



December 2012 Message for Congregations and Lay and Rostered Leaders

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ –

*May grace and peace be yours in abundance (1 Peter 1:2a).*

It is with profound humility and gratitude to God that I write to you as Bishop-Elect. My experience of our recent Special Synod Convention was one of incredible affirmation and encouragement, as well as of a unity of spirit mindful of our past, aware of our present and ready to journey together into God's future.

Since the Special Synod Convention I have appreciated your emails, telephone calls, cards and expressions of support, including sharing that in several congregations the covenant shared at the Special Convention was spoken together during Sunday worship (available on the Synod website). Continue to pray for me. Continue to pray for our Synod staff. Continue to pray for discernment, wisdom and courage.

Following the Special Convention one of the Deans asked if I might prepare a bit of a biography to share with you, including the core values and mission which I identified and by which I seek to live and serve. So, here goes:

I was baptized, confirmed and ordained at Valhalla Lutheran Church in Valhalla Center (north-west of Grande Prairie). Raised on a farm with an identical twin brother (I am the eldest by twenty minutes!) and three younger sisters I learned firsthand, through the modeling of my parents and of others in the farm and faith communities, the gift of servanthood – of people reaching out to one another in care and respect and love.

My life has been shaped by the themes of service, community and of sharing the stories of faith. Many people, key events, and experiences have fashioned my focus in life and in ministry: to engage, empower and equip – the community of faith – the baptized people of God – through Word and sacrament – to live out faith in service and in action in every aspect of life by using the gifts that God has given.

In the past years journeying to Mexico with youth and adults, and most recently of journeying with youth and adults to Colombia and our Companion Synod I have experienced anew the significance of gracious hospitality and welcome, of great joy in the gift of family and of community, of deep deep faith, and of the importance of relationships and relational ministry.

Core values for me are servant-leadership, affirmation and involvement as I seek to engage, empower and equip the people of God.

As a child and youth I was regularly involved in our community of faith through Christian education, choirs, youth group and as a musician leading congregational song beginning at an early age. Following High School I enrolled in the Bachelor of Music program fully intending on performing and teaching the piano – the call to ordained ministry was always in the back of my mind, however. My mother tells the story that I announced that I was going to be a Pastor when I was four years old.

After my first year of studies (which included 6-8 hours of practice per day) one of my hands went numb – a long and pain-filled story – and my piano performance career was over. But in the midst of this painful life change I sensed the Spirit of God at work and I enrolled at the Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute (CLBI) in Camrose to study and seek God's will.

It was there that my eyes caught sight of an alto in the choir, Cathy Wig, and we were married in 1983. Cathy is a wonderfully gifted woodworker; she loves crafts, music and organizing. She is an exceptional caregiver.

We are parents to four children: Paul (soon to be 26), Matthew (24), Anna (soon to be 22) and Jordan (soon to be 19) whose lives have greatly enriched our own. It is a gift to us that our home includes a "revolving door" where our children, family and friends are welcomed and blessed on their journeys.

Following two years at CLBI I enrolled at the University of Alberta, Augustana Campus (at that time Camrose Lutheran College) and was a member of the first graduating class with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music and Psychology in 1985. I entered Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon in 1985 and graduated with a Master of Divinity degree in 1989. In 2008 I graduated from the Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies, Florida, with a Doctoral of Worship Studies degree where my doctoral thesis focused on renewing baptismal spirituality.

I have been blessed to serve with and among the people of Bethany Lutheran Church, Dickson (1989-1993), Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Lethbridge (1993-2002) and Ascension Lutheran Church, Edmonton (2002-2010), and as Assistant to the Bishop (beginning August 2010).

I am grateful for the call extended to me to serve as Bishop and I am excited about beginning this new ministry with and among you. I am deeply appreciative of your prayers. And I hope that you are able to join me in the Service of Ordination, Saturday, January 26, 2013, 2pm at Trinity Lutheran Church, Edmonton.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ: *The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).*

In Christ Jesus –  
Shalom,  
Larry

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