



**SYNOD OF
ALBERTA
AND THE
TERRITORIES**
Incorporated as Alberta Synod

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*Spirit-Led
Leadership*

*Hope-Filled
Discipleship*

*Innovative
Tradition*

*Collaborative
Partnerships*

January 2015

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

May grace and peace be yours in abundance (1 Peter 1:2a).

I send you greetings in the Name of the One who is the light of the world, Jesus our Lord, as you gather for your Annual General Congregational Meeting.

When you meet, you will discern together about the priorities that God has for your congregation. The budget items, action plans, gifts represented, and dreams and visions all intentionally work together to guide you in discerning your work of ministry in your neighbourhood.

The liturgical church year intentionally moves us through the *anticipation* of Advent, the *celebration* of the incarnation at Christmas, into the *joyful* awareness of enduring presence in the world in Epiphany and beyond. As Baptized workers in God's Reign, we are called into the ministry of Jesus and are sent into the world bearing his name. There is no doubt that the congregations in our Synod as well as across the Church face ministry challenges. We are invited into the movements of anticipation, celebration and the joy of God's enduring presence as we journey forward together in faith.

In the midst of the diversity in our world and our neighbourhoods, we are reminded that Jesus teaches love; we live and receive hospitality. In the face of fear, we remember the angels speak peace and hope; we live and receive justice, mercy and kindness. In the trials and challenges of change, we hold fast to the freedom and hope of the truth of the gospel. Baptized into Christ's death, we share in his resurrection and walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4).

Our Synod has chosen to work together, with prayer, hospitality and collaboration. We intentionally work to support Spirit led leadership, hope-filled discipleship, innovative tradition and collaborative partnerships. Each individual and congregation uniquely adds to this journey.

Perhaps at this year's Annual General Meeting you might reflect, name and give thanks for the gifts and mission into which God has invited you and your congregation. As you meet, you might also prayerfully consider forwarding a tithe (1/10th) of your annual income as a congregation as your minimal offering for Benevolence for the ministry of the Synod and through the Synod to the wider Church. Some congregations have exceeded this mark already, but I would encourage all congregations to set this goal.

I thank you for your partnership in the gospel, dear sisters and brothers in Christ. We walk together, serve together, journey together in the Spirit of Christ, *In Mission for Others*.

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).

In Christ Jesus-

Shalom,

+The Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer, Bishop
Synod of Alberta and the Territories