



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

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June 14, 2010

**TO: New Jersey Synod Rostered Leaders**

**FR: Bishop Roy Riley**

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I am writing to share with you announcements related to last Saturday's Synod Council meeting:

**STRATEGIC MISSION PLAN**

The first chapter of the Synod Strategic Mission Plan is focused on the mission development of the 181 congregations of this Synod. On Saturday, the Synod Council adopted a proposal to launch an eighteen-month emphasis from July 2010 through December 2011, titled *Becoming, Strengthening, Transforming COMMUNITIES OF GRACE*. I am attaching to this letter the proposal summary and a tentative calendar related to the plan. Please review both pages.

As part of the mission development plan, parish pastors will be invited to attend one of seven twenty-four hour mission-leadership retreats led by the bishop this fall. Please pencil-in these dates into your calendars now (October 18, 19, 20, 21, November 1, 2, 3). I will write with an invitation and more details by mid-summer.

**LOGM DIRECTOR MOVES TO PART-TIME**

The reduced Synod Spending Plan for 2010 anticipated Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry Director Bruce Davidson's retirement in mid-summer. Because of increasing pressure to eliminate or severely reduce State government expenditures that provide a safety-net for people, especially children, living in poverty, Pastor Davidson has agreed to continue part-time beginning July 1 (about one-third time) through December 31, 2010. I am very grateful.

**UNITED METHODIST-LUTHERAN FULL COMMUNION CELEBRATION**

On Saturday, October 9, Lutherans and Methodists from across the State will gather in East Brunswick for a celebration of our agreement for full communion. The celebration will be hosted by two large Methodist congregations (Aldersgate and Calvary) that stand side-by-side on Ryders Lane in East Brunswick. The day will begin at 10 AM with worship. Bishop Devadahr will preside and Bishop Riley will preach. There will be lunch provided and then presentations by Dr. Timothy Wengert from the Lutheran side and Dr. Kadi Billman (Professor of Pastoral Theology at LSTChicago) from the Methodist side. Please save the date and join the celebration!

**ORDINATIONS SEPTEMBER 19, 2010**

On Sunday afternoon, September 19, there will be a synod-wide ordination service beginning at 4 PM at St. Paul, East Windsor (Hightstown).

**ALSO LAST SATURDAY...**

The Rev. Wolfgang Herz-Lane, spouse of Pastor Margaret Herz-Lane (Grace, Camden), was elected Bishop of the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the ELCA. Wow.

Peace be with you.



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***Becoming, Strengthening, Transforming***  
**COMMUNITIES OF GRACE**

*Mission on the Move* has led us into conversations about God's mission on this territory and changing the mission culture of this church from *settled to sent*. At the center of those conversations has been this question: *What is God calling us to do for the sake of the Gospel?* The Strategic Mission Plan of the New Jersey Synod presents a wide array of mission initiatives, challenges and opportunities in response to that question, but none more vital than the work of Chapter 1 – Congregations.

Over the next eighteen months (July 2010 - December 2011), this Synod will be engaged in a special emphasis on the mission development of its congregations.<sup>1</sup> Our objective will be to challenge the imagination and strengthen the missionary behaviors of every congregation, for the sake of revitalizing the church for mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We propose to do this under the theme ***Becoming, Strengthening, Transforming* COMMUNITIES OF GRACE**.

To assist us in this emphasis, the New Jersey Synod will engage **are a renewal enterprise, Inc.**, a consulting team led by Kelly Fryer (author of *Reclaiming the L Word*, among other resources) and David Daubert (author of *Living Lutheran*).

The **are** team will work closely with Synod staff and leaders to

- Inspire vision for a mission culture shift among congregational leaders;
- Build leadership capacity for mission and ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century;
- Deepen a sense of interdependence in mission among leaders, congregations, and synod;
- Pay attention to new possibilities in mission and ministry that are emerging in the synod;
- Develop a grassroots-led strategy for moving forward.

Alongside of and helping to fuel this emphasis, this Synod will continue its journey in the *Book of Faith* initiative, especially encouraging leaders to become fluent in the first language of the Christian faith.

A tentative calendar for this emphasis follows this proposal summary. At the outset, parish pastors will be invited to join the bishop in one of a series of twenty-four hour retreats for spiritual renewal and exploring missional leadership. These will take place at the new Christ Center at Cross Roads, October 18, 19, 20, 21, and November 1, 2, 3.

This mission development emphasis is our best current effort to move our mission conversations forward and strengthen those vital mission outposts that are congregations of this Synod. We trust that the Holy Spirit will guide and enliven this work for the sake of the Gospel.

**1.** As of this writing, the New Jersey Synod has 181 congregations; 29 of them are part-time ministries. There are five new missions under development.



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**2010**

- August 11-12            Planning Retreat with **are** Team and Bishop's Staff
- September 11            Book of Faith – SCS Teachers Event with Dr. Dianne Jacobsen*  
*Abiding Presence, Ewing*
- September 17-18       Synod Council Retreat, Christ Center, Cross Roads  
(includes time with **are** Team)
- October 18-21           Mission Leadership Retreats with the Bishop (Parish Pastors)
- November 1-3            Mission Leadership Retreats with the Bishop
- Mid November            Book of Faith – Advent Preaching and Matthew's Gospel*
- November 20            Synod Council Meeting

**2011**

- February 15            Ministerium Day 1 with Kelly Fryer and Dave Daubert
- March 19                Conference on Congregational Ministries (**are** Team Leadership)
- April 12                    Ministerium Day 2: Book of Faith with Dr. Rolf Jacobsen*
- June 3-4                Synod Assembly in three parts with Saturday, June 4 Mission Festival  
(**are** Team Leadership)  
*Book of Faith: Dwelling in the Word reflections during Assembly*
- Fall                      Mission Gatherings for Laity (north/south or 8 Mission Districts)  
(**are** Team Leadership)
- November 19            Synod Council Meeting (emphasis evaluation)

Note: **are** Team onsite and/or virtual meetings with leaders scheduled at least every quarter.