



The Bishop's Journal

A Renewed Vision for Mission in the Eastern Synod 2006-2008



Every two years your Eastern Synod Council goes through a process of identifying new mission goals for the coming biennium. This mission plan is then presented for adoption at our biennial synod assemblies and shapes the work of the council for the subsequent two year period.

This year's proposal focuses very specifically on how we might more effectively live out the ELCIC theme A Church in Mission for Others. Section 1 of this plan reads as follows:

The gospel calls the church to be in mission for others, not for ourselves. Recognizing this, we intend to design, create, and implement mission plans based on the gospel's call to meet the needs of others. As we realize these plans, we commit ourselves to ongoing evaluation of our efforts. We will, likewise, encourage congregations to engage in a similar program of mission planning and evaluation.

As such the Eastern Synod will:

- Encourage each congregation to have a congregational mission plan.
- Create appropriate vehicles for church-wide reporting and review of congregational mission initiatives.
- Revise forms for the Congregational Profile as used in call processes so that it is more focused on mission plans and opportunities.
- Promote the use of such programs as Natural Church
- Development, Transformational Ministry, etc.
- Identify congregations to examine and test new mission models and initiatives.
- Include training for mission plan development in the First Call program.
- Consider developing materials and a process for engaging in an Every Congregation Visit.

- Routinely evaluate all Synod Council work, the work of the synod committees, working groups and committees in light of the following six priorities:

- 1. We want to be a synod that nurtures leaders who encourage and equip other leaders.*
- 2. We want to be a synod that works in partnership with others.*
- 3. We want to be a synod that reflects the diversity of our society.*
- 4. We want to be a synod that is generous.*
- 5. We want to be a synod that is passionate about our relationship with God, in Christ.*
- 6. We want to be a synod that is engaged by challenging questions.*

Over the next three issues of the Eastern Synod Lutheran, I will be commenting on each of these priorities and identifying the specific ways your Synod Council intends to achieve them. A complete text of this full mission plan document is available on the Eastern Synod website and I would encourage our membership, particularly pastors and congregational councils, to review this plan over the next several months in advance of our Synod Assembly.

Planning is important. It's important in how we function as individuals, as families and communities. Regrettably, we don't often appreciate the need for good and effective planning in the life of the church, and by default, passively adopt "non-plans" that lead to continued stagnancy, complacency and decline. We can and must do better.

+ *Michael*