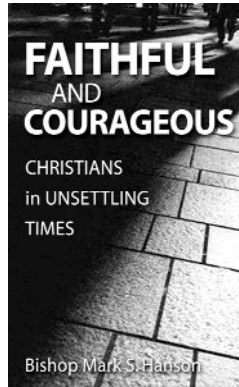




Presiding Bishop Calls for Courageous Faith

In his new book, *Faithful and Courageous: Christians in Unsettling Times*, the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), calls for Lutherans and other Christians to be strong and courageous in their faith and witness to God. Augsburg Fortress, the publishing ministry of the ELCA, published the 96-page paperback.



“In such unsettling times as these, God calls us to be both faithful and courageous. We are faithful to God’s call that sends us into the world as witnesses to the love and mercy and forgiveness of God. It takes courage to witness boldly,” Hanson wrote in this sequel to his book, “Faithful yet Changing: The Church in Challenging Times,” in which he recognized marks of a faithful church.

Four key topics are discussed in the sequel:

- + Trusting God’s faithful promises
- + Pondering Jesus’ probing questions
- + Obeying Jesus’ unsettling commands
- + Discerning our way in the world

After each of the four chapters, Hanson poses questions for reflection and discussion.

“My hope is that this book will encourage holy conversation about what it means to be a follower of Jesus in unsettling times. I hope it will be read by individuals who then will gather with other believers in new member classes, adult study, church councils and other settings for lifelong learning in the church,” Hanson wrote in the preface.

Hanson used Bible verses, personal stories and quotes from theologians, authors and others providing hope and inspiration for readers. Throughout the book he offers questions to ask ourselves daily as individuals and from a community outlook.

Hanson offers the reader ways to live with faith and courage during these times. “We too need to disengage for a time, to be consciously in God’s presence, to regain perspective, to pray for discernment and strength to move back out in the world with new vision, courage and strength,” Hanson wrote in the book.

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For more information about the book or to order it, visit www.augsburgfortress.org or call 1-800-426-0115.

ELCA Brings “Joy to the World” to ABC Television for Christmas

“Joy to the World,” a one-hour ABC television special produced by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), is scheduled to air on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day 2005.

This holiday worship service includes a joyful mix of music and praise from ELCA African American, Asian, American Indian, Arab and Middle Eastern, and Latino congregations. The rich and diverse cultural blend begins with a Santa Lucia celebration in the Swedish Lutheran tradition.

Featured congregations include:

- + Ebenezer Lutheran Church, Chicago
- + Salam Arabic Lutheran Church, Brooklyn
- + Thai Lutheran Community Church, Forest Park, Illinois
- + St. James Lutheran Church, East Cleveland and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Cleveland
- + San Marcos Lutheran Church, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico
- + Eben Ezer Lutheran Church, Oaks, Oklahoma

While many ABC stations are airing “Joy to the World” on Christmas Eve at 11:30 p.m., check local listings for the exact airtime in your area.

This program is produced by the ELCA for the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission.

This same information is online at www.elca.org/joytotheworld. More information will be posted on this site in the coming weeks, including artwork, publicity materials, and bulletin inserts.

What Happened At Churchwide Assembly?

A Churchwide Assembly Wrap-Up will be featured in next month’s issue of *River Crossings*. In the meantime, you can visit www.elca.org/assembly/05 for news, videos of plenary sessions, and photos from the event.

