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“...that they may be
encouraged in heart
and united in love...”
Colossians 2.2 (NIV)

Dear friends,

Merry Christmas! As we continue to celebrate the birth of our Savior during these twelve days, we also enter into a new calendar year. It seems like only yesterday that I wrote my first response to the events unfolding with Covid, but many months have since passed. Many plans have changed. Many people have taken ill and, far too many have died. 2020 is truly a year we will never forget.

However, 2020 also brought about many blessings. We have learned to adapt and grow in ways that many of us never imagined. Personally, I have recorded, edited, and been on Facebook Live more than I ever dreamed. I learned new software and became certified as a contact tracer. Words I didn't use on a daily basis have become a part of my everyday conversations. And, as a Network, we pivoted our Learning Strategies to focus on virtual and home faith formation. Even in the midst of the difficulties, we remained faithful to the call and God has indeed blessed our efforts.

As we look forward to 2021, it is with great pleasure I announce the Big Idea:

Learning Strategies for the Life of Faith Initiative.

Together we will:

- Discover what it means to be both a Gathered and Scattered Church
- Equip leaders to model and encourage a life of faith in others
- Nurture all ages to live out their faith on a daily basis
- Learn about real life examples in our Congregational Spotlights

This Big Idea grew out of the Network's friendship and partnership with the Rev. Dwight DuBois, author of *The Scattering: Imagining a Church that Connects Faith and Life*. For more information, check out thescattering.org. In addition to offering resources each month, we will also be highlighting congregations who are living out lives of faith. Keep coming back from new and exciting ideas, conversations and resources that can help make your life a little easier. Also, be sure to check out the Christian Education Network of the ELCA Facebook Group for the latest ministry ideas from your colleagues. This is a great group to ask questions as you plan your new year.

Also, if you have not made you year-end donations, please consider the Christian Education Network of the ELCA. You can use the Donate tab on the webpage. You can also use your Smile Amazon donations and Thrivent Choice Dollars to help support the ministry. Every donation is greatly appreciated and helps the Network continue to provide new opportunities and resources.

Finally, it is my hope and prayer that you are able to find sabbath rest for your soul during this Christmas time. Stay safe and have a blessed New Years!

The Rev. Juli Lejman-Guy, President

