

Bishop Mark Hanson has asked all congregations and individuals to engage in 50 days of prayer prior to the Churchwide Assembly coming up August 17<sup>th</sup>. These 50 days are to pray for the ELCA and its discernment of where God is leading us as a church body. The Assembly will be considering a Human Sexuality Statement 15 years in the making, recommendations concerning same sex marriage and gay clergy, and important Worship, Music and Scriptural initiatives.

Bishop Hanson's letter is below:

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

"Marked with the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world." We are an evangelizing church, and this mission flows out of a life attentive to God's Word and rooted in unceasing prayer for the Spirit's life-giving work with the Word. In the seven weeks leading to the start of the ELCA Churchwide Assembly on Aug. 17, I invite you to join in 50 days of renewed and focused prayer around the Scriptures that will be used at the assembly, when your co-workers in the Gospel are daily gathered, centered and sent into mission.

The accompanying Scriptures, prayers and songs are a resource ( <http://www.elca.org/50days> ) you can use in small groups, in individual devotions or as a congregation-wide initiative. As you gather around God's Word, I ask you to pray especially for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, for those who will gather in Minneapolis, for decisions to be made, and for faithfulness in discerning those directions to which God is calling this evangelizing church in mission and service for the sake of the world.

In God's grace,

Mark S. Hanson  
Presiding Bishop