



## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Spring 2014

*So we, who are many, are one body in Christ,  
and individually we are members one of another.*

– Romans 12:5

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

One of my deep joys as I begin my term as the fourth presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is meeting with you and witnessing how we are church together. It is wonderful to see how people's lives are changed because of the commitment of our congregations to share God's love with one another. Thank you for your faithful witness to the gospel. Because of our relationship with God through Jesus Christ, we are church together for the sake of the world.

At the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, we affirmed the Book of Faith initiative as a continuing emphasis and priority in this church. It is my hope that our deep biblical engagement with the written word of God may help us become a community of deep spiritual discernment. Together, let us recommit to those spiritual practices of prayer, silence, worship, giving and Scripture study so that together we can prepare ourselves and be quiet long enough to hear how God is speaking to us through the Holy Spirit.

We need to first listen to God and then listen to one another. In your congregations, you are already listening and engaging in this communal discernment as you continue to work on your missional covenants. This work, begun by the encouragement of the Living Into the Future Together task force, is not done in isolation from or in competition with one another. It is shaped by our mutual conversations concerning our vision and mission and discerning where the greatest needs are within our congregations and communities.

The 2013 Churchwide Assembly recognized a number of those greatest needs when it approved the *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*. The Campaign for the ELCA seeks to raise funds for existing local and global churchwide ministries and for new ministries. As church together, we can start or renew a congregation; save a child's life; develop leaders in our church and in our global companion churches; and feed people who are hungry, equipping them to break out of the cycle of hunger and poverty.

This past fall, thousands of congregations participated in the "God's work. Our hands." Sunday. We plan to do this again Sept. 7, 2014. I hope you will join us. This day of service in Jesus' name is a wonderful way to share God's love.

As you pray, worship and discern together to seek and listen for God's will, know that throughout the ELCA, your brothers and sisters are praying for you.

God's peace,

Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



## **2014 Bishop's Report to the South Dakota Synod**

*"I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus . . ." (I Corinthians 1:4)*

It has been another wonderful year in the life of this Synod. I thank you for the opportunity to continue to serve you as your bishop for six more years. I give thanks for the work that we share in making Christ known. I want to thank each and every one of you for your support of our shared ministry. Mission support for 2013 increased from 2012 and letters of intent for 2014 also increased over 2013.

Just a few highlights of the year, since we were together last:

### **August in Pittsburgh for the 2013 Churchwide Assembly**

We had a fine group of voting members from the South Dakota Synod. It was a privilege for me to spend the week with them, have opportunity to get to know them better, and to do the work of this church on a churchwide level together. We helped elect Kayla Koterwski (member from Peace Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls) as a youth member to the Church Council and Reid Christopherson from St James in Garretson was also elected to the Church Council. It was an amazing process to be a part of as we elected a new Secretary of the Church, the Rev Chris Boerger (who will be our churchwide representative this synod assembly) and a new Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.

### **October in western South Dakota**

On October 1, 2013 much of western South Dakota and North Dakota was hit by the worst early blizzard on record. Significant loss of livestock happened across the western prairies. The only good news was no loss of human life. I was at the Conference of Bishops' meeting in Chicago and was able to speak to Lisa Adler and Betty Oldenkamp of Lutheran Social Services as the significance of the storm began to be reported. Lisa works for LSS in Aberdeen, but in times of natural disaster she becomes our point person for Lutheran Disaster Response. I was able to release five thousand dollars from the Synod Office to aid in Lisa's initial response in putting an office together and in beginning to respond to the needs that were already coming in. We are blessed that Lisa, because of her skill, also chairs VOAD (volunteer organizations aiding in disaster). Lutheran Disaster Response also released \$75,000 with an additional \$75,000 as needed to aid in recovery. It was amazing to see all the different agencies and associations come together to help those impacted by the storm.

## **November in Cameroon**

Right before Thanksgiving, I traveled with Pastors Trisha Boese, Jess Daum, Natanael Lizarazo, and Bill Tesch to Cameroon. I attended parts of their Church Council meeting and then on our first Sunday there we all celebrated with the people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon as we installed their new bishop the Rev. Dr Reuben Ngozo. We traveled that week to Garoua Boli to re-dedicate the hospital, helped install the mayor (the second woman and first Christian to hold that office) and bless two churches that had roofs donated by congregations from South Dakota. We celebrated Thanksgiving with real cranberry relish and with doctors, staff and many of the pastors from Central African Republic who had come for a moment of respite from the violence. I said good-bye to my traveling companions as they returned home and I went on the road with Bishop Ngozo and President Goliki of the Central African Republic Lutheran Church. I was invited to preach at the worship service where two women and two men were ordained. I also preached at the two dedications of roofs, and at two other services of ordination. The highlight for me was the week teaching at the Lutheran Seminary in Meigunga. I was able to spend time with each class, from those just beginning their education to those in their last semester.

## **January in western South Dakota**

Every January we have a senior pastor's retreat in central South Dakota. This year we were joined by Bishop Elizabeth Eaton for a day before we headed out on the road. Bishop Eaton was introduced to the House of Representatives and then we had a meeting with Governor Dennis Daugaard before driving to Bison South Dakota. We shared an evening meal with people from ten congregations from North Dakota down to Newel. We were hosted by Pastor Dana Lockhart and members of the four congregations he serves. We traveled with Lisa Adler of LSS and the Rev. Michael Stadie of Lutheran Disaster Response. That night we stayed at the Jorgenson ranch and the next morning toured their place and could see first hand the devastation of the storm. We traveled to Sturgis and met with other ranchers and again had a community meal at Grace Lutheran in Sturgis. We were hosted by Pastor Henrique Fleming and the fine people of Grace Lutheran and we had a strong showing from area pastors and members. It was good to hear how people were taking care of one another in recovering from the blizzard.

## **March and April in the South Dakota Synod**

We received five seminarians in the spring draft and all of them are in some portion of the call process. The seminarian that we had received in November has received a call from a congregation in South Dakota.

Dr Solofu from the hospital in Garoua Boli sent us the final drawing and costs for the electrical re-modeling of the hospital. I want to personally thank Pastor Nate and the people of First Lutheran in Sioux Falls, Scott Paisley and East River Electric, and Pastor Chris Baisler and the people of Trinity Lutheran in Mitchell, and St John's in rural Dimock for their outstanding support of this project. They promised me that the money would be raised and that I should release funds to begin the project even before the money was in hand. The need for the electrical work was critical and I released the money. I can report that except for installation of the new

generator (still waiting for delivery) the work is done and the money has been raised. Thanks be to God and to all those who participated.

When I started my first term as your bishop we were anticipating that within 12 years approximately two thirds of our pastors would be retired by then. As we are now more than half way through that time period I have seen nothing to dissuade me from that statistic. Much of my work and the work of the Synod office has been focused on the recruitment of first call seminarians and experienced pastors to replace those who have completed their years of service and are retiring. By the end of 2014, I will have ordained over 65 seminarians and we will have invited more than 25 experienced pastors to come and serve in congregations of South Dakota. We have focused on supporting, encouraging and mentoring those first call rostered leaders who are serving in South Dakota. We have increased our seminary debt reduction program from \$4,000 when I came into office to \$51,000 this past year. We have started our first senior pastor school cohort and we will start a second cohort soon. We are a synod that needs about thirty senior pastors at any given time and its imperative that we begin the process of preparing the leaders that we will need tomorrow, today. That is what our mission campaign is all about, the leaders and ministries of tomorrow.

Half of the mission campaign that you will be voting on is about the recruitment, support and encouragement of the future leaders that will be needed by this synod long after I am done serving as your bishop. None of that mission campaign is about underwriting the current operating budget of the synod. It is all about the mission and ministry that we do together now and into the future.

I want to close with a “Thank you” to my wife, LaDonna. My travel schedule has been the worst since elected this past year and I am ever mindful of her sacrifice, support and love. Thanks as well to my children and grandchildren for your love and support. I continue to be blessed by a talented and dedicated group of people. Even more importantly, every member of the South Dakota Synod and our Companion Synods are also blessed by their dedication and work in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ in all that we say and do.

In Christ’s Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bishop David B Zellmer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bishop David B Zellmer  
South Dakota Synod. ELCA

## CONGREGATION ANNIVERSARIES and ROSTER CHANGES

### Anniversaries and Dedications

#### 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Trinity Lutheran Church, Rapid City

#### 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Bethesda Lutheran Church, Bristol

Zion Lutheran Church, Eureka

Hudson Lutheran Church, Hudson

Trinity Lutheran Church, Revillo

Trinity Lutheran Church, Tea

#### 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Brule Creek Lutheran Church, Elk Point

Bergen Lutheran Church, Gayville

Gayville Lutheran Church, Gayville

Vangen Lutheran Church, Mission Hill

### Commissioning

7/28/13 Susan Rohde, AIM

### Installations

5/5/13	Rev. Chris Anderson, Aberdeen, Scandinavia Lutheran
6/2/13	Rev. Marcia Brennan, Newell, First Lutheran
6/2/13	Rev. Timothy Thies, Canton, Canton Lutheran
6/23/13	Rev. David Bentz, Elk Point, St Paul Evangelical Lutheran
7/28/13	Susan Rohde, AIM, Sioux Falls, Spirit of Joy Lutheran
8/18/13	Rev. Adam Butler, Sioux Falls, Holy Cross Lutheran
9/15/13	Rev. Randall Gehring, Sioux Falls, Our Savior's Lutheran
9/19/13	Rev. Mary Sacco, Sioux Falls, Bethany Lutheran Home
9/22/13	Rev. George Ekeren-Moening, Crooks, West Nidaros Lutheran
9/22/13	Michele Gehring, AIM, Madison, St John Lutheran
9/29/13	Rev. Elizabeth Dieseth, Aberdeen, Good Shepherd Lutheran
9/29/13	Rev. April Peterson, Stickney, St Paul Lutheran
10/13/13	Rev. Stephen Palo, Brookings, First Lutheran
10/13/13	Rev. Herb Wounded Head, Brookings, South Dakota State University
10/27/13	Rev. Matthew Miller, Miller, Trinity Lutheran
11/14/13	Rev. Robert Chell, Sioux Falls, St Dymas of South Dakota
1/12/14	Rev. Susan Sinclair, Toronto, Leganger Lutheran
2/2/14	Rev. Gregory Johnson, Brandon, Beaver Valley Lutheran

2/2/14	Rev. Lisa Heffernan (Interim), Chamberlain, Trinity
2/9/14	Rev. Loren Olson, Sioux Falls, First Lutheran
2/16/14	Yvonne Steindal, AIM, Custer, Custer Lutheran Fellowship
3/9/14	Rev. Frank Philipp (Interim), Sioux Falls, Holy Cross
6/8/14	Rev. Michael Johnson, Flandreau, Our Savior's Lutheran
6/8/14	Rev. Dr. Lon Kvanli, Mitchell, First Lutheran
6/8/14	Rev. Dr. Heidi Kvanli, Mitchell, First Lutheran

### **Leave from Call**

12/1/13	Rev. Heidi Kvanli
8/15/13	Rev. Kristin Kellaheer
2/20/14	Rev. Kristin Ostercamp

### **Necrology**

7/21/13	E. Matheny, AIM
9/12/13	Rev. Ronald Brugger
3/27/14	Rev. Harold Watrous

### **Ordinations**

6/15/13	Rev. Adam Butler
6/23/13	Rev. David Bentz
7/27/13	Rev. Elizabeth Dieseth

### **Resigned from Roster**

9/15/13	Rev. Anthony Haglund
3/3/14	Rev. Gary Pabst

### **Removed from Roster**

10/11/13	Angela Smith, AIM
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### **Retired**

6/1/13	Rev. Marjorie Hershey
7/1/13	Rev. Ann Webb
7/7/13	Rev. Dennis Tranberg
9/1/13	Rev. James Joyslin
11/1/13	Rev. Marlin Wangsness
1/1/14	Rev. Duane Neugebauer
2/1/14	Rev. Ralph Egbert
4/1/14	Rev. Jeffrey Rohr
4/1/14	Rev. Bob Ohnstad
5/1/14	Rev. Carroll Marohl

**Transferred Into South Dakota**

9/15/13 Rev. Randall Gehring  
9/22/13 Rev. George Ekeren-Moening  
9/22/13 Michele Gehring, AIM  
9/29/13 Rev. April Peterson  
2/9/14 Rev. Loren Olson

**Transferred Out of South Dakota**

5/26/13 Rev. Jeffrey Hansen, 5F Northeastern Iowa  
7/15/13 Rev. Junfeng Tan, 4F TX-LA Gulf Coast  
9/27/13 Rev. George Wieland, 3G Minneapolis Area  
11/27/13 Rev. Holly Slater, 5K S-C Synod of WI  
12/4/13 Rev. Tanya Rist, 5L La Crosse Area  
12/13/13 Rev. Karen Matuska, 2E Rocky Mountain  
1/16/14 Rev. Carol Mapa, 4A Nebraska  
1/16/14 Rev. Jon Mapa, 4A Nebraska  
1/16/14 Rev. Nicholas Slater, 5J Greater Milwaukee  
4/2/14 Rev. David Astrup, 3D NW MN

The 2014 Synod Assembly Report of Pastor Bill Tesch  
Director for Evangelical Mission and Associate to the Bishop

We recently celebrated “Companeros de Camino” Sunday (“Companions on the Journey”) in the South Dakota Synod. The Gospel for the Day was from Luke 24 – the story of Cleopas and company on the road to Emmaus. The Gospel and the theme for the day led us to explore the realities facing young immigrants who are our companions on the journey. Together we imagined how Jesus meets us as we walk together. For the congregations who participated, it was a joyful celebration of what God is doing in our world. That story of the disciples on the road in Luke 24 has shaped my thoughts and feelings about our partnership in the Gospel as congregations/synod/church wide. This ministry is about walking together as God’s people and discovering that as we journey along Christ meets us in often surprising ways.

Sometimes what draws us together is the recognition that something has to change – it can’t be business as usual if we want to be part of God’s mission in a changing world. This year I’ve had the joy of accompanying several congregations on a months-long process of listening to God, to each other and to the surrounding community – listening for God’s calling to live and serve in new ways. Like those disciples we often “felt our hearts burning within us” and had our “eyes opened” to new opportunities for mission and ministry. This was part of my work in an area called “congregational renewal.” Last year 16 congregations were engaged in some kind of intentional renewal process. They received a total of \$45,600 in direct grants from the Congregation and Synodical Mission Unit of the ELCA and \$22,000 from the Synod.

Sometimes what draws us together as companions is the opportunity to grow. It has been a joy to work with the Renewal Team of the Evangelical Outreach Committee (Jackie Braun, Charlie Bunk, Becky Piper, John Paulson, Tim Sersen, Margie Neugebauer, Suzanne Hansen). We’ve taken what we’ve learned over the last 5 years of doing this work and applied it to creating a new system for accompanying congregations on a journey of renewal. The new process is called “G.i.F.T.” It stands for, “Growing in Faith Together” with the tagline “The Gifts of God for the People of God.” We expect to offer this to the first group of congregations this fall. Please call me if you are interested in having your congregation discover how God is calling you to reach out and serve in Christ’s name.

Sometimes what draws us together as companions is a cry for help. I’ve been working with the Bishop and other leaders of the Episcopal Diocese to expand relationships with Native American companions in South Dakota. Together we’ve discerned the need to invest in our native youth. We are proposing a new position in Pine Ridge devoted to working with our children and youth. I hope you will learn about and support this vital new ministry at Pine Ridge.

Sometimes what draws us together is pain. This year I’ve accompanied a couple of congregations as they moved through conflict and toward healing. I am humbled by the faithfulness of God’s people and heartened to see God’s mercy working in congregations when they face tough times together.

Sometimes what draws us together is a “plentiful harvest.” Jesus said, “The harvest is ready but the laborers are few.” I accompany our new congregations who are sending new laborers into the harvest. Community of Hope in Aberdeen, WestSide, Pueblo de Dios and First Lutheran African Ministry in Sioux Falls, Woyatan in Rapid City, and the Young Adult Intentional Community in Mission are showing us how to reach out in innovative and exciting ways. I hope that you will become a Mission Partner with one or more of these amazing new ministries. Call me if you are interested.

Sometimes what brings us together is a vision for a new future. The proposed “Appeal for Mission and Leadership” provides a pathway to meet the challenges of being the church in a changing world. I had a role in shaping the initial proposal, receiving your feedback and modifying the plan accordingly. At this assembly, you will make decisions about this proposal. It’s about the future of the church. Please consider it as you always do – faithfully and prayerfully.

A simple “thank you” does not express the gratitude I feel for the blessing and honor of serving you on your synod staff. It has indeed been a blessing to serve with Bishop Zellmer, Susan Marone and all of our wonderful synod colleagues on the staff. It is indeed an honor and a joy to accompany the congregations of South Dakota on this breath-taking adventure called, “God’s Mission.” Thank you for your partnership, and may the Joy of the Risen Jesus bless your journey!

Respectfully in Christ,



Rev. Bill Tesch, Director for Evangelical Mission and Associate to the Bishop

Synod Assembly Report, June 2014  
Submitted by Susan Marone, MA, LPC, AIM  
Associate to Bishop Zellmer

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

It continues to be an honor and great privilege to be part of the SD Synod Staff! I feel very blessed to be part of a talented, gifted and supportive team of colleagues, not only on the Synod Staff but also the many fine rostered and lay leaders we have in our synod!

This year was filled with congregational visits and conducting Parish Studies for congregations with Rostered Leader vacancies. In January and February the Executive Staff traveled around the state meeting with congregations for a time of listening and “open space” conversations.

One of the great joys of this work is working with newly ordained clergy! Newly ordained pastors of the SD Synod include:

Pastor David Bentz  
Pastor Adam Butler  
Pastor Elisabeth Dieseth

Commissioned as Associates in Ministry include:

Susan Claire Meyer, AIM  
Susan Rhode, AIM

We welcome the following out-of-state Rostered Leaders to our synod:

Rev. Marcia Brennan  
Rev. George Ekeren-Moening  
Rev. Randall Gehring  
Michele Gehring, AIM  
Rev. Lars Olson  
Rev. April Peterson

Mobility in the SD Synod has been steady as folks who had hoped to retire can now afford to do so. Several of our larger congregations are now being served by a great group of senior pastors and our First Call folks have been wonderful! I would like to thank Pastor Patrick Hahn for his leadership as Chair of the Support to Ministries Committee and for his faithful service in ministry in the Northern Plains Conference.

I continue to enjoy working with the Candidacy Committee as we accompany 49 candidates in responding to a call to ministry in the ELCA. The annual Candidacy Retreat at Shalom Hills Farm in MN, was held in late April and the committee always enjoys spending time with our candidates and getting to know them better. 18 Seminarians will receive scholarships from the SD Synod and we are grateful to all who contribute to those scholarships! Many “thanks” to Pastor Don Salberg and Pastor Duane Neugebauer for their exceptional leadership for this committee as their 10 years of service on the committee has been completed.

I continue to grow and thrive in my call to synodical ministry and am grateful for my colleagues and the ministry of our team!

Peace,

Susan Marone, MA, LPC, AIM

South Dakota ELCA Synod Assembly Report, 2014  
Pastor Karen Rupp, Director of Native American Ministries

We continue to give thanks for the blessings you all bring to our Lutheran Lakota Shared Ministry through your continued prayers, words of encouragement, generous hearts and hands. With grateful hearts and thanksgiving we receive financial contributions quilts, new clothing, disposable diapers, food, gift cards and many other items for the community. Thank you!

We are also continually thankful for relationships – both new and ongoing, and the networks of connections which have developed and grown through visitors coming here for cross-cultural learning from diverse geographic, denominational, educational arenas. Groups reserve their time to come and participate in building and strengthening bridges of relationship with the Lakota community and the calendar fills quickly. We are encouraging groups to consider participating through forming “long-distant” bridges, fundraising to provide materials, tools, and finances to pay members of the local community to perform much needed structural improvement projects.

We also are hopeful that friends far and near will consider contributing to funding a new staff position an Ecumenical Minister for Children and Youth “Crafting a Circle of Healing.” Lakota call their young people wakanja, “sacred beings” and consider the children to be the hope of the future. The Lakota also express belief that choices made today affect all creation through the 7<sup>th</sup> generation to come, even as we feel the repercussions from 7 generations back. Making a choice to be proactive in forming circles of healing for the young people by providing a Christ-like witness, building leadership capacity, increasing resiliency, especially addressing issues of suicide, gang activity and women’s empowerment is a gift we pray the Holy Spirit empowers us to provide.

Interest remains for the local Habitat for Humanity to become active once again, but no action. I’ll try to reconvene the group who can it happen.

The January cross-cultural immersion program for Seminary students welcomed once again several enthusiastically engaged students from Wesley, Lutheran Southern, Wartburg, Bexley Hall and Gettysburg this year. Professor Rev. Craig Nessian accompanied his Wartburg students and provided very positive feedback about the experience. I hope to visit Wartburg next fall to strengthen our connection. Lutheran Outdoors and Augustana College continue to offer opportunities for our young people through summer programs and alternative spring and/or fall breaks and invite our young to their campuses and programs. We like to attend Woyatan Wednesday night or Saturday night whenever we can with our young people and/or visiting groups.

Word and Sacrament ministry continues at St. John’s Episcopal Church in N. Oglala and Cohen Home, a residential facility for the elderly. We have not been involved at Makasan Presbyterian Church since the conflict within their congregation, but have been attending Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church when possible and when we do, I’m frequently invited to offer prayers there. We seek to strengthen healthy ecumenical relationships. We will likely begin offering worship opportunities to the community right at the Retreat Center in response to several requests. .

We applied to be a Horizon Internship site and were approved, but no intern was assigned to our site. Young people from the community continue attend our Sanctuary young peoples’ afternoon program where we host youth for play and worship activities. Over 100 local youth visit on a regular basis in age groups 7 and under and 8 and over. We invited families to our Thanksgiving meal in November and hosted 84 on Wednesday and another 22 on Thursday...good fellowship and celebration Through generous donations from individuals and faith-based groups we provided Christmas gifts to over 250 young people and gift certificates their families and some of our regular lunch time folks and artists. During the past year we served over 8.500 lunches to the hungry of the community. Thank you, South Canyon Lutheran Church in Rapid City, for continuing to assist with this program by donating food items for the lunch, Sanctuary meals and snacks.

The Multi-cultural committee continues to meet regularly for the work of supporting multi-cultural ministries, nurturing their growth, fostering educational opportunities and building healthy relationships.

Please check our Face Book page, web page and newsletters (I do hope to get newsletters out more regularly) for continuing updates. Thank you Bishop Zellmer, Synod Council members, Synod Staff, and mission partners for ongoing prayer, encouragement and support. Please know we keep on keeping you all in our prayers.

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen Rupp*

Rev. Karen Rupp

## **South Dakota Youth Ministry Assembly Report 2014**

The South Dakota Synod did a Synod Youth Gathering this March with 100 Youth and Adults attending. The Gathering was held at Lutheran Outdoors Joy Ranch in Watertown, SD. This was a giant success for the Youth of our Synod. The music was great, the speakers spoke from the heart, and the housing and food were fantastic. The Youth also were involved in doing service projects, such as: tearing and winding up bandages, tying quilts to be sent to Pine Ridge and other places, and making scrap book pages for kids in foster families.

Since this event was so well received, the Synod is planning on having another Gathering next March at Joy Ranch.

The people who work with Young Adults in the Synod's congregations still come together on a monthly basis to talk, laugh, and share their "wisdoms" with each other. The Synod's Youth Ministry Network has become stronger because of these committed people. We have been using the times that we meet together as a continuing education time by discussing the "Practice Discipleship" topics that come from the ELCA's Continuing Ed. for Youth Workers whose ministry is working with the Young Adults in their communities. I am thankful for the opportunity to be a part of this important ministry in the South Dakota Synod.

Suzanne Hansen AIM

SD Synod Youth Ministry Coordinator