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**Annual Report to Minneapolis Area Synod Congregations
From Bishop Craig E. Johnson
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Grace to you and peace in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord. In order to give you a broad look at the work of our synod office in the Minneapolis Area, I will organize this report in the four-fold way we focus upon our work of mission.

Mission

This year our churchwide organization through the Office of Evangelical Outreach has provided a full-time Director for Evangelical Mission. In partnership with our synod, Pastor Susan Tjornehoj was appointed to the ELCA position. Pastor Tjornehoj will be gathering our leaders together to dialogue about the targeting of new mission starts so that we are ready for the 1 million new people coming to our metropolitan area by 2020. She will also engage our pastors in conversations about reflecting and acting upon what God continues to call us to be doing in our congregational arenas. Pastor Tjornehoj will also be encouraging transformation in congregations that want missional movement forward.

The Bishop's Associates are actively at work in helping congregations discover new ways to reach out to their neighborhoods and to accomplish the mission which God is calling us to do. The funding of our mission and the stewarding of our resources is overseen by Pastor Heather Hammond. Pastor Hammond does great work in interpreting the work of our churchwide organization to our congregational leaders. This year Vice Presidents' gatherings begun to better communicate the work of our church.

Making a World of Difference was a development of the Minneapolis Area Synod in order to fund new mission starts, redevelopment in congregations, global mission efforts and evangelism. To date, we have received pledges for \$5,343,927 through 2011, and to date, we have received \$2,799,045. My thanks to Terri Endres, DM, for leading this important work of funding the mission of our church in the Minneapolis area and beyond.

Partnering

The Office of the Bishop is to encourage congregations to work together to accomplish Christ's mission. Pastor David Wangaard is actively seeking willing suburban or urban partners for urban core congregations, which are working often times with the most vulnerable in our society and need funding to accomplish this task.

Through our global mission and the work of Kris Perry, DM, and Bishop's Associate Glendy Ose, we are continually creating intersecting points between congregations and our companion churches of the Leipzig District of Saxony and the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria. This partnership which we have focused upon since 2003 is flourishing and each year more congregations become a part of these partnerships. Pastor Wangaard is also leading the synodical inreach. The intention of which is to gather information from all across our synod so that new directions of Gods calling will emerge along with shared leadership growing within our synod. When our congregations find themselves in deep conflict and are unable to efficiently carry out Christ's mission, Glendy Ose and I become involved to help congregations to heal or find new leadership. The purpose of this work is basically missional to aid our congregations to receive the potential of a new day.

Leadership

This year, we were actively involved in 58 call processes within our synod helping congregations reflect on their mission and then to guide them in a process to find the best candidate to become their pastor, diaconal minister or associate pastor in Minnesota. More than one third of our congregations found themselves in a call process. We are blessed in the Minneapolis Area Synod to have effective wonderful rostered leaders. Each quarter, our staff gathers potential candidates from around the country and locally to seek qualified candidates to serve our congregations as rostered leaders. These mobility conversations have borne much fruit in finding effective leaders across our church. This year we interviewed between 80-100 potential candidates.

We also are growing leaders. One hundred and thirty four candidates from the Minneapolis Area Synod are seeking ordination through our candidacy process. My thanks to Pastor Heather Hammond for leading this comprehensive effort in our synod.

Public Voice

This year is a year with unprecedented budget deficits in our state. We will be working closely with our churchwide partners: Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota and other Minnesota synods to focus on three vital issues—Care of Creation, ending poverty in Minnesota and caring for the hungry. Our synod has been a leader on hunger issues for many years. My thanks to you for this great support. This year I testified at the legislature on Care of Creation issues and on the important work of helping and supporting the disabled.

It has been a joy for me to serve our church in Minneapolis as Bishop. I am grateful to our wonderful staff and our great congregations for all that is done in the name of Jesus Christ.



Bishop Craig E. Johnson