

## Letter from the Executive Director of the Program Unit for Church in Society

November 2008

Dear Partners in Mission and Ministry:

The ELCA program unit for Church in Society is pleased to make available *Genetics and Faith: Power, Choice, and Responsibility* as the first publication in the process of developing a social statement on genetics. You have in your hands an ambitious and solid set of Christian reflections that invites you to join in study, discernment, and deliberation. Your participation is vital as our church thinks together about these matters and faces the broad and pressing implications for our time.

The challenges of genetics are daunting but this study brings to life the stories and challenges faced by many, if not most of us today. These are stories about pastors and other church leaders and those who live their vocation in science, medicine, farming, business and a growing list of other occupations. These are stories about parents, teens, consumers, and aid workers. The study brings to light what is at stake for all of us as our human power to work with the genome expands rapidly. It presents faithful and thoughtful reflections that can teach and encourage discussion on questions related to congregational care, global realities, justice, and the common good.

On behalf of the Church in Society unit I want to thank the energetic and dedicated members of the ELCA Task Force on Genetics who have produced this engaging and comprehensive study. I know hours of loving labor have gone into their efforts to lead this church in the process toward a teaching and policy statement on genetics slated for consideration at the 2011 Churchwide Assembly.

It is my hope that many in this church will benefit from the task force's work by engaging it and will, in turn, aid them by providing many thoughtful responses. That deadline is November 1, 2009, and your response provides crucial input for the task force's thinking when they begin to craft the draft social statement that is due to be released in early 2010.

In Christ,



Rev. Dr. Rebecca Larson  
Executive Director  
Church in Society