

Vision for Mission in the Eastern Synod 2010-2012

A Church in Mission for Others

God calls the whole church through the Gospel to be engaged in mission in response to the needs of others, celebrating what God has done and continues to do through us. Relying on the gifts of the Spirit, we will develop ministries that will inspire and equip us to care for others through the mission work of the synod, conferences, congregations, and specialized ministries. As members of the Eastern Synod, we will help one another to embrace our vocations as ministers of the Gospel.

Mission Priorities

1. We will practice Spirited Discipleship

We will encourage one another to be joyful in worship, diligent in exploring God's Word, passionate in bearing witness to our faith, generous in sharing the gifts we have received, and wise in working with all our sisters and brothers in Christ. In our life together, we will be open to the creative and loving ways that God's Spirit works in and through us as members of the Eastern Synod.

In the synod, conference, and congregations this mission priority may include:

- a) renewing worship through workshops, retreats, and the efforts of the Director of Worship Ministries,
- b) encouraging clergy and laity throughout the synod to study the Bible and wrestle with questions of faith through program resources, educational events, and leadership from the faculty of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary,
- c) sharing faith stories and promoting resources through the *In Mission for Others* initiative, the synod's publications and communication network, and the efforts of the Director of Witness and Evangelism Ministries,
- d) inviting generosity of spirit and offerings through events, publications and the work of the Director of Stewardship and Resource Development, and
- e) fostering a sense of collegiality through a variety of events, retreats, conference meetings and gatherings for clergy and laity.

2. We will welcome Diversity

We will meet our neighbours and become more familiar with those living in our communities who may vary from us in age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, and religious practices. We will foster a climate of welcome and hospitality within our synod, conferences and congregations. We will seek to reflect the diversity of Canadian society within our church, recognizing that others may challenge us with new ideas.

In the synod, conference, and congregations this mission priority may include:

- a) integrating children, youth and young adults into the life of our church through programs, gatherings, the camps, campus ministries, and the work of the Director for Youth and Young Adults Ministries,
- b. identifying and encouraging the use of resources that help us understand and appreciate the cultures and practices of others with the support of the Director of Ecumenical and Multi-Faith Ministries,
- c. entering into dialogue with our multi-faith neighbours,
- d. welcoming those whose sexual orientation may differ from our own, and
- e. keeping a diversity of faces before us as we choose leaders.

3. We will demonstrate Compassionate Justice

We will be mindful of the biblical principles of justice and compassion, striving to work with and for people who live on the margins of society. We will also seek to take better care of the earth, and play a leading role in preserving all that God has made.

In the synod, conference, and congregations this mission priority may include:

- a. becoming familiar with the issues of our day by engaging in the study and discussion of challenging questions,
- b. identifying and supporting initiatives which seek justice tempered with mercy through the work of the Director of Public Policy and Service Ministries, and KAIROS, and
- c. supporting the work of Canadian Lutheran World Relief,
- d. identifying and promoting ways in which the church and individuals can exercise greater care of the earth's environment and resources.

4. We will establish a Focused Framework

We will develop effective and flexible structures which will be suited to the tasks to which the Gospel calls us. We will be challenged by on-going evaluation of our various ministries, mindful that God may lead us to end some of them and begin others. We will identify, call, mentor, and equip ordained and lay leaders to meet the challenges that are before us.

In the synod, conference, and congregations this mission priority may include:

- a. evaluating the effectiveness of our leaders and committees and making changes in our organization which allow us to more fully participate in the mission to which God calls us,
- b. recruiting leaders with gifts and skills that match the needs of our church today and

- in the future,
- c. training these leaders for service in the conferences, congregations and specialized ministries through the leadership of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and a variety of educational events for both clergy and lay leaders,
 - d. proposing specific programs of continuing education for our rostered ministers, and
 - e. identifying and establishing partnerships which will help us to effectively use all of the resources that have been entrusted to us.

5. We will develop Effective Partnerships

We will strengthen our existing partnerships and develop new ones. This includes collaboration with congregations, conferences, other synods, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, as well as ecumenical, multi-faith, and community organizations. We will frequently ask ourselves, “Do we have to do this alone?”

In the synod, conference, and congregations this mission priority may include:

- a. strengthening our working relationship among the Synod Council, Conference Deans and Ministry Directors,
- b. improving communication within the synod through its publications, programs and communication network,
- c. continuing to work in partnership with women’s groups and networks in the Eastern Synod,
- d. deepening our relationship with our companion synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana,
- e. continuing to explore possibilities for shared ministry with the Anglican Church of Canada, especially at the diocesan, regional and parish level, and
- f. seeking justice for all by working with ecumenical coalitions like KAIROS, inter-faith groups, multi-faith groups, as well as groups sharing similar goals and values.