

Dear Members of the South Dakota Synod,

Grace and peace to you in this holy season of Advent.

As we look once more for the light that points us toward the birth of the Christ child, we are reminded that Advent is not a passive season, but one filled with hope, expectation, and faithful preparation.

This packet is being made available to you now—not to add another task to an already full season, but so that it may be ready when you and your congregation need it. We recognize the brief window between the New Year and the time when many congregations gather for annual meetings, and we hope these materials will serve you well.

Included in this packet are several important resources for your congregation:

- Annual Report from Presiding Bishop Curry and the ELCA
- Annual Report from Bishop Constanze Hagmaier
- 2025 Ministry Celebrations
- Five-Year Vision of the South Dakota Synod: *Journeying Together in Christ*
- South Dakota Synod Mission Plan
- Annual Report from Lutheran Planned Generosity
- Statement of Intent for 2026 Mission Support*
- Congregational Leadership Form*

These resources are offered as tools to help us celebrate the ways God has been at work among us and to discern how we will continue to journey together in Christ.

The **Statement of Intent for 2026 Mission Support** is especially important, as it assists the Synod Council in prayerfully planning for the year ahead. We invite you to consider, with your congregation, the shared ministry to which we are called. Mission Support is the undesignated gifts shared with the synod and churchwide organization. The **Congregational Leadership Form** helps us stay connected with your congregation's leadership so that we may continue to share information, resources, and opportunities for collaboration.

Please return both forms to the synod office following your annual meeting. They may be found online at sdsynod.org/yearend. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the synod office at **605-274-4011** or synod@sdsynod.org.

May God's blessing and presence be felt ever near to you as you reach into the world with the Word who has always been—and who comes to us again.

In Christ,

Pastor Jonathan Vehar

Associate to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission