



Southwestern Minnesota Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

December 22, 2011

Greetings Sisters and Brothers in Christ Jesus serving the Gospel in Southwestern Minnesota,

Thanks for your faithful service in the name of Jesus in the past year. I am thankful as I pray through the roster of our synod as I think of your faithful leadership.

Thanks in advance for taking time to complete your report. You will find instructions below for how to do that. Thanks for investing the time and sharing an update with me about your life, ministry and mission.

Last year I was not able to write replies to many of your reports. It was one of the losses as a result of our thin staffing and ongoing tensions. I did read all the reports. I hope that this spring I will be able to again write replies.

I was struck by the Old Testament lesson from the second Sunday in Advent. The language in the middle is what sang to our time.

*The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion-- to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. **They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.** ... I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations* *Isaiah 61*

May God use you to proclaim the Good News in the name of Jesus that God is at work in our world and midst restoring and rebuilding even now.

In Christ,

† Bishop Jon V. Anderson

Annual Information from Bishop Jon V. Anderson

1. **2011 Rostered Person Report Form:** This form invites you to reflect on the past year and the coming year, while sharing some helpful information. We encourage you to use the Formatta Filler program and do this online at www.elca.org/secretary/reports/ldrForm.html (click on the "Rostered Leader's Report to the Synod Bishop" link on the left side). You also can go to www.elca.org and search for "Rostered Leader's Report" or simply go to our website (www.swmnelca.org) on the *Rostered Resources* tab for the link to the ELCA webpage.
 - a. If you cannot open your specific form, download Formatta Filler program on the right hand side of the screen.
 - b. If your Formatta Filler does not work, try looking for an upgrade under the help button.
 - c. However, if you need a hard copy, please call our office to request one to be sent to you.
 - d. **If you do the report online, email it to Tammy Sather who supports my work.** Her email address is tammy.sather@swmnelca.org
2. **Annual Meetings:** The coming months of annual meetings in our synod will be important.
 - a. Remember your congregation's annual meeting is a golden opportunity to lift up God's mission that we serve together.
 - b. Synod Interpretation and Churchwide Ministry Interpretation
 - i. We encourage you to share the Synod's Annual Report to the congregations of the synod that I have written in your annual meeting booklet. It is available at www.swmnelca.org under the *Annual Meeting Resources* tab.
 - ii. We invite you to use the synod's Congregational Meeting Video (it will be available online soon and also in CD form by request if you do not have web access in your congregation's meeting space.) We have a new brochure that interprets our synod as well that is available.
 - iii. We will be lifting up interpretation options for our churchwide ministry in the Enews Update.
3. **Statement of Intent:** If you serve in a congregation as a rostered leader, we need to know what your congregation's plans are for mission support (often called Benevolence) in the coming year. You could:
 - a. **Email** - Emailing in your proposed numbers to sara.johnson@swmnelca.org and then sending in your adopted amounts would be helpful to your synod's leadership as we make plans in these times of uncertainty. A copy of the form is available on our website at www.swmnelca.org. You can also use the online form that you will find a link for at the same address.
4. **Continuing Education:** Many of you have found it helpful to use the form from the past as a road map for planning continuing education. It is located at www.swmnelca.org. Remember the continuing education search engine, *Faith and Wisdom: Lifelong Learning*. You can find this ecumenical resource at www.faithandwisdom.org/default.asp. It is for any baptized ministers, staff and pastors, and allows searches that are quite specific. The *Continuing Education Covenant* document is posted on our website under the *Rostered Resources* tab.
5. **Constitutional Update** – After working with many congregations whose constitutions were very old, I am asking pastors to help their council work to update the constitutions. The ELCA adopted changes to the model constitution can be adopted with a single vote if 30 day notice is given. The Policy and Procedure Committee of the Synod Council is available to help with constitutional changes. They need to approve changes (It is helpful to share them at the draft stage.) and we need a copy of your final adopted constitution for your congregation's roster file.

Please return these forms by February 15, 2012