

## Bishop's Message for January 2012

As we cross the bar into a new year, we do so with the Word of God. There are lessons appointed for New Year's Eve. The Preacher of Ecclesiastes reminds us that "for everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven". (Eccl. 3) The psalmist ponders: "...what are mere mortals that you should be mindful of them, human beings that you should care for them?" (Ps. 8) John the Revelator sees a new heaven and a new earth where: "the home of God is among mortals... God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away... See, I am making all things new." (Rev. 21) And Matthew the Evangelist shares Jesus' judgment scenario – the parable of the sheep at his right and the goats at his left: "as you did it (or did it not) to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Matt. 25) Love of God and love of neighbor are ever before us – day by day, year by year. I say wisdom lies in entering a new year humbly, repentantly, prayerfully. To that end, two prayers for this next year of our pilgrimage:

O God, strip this new year of all excessive fat. Keep it lean with the truth of what I am celebrating. Keep me poised and relaxed – and above all, help me to be honest, confessing my own need to be "born again" and to make a fresh start with a new Bethlehem kind of faith. Amen. (Robert D. Hershey 1909 – 1993).

Eternal God, you have placed in a world of space and time, and through the events of our lives you bless us with your love. Grant that in the new year we may know your presence, see your love at work, and live in the light of the event that gives us joy forever – the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (EvLW p. 63)

+Ronald B. Mayan, Bishop  
Synod of Alberta and the Territories  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada