



Annual  
Report  
2007

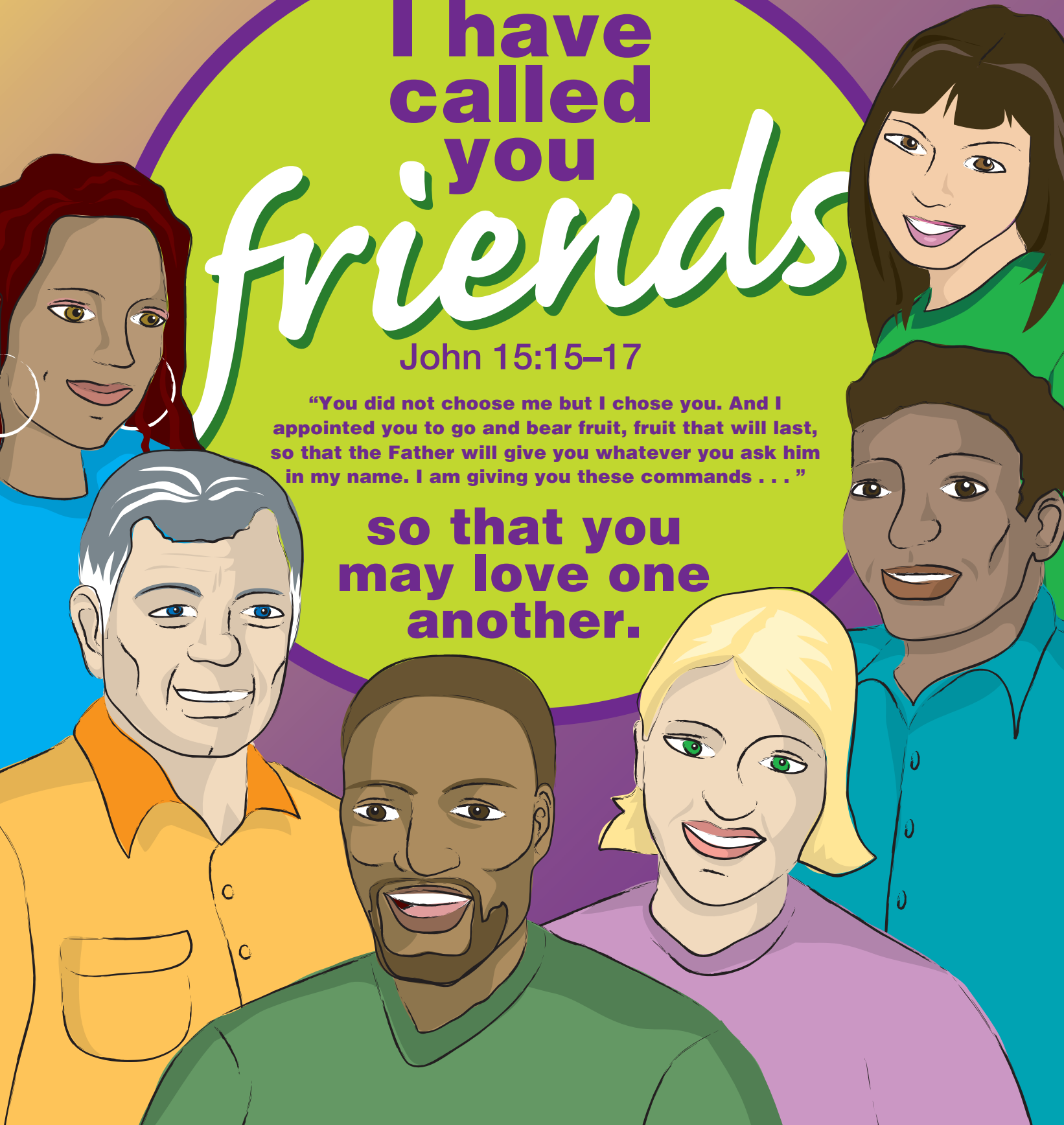
I have  
called  
you

friends

John 15:15-17

**"You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands . . ."**

**so that you  
may love one  
another.**





# Annual Report 2007

Every congregation has its own story of stewardship—stories about how we have learned to share what God has given us so that it can be used for the mission of God. Stewardship stories are also stories of wonder as we begin to see how God is present and working through us. This year take the time to reflect on “What is your congregation’s stewardship story?” and “What stewardship story is God calling your congregation to be apart of?”

## *British Columbia Synod*

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Maple Ridge, BC, tried something a little different. At one church council meeting, the pastor had council members write down what 10% of their net monthly income would be. After adding up the figures, the pastor informed council what the implications would be for the yearly church budget. The council decided they would each seek to give 10% of their net income, and that they would challenge the members of the congregation to do the same for the month of October as a special thanksgiving to God!

The pastor and church council were amazed at the responses. About 40% of the congregation decided to accept the challenge. Those unable to accept the challenge were encouraged to pray for those who could while others chose to tithe their time by giving significant time to visiting and service projects in the congregation.

The result was a change in the money culture of the congregation. No longer was there the panicked November stewardship dance. Instead some found that tithing was a joy and have continued to give at this new percentage. Others do so every October. In the process the attitudes of the leaders of the congregation changed from “what can we do about it?” to “we can do it!”

## *Alberta and the Territories Synod*

Peace Lutheran Church, Innisfail council has found it a perpetual challenge to keep congregational spending less than offering. The budget passed at the Annual Meeting was good in concept but our ministry was always choked by the reality of the offering plate. Last year council decided to switch challenges; instead of working with deficits we tried Herb Miller’s “Consecration Sunday.”

We were tentative at first; it sounded good but we couldn’t find an Alberta congregation who had

used it. We needn’t have worried. The program is based on Scriptures but is set up as a formula; when we stuck to the formula we were okay. It is organized, easy to use, field tested and the work is charted and shared out. What about results? Our council previously sweated to keep the proposed budget at a zero to five percent increase. When the announcement was made at the Consecration Banquet that our cumulative offering for 2007 would increase our funds for ministry by 15% there was a collective, “Ahhh” and then we laughed.

People also worried that writing down a number on a piece of paper was easier than actually following through with giving. As of the end of this May our offering is more than \$2,000 ahead of spending and nearly \$500 ahead of budget. This year council has not talked about money for three months . . . instead we talk and pray about ministry and long range plans. Praise God for the wonderful change!

If you would like assistance in developing your congregation’s stewardship ministry contact your synod stewardship coordinator.

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### *Saskatchewan Synod*

Trinity Lutheran Church, Estevan, SK, has a long history of strong leadership in stewardship, including pastors known for their passion for the church and its stewardship. At all levels, this has translated into financial support and leadership participation at synodical and national levels. This continues today with benevolence support that far exceeds their "fair share" of the synod budget and strong support of other ministries such as Metochos Camp, the ELCIC's Global Hunger and Development Appeal and Canadian Lutheran World Relief.

Commitment to stewardship is important for the members of Trinity. Tim Seipp, chairperson of the congregation, notes that this commitment comes from understanding that money is only part of good stewardship. Seipp believes we also need to share our time and abilities with those around us. Tim not only encourages others to actively participate in the church and the community, but he lives this out and has been recognized as the Community Volunteer of the Year.

Participating on community boards, Synod Council, National Church Council, church committees

and task forces is all part of the stewardship model at Trinity which leads the congregation to be a vital part of its community and the larger church.

### *Manitoba/Northwestern Ontario Synod*

Prince of Peace is a small Lutheran church in Winnipeg. Even with a modest budget, at times we struggle with making ends meet. We knew it was time for us to start talking about stewardship, but didn't exactly know how to start. We finally decided that we would give "Consecration Sunday" a try.

Our first consecration Sunday was a great thing for our congregation. It was a day centred on celebration and thanks. People were talking about how great a day it was for months afterwards. It was especially good that this program had us partner with another church. As a result instead of working on our own, as we so often do, we worked with Faith Lutheran Church, Winnipeg and together we cheered and celebrated each other's ministry. What a blessing that is.

After looking at the estimates of giving that were handed in, it appeared that we would have a 26% increase in our giving over 2006. We are already excited and

planning this year's "Consecration Sunday". It was a great time of celebration and thanks.

### *Eastern Synod*

Stewardship at Trinity Lutheran Church, London, ON, has always included a solid emphasis on outreach and mission. Trinity also has a strong history of receiving many bequests. Wanting to see these gifts work for mission, Trinity decided to establish a Memorial Benevolence Fund. As a result 25% of all undesignated bequests are channeled into this endowment fund. Trinity has used these funds to support various benevolence and mission projects outside the congregation, such as ecumenical work on affordable housing in the inner city of London, ON, and Bonnie Wepler, the ELCIC missionary to Papua New Guinea.

Having this Memorial Benevolence Fund has kept mission outside the parish clearly in the vision of the congregation. At our annual congregational meeting there is now a special joy. Instead of just receiving reports and approving budgets, Trinity members delight in being able to reach beyond the walls of the parish as we decide how we can serve others by using the proceeds from these funds.

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# Devotionals

by: National Bishop Susan Johnson

## Opening of a Meeting

### Prayer

Gracious God, we ask for your presence with us as we gather to meet. Help us to celebrate the ministry we have done together in the past year. Give us vision as we plan for our shared future. Equip us to be generous and faithful stewards and strengthen us to be *In Mission for Others*. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**Reading**—John 15:12–17

**Hymn 659**—Will You Let Me Be Your Servant\*

### Litany

**Leader** As we gather to meet,  
**All** Be with us, God.

**Leader** Equip us to go and bear fruit in your world.

**All** Be our wisdom and counsel—guide our decision-making.

**Leader** Equip us to answer your call to love.

**All** Be our friend and help us to befriend one another.

**Leader** Equip us to be *In Mission for Others*.

**All** Be our model for our generosity and witness.

**Leader** As we gather to meet

**All** Be with us, God. May all that we do and say today be pleasing in your sight. Amen.

## Closing of a meeting

### Litany

**Leader** This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

**I** Gracious God, we thank you for your love and all of the gifts you give to us.

**II** Help us as we leave this place to share your love with all those we encounter.

**Leader** No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.

**I** Loving God, we give you thanks for the gift of life we receive through you.

**II** Help us to imitate your sacrificial love in all that we do.

**Leader** I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.

**I** Holy God, we do not always understand your ways and we do not always understand what you require of us.

**II** Help us keep our hearts and minds open so that we may discern your will and answer your call.

**Leader** You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.

**I** Generous God, we give you thanks that you have chosen us and called us as your partners in ministry.

**II** Help us to use the gifts you have given us, as individuals and as a community, so that we may bear fruit in the world you love.

**Leader** I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

**All** Loving God, in all that we do, in all that we say, may we show your love for the whole world. Help us to be a church *In Mission for Others* and good stewards of all of creation. Amen.

**Hymn 695**—As Saints of Old\*

**Leader** Go in peace.  
Love one another.

**All** Thanks be to God.