

# Central/Southern Illinois Synod of the ELCA



**God's Work.  
Our Hands.**

**Mission Statement:**

*Called and gathered by God in baptism, to walk together with Christ, to pray, proclaim and participate in and through the grace of God.*

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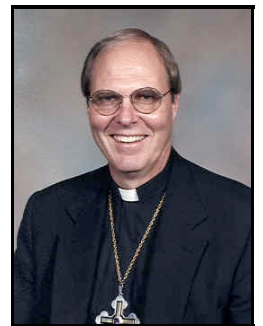
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**Bishop's Prayer**

Dear Lord, we are grateful for the Holy Spirit that calls us through the Gospel

## Reflections from Bishop Freiheit



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The first question that was asked of me during the election process at the 2000 C/SIS Assembly was, "What is your favorite Bible verse and why?" It didn't take me long to respond with Psalm 46:10, "Be still and know that I am God." Those words came to me this last week as we met at Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis, following the passage of the Social Statement of Human Sexuality and its implementing resolutions, together with the passage of the four rostering recommendations. That Bible verse has served as an anchor for me through much of my ministry, knowing that when I am overwhelmed it is time for me to be still, and listen to God, as well as to others around me.

Many seem to be overwhelmed with questions and emotions following the Assembly as we recall a familiar phrase from Luther's Small Catechism that asks, "What does this mean?" It is my prayer that as we deal with this question and how it pertains to our lives, individually and corporately, that we do so by listening before we make far-reaching decisions. It is my fervent prayer that we proceed with love and respect for one another even though we may react differently to the

through the Gospel, enlightens us with his gifts and sanctifies and preserves us in true faith. We are thankful for the Church in which the Holy Spirit keeps the fellowship of believers united with Jesus Christ in true faith. Yet, in the midst of our gratitude, we realize that there are many influences that work on us individually and corporately to compete with the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

We pray this day that you would bless our efforts to identify those influences and work to keep them from interfering with the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in the life of your Church. We ask that you bless our renewal efforts as we make them a priority throughout this coming year. Open our hearts to your love and grace, O Lord, as we seek to be faithful disciples.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen

--Bishop Freiheit

decisions made by the Churchwide Assembly.

I anticipate a great deal of correspondence, and I welcome your input as to how we may engage in effective dialogue in the coming weeks. Even though the resolutions have passed, there will be no immediate changes until after the Church Council meets and acts on these resolutions in November. It is my hope that we can use this time to address what the resolutions say, as well as to what they do not say. And it is my hope that we can also use this time to recommit ourselves to our mission and grow in our understanding of encouraging and loving our neighbors.

In light of Bishop Hanson's emphasis on prayer for the 50 days preceding the Assembly, I would like to encourage prayer for at least these first 50 days following the Assembly. I would encourage your prayer for the ELCA in all of its expressions, and for God's guidance as we proceed in our effort to Glorify God and serve God's people.

Blessings!

Bishop Warren D. Freiheit

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