



DECEMBER 2022

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I write this letter on the First Sunday of Advent. A new church year has begun. We begin a new journey into Advent, and we may be filled with anticipation for the season ahead. Or we may be filled with other emotions as we consider our hectic schedules and how we are going to get it all done. Our journeys this season may take us to reunions and time with loved ones, or we may be celebrating in our own homes with people coming to visit us. We are all on the road in some sense, whether we are traveling or not.

Our time on the road these last few years have included changes and challenges along the way. There have been roadblocks, construction, dead ends, detours, one-way streets we did not expect, roads closed where we wanted to go. Our faith formation ministries have changed dramatically as we have been traveling on this road. We've adapted and adapted again as we've designed ministries that meet needs. We've been faithful people, being the church in new ways.

Faithfulness does have a cost. We may be exhausted physically, emotionally, spiritually. We may be suffering from burnout and not even recognize it. Even our positive emotions of hope and anticipation influence us. We may feel every emotion as we serve in our settings and face the challenges when we're on the road. We are serving during big changes for the church. We are witnesses to a time unlike any other.

The Christian Education Network has chosen for its 2023 theme **IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL**. We want to be on the road with you, exploring the wide range of changes we are living through, experiencing the ways we can frame our physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental health. We want to discover how we can effectively walk alongside children, youth, and adults who live with a wide range of health issues. Our Network wants to create caring conversations and teachable moments.

Our partner in this effort throughout 2023 will be ELEA, the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association. They will co-sponsor with us some webinars and other conversations. Some of the topics we are considering are Bullying, Anxiety, Teaching on the Spectrum, Suicide Prevention, and Trauma/Grief.

We will follow the pattern of past years, some months will feature a webinar, others will feature a book review and/or congregational interviews. We have many resources to draw from. We need each other and we will focus on people with specialties and expertise on these topics.

Wellness means different things to different people. We all have some things in common. We are on the road together, living out our callings as faith formation leaders, and staying faithful as best we can.

I am in awe of the faithfulness I see with the people on our Board, my colleagues in ministry, and many other partners who support the efforts of the Network. I am able to be faithful because others are faithful, and we all can live into the promise of our Savior together.

Diane McGeoch

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*"...that they may be encouraged  
in heart and united in love..."*

Colossians 2.2 (NIV)