



Eastern Washington Idaho Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



Rev. Martin Wells, Bishop
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Annual Meeting letter for Congregations 2015

To the Congregations of the Eastern Washington and Idaho Synod,
Grace and peace to you from God our creator, Jesus our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit, our guide!

As you gather for your annual meeting I hope there is a sense of purposefulness and hope in your ministry! The Holy Spirit has gathered you as a congregation and you have faithfully sustained ministry in Jesus' name. All of this hope and intention are rooted in God's great love for the world and the whole human family. Thank you for being the arms of God to embrace this world, the wisdom of God in seeking its welfare, and the voice of God in declaring hope in life!

Elsewhere in your materials you'll have a report from our national and international church and I hope you'll take time to read these materials carefully. The work going on through Young Adults in Global Mission; through our seminaries in training new pastors, and through the network of church colleges is truly impressive! Together we are three hundred missionaries working all over the world extending the embrace of God!

What's the news from the Synod, your regional partner in this work? We've been busy as well and many of you know the most important development has been in the deployment of four "Net-Workers" throughout our big and beautiful synod. The central challenge of our day is no longer about providing materials to assist in vital ministry. No, the crucial task is identifying and getting access to the abundance of people and wisdom we already have! I hope you will welcome your "Net-Worker" to meet with your council and congregation to begin this work.

Otherwise your Churchwide and Synod staff have been on the road for meetings with you concerning stewardship, vitality in mission, and outreach to new residents among us, particularly Hispanic friends. New outreach in the Wenatchee/E Wenatchee area, Pasco, and Yakima are the result of this work. It's been my particular privilege to work with congregations in call process, interim ministry, and mission advancement. Continuing education, pastoral care, and motivation have been offered among the rostered pastors and other leaders of congregations. Planning for the next Synod Assembly (April 24-26, 2015 in Pasco) is well underway and we'll have outstanding leaders share a "theology of water" with us.

And we ask for your help: the mission of the church beyond your congregation is funded from your offering plate and the amount of mission support you send in to keep local, regional, and national/international mission available and healthy. We'll likely miss our budgeted goal this year so please take seriously the budget you approve and the amount of mission support (formerly called "benevolence") you can offer in 2015. Along with the form for "mission intent," we ask for your parochial report so we can measure the health of our regional church.

God bless and keep you as you meet! Thank you for being the Church, together!
Bishop Martin Wells