



Minneapolis Area Synod of the ELCA

God's grace, peace, and hope be with you through our Savior, Jesus Christ .

Like rain after an endless drought, the gift of gathering in person this year has quenched a deep thirst. The pandemic revealed anew the depth of our thirst for community; Scripture also articulates this profound human need. Advances in technologies like livestreaming are indeed gifts to our church and world. Still, our hearts sing when we can rub shoulders around the communion table, embrace those who grieve, and raise our voices together in resounding song.

The mission of the synod is to support communities who share the thirst-quenching love of God – forming disciples, building beloved community, and working for just and healthy neighborhoods. I am deeply grateful for the many ways that we walk together in our journey of faith.

The synod staff walks closely in partnership with congregations, especially in times of transition, planning, or conflict. Last year, we accompanied congregations in 58 call processes. We offer skills trainings for lay members through the annual Tool Kit, and for church staff through peer groups and communicators gatherings. And, our Faith Practices & Neighborhood Practices program strengthens congregations in faith formation and engaging their neighborhoods.

Synod staff also work closely with our deacons and pastors. We experience great joy when we gather with congregations for ordinations, installations, and Ministry Site Profile reviews, as well as in preaching, presiding, and offering adult forums. We support our interim pastors who provide wise leadership in times of transition and our chaplains who provide critical care in a variety of settings. And, currently, we support 50 seminary students preparing to become pastors and deacons.

Our congregations worship in Spanish, Swahili, ASL, Oromo, Hmong, Lao, Norwegian, and Amharic. As we celebrate our diversity, we also recognize inequities affecting our congregations. Using a “racial equity lens,” the synod council launched an in-depth process to evaluate and strengthen partnerships with our “strategic ministries,” addressing historical realities of disconnection and resource inequities.

As a synod together, we will gather again April 28-29 for Synod Assembly. All are welcome at the opening worship Friday night; voting members will carry out the business of the synod on Saturday. We are blessed with the Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III as our keynote speaker.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of Lutherans in our synod and in the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, the ground-breaking for the first ever Lutheran University in Nigeria occurred this December. We celebrate God's provision and look forward to the blessings this university will bring.

During my sabbatical, I have been studying “the church in the U.S. – hopes and challenges.” I would like to present some of my learnings as well as facilitate conversations in as many congregations as possible during the coming months. For more information about these visits or news about what's happening around the synod, please visit the synod website and sign up for our weekly enews.

In Christ,
Bishop Ann Svennungsen