



Oregon Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

January, 2012

Dear Friends in Ministry,

It is the season of Epiphany. Jesus is calling disciples and casting out demons. "*What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?*" That is the question, is it not?

As you gather for your annual meeting this year I greet you in the name of the Calling One, Jesus our Lord. Who will follow and who will flee? Many of us face difficult questions this year. Is this bad? I think it is simply true. What a privilege to be empowered to address real issues in a real world. We have the gift of God's Spirit to guide us and the embrace of Christ to strengthen us. What more could we ask?

I have sent three letters to your congregation over the past two months outlining my priorities as bishop of this synod, our need for you financial support, and a narrative budget demonstrating how that support is used. My priorities involve ways the synod staff and I seek to serve you and your ministry. I encourage you to honestly evaluate your gifts and opportunities. We are now working directly with some twenty congregations in intentional planning processes. We seek to be where you are, and our pledge is that we will neither shy away from our responsibility to you nor let you off the hook in your responsibility to Christ. We are the church. We are called. We have a mission. Who will follow and who will flee? I am thankful you are those who have answered the call to follow. Do so with faith and great joy!

Thank you for the work you do. Thank you for the prayers you offer and the passions you exhibit. Thank you too, for the Mission Support you share with the church as a whole, money that goes to share the Gospel abroad, feed the hungry here at home, administer camps and colleges, and so much more. The ELCA has just announced partnership support grants for 2012. We in Oregon will be receiving \$221,000 in partnership support grants this year. In addition, we receive salary and program support for our two 0.5 FTE, Directors of Evangelical Mission, The Revs. Glenn Chase and Michael Keys. We also receive support grants for various hunger programs. Combined, this equals over two-thirds of the money we send on to churchwide from your Mission Support. It comes right back to us. Please know that your money and your ministry are well invested as a congregation of the ELCA!

Blessings in this New Year,

The Rev. Dave Brauer-Rieke,
Bishop