



## Preface

At its churchwide assembly in 2007, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affirmed the centrality of the Bible to Christian life and faith while at the same time recognizing the reality of biblical illiteracy in the church. The result is Book of Faith—a five-year initiative with “the goal of raising to a new level this church’s individual and collective engagement with the Bible and its teaching, yielding greater biblical fluency and a more profound appreciation of Lutheran principles and approaches for the use of Scripture.” *Book of Faith Lenten Journey: Marks of the Christian* is one of many resources prepared to accomplish this goal.

According to the Book of Faith initiative’s Web site, [www.bookoffaith.org](http://www.bookoffaith.org):

The Book of Faith initiative invites the whole church to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

The Bible is the written Word of God that creates and nurtures faith through the work of the Holy Spirit and points us to Christ, the incarnate Word and center of our faith. The Bible invites us into a relationship with God, making demands on our lives and promising us life in Christ. The Bible tells the stories of people living their faith over the centuries and, through its demands and promises, forms us as a people of faith.

The language of the Bible becomes our language. It shapes how we think and speak about God, about the world, and about ourselves. We become renewed, enlivened, and empowered as the language of Scripture forms our hearts, our minds, our community conversation, and our commitments.

*Book of Faith Lenten Journey: Marks of the Christian* will lead you into an encounter with God through a slow, prayerful reflection upon Romans 12:1-15. The primary goal is not to fill your mind with ideas about what the apostle Paul is saying in these verses. That blessing will come to those who take the time to read, reflect, and pray with the pages that follow. However, a greater grace awaits you. Meditating on Paul's words will lead you into deeper intimacy with the One who has known and loved you since before the dawn of time. The Spirit of Christ breathed the apostle's message and will breathe life fresh and full into you as you meditate on God's mercy and call in your life. That's God's promise, and God will keep it.

You can use this book on your own, with a spiritual friend or small group, or with the entire congregation. Worship helps and sermon starters for Sundays and Wednesday evenings in Lent are available online at [www.bookoffaith.org](http://www.bookoffaith.org).

Be sure to visit the Book of Faith Web site regularly for more resources designed to bring the book of faith and the community of faith closer together.