



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Northern Great Lakes Synod

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BISHOP'S REPORT FOR CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL REPORTS

The New Year 2017

Dear Sisters and Brothers in the Northern Great Lakes Synod,

Most of our congregations will gather in this month or the next month at Annual Meetings! So what do you do at an annual meeting? Some of them last a half hour, others are an hour or so—sometimes they can go a lot longer being an endurance test! All of them are for the purpose of electing leaders, adopting budgets and generally discussing life in the congregation. There may be compliments expressed, appreciations given and even a complaint or two offered at these meetings.

This year, at your annual meeting, use the following questions for a good hunk of your meeting. The twenty or forty or seventy of you who show up should ask each other:

WHAT IS GOD CALLING US TO DO IN 2017?

WHAT IS OUR MISSION?

**WHAT SHOULD THIS CONGREGATION AND OUR PEOPLE BE ABOUT
THIS NEW YEAR?**

I could only guess at your answers. The folks in Trenary may answer these questions different than the people in Ironwood or in Rudyard or Rhineland. Yet we believe that God has “called” us to a ministry. In baptism we are given gifts and God says, “Use them!”

So what are we about in this new year?

Listen to Martin Luther in his explanation to the Third Article of the Creed:

“I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one common, true faith. Daily in this Christian church the Holy Spirit abundantly forgives all sins – mine and those of all believers. On the last day the Holy Spirit will raise me and all the dead and will give to me and all believers in Christ eternal life. This is most certainly true.”

God is at work in you, your congregation and in our synod. God will be at work when our 2017 Synod Assembly calls a new bishop this spring. God will be at work as you continue to give thanks for the power of the Holy Spirit to make all things (including your congregation) new!

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Skrenes, Bishop

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Companion Relationships:
Eastern & Coastal Diocese
Evangelical Lutheran Church
in Tanzania

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Rev. Dale R. Skogman
Bishop Emeritus
1991-1999

Rev. Harry S. Andersen
Bishop Emeritus
1987-1991