



Oregon Synod



January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025

Dear Beloved of the Oregon Synod,

Blessings as you gather in the name of the Incarnate One! My prayers are with you as you seek to continue to walk the Way of Jesus in these compelling and complex times. As you prepare for all the discernment and decisions ahead in your 2025 congregational meeting, God bless you and hold you. With courage and delight, may we be for others the Body of Christ and living reminders that we are never alone, but live always awash in God's grace.

Please save the date and prepare for our upcoming Synod Assembly which will be held May 30<sup>th</sup>-June 1<sup>st</sup>, in person, at the Holiday Inn on the Columbia Riverfront in Portland, Oregon.

You might have noticed that our themes the last few years have focused on friendship. The theme for this year is "Anam Cara: Soul Friends in the Spirit of Jesus." Anam Cara is a Gaelic phrase that describes a sacred relationship that encourages spiritual growth. At the 2025 assembly we will explore and seek to strengthen our friendships with one another, the Earth, and all of our neighbors, churched and unchurched.

What a time to abide in God's sacred friendship/"koinonia"! Our theme verse for the year speaks to Anam Cara from John 15:13; *Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friend.*

As in years past, there are a couple of things to consider as you prepare for Synod Assembly 2024:

1) **Voting members.** Please elect your voting members to attend the event and ensure your budget provides funds to send these members to the assembly.

2) **Additional voting members.** If possible, we encourage you to elect “additional voting members” as described in the constitution and rules of the assembly (both which you can find on our website). Additional members can be constituted of: up to 2 people who identify LGBTQIA+, up to 2 people for whom English is not their first language AND up to 2 Youth/Young Adult voting members).

With your continuing prayers, financial support and deepening relationships, our synod is becoming a shimmering fabric of relationship, capable of befriending one another, our planet, ourselves, our history, our theological tradition and our diverse neighbors with kindness and grace. In so doing, we can become more than we dare dream or imagine, transformed by the renewing of our lives and minds.

I look forward to sharing in this work with you throughout this new year. Let us dare to love one another and walk the Way of Christ’s courageous love together, as ongoing and sacred encounter.

Yours in hope,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie L. Caesar". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Bishop Laurie Larson Caesar

Oregon Synod, ELCA