships and share ministry with the people of Standing Rock. A generous offer of financial assistance from a person in TX is providing the occasion/opportunity for this exciting conversation.
- 3) Growing in Faith Together: This is a training program that teaches congregational leaders how to listen to God, each other and their community in order to form a deep sense of purpose and discover how God is calling them change and engage the world. (i.e.: This is about congregational renewal). It is intensive and requires commitment. While many congregations have affirmed the value of such a process - we are finding that the delivery system (a 4-day retreat) may be prohibitive for many potential participants. We are exploring ways to offer this on-site in shorter periods and expect to have at least one pilot group of congregational teams this year.
- 4) Growing Stewards: 15 congregations are part of our new initiative (called “Ventures”) to cultivate a culture of healthy stewardship. Their participation has been enthusiastic which is evidenced by the increasing size of congregational teams from one workshop to

the next. (The process involves a series of four workshops.) We have 17 certified trainers (the most in the ELCA) who work together to provide this excellent opportunity.

5) Ongoing work:

- a. Council Visits – Thank you for doing them. If you have not been part of this process of visiting congregation councils and saying “thank you,” you are missing out on the best part of this commitment to synod council. I visited a church last week, and there were tears in people’s eyes – “No one ever thanked us before. We don’t do it for recognition, but it’s still good to be recognized.”
- b. Pueblo de Dios: We have a new “indigenous” leader who has emerged! Maria Caballo Salmon is in the TEEM program. She will work with Pastor Jeanette Clark for one or two years before taking over as the pastoral leader.
- c. Pine Ridge: Pastor Karen Rupp is nearing retirement and we have been working to find a qualified leader to replace her. We have funding for the new “Ministry for Children and Youth” position and our initial thought is to wait until a new director is called to fill it – we believe this will simplify and streamline the transition.
- d. Woyatan: We continue to work with the congregation to develop short and long-term strategies for providing Word and Sacrament ministry. A potential partnership with a nearby Episcopal congregation has emerged and we have the possibility of a “new” (or “returning”) TEEM candidate. I’ve worked with them to make progress on some maintenance issues with the building and on some organizational issues with the ministry.
- e. WestSide: I attended mission developer training with their new pastor, Heidi Binstock and with two lay leaders. They have about \$217,000 remaining on their mortgage.
- f. Wopila House (Young Adult Intentional Community at Pine Ridge): We are always looking for young Lutherans and Episcopalians to be part of this unique community.

This has been a fruitful time and God is lifting up and opening our eyes to what seems to be an ever-widening “field” of harvest in which we are called to labor. I continue to cherish the partnership we share as synod and the church wide organization with the leading edge of mission and ministry – our congregations. I greatly value the partnership with Dave and Susan and the whole synod staff – as I travel around our ELCA, I truly believe we have the best!

Thank you for your partnership.

Respectfully in Christ,



Pastor Bill Tesch

Synod Assembly Report
May 2015
Submitted by Susan Marone, MA, LPC, AIM
Associate to Bishop Zellmer

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

It continues to be an honor and great privilege to be part of the SD Synod Staff! I feel very blessed to be part of a talented, gifted and supportive team of colleagues, not only on the Synod Staff but also the many fine rostered and lay leaders of our synod!

This year was filled with congregational visits and conducting Parish Studies for congregations with Rostered Leader vacancies.

One of the great joys of this work is working with newly called rostered leaders! Newly ordained pastors of the SD Synod include:

Pastor Dan Nelson, Brandon Lutheran
Pastor Arlyn Rusche, Lyman County Parish
Pastor Lisa Heffernan, Trinity Lutheran, Chamberlain
Pastor Jonathon Steiner, Atonement Lutheran, Rapid City
Pastor Durk Thompson, Trinity Lutheran, Arlington
Pastor Rhia Strohm, Bethlehem Lutheran, Aberdeen
Pastor Chris Strohm, Bergen/Bristol, Butler Lutheran

Commissioned as Associates in Ministry include:

Penny Steinken, AIM

Mobility in the SD Synod has been steady as folks who had hoped to retire can now afford to do so. Several of our larger congregations are now being served by a great group of senior pastors and our First Call folks have been wonderful! I would like to thank Pastor David Schoeld for his leadership as Chair of the Support to Ministries Committee and for his faithful service in ministry in the Medary Conference.

I continue to enjoy working with the Candidacy Committee as we accompany 52 candidates in responding to a call to ministry in the ELCA. The annual Candidacy Retreat at Shalom Hills Farm in MN, was held in April.

I continue to grow and thrive in my call to synodical ministry and am grateful for my colleagues and the ministry of our team!

Peace,
Susan Marone, MA, LPC, AIM

2015 Report for Lutheran Lakota Shared Ministry at Pine Ridge

This has been a year of challenges as we continued to host faith based and academic oriented groups and guide them through inter-cultural immersion experiences where they build relationships, understanding and respect for and between all God's peoples. The schedule for this coming year is full. Several groups are returning and we will be welcoming some first- time groups too. We're grateful for growing networks of connections as those who visit and experience Pine Ridge share the story, increasing interest and expanding the numbers who come and see, but most importantly become aware of the conditions on Pine Ridge and other reservations.

We experienced a good January Cross-cultural program with positive feedback from the seminarians – seven from Wartburg and seven from Wesley.

An organization called AMEND has provided several families connected with the Center with heating assistance. We are very grateful for so many generous hearts and hands and the prayers of many from near and far. Our sandwich/lunch program and after-school Sanctuary Programs continue to be well received and well attended.

Our Steering Committee is very committed and supportive. We've changed the meeting schedule to quarterly and will deal with urgent/emergency issues via electronic media.

Hopes for this year carry over from last year – they continue to include but are not limited to:

- Increase staff (focus on youth & intern)
- Develop Teen group (probably including ages 11 & up)
- Bi monthly newsletter
- Construction of Fellowship Hall at St. John Episcopal
- Strengthen LutEpisc relationship
- Visit churches and schools of visiting groups
- Offer additional services of Word and Sacrament (either at the Pine Ridge Retreat Center or in cooperation with the Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church.)
- Support groups/recovery program

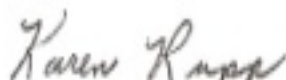
Bishop Tarrant met with clergy serving Episcopal Congregations to strategize coverage until a person is found to serve at Holy Cross in Pine Ridge and St. Katharine's in Martin. I'll be helping once a month at St. Katharine's. The person filling the Circle of Hope position will be provided housing at the Holy Cross campus in Pine Ridge, further strengthening our cooperative relationship. I am hopeful that we will move forward in filling that position for the "Circle of Healing" which was approved at Assembly last May. There have been nine suicide completions since December and several (100+) failed attempts. Please pray for the community.

I was able to visit two strongly supportive congregations of our ministry while in Virginia in December and also spent four days at Wartburg Seminary the first week of November. I would love to visit every school and congregation who bring groups to the Pine Ridge retreat Center.

The time has come for me to enter into retirement. I've been blessed to be serving in such a prayerful spirit led community and pray for a smooth Holy Spirit led transition. I believe the ministry is being taken to a higher level under new leadership.

I continue to be thankful to Bishop Zellmer, Synod staff, Synod Council, and the Synod congregations for ongoing words of encouragement, prayers and support for the Lutheran Lakota Shared Ministry at Pine Ridge. Thank you for the many donations we receive– the quilts, disposable diapers, gift cards and designated funds for utilities, propane, gasoline and clothes and play toys. Pilamayaye! Mitakuye Oyasin!

Respectfully submitted,



Rev. Karen Rupp, Director Native American Ministry, South Dakota Synod, ELCA

2015 South Dakota Synod Assembly Report
Suzanne Hansen AIM, Synod Youth Ministry Coor.

RISE UP TOGETHER is the theme for the 2015 Youth Gathering in Detroit. Once again this South Dakota Synod is sending over 1,000 Sr. Hi Youth and committed Adult Advisors to be a part of this Gathering. Detroit is going to be a great place to come and hear inspiring speakers and worship together, and help the people in Detroit during the week of July 15-19. The experiences that each person will have will be life changing .

The Youth Ministry Network continues to meet once a month and support each other in the ministries that they each serve. It is a joy for me to be a part of this group.

Another group that has been started in the Synod is The Family Network, which consists of people in congregations that work with the Ministry to Families that each serves. We meet together once a month in different locations to learn from each other about how to help with the Faith Formation in Family Ministry.

I feel privileged to be able to be on staff in a Synod that is innovative and faithful to the Ministries that we serve.