



**SYNOD OF
ALBERTA
AND THE
TERRITORIES**
Incorporated as Alberta Synod

January 2011

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The Office of the Bishop

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On behalf of your extended family throughout the Synod of Alberta and the Territories I send you warm greetings!

Annual General Congregational Meetings can be “many splendored things”. My prayer is that your meeting will be a recital of praise to God for the evidences of the Holy Spirit at work, in, through, around, and among you.

It seems to me that we seldom if ever take the time to look with loving eyes at our congregation, and our Church, and identify what is good and praise-worthy. Actually there is so much that is commendable in the work of each congregation, and our work together as the larger Church.

But as in other aspects of our lives, so also in our faith-communities, it is easier to look with critical or fearful eyes and identify the barriers, the stumbling-blocks and the plain errors that we encounter in each expression of the Church: congregation, synod and national.

Is the glass half full, or is it half empty? Of course, that depends entirely on how you and I choose to view it. From my perspective, I want to see my congregation and Church through the lens that the Apostle Paul suggests: “Finally, sisters and brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, *think about these things.*” (Phil. 4:8)

2011 will be a significant year in the life of our Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. Make sure that you step up as a congregation and participate in the decision-making that will take place when the Church gathers in its National Convention in Saskatoon in July. Your participation will include praying for the Convention, and by making sure that your voice is heard and your votes are counted. Send a delegate. Not participating deprives you of the right to praise or criticize National Convention actions.

Your congregation – our Church – is not perfect. It can be no more perfect than the people who compose it. And therein lies the limitations. Yet Christ, the Head of His Body, does not abandon but continues to work through our fallenness as His members. That is awesome grace and enormous comfort. For when all is said and done, we are not Lord, but Jesus himself is.

May you make faithful and courageous decisions as you meet today!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all!

Your Servant In Christ,

+Ronald B. Mayan, Bishop