



FROM THE BISHOP



Greetings to all of you and may our Heavenly Father bless you richly,

Once again I begin my note to you with words of gratitude:

Thank you for your support this past year of our common mission, both on the synod level and in the larger church. Your generous response to our recent appeal for Mission Support was especially gratifying! A number of congregations went “above and beyond” in their intentions. Thank you again!

Thank you, pastors and other congregational leaders who made the effort to travel on a very cold winter day and were able to take part in our Appreciation Dinner for Public Servants (formerly known as the Legislative Dinner) at the end of January. We had an excellent turnout from the Governor’s office, Legislators, Constitutional officers, Judicial members, and Public Utilities Commissioners but more important we had the opportunity to acknowledge and express our appreciation for the work these folks do on behalf of our state. We will work at making it longer with more opportunity for conversation, but we were aware that several legislators needed to return to work that evening because of a funeral for a legislator’s son the next morning.

We will be holding our South Dakota Synod Assembly in Sioux Falls May 30 and 31. The assembly theme is *God’s Work. Our Hands*, and to help uplift that theme we’re asking for pictures of congregations’ members going about God’s work—helping at food pantries or soup kitchens, helping build Habitat for Humanity houses or painting homes for the elderly, cleaning up after natural disasters, delivering Meals on Wheels, teaching, farming, working cattle, supervising daycare, etc. Please mail or e-mail your pictures (with names and place) to the synod office.

During the synod assembly, we will have a listening post led by members of the Human Sexuality Task Force. (The draft will be released to rostered leaders on March 12, and to the public on March 13.) The Draft Social Statement is the proposed social statement that will be prepared for release next February; it is a document intended to garner responses via synodical hearings and other means. So anyone in this synod who wants to have an impact on that process should plan to attend the hearing and provide input to the Task Force members. For individuals or congregations that participate in the process by doing their own studies, responses need to be in to the Task Force by November 1, 2008. (A memorial to the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly would be too late.) Please make every effort to attend this listening post or complete your own study.

Speaking of the Churchwide Assembly: voting members need to be nominated at your spring Conference Assemblies, those voting members will be ratified at the Synod Assembly and they will attend the Assembly which will be held in Minneapolis August 17-23, 2009. I encourage you to seek out reasoned, mature people who are deeply committed to the life and ministry of this church. That is the best way to ensure the continued growth and vitality of this church; that is the only way to ensure we continue our commitment to *God’s Work. Our hands*.

God’s blessings to you in your ministry,

Bishop Dave

Bishop David B. Zellmer
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