

## “Called Into God’s Marvelous Light” Strategic Planning Process Proceeds to the Next Step

You have done it. And I want to say “thank you.” Your congregational involvement in the strategic planning for our synod has been overwhelming. We have received thousands of your responses. Those yellow questionnaires continue to arrive! Yet even more exciting, over 350 people from around the synod have signed their name, indicating an interest in taking part in the continuing process.

We live in a time where our sight is too often so narrow. We attend only to that close at hand. We ask, “What’s in it for me?” We pick and choose in matters of faith. And some would say we even make God in our image. And in the process, we lose the greater picture of being called into Christ’s community – his whole and huge community, which was here before we came on the scene, and will remain after we are gone. Luther, in the Large Catechism, writes that the Holy Spirit “leads us into his holy community, placing us in the church’s lap, where he preaches to us and brings us to Christ.”

The response of this synod to our planning process reveals that there are many who sense this wider vision. I believe it is evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives, and in our congregations too. Thank you for your faithful leadership. Thank you for lifting up the wider church in your congregations.

On Saturday, February 7, we move to our next step in the process.. We are calling every one of those 350+ people and offering a personal invitation to gather at Assisi Heights. It will be a day of worship, prayer, serious reading, and thoughtful discernment regarding where this synod is being called. We are excited that David Daubert will be facilitating that gathering. The

Rev. Daubert is the Executive for Renewal of Congregations in the ELCA Division for Outreach. But even more importantly, he is a leader who is passionate about his Lord and His church.

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

(I Peter 2)

---

**We have received thousands of your responses...[and] those yellow questionnaires continue to arrive!**

---

Shalom,



Harold Usgaard  
Bishop

