

## The Sankofa Litany:



### Contributions of People of African Descent Remembered

The second Sunday in November has been designated by the Virginia Synod African American Outreach Team as a day of remembrance for the contributions of people of African descent across the Synod. A memorial approving the recognition of 2011 as the International year for People of African Descent was adopted at the Synod Assembly in June. The memorial acknowledged both the hardships and contributions by people of African descent around the world.

The team encourages congregations to be in dialogue with one another in efforts to research and remember how these people have impacted them personally, locally, nationally, and globally. The team said that it hopes that congregations will spend several weeks discovering different places of impact.

The team is providing a litany that will help share all that the congregations have discovered. Alternatively, congregations could have Sankofa moments in worship for short remembrances of contributions of people of African descent.

Sankofa is a concept from the Akan people of West Africa, teaching that “we must go back to our roots in order to move forward.” The symbol of Sankofa is a mythical bird which flies forward while looking back, with an egg (symbolizing the future) in its mouth, or taking an egg off its back.

The Synod team encourages congregations to be creative in using the Sankofa concept and symbol. Team members are willing to help plan or suggest resources. Congregations may contact the Synod office to request assistance from the team.

This focus is not to exclude the achievements of other peoples, but to show how richly all lives are intertwined. As the ELCA continues to struggle to be more reflective of the communities it serves, this is an opportunity to celebrate what God has done through people of African descent to benefit all people.