

Report on the Book of Faith Initiative



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

The Book of Faith Initiative represents one aspect of this church's standing commitment to the Bible. The Book of Faith Initiative invites this whole church to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that it might live into its calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered, and sent by the Word.

During the past biennium, the Vocation and Education unit focused on equipping Book of Faith leaders in the synods. An important example of this work was a gathering of synod advocates on February 11–13, 2010. The event focused on assisting advocates to increase congregational engagement and prepare for local Book of Faith training events. A follow-up gathering was organized for advocates from synods in the mid-Atlantic section of the country since a blizzard prevented many of them from attending the February gathering. A Synod Advocates Leadership Team was also created during this biennium under the direction of Paul Lutz, who also serves as synod advocate for the New Jersey Synod.

With the restructuring of the churchwide organization in October 2010, the staff and program work for the Book of Faith Initiative transferred to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit (CSM). Although approved by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly as a five-year effort, the Book of Faith Initiative will continue as part of the ministries of CSM beyond 2012, with the first five years of the Book of Faith Initiative having served as the launch phase of the initiative. Elements of the ongoing initiative will include the following:

1. Part-time deployed staff will continue to serve, with Ms. Diane L. Jacobson as Book of Faith director.
2. Work is underway to integrate the Book of Faith Initiative into CSM's development of a faith practices model in the ELCA.
3. The fourfold method for Bible study (devotional, historical, literary, and Lutheran theological methods) has been well received and will continue to be promoted. The fourfold method, along with use of the *Lutheran Study Bible*, will serve as ongoing core markers of the initiative.
4. In addition to the *Lutheran Study Bible*, Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, has produced a wide array of resources for congregational use, which continue to be available.

In October 2011, CSM will convene a gathering of synod advocates and others interested in continuing to promote the Book of Faith Initiative. The intended outcome of the gathering is the establishment of a leadership network for the Book of Faith Initiative as a continuing initiative of this church.

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