



122 West Franklin Ave Suite 600, Minneapolis, MN 55404  
Phone: 612-870-3610 Fax: 612-870-0170  
E-mail: [info@mpls-synod.org](mailto:info@mpls-synod.org)

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**Annual Report to Minneapolis Area Synod Congregations  
From Bishop Craig E. Johnson  
January 2008**

Let me first express to you my gratitude for the amazing support that you have given your church this past year. Because of your generosity, about \$2 million dollars has been given to our churchwide organization from the Minneapolis Area Synod congregations. Also, \$1 million dollars has gone to the World Hunger Appeal from our Minneapolis area congregations, plus \$450,000 to Hurricane relief on the Gulf Coast. Further, because of Lutheran Social Services (LSS) work, more than 38,000 volunteer hours have been given to the people of Southeastern Minnesota for flood relief. Many of these hours were filled by our members.

Because of your generosity in mission support, hundreds of seminary students all over the country have received subsidies for their educational expenses since only about 25% of their theological education is covered by tuition.

Great work of caring, advocacy, and evangelism is being done around the world through our Global Missions – in Nigeria; in Palestine; in Tanzania; and in India. All across the world our church is present because of your support.

One hundred and seventy-four new ELCA missions have been started in strategic contexts across the U.S. It is energizing to be a part of a church that has impact globally and locally sending people in the name of Jesus Christ.

**Making a World of Difference**

Making a World of Difference is our synod's mission initiative, raising funds for a variety of missions in our synod and beyond. To date, over \$5 million dollars has been pledged to ignite mission here and beyond our synod through this initiative.

- Ten new congregations have begun work in the Minneapolis Area.
- Thirteen congregations continue the work of transformation for mission in our synod.
- The momentum is building for 30 congregations where rewarding work of evaluation and strategic planning through Natural Church Development is being done.
- A Health Care Task Force has been set up and is working with The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria to develop sustainable sources of clean water.

**Synodical Inreach**

We are making great plans for a synodical-wide inreach. A series of 1,000 visits are being planned so that a shared leadership and shared decision-making and relationship-building might emerge. As to the great mission that stands before us, one-on-one visits will be made so that ideas for mission and ministry may emerge. We can then begin to focus on themes of mission drawn from all across our synod in order to speak with one voice on mission plans. The inreach has begun and will continue for a good share of this year.

**Book of Faith Initiative**

You will be hearing more about ELCA's Book of Faith Initiative at our Synod Assembly in April. This initiative will encourage our church to be in a significant Bible study. My hope is that our synod will take a leadership role in becoming a Book of Faith synod.

My sincere thanks to all who love this Church and help it to thrive. Great things are being done and still greater mission will happen as we work toward shared leadership in our synod and the building of relationships between us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bishop Craig E. Johnson