



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

March 2009

Dear friend of *Grace Matters*:

You will see in the contents of the enclosed *Grace Matters* newsletter that this is no ordinary issue of the publication. It is, in fact, the last issue, and it comes to you with the announcement that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's radio ministry is coming to an end.

For more than 60 years the ELCA's weekly radio program has been bringing the good news of God's redeeming love for the world to thousands of listeners. The first program aired in 1947 with the name *Lutheran Vespers*. In 2005 the name was changed to *Grace Matters*. Today the program is carried on 180 radio stations in the United States, several European countries, plus Australia, New Zealand and Puerto Rico. Listeners throughout the world have been able to hear the program online.

The decision to close *Grace Matters* was made in response to current economic challenges and with consideration for the strategic priorities of the ELCA's Communication Services unit and those of the churchwide organization.

While donor and volunteer efforts helped keep the program on the air for many years, those efforts, ultimately, were not enough to offset increasing costs of production, distribution and broadcasting. Communication Services covered costs over and above income, but the economic downturn has made it impossible for us to continue to do so.

Even as we grieve this loss, we are ever thankful for the wonderful ministry that has touched so many lives over the years, for faithful friends like you, and for the dedicated, talented staff whose sense of mission and vocation helped shape *Grace Matters* into more than just a program.

Please hold in your prayers the gifted *Grace Matters* staff as they continue to live out their vocations and callings in other endeavors. They are: Susan Greeley, *Grace Matters* producer for 13 years and development director since 2007; Barbara Berry-Bailey, associate producer since 2006; Dixie Miller, *Grace Matters* office manager since 1988; Peter Marty, program host since 2005; and Ed Hoke, recording engineer since 2004.

Again, thank you for your partnership in the ELCA's radio ministry. You have helped make a difference in the lives of thousands of people. We are grateful beyond measure.

The last *Grace Matters* broadcast is scheduled for Easter Sunday (April 12).

God's peace,

Kristi S. Bangert
Executive Director
Communication Services