



Southwestern Minnesota Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

January 2, 2015

Greetings,

I am sorry that we could not get enough folks together to have this conversation the first time. I am more sorry that I did not drop out notice of our plan to not meet beyond the folks who had registered online. We will try to get word out but it is easiest to register and then we know who to notify.

So, I would like to invite you again to consider giving me a few hours of your time to join me for a Bishop's Gathering with leaders from Area Parishes as part of our Listening Project **on Tuesday, January 27 at the synod office in Redwood Falls from 9:30 a.m.-12.00 p.m.** For the purpose of this conversation I will define an area parish as one that has at least three congregations in it.

If the weather becomes an issue we will plan to host this gathering as a webinar. Registration information is below. We will share the information on how to do that from Kairos later if it looks necessary.

Again, I would like to invite a pastor from every parish and a lay person from your congregations to join this conversation about our synod, our life together, and the dream we might embrace for a transforming future. These are important times we are in as our culture continues to change and the role of the church is taking on new forms of influence and impact. Being proactive in discerning where we are being led is of utmost importance to do as leaders. Because so many congregations in our synod are in partnerships we want to be sure to listen even more deeply to these missional systems.

I want to remind you that our synod has entered into a consulting relationship with Kairos and Associates, a national resource development firm that works primarily with ELCA churches, synods and affiliated ministries. Jeff Kjellberg, principal owner of Kairos, is working with us on this process. Our desire with this relationship is to engage in a process of deep listening with our leaders to help us discover together where God is leading us into the future. Key to this conversation is asking,

- How can we be a better synod together?
- What can be done so that you and your congregations and parish feel more connected and served by our synod?
- How can we be more proactive and responsive to empowering, building up, and equipping parishes, congregations and leaders to maximize their impact and effectiveness?

The time is ripe and necessary for us to conduct this important work. We need to discover how we not only serve our current churches, parishes and members better, but also how we advance our mission to engage those we have yet to meet. I am excited for this gathering and look forward to having you there with us.

Register by [clicking here](#) or reply to Caitlin Kodet by phone or email. If you are not able to join us, we understand. We are flexible about who does come...pastors and lay people are welcome even if your partners can not join us. If you have questions call Caitlin in our office, 507-637-3904. You can also email her at caitlin.kodet@swmnelca.org.

The meeting will happen on Tuesday, January 27 at the synod office in Redwood Falls 9:30 a.m.-12.00 p.m. If the weather is challenging we will send information about the meeting's status out to those who register.

Thank you for prayerfully considering this invitation! If you are not able to attend but want to share written thoughts we are open to receiving them.

In Christ,
+ Pr. Jon Anderson
Bishop of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod