



# Oregon Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

January 1, 2019

Dear Friends and Members of the Oregon Synod,



It is a joy to wish you a happy new year. I look forward to the opportunities, challenges, joy and work that lies ahead. Mostly I am thankful that we enter this year together in Jesus' name with the Good News, ready hands and hopeful hearts that we are given.

Please know that my prayers are with you as you gather for your congregational meeting. The business of your congregation is important. The work we do together as the Oregon Synod is important. And, our unity as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a gift. Let us vow to hold these gifts as one as we engage the world around us with hope.

This last year we came together in five Regional Gatherings around the state. Together we looked at the insights and sharing we had done through congregational vitality surveys, congregation to congregation visitations and more. This year we will be coming back to (and with) you for further gatherings in a similar pattern. We promised that we would equip you to interpret and apply your specific data and learnings for your local ministry. These **PHASE II** gatherings will be happening January – March, right around the corner. We are asking for a team of 3-5 leaders from your congregation to participate. I invite you to commit to these gatherings today as you meet with an eye on the year to come. You'll find more information at [www.oregonsynod.org](http://www.oregonsynod.org).

Our Annual Synod Assembly will be in Eugene this year, May 10-12, 2019. I hope that today you will be electing Voting Members to attend. Remember, in addition to your regular Voting Members we encourage you to send an additional Youth or Young Adult; an additional person of color, or somebody whose primary language is other than English; and an additional individual who identifies as LGBTQIA. At this year's Assembly you will be voting on people to serve both as the Bishop and the Synod Vice-President. As announced at last year's Assembly I feel led to joyfully stand for another term as bishop. Our Synod Vice-President Debbie Chenoweth will be finishing her service. Please be in prayer with us!

With your prayers, financial support and participation we are doing amazing work here in Oregon. Besides the work of your congregation, and those like you, we continue to do new work in Latino Outreach. We have secured grants to support four different ethnic specific ministries. The Flame, an LGBTQ outreach ministry continues to grow. We are present and in partnership with people in poverty; we are speaking out for the dignity and care of asylum seekers and migrants to the U.S.; we are starting a new congregation in the Bend area with the United Methodist Church; and much, much more. I look forward to sharing this work with you throughout the year.

May God bless you, your congregation, and those you minister to. The beat goes on!

In service,

Bp. Dave Brauer-Rieke