



## Getting the *Word* Out

We give thanks to God for all of the individuals, congregations, synods, and churchwide ministries and institutions for their deep and abiding commitment to God's transforming word in Christ, in proclamation and in Scripture!

The Book of Faith Initiative is a continuing priority of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, dedicated to encouraging all ministries and people of the church to continually renew and enrich our broad and deep engagement with Scripture for our own sakes and for the sake of the world.

The Book of Faith Initiative has operated using a decentralized, grassroots approach centered on our common vision in which all are invited to *open Scripture* and *join the conversation*. We invite leaders to continue and boldly further this effort in their places of involvement.

From the beginning, the goal of the initiative has been two-fold:

1. to meet the continuing challenge of widespread biblical illiteracy and
2. to renew the teaching of our rich theological heritage of scriptural understanding, interpretation and engagement.

To help realize the above goals and address the challenges listed below, we want to further encourage engagement of Scripture, especially using the "multiple lenses" approach. We seek your help and support as partners in this effort, in addressing the challenges that are currently serving to shape our calling. Some of the larger challenges are:

- The growing number of people in society claiming to be "spiritual but not religious"
- The need to address and learn from the great variety of cultures that make up this church and world
- The role of the Bible in mission outreach
- The importance of family and home as centers of faith development
- The need for creative use of social media
- Continued biblical illiteracy

Despite the challenges, Christ is present as we engage Scripture and this promise calls us forward together. Please join us in getting the word out and in encouraging all to *open Scripture* and *join the conversation*!



# Four lenses for engaging Scripture.

## Open Scripture. Join the conversation.

The initiative has emphasized that biblical engagement is greatly enriched by the use of multiple lenses in conversation with Scripture and other people. This suggested method is centered on four ways of reading the Bible and asking questions: devotional, historical, literary and theological reading.

**DEVOTIONAL**

AT CHURCH      IN THE COMMUNITY      AT THE OFFICE      AT HOME WITH FAMILY

Where are you today?      Our Devotional      book of faith

We begin. We read, ask questions, reflect on the meaning of the Bible from wherever we are – in place, time or state of mind. No matter where we are, our Book of Faith meets us there.

**LITERARY**

EPIC JOURNEYS      LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT      TALES OF TRAGEDY      BOOKS OF POETRY

The library that's always open      Our Literary      book of faith

We pay close attention to how the passage is written. We notice what kind of literature it is. We notice all the details, themes, characters, storyline, poetry and logic. We compare and contrast these with our understanding and experience of life. In this process we discover meaning.

**HISTORICAL**

THE TEMPLE      THE ROMANS      THE EGYPTIANS      KING DAVID

Meet yesterday's story today      Our Historical      book of faith

We seek to understand the world of the Bible. We explore the world of the writers and the original readers, the rulers, slaves, women, men and children. All the people in our Book of Faith. How do we understand their social and cultural contexts? How were their lives different from or the same as ours today?

**THEOLOGICAL**

HOW DO I FIND HOPE?      WHO IS GOD?      WHY IS THERE SUFFERING?      WHAT IS LOVE?

What are the God questions?      Our Theological      book of faith

As we open Scripture and join the conversation, we ask our deepest questions and listen for God's voice. We hear God's demands as well as God's words of comfort and promise. We see Christ alive yesterday and today. We feel the movement of the Spirit and are moved to respond. God is present in the word.