



Southwestern Washington Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

The Rev. Richard E. Jaech, Bishop

June 14, 2019

Dear Friends,

Thank you for re-electing me to be Bishop of the Southwestern Washington Synod! I am so grateful for the trust and affirmation you have given to me in allowing me to continue my ministry among you. In response to your trust, I pledge to serve you with all the faith, integrity, and commitment that I have.

The first key responsibility of a bishop is to be a pastor to the pastors, deacons and congregations of the Synod. Please know that you can call on me at any time if you have needs, questions, or requests for which I can provide help. Ministry in today's world offers many vital opportunities for living out the love of God. Yet, many times ministry can also feel overwhelming and lonely. I am committed to supporting you and walking with you in every way that I can.

I am thankful that my re-election allows me to stay closely involved in the ministry of our Synod as we strengthen our leaders and support new and existing congregations. The PSALM program for lay ministers and the *Imagine* program for re-vitalizing congregations are particularly exciting. Without a doubt, God has surprises in store for us that we haven't yet thought of!

Six years ago when I began my first term, I made a commitment to visit all of the 88 congregations and ministries in our Synod. Traveling throughout the Synod and seeing the important ministries that you are doing has been the most joyful part of my work. As I begin this new term, I am beginning again that cycle of visits to all the congregations. I look forward to seeing you in the time ahead and celebrating with you God's gifts of life and love.

As we begin this new time in our journey, I am very thankful for the Synod staff I work with daily: Rev. Melanie Wallschlaeger, Director of Evangelical Mission; Allison Ramsey, Office Manager; and Rev. Kim Latterell, Bishop's Associate (through July 31st). On September 1, we will welcome a new member to the staff, Rev. Rebecca Shjerven, as Bishop's Associate. In addition to staff, our Synod Council, under the leadership of Vice-President Paul Ogrande, provides vital direction, energy and assistance to our work.

I am deeply honored to serve as your Bishop and I enter this new term with joyful anticipation! The God who said through Isaiah, "See, I am doing a new thing," will be present among us with power, grace and surprises. May God bless us all as we walk together as a Synod.

In Christ,

Rev. Rick Jaech

420 121st St S Tacoma, WA 98444 • 253-535-8300 • swwsynod@plu.edu • www.lutheranssw.org

The mission of the Southwestern Washington Synod is to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ by empowering congregations and Church leaders to grow in worship, education, outreach, stewardship and other ministries.