



Dear Friends in Christ,

ELCIC

*In Mission
for Others*

In February of this year, officers of the National Church and all five synods of the ELCIC met to discuss the current financial challenges facing our church. Their environmental scan of the last 20 years reviewed the following:

- Total church baptized membership is down 23 percent. Despite this, offerings to congregations continue to grow keeping up with inflation;
- Benevolence dollars passed on to synods from congregations have remained the same and are now starting to drop. With inflation factored in, synods are trying to maintain ministries with less purchasing power; and
- Benevolence dollars passed on from synods to the National Church have decreased. With inflation, this means the National Office is operating with about one-third the purchasing power it had in 1986.

These challenges will only become more severe in the next few years. The officers agreed on the need for major changes to the church's organizational structure while also increasing efforts in the areas of evangelism, outreach and stewardship as we live out our call to be a church *In Mission for Others*.

National Church Council (NCC) heard these concerns and appointed a Structural Renewal Task Force with the mandate to develop a structural framework for our church which is flexible, affordable and sustainable and equips us to be a church *In Mission for Others*.

The Task Force has begun its work which will involve a consultative process of presentations and discussions at 2010 synod conventions, online surveys, and dialogue with partners and others, to ensure as many conversations as possible are generated across the church. This will eventually lead to a detailed proposal presented at 2011 National Convention.

How can you help?

1. **Pray for our church and the Task Force.** May God guide us to a new model of being church, equipping us to live out our vision of a church *In Mission for Others*.
2. **Participate in the process.** Listen to presentations and provide your feedback.
3. **Share this message with others.** Engage in dialogue with friends, family and other members of your community.

Thank you so much for your partnership in mission and ministry, and for your support of this important work.

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Susan C. Johnson

National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada



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