

BISHOP'S ANNUAL REPORT 2009



Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Dear Congregations of the Northwest
Synod of Wisconsin,

When you reflect upon your congregation's ministry during the past year and read your annual report, it is typically the big, noteworthy happenings that make it into print. But rarely recognized are the unnoticed ministry happenings that are done in the name of Christ: the hand held at a hospital bedside; the Sunday School teacher diligently preparing each week to tell the story of Jesus to little ones; the nimble fingers pulling thread through fabric for a quilt sent overseas; the sermon illustration through which the Spirit made faith alive within the man tortured by doubt; the casserole dropped off at the home of overwhelmed, new parents; the prayer lifted up for the grieving widow; the joy in the heart of a choir member praising God.

All of the above and more quietly take place in congregational life and provide the texture and color to the tapestry of our lives together.



Such quiet, unrecognized ministry happenings also occur throughout the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin because of the partnerships we share. We hear about the big initiatives, programs, and conferences, but often unnoticed are the persons whose lives are profoundly touched because of our joint mission:

- † the woman who contributes \$7 for a bed-net that saves the life of a child in Malawi
- † the man who delves into the Bible for the first time because of the Book of Faith emphasis
- † the couple who is excited because they completed their will and remembered ministry through a deferred gift because of assistance through the Gift Planning Initiative
- † the teenage boy whose faith in Jesus is stirred at Godstock
- † the new pastor who receives financial help through the First Call Debt Reduction fund
- † the council member who came away from the Council Leader Workshop with new ideas to implement
- † the excitement of the teacher because of a creative idea found online at the Synod Resource Center
- † the pastor's spouse who makes new friends and is renewed at the Clergy Spouse Retreat
- † the voting member who attends Synod Assembly and realizes for the first time the incredible witness and service of the whole church
- † the teenager who considers becoming a pastor for the first time because of Invitation to Serve
- † the seminary student who receives a tuition grant because of the Fund for Leaders endowment
- † the old man in the nursing home still engaged in the ministry of his church by daily praying for a child because of Cherish Our Children
- † the woman whose faith is deepened at a Circle meeting because of Women of the ELCA
- † the college student who finds a place to belong and explores issues of faith and life in campus ministry
- † the budding theologian led deeper into faith because of the Lay School of Ministry
- † the junior high girl whose eyes are opened to God's grace through a caring counselor at Bible camp
- † the broken family helped because of the professional resources of Lutheran Social Services
- † the youth director who finds collegial support through the Youth Worker's Network

The individual stories of lives touched and changed in Jesus' name are many on account our synodical ministries. When we talk about "the synod," we are speaking about what we do *together* in ministry and mission. Thank you for this partnership. Thank you for your mission-mindedness. Thank you for being a church that serves and witnesses locally, synodically, and beyond. Thanks be to God!

Yours in Christ,

Duane C. Pederson, Bishop