

# Bishop Jon V. Anderson's Annual Report - 2018

**You are all synod ministers.** You are the synod as baptized ones living out your vocations in your everyday lives, inside the communities of faith of Southwestern Minnesota and beyond. Thanks for all the ways you have lived out your faith, loved your neighbors, and invited people to join you in following Christ. The attached infographic lifts up some information about our synod's life. We are also working on a new poster map to share with you that includes our vision statement.



**Southwestern Minnesota Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.



## Deepen Congregational Vitality

Congregations exist to proclaim the Good News we know in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus through word and sacrament. Growing gracious, generous Christians who follow Christ provide energizing focus. We are thankful for churches' sending capacity to engage God's world. Our staff continues to use tools to help congregational leaders grow and engage the work of reforming congregations to serve our changing mission field.

These involve stewardship education programs, evangelizing training that will begin in the new year, and ongoing use of planning assessments. What is God up to in your community and your congregation? God is working in your midst.

I want to share the five steps of our "Leadership for Faithful Innovation" project with Luther Seminary. A cohort of leaders is learning to slow down to more deeply engage the adaptive challenges of our time.

**LISTEN** – We are called to be "listening to God, listening to each other, listening to ourselves, and listening to the world around us."

**RECONNECT** – In addition to "Dwelling in the Word," we are also called to be "Dwelling in the World." We are called to reconnect spiritually with God's faithfulness, God's story, and God's promises to us as God's people.

**DEFINE** – the challenges God has called us to face.

**REFRAME** – “Leaders need to articulate the challenges congregations are facing in ways that invite others to learn by doing in order to discern God’s movement and God’s call to a new way forward.” We have to be willing to change as congregations and leaders to speak to our time.

**CULTIVATE** – “(I)nvolves whole congregations cultivating life together through spiritual practices and innovation focused on discerning God’s presence and joining God’s work.”

### **Enhance Local and Global Mission**

Congregations that have a mission beyond themselves are healthier. Congregations that have a focused sense of mission externally and internally live with greater joy and energy. Inside of even the most challenging situations are opportunities to serve in Christ’s name.

### **Develop Servant Leaders**

We continue our work of equipping God’s people for service in God’s world, developing people who serve in congregations and rostered ministry. Our dream to develop our synod’s “culture of call” continues to develop.

### **Again, Thanks**

We are grateful for each of you as you live out your faith and many callings. We are thankful for your congregations and the institutions of our synod. We are grateful for your support of God’s whole church – the ELCA and our Global Companions. Thanks for your faithful witness in God’s world. I also want to thank our staff (particularly Pr. Linda Pedersen who has concluded her service) and the committees, boards, and council of our synod.

***Bishop Jon Anderson***

***Southwestern Minnesota Synod, ELCA***

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