



**Northern Illinois District**  
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

## **“We Are One in The Spirit”**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

May grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and Christ Jesus our Lord. We continue to hold you in prayer as we all are currently navigating through “unchartered territory” as another academic year begins. We thank you for your service and dedication to the mission and ministry of sharing God’s great love with so many; students and families, throughout this difficult pandemic.

St. Paul wrote to the Ephesians in chapter 4:1-7, “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.” The very first thing Paul mentions is Christian unity, we are all saints in the Lord united together by our Christian faith.

As we have been united with God, we are also aligned with each other. This unity is the single most significant marker of our life in Christ. As we relate this to the current circumstance, a mask mandate, some for and some against, we must realize that people are not the enemy, but COVID is. We can have our differences and still be one in Christ. The power of the devil is constantly pulling and tugging at us trying to divide and conquer. We cannot allow the devil to get a foothold. He certainly uses anger and division to lead people to other sins.

The Holy Spirit gives faith in order to produce unity among believers. The faith that believers have as members of the Holy Christian church is vitally important and powerful. Faith dwells in the hearts of believers. This means God dwells in the hearts of believers. Faith unites us as believers to live united lives for the benefit of the world. We are united by God’s word to live God’s word. God’s word reveals to others and us His great love for all sinners.

As we go forth into this academic year, we all are concerned about the health and safety of the students, and not just their physical health and safety but their Spiritual health as well. We want the children at the feet of the teachers hearing and learning the Gospel message of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ along with all of the academic learning and



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extra curriculars. Academic learning must be in person instead of remote for this to take place. The most important issue is that the Word of God is shared with students and families and nothing should get in the way of allowing that to happen.

We are monitoring Religious Liberty Issues with our Districts. We have been in consultation with religious liberty advocates as has the leadership of the LCMS.

The Roman Catholic Diocese in Illinois have “mandated masks” in their schools and we understand that we do not have that authority, but want you to be aware.

Our Districts will be monitoring ongoing development in this matter and others! You have our encouragement and support in this important work.

Thank you again for your dedicated service and unity to our Lord. We keep you in fervent prayer as we are in this together and the Lord will see us through. God’s grace, mercy, and peace be with you now and always.

In Christian love,

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