



March 2018 Message for Congregations and Lay and Rostered Leaders

Dear Beloved of God –

Many have noted that I sign correspondence with the word, *Shalom*. This has been my practice since my first call serving with and among the people of God at Bethany Lutheran, Dickson.

Recently I ran across an explanation of *Shalom* from a Pastor's sermon preached May 27, 1984. The Pastor, Rev. George Madsen, is Father to this year's Synod Convention keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. Anna Madsen. It feels right to share this with you...In the midst of Lent:

Shalom is a word that is broad in the extreme. It has to do with wholeness, with fulfillment.

Shalom paints a vision of the way things will one day be with all hands helping.

Shalom knows of a lion lying down with a lamb, of the thirsty having drink, hungry having food, naked being clothed.

Shalom knows of swords being beaten into plowshares, of justice and freedom.

Shalom knows of strangers being welcomed, the sick and imprisoned being visited.

Shalom knows of sorrow and tears disappearing and death being no more.

Shalom has as its agenda liberation and reconciliation.

Shalom has as its agenda love, hope, and renewal.

Shalom has as its agenda drought and famine.

Shalom has as its agenda war and hatred.

Shalom has as its agenda prejudice and oppression.

Shalom has as its agenda sickness and suffering.

We are not bound by our own lives, our own deaths, but live within the great parenthesis of Shalom.

Shalom is the shape of the future, the vision of that to which a mysterious power summons us all here and now, in the role of servant, in bringing and establishing justice and freedom, grace and peace.

In Christ Jesus –
Shalom,
+Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

*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