

January 25, 2010

Dear Fellow Members,

As Richland Lutheran Church considers ending its affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), we also need to consider affiliating with a different Lutheran denomination. After considerable research, discussion, and prayer the Congregation Council recommends that RLC affiliate with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC).

The process used to arrive at this recommendation is covered more completely in the question and answer information in this mailing. But ultimately, when we compared what is important to RLC with all of the options, the best fit for our values is the LCMC. Specifically, the basis for the Council's decision is that LCMC is an association of centrist Lutheran congregations (284) where the people of God gather together around Word and Sacrament; is committed to a common set of ministry standards; includes a full role for women (ordination); has open communion practices; is associated with four seminaries; does not make official social statements, and is mission-oriented.

To make this process as transparent as possible and to assist members of RLC in their voting for the new denomination, in mid-January a special edition of the *Preview* that provided an overview of Lutheran denominations in the United States was mailed to each of you. We encourage you to review the information as you prepare to vote for a new church body with which to affiliate.

The second congregational vote regarding RLC affiliation with the ELCA is planned for February 28, 2010 at 1:00 p.m. The Council selected this date to meet the 90-day required period between votes, to allow the Council sufficient time to research new affiliation options, to provide this information to RLC members, and to not impact other previously planned church activities.

In addition to reviewing the special edition of the *Preview*, we urge you to become familiar with the information we are providing in this mailing. A new page is being added to the website so you can access information we have gathered about the LCMC and become more familiar with the organization prior to the vote. The RLC website is www.richlandlutheran.org and the LCMC web address is www.lcmc.net.

We are keenly aware of the significance of this decision in our congregational history. We give thanks for your prayerful deliberation about all the decisions we have and still need to make. Let us all keep one another in prayer during these days of discernment about the future of this congregation.

In Christ's Service,

Mot Hedges, President
Richland Lutheran Church