

## Three Years of Being 'Called into God's Marvelous Light'

Throughout 2005-2007 we have been a synod 'Called into God's Marvelous Light' to be:

- Joyful witnesses
- Christ-centered disciples
- Strong leaders

Now that the cycle of the strategic plan has ended, let's take a look back at what the last three years have brought:

- Strengthened prayer lives, including praying for our brothers and sisters in other congregations
- Better understanding of the Bible through study and regular reading
- More ideas for ways to share our faith stories
- Increased awareness of synod ministries in the congregations, including the creation of *The Bridge*
- Stronger congregations in those that participated in Natural Church Development
- Greater emphasis on youth including the return of the Lutheran Youth Organization at the synodical level and the creation of the Youth Servant Leadership Institute to raise up young leaders
- Strengthened worship, including several meetings for church musicians and opportunities for worship leaders to learn about the new *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* hymnals
- Increased awareness about stewardship through stewardship visits, dinners, and events
- Greater connection to our church's global context through continued relationships with our companion synods, the first synod delegation to Colombia in several years, and the opportunity to use a set of communion ware from the Holy Land
- Greater awareness of our church's local context through supporting new mission sites
- Stronger rostered leaders through a focus on healthy leaders at Theological Conference and the development of the Spiritual Task Force
- More awareness of the larger church through trips to visit the ELCA churchwide office in Chicago for First Call pastors and others from the synod
- Celebration of our rural heritage through a "Celebrating Rural Life" event

The strategic plan is over now, but many of the programs and their results will continue to bless our synod in the years to come. For more, go to [www.semnsynod.org/strategicplan/marvelouslight.html](http://www.semnsynod.org/strategicplan/marvelouslight.html)



## Role Models Through Word and Deed

By Mark Bradley  
Congregational Renewal Team

The faith stories of fellow Christians from my congregation and from work make frequent reference to key role models in their faith journeys. A role model is a friend who invites you to Young Life club or a Sunday school teacher who joyfully shares his faith story. Or it's a youth pastor who could "be very real, enjoy life, and also lead a very healthy and strong spiritual day-to-day existence."

Parents are key role models. "The thing I remember most about my mother is that I never, ever

remember her saying a bad word about anybody. She always looked on the positive side of things." "My father was, and is, the most influential person in my Christian life." "Where did my faith come from? It was the result of the endless hours my own mother spent reading to me from a favorite story, *If Jesus Came to My House*. My mother's patience must have been incredible..."

Or the Christian role model can just be a friend when you are in a strange city trying to get home in a snowstorm when the airport is closed. "Feeling somewhat panicked, I called Dave. What a friend! He drove through inclement weather to pick me up, took me to his house for the night, and delivered me to a different airport the next day."

Lord, May we be role models today. Amen

*Quotations are from Ordinary People of Extraordinary Faith, Mike Ransom and Carol Solovitz, Editors.*

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**To Be Joyful Witnesses**  
**To Be Christ-Centered Disciples**  
**To Be Strong Leaders**