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October 30, 2013

Dear friends,

I am writing to invite your congregation to become a signatory to the “Covenant Concerning the Life and Ministry of the Eastern Synod, ELCIC”.

The process of developing and publicizing the covenant document has been going on for 18 months. Before Synod Council approved the final text, its members reviewed all of the comments received during the 6 months that a draft version appeared on the Synod’s website. Public discussion was encouraged at the 2012 Synod Assembly and at spring conference meetings earlier this year. I hope that you have taken the opportunity to read and discuss the covenant document during the past year and a half.

Right from the beginning of the process we envisioned church councils signing the document on behalf of their respective congregations. In our view this would signify the re-affirmation of a commitment to live in a certain kind of relationship with the synodical expression of the church. That relationship is characterized by mutual respect, mutual accountability and mutual responsibility for the well-being of the parties. Our hope is that every congregation in the Synod will become a covenant signatory.

The covenant is an acknowledgement of what we already know: that we are all members of the body of Christ that exists in every expression of the church. As St. Paul said in his first letter to the Corinthians, “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.” Signing the document together re-enacts our commitment to all of the other members. We pray that the body may be strengthened for the mission that God has entrusted to our care.

If you have not already done so, I would encourage you to engage with members of your congregation in study and discussion of the covenant document. And then, at your congregation’s next annual general meeting of members, I invite you to present a motion similar to the following:

That the Congregation Council and officers are authorized to sign the “Covenant Concerning the Life and Ministry of the Eastern Synod, ELCIC” on behalf of the congregation.

After we receive the signed document at the Synod office, I will sign it and send it back to you as a symbolic record of our mutual commitments.

If you have any questions about the document or the process, you can contact Jeff Pym at jpym@elfec.ca or 1-888-308-9461. The covenant document, congregational signing sheet, and this invitation letter are also available for downloading from the Eastern Synod Website at <http://easternsynod.org/ministries/ecumenical-and-multifaith/>.

I look forward to receiving the signed covenant from your congregation and entering a new era in the life of the Eastern Synod.

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a plus sign followed by the name "Michael" in a cursive script.

Bishop Michael J. Pryse
MJP:cc

Covenant Concerning the Life and Ministry of the Eastern Synod, ELCIC

All these things we will strive to do, with God's help.

Congregation Name

Location City

Province

For the Congregation:

Council Chair

Date

Pastor

Date

Pastor

Date

For the Eastern Synod:

Bishop

Date