



# Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod

## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

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October 28, 2018

Dear NT-NL Lay leaders, Pastors, Deacons, and SAWLS:

“The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.” -Psalm 126:3

When you receive this I will have just completed preaching at the celebration liturgy in Freetown of 30 years of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone. Our partners chose this text and theme for our mutual celebration of their church and our partnership these three decades.

Our partnership with the ELCSL is a great example of the work that we can do together. Bishop Momoh has made a commitment to building the people of the ELCSL. Particularly focusing on education for women, children, and developing the theological foundation of pastors. Together with our sisters and brothers in Sierra Leone we as NT-NL participate in this work of building people, building disciples of Jesus, with our focus on cross-generational leadership development.

Your congregation is about this work. I know this to be true because my staff and I see it weekly when we visit congregations across our #milesandmiles. We see it #InMissionTogether when...

- 330+ NT-NL youth gather in Houston to learn, grow, serve, and worship among 30,000+ youth from across the ELCA. 32 of them part of the first ever “Bishop’s Group.”
- 30 young adults gather at Briarwood for a Christmas break leadership retreat.
- 4 “home-grown” NT-NL pastors are ordained in 2018 to serve NT-NL congregations.
- Candidates for rostered ministry grow 35% in one year.
- Parish Lay Ministry Academy (English and Spanish) enrollment triples and classes are now able to be offered in a fully “virtual” capacity.
- 2019 Synod assembly registration fees are reduced 30% from 2016 levels in order to ensure full participation of our congregations in this vital work together.
- NT-NL Latinx leaders lead in developing new models of theological education.
- The Briarwood board approves a bold new approach seeking a leader to fulfill the vision of a multi-generational leadership center at Briarwood including robust camping.

Indeed, the Lord has done great things for us in 2018 and I believe will continue to do great things for and with us in 2019. Your congregation’s participation in this work through gifts of time, talent, and mission support make this work possible. As your bishop I am deeply grateful for what you have given. For your commitment in 2019, thank you. We do this work...

En Misión Junt@s/In Mission Together,

Bishop Erik K.J. Gronberg, PhD.