



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

We write this as voting members from Southwestern Minnesota Synod at the 2009 Churchwide ELCA Assembly.

We write this because we believe that some of you may be pleased and relieved by the actions of the Assembly, and others are highly distressed by its' actions. We all see life and the actions of others from our own perspective and context. We want to share with you the context of the Assembly, to say that some aspects of the Assembly may help as we go forward, and to urge you to respond to the Assembly as Lutherans whose faith is active in love.

1. The Assembly had people of all views unite in working to eradicate malaria, HIV/AIDS and hunger; declaring full communion with the United Methodist Church; worshipping and communing together; having meal fellowship; being respectful in spite of profound disagreements; being together under a tornado cloud; singing beautifully together and getting to know people of deep faith who are very different than each other.
2. The Assembly allowed us to see people of deep faith with great differences come together, express their views clearly, act with civility, see each other as faithful Christians who want the ELCA to go forward in mission and experiencing evenhanded leadership during plenary sessions. Confessing Christ and serving Christ's mission was and still is central in speech, in worship and in discussion.
3. We now live with and into the results of the Assembly's actions. There are those among us who wonder if the church has strayed from biblical teaching and has followed the dictates of society. That is certainly a valid concern that we will have to address together; but we cannot address that concern if we divide the church into "us and them." We encourage you to go to God's Word, deepen your faith, seek to understand the other and listen to what the Spirit is saying to you through these actions. We often see the Holy Spirit working when the Assembly makes decisions that we like, but when it comes to a decision contrary to our position we do not believe that the Spirit is at work. As part of our repentance we may need to ask, "What is the Holy Spirit saying through these actions?" and "How does my faith live in love toward fellow Christians with whom I disagree?"

We ask you to consider these realities as we move forward. Christ is still the Head of the church. Christ's body (The Church) is not perfect, but Christ loves it and uses it. May the Lord use us now for the up-building of Christ's body in Southwestern Minnesota and the world. Let us live with apt question from the Assembly: "So, then what shall be our witness."

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(Signed by the following voting members August 22-23, 2009: Rev. Harvey L. Nelson, Gwen Arneson, Rev. Ron Bockhaus, Roy N. Colberg, Rev. Tim Ehling, Rev. Mary Hovland, Jon Hoyme, Corlys Knudson, Rev. Steven Knudson, Deborah Krogstad, Lowell Krogstad, Rev. Linda Lagergren, Brittani Lamb, Larry Larson, Rev. Kristi Mitchell, Rev. Pablo Obergon, Rev. Katherine Rood, Dennis Schmidt, Rev. David Weeks, Brenda Weise, Chad Winterfeldt and Karen Wojahn)



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