



## + *Gwen Arneson, Synod Vice President*

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### ***Synod Council and Executive Committee Report to 2018 Synod Assembly***

In this Easter season our worship services may include the hymn, “Be Not Afraid” from Evangelical Lutheran Worship. Whether our hearts are filled at any particular moment with joy or doubt or trepidation, we join the refrain, “Be not afraid, sing out for joy! Christ is risen, Alleluia!” In this spirit and with these words of promise and encouragement, we regularly gather to do what we are called to do as members of the Synod Council and Executive Committee. It is a privilege to deliberate, learn, and act alongside folks who are eager to serve and share their diverse gifts and collective wisdom on behalf of God’s people here in SW MN.

As with any governance entity, some of our work addresses ongoing matters such as Roster Matters and financial reporting. We steward the oversight of congregations’ constitutions as changes are voted upon locally, and consider synod-wide policies. At each council meeting we strive to increase our awareness and deepen our understanding of various ministries in our synod and beyond through intentional learning and development time. It is interesting to note that many council members routinely remark positively about how eye-opening to the larger expression of the Church it has been for them as they serve and as we learn and discuss the best ways to approach our own synodical work, and then bring that work back to our own congregations.

Over the past months a Task Force has been deliberate in working to propose revisions to our conference structure to better meet the needs of our context. The Task Force has presented the fruits of their work to the council for additional reflection. Also, input has been invited in a variety of other settings when leaders gather around our synod.

Our exciting SWMN Synod Funding Initiative, “Embrace God’s Mission + Equip God’s People” has captured our attention throughout the past year as we hear updates and inspiring stories of the impact this courageous initiative has had in the lives of individuals and congregations all around us. At this Assembly we will be moved by stories about what has already been accomplished, and dream about what the future holds with Embrace/Equip, as well as put our heads together regarding participation in big and small ways as we leave Redwood Falls.

The council has the joyful work of allocating and directing funding to support our partner ministries and ministries that are in development in our synod. It is a constant and good reminder that we belong to one another as the body of Christ. God calls us to generous service and mutual support in so many ways.

God’s abundant gifts surround us at every turn. It is the careful intention of your Synod Council to steward those gifts in a manner that is pleasing to God and for the common good. We are grateful for your prayers and words of encouragement for the work you’ve elected us to do.

With joy and gratitude,

***Gwen Arneson, Synod Vice President***