

Our Eastern Synod Vision for Mission 2014-2016

A Church in Mission for Others

God calls the whole church through the Gospel to be engaged in mission in response to the needs of others, celebrating what God has done and continues to do through us. Relying on the gifts of the Spirit, we will develop ministries that will inspire and equip us to care for others through the mission work of the synod, ministry areas, congregations, synodically recognized ministries and specialized ministries. As members of the Eastern Synod, we will help one another to embrace our vocations as ministers of the Gospel.

Mission Priorities

1. We will practice Spirited Discipleship

We will encourage one another to be joyful in worship, diligent in exploring God's Word, passionate in bearing witness to our faith, generous in sharing the gifts we have received, and wise in working with all our sisters and brothers in Christ. In our life together, we will be open to the creative and loving ways that God's Spirit works in and through us as members of the Eastern Synod.

Throughout our synod, this mission priority may include:

- a) endorsing and practicing our National Bishop's call to Spiritual Renewal. This call to deeper discipleship includes: Pray, Read, Worship, Study, Serve, Give and Tell;
- b) renewing worship through workshops, retreats, and the efforts of the Director of Worship Ministries;
- c) encouraging clergy and laity throughout our synod to study the Bible and wrestle with questions of faith through program resources, educational events, and leadership from the faculty of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary;
- d) sharing faith stories and promoting resources through the *In Mission for Others* initiative, our synod's publications and communication network, and the efforts of the Director of Witness and Evangelism Ministries;
- e) inviting generosity of spirit and offerings through events, publications and the work of the Director of Stewardship and Resource Development; and
- f) fostering genuine collegiality among clergy and laity.

2. We will pursue Compassionate Justice

We will be mindful of the biblical principles of justice and compassion, striving to work with and for people who live on the margins of society. We will meet our neighbours, become more familiar with those living in our communities who may vary from us in age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, and religious practices, and foster a climate of invitation for all. We will also seek to take better care of the earth, and play a leading role in preserving all that God has made.

Throughout our synod, this mission priority may include:

- a) becoming familiar with the issues of our day by engaging in the study and discussion of challenging questions;
- b) identifying and supporting initiatives which seek justice, tempered with mercy, through the work of the Director of Public Policy and Service Ministries as well as KAIROS;
- c) endorsing and supporting the work of Canadian Lutheran World Relief;
- d) continuing dialogue with our multi-faith neighbours;
- e) welcoming those whose sexual orientation may differ from our own;
- f) keeping a diversity of faces before us as we choose leaders;
- g) promoting right and renewed relationships between non-indigenous and indigenous peoples in Canada;
- h) increasing our responsibility as good stewards of the earth's environment and resources including faithfulness to our joint Anglican-Lutheran commitment to promote responsible resource extraction and climate justice; and
- i) participating in the ELCIC Commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation in 2015-2017 under the theme of *Liberated by God's Grace* and including three sub-themes *Salvation – not for sale, Human beings – not for sale and Creation – not for sale*.

3. We will strive to be a Healthy Synod

We will have a clear sense of purpose and a strong sense of identity. We will be faithful stewards of gifts and assets entrusted to us. We will engage, cooperate with and support our national church. We will continue to assess and adjust our structures so that we remain suited to the tasks to which the Gospel calls us. We will be challenged by ongoing evaluation of our various ministries, mindful that God may lead us to end some of them and begin others.

Throughout our synod, this mission priority may include:

- a) living and working according to the Covenant Concerning the Life and Ministry of the Eastern Synod;
- b) integrating children, youth and young adults into the life of our church through programs, gatherings, the camps, campus ministries and the work of the Director for Youth and Young Adult Ministries;
- c) identifying, calling, mentoring and equipping ordained and lay leaders to meet the opportunities and challenges that are before us;
- d) evaluating the effectiveness of our leaders and committees and making changes which allow us to more fully participate in the mission to which God calls us;
- e) recruiting leaders with gifts and skills that match the needs of our church today and in the future;
- f) training both clergy and lay leaders for service in the ministry areas, congregations, synodically recognized ministries and specialized ministries through the leadership of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and a variety of educational events; and
- g) proposing programs of continuing education for our rostered ministers.

4. We will build Effective Partnerships

We will strengthen our existing partnerships and develop new ones. This includes collaboration with congregations, ministry areas, synodically recognized ministries, specialized ministries, other synods, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, as well as ecumenical, multi-faith, and community organizations. We will frequently ask ourselves, "Do we have to do this alone?"

Throughout our synod, this mission priority may include:

- a) strengthening our working relationship among the Synod Council, Deans and Ministry Directors;
- b) improving communication within our synod through its publications, programs and communication network;
- c) continuing to work in partnership with women's groups and networks in our synod through the work of the Director of Women's Ministries;
- d) deepening our relationship with our companion synods, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land;
- e) continuing to explore possibilities for shared ministry with the Anglican Church of Canada, especially at the diocesan, regional and parish level;
- f) identifying and establishing partnerships which will help us to effectively use all of the resources that have been entrusted to us; and
- g) seeking justice for all by working with ecumenical coalitions like KAIROS, inter-faith groups, multi-faith groups, as well as groups sharing similar goals and values.