



Oregon Synod

A Word from Bishop Laurie Larson Caesar

One of the great joys of my call is to visit the faith communities across this synod. Our territory includes rocky coastlines, massive mountains, rich soil, quiet lakes, and powerful rivers. Our 115 diverse camps, campus ministries and congregations have been planted in cities, suburbs, open farmland, and small towns. We are very different from each other; yet in Jesus Christ, we all are one.

As we've journeyed together this year, we have been united by focusing on the promises Christ has given us, particularly John 15:15 - "I no longer call you servants but I have called you friends." Be present in *this* way to the world, Jesus invites us.

Thank you for the way you, as beloved of God, embody the living Word in your congregations, communities and daily callings. You are engaging in ministry every day that is vital to the life of the world. Although many of us are still exhausted from pandemic adaptations, congregations are emerging from these difficult years with a clearer sense of who we are and what God is calling us to be and do today. May we be brave for the sake of Love! The dedication of our church leaders to ministries of word, sacrament and accompaniment in Christ's name has never been greater.

Thank you, for your ministry and your faithful gifts to the ministry of the Oregon Synod. Though you are facing your own financial challenges, most of you continue to give generously to our shared work as synod and a larger national church. Your partnership has made possible our ministry with those facing hunger, the houseless, young leaders growing in their calling, our interfaith companions, new creative ministries, ecumenical journeys of racism, disaster and climate resilience, innovation with youth and international leaders and so much more.

If you have not yet sent in a Mission Support contribution for this year, will you please consider a gift yet in January? Every gift counts! And if you have not yet returned a Mission Support Intent form for 2024, please do so. We are deep in planning the 2025 budget that will be presented at the 2024 Synod Assembly, and your planning will help us do our best planning, as well. Thank you!

Blessings on your annual meeting, your key decisions and discernment, and your ongoing ministry on the Way of Jesus for the sake of the life of the world. And do not forget to elect your voting members for our June 1 Synod Assembly. Most congregations are eligible to elect up to eight voting members: two initial voting members, two more who are youth or young adult (15-29), two who are black, indigenous, persons of color or whose first language isn't English and two more who identify as LGBTQIA.

Holy God, we praise you for calling diverse people into your church and its ministries. Uphold all leaders with your strong and loving arms. Empower ministers to serve your people with the word of scripture, the water of life, the meal of grace, and deeds of love and mercy and justice. Equip them with both beloved traditions and fresh ideas; grant them joy in their tasks; and renew them daily by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Word among us, now and forever. Amen. (adapted from ACS, p. 46).

With grace, peace, and love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie L. Caesar".

Reverend Laurie L. Caesar
Bishop, Oregon Synod, ELCA