



Welcome to the 2017 Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly!

I am delighted that we can share time together these two days. I realize that spending time away from your other responsibilities is no small thing. And yet, I hope you also know that your presence here is a big thing! Spending time together makes us all better able to join God's movement in the world. I expect that you will bring back to your congregation new insights, new relationships, renewed faith, and a deeper commitment to our common mission.

The theme that centers our conversation this year is "Real Presence." We are living, breathing embodiments of the presence of Christ in the places where our congregations are planted. Each one of us is also a living, breathing embodiment of Christ's presence as we live in relationship with friends, co-workers, and family members.

We'll worship, sing, play, listen to some of the most inspiring leaders in the ELCA, learn from one another, and do the business of being synod. We'll talk about:

- engaging our neighbors and our neighborhoods
- mission partnerships at home and around the globe
- immigration, racial justice, and supporting our Muslim sisters and brothers

We'll hear stories from scripture and teachings from Lutheran theologians to sharpen our thinking and acting. After gaining strength and inspiration from one another, we'll be sent out to be "real presence" in the world.

It is my deep honor to serve as your bishop. I thank God for you and for the mission we share.

In Christ,

Bishop Ann Svennungsen