REFLECTIONS ON OUR RESPONSE TO GOD’S GRACE AND OUR WORK TOGETHER

Whether we are gathered in our faith community or sent into our daily lives, we remember that we are a new creation through God’s living word by the power of the Holy Spirit, and we are to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed. As we live into God’s word and deed, we are also reminded to be faithful stewards of God’s creation and gifts. Faithful stewardship is about holding to God’s purpose and ensuring the responsibilities and resources that God has entrusted to us are used with great care and with accountability to God, to each other and those served by the church.

With the adoption of Strategic Directions 2025 in 2017, the goals and priority areas for the ELCA as a whole church are identified. These goals and priorities are based on a shared trust and hope that the future is in God’s hands. As stewards of God’s grace, we are responsible for the time, talents and resources that will make these goals and priorities attainable in the many expressions of the church. As you consider your goals, priorities and resources for the years ahead, please consider how the following strategic directions are connected to your ministry.

A thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all people
(Acts 1:8, 1 Peter 2:9-10, Matthew 28:16-20, Romans 1:16)

A church equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world and the church
(Philippians 2:4-11, 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, Romans 6:3-4, Mark 10:13-16)

An inviting and welcoming church that reflects and embraces the diversity of our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings
(1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 2:14-20, Acts 10, Galatians 3:26-28)

A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world

A well-governed, connected and sustainable church
(1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 2 Corinthians 4:1-2, Micah 6:8, 2 Corinthians 9)
Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

In 2017, Lutherans around the world observed the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. As the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we are called to foster unity within the church and to live into God’s calling together in the years ahead. Through our more than 3.7 million members and friends, we will continue to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ crucified and risen for the life of the world.

We are church together, united by a common vision:

A world experiencing the difference God’s grace and love in Christ makes for all people and creation.

We are church for the sake of the world, united by a common purpose.

Together in Jesus Christ, we are freed by grace to live faithfully, witness boldly and serve joyfully.

As we strive to live into this vision and purpose, we face many challenges. In a radically individualistic society, we seek to create and sustain life-giving relationships and communities that connect us to God and one another. In a society that is becoming increasingly secular while facing many tensions, we seek to proclaim the gospel and share the story of Jesus as a source of hope, inclusion, peace and reconciliation. And, in a world that misuses power and authority while struggling with growing inequality, we seek to follow Jesus who spoke publicly for those who were oppressed and marginalized.

As your church family gathers to make decisions about using the gifts God has entrusted to you, may you remember that they are God’s gifts to us. May you also remember that they are gifts to the world. May you seek as a family of faith to use them well and to be faithful stewards of the gifts we are given.

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