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Companions with
The Mbulu Diocese, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land
The Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

January 29, 2025

Dear Ones in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ!

This past week we saw a flurry of news headlines coming from Washington D.C. After our nation experienced a peaceful transfer of power on Monday, President Trump put forward a number of executive orders, which have caused fear, confusion, and anxiety, especially amongst the most vulnerable of our neighbors. Additionally, this administration's determination to step back from previous commitments to DEI programs (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) creates further concern among these communities. As the Southeast Michigan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, we stand in solidarity with our LGBTQIA+ siblings, our immigrant siblings, our siblings of color, and all others who sit in a place of fear and anxiety in these days.

As Lutheran Christians we claim and follow Martin Luther's teaching that we have been made completely free by faith alone in the life-giving work of Christ AND at the same time, we are bound by love to serve our neighbors. (See Martin Luther's "Freedom of the Christian.") We believe that all people are made in the image of God, and all people are beloved neighbors, even those we have a hard time liking.

Being set free by the work of Christ to do the work of loving our neighbor means that we are called to faithfully preach and to live the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus' ministry involved reaching out with love and welcome to those on the margins AND speaking the Word of God to those in power. We are called to live into this Gospel work, remembering that because Christ first loved us, we can love our neighbors as we love ourselves. We are to love our enemies, pray for those who persecute us, and in small and big ways, do what we can to make our local communities better, and help those around us find joy and know they are loved and seen and not alone.



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We also recognize that no person and no community can be all things to all people. Attempting to do everything would lead to exhaustion, chaos, and burnout. But still, we can do some things! I ask you to look at the needs of your local community and see where the gifts of your congregation meet those needs. Speak to your locally elected representatives, show up to village, township, or city council meetings, run for school board, build a free library, or food pantry, or community garden. If you have an initiative you would like to invite others to join, reach out to us so we can assist in getting the word out. While we cannot do everything, we can together, as the body of Christ, accomplish a lot.

As a means of living out our calling, be assured that the Southeast Michigan Synod remains committed to our partnerships with and support of Samaritas (formerly Lutheran Social Services of Michigan), Reconciling Works, and Global Refuge (formerly Lutheran Immigrant and Refugee Services). Also, we will continue our support of our companion synods: the ELCJHL, the Mbulu Diocese, and the Southeast Pennsylvania Synod.

“Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things...and the God of peace will be with you.”
Phil. 4:8-9

Grace and peace,

Donald P. Krueger

Bishop



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