

Galilee Lutheran Church
METeam Update May 1, 2011
The Fourth Developmental Task: Renewing Denominational Linkages

Usually in the midst of a called pastorate, people in a congregation and the pastor move through each day without much thought or interaction with the synod. Yes, there are many who remain involved with synodical partners and ministries over the years. Yet, most of the time, in the midst of a called pastorate the synod is an entity out there somewhere, who will be there if we need them; they are the folks who organize a few events each year, including synod assemblies each year and they publish salary guidelines for clergy.

As a congregation moves through the interim, the synod becomes more visible. Generally, one of the first phone calls the congregation's president makes after learning the previous pastor is leaving, is to the synod office. An Assistant to the Bishop is involved in the process almost immediately. Synod staff members assist the congregation in covenanting with/calling the interim pastor. They work with the Mission Exploration Team at the onset and help the congregation to debrief the MET Report. They supply the names and paperwork of pastoral candidates to interview for call. Even when the synod only seems to work "behind the scenes" while a called pastor serves in a parish, their role becomes more evident during the interim.

During the interim time, a congregation may also choose to look at what it means to belong to a particular denomination, in this case, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Why is Galilee ELCA and not LCMS, or UMC or PCUSA*? What do all those letters mean (see below)? And what does it matter? The reality of the mainline Church is that members move across denominational lines with greater frequency than in decades past. The interim period offers opportunities to help members from other denominational backgrounds understand why things are done in certain ways.

Being that the ELCA is a relatively young denomination, having its birth through the merger of three predecessor bodies, many members of Galilee have belonged to at least one other Lutheran denomination—ALC[□]. and some of you remember the merger when the ALC came into existence! Each denomination functions differently. Each has variations on practices, even when theological understandings resemble one another. How we practice traditions makes a difference. The interim period is an appropriate time to learn about why and how things are done in the ELCA.

*LCMS—*Lutheran Church Missouri Synod*, UMC—*United Methodist Church*, PCUSA—*Presbyterian Church US*

□ALC—*American Lutheran Church*, the other two Lutheran Denominations are the LCA—*Lutheran Church of America* and the EALC—*Evangelical American Lutheran Church*

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