

2014 SYNOD STAFF REPORTS

PASTOR RON MOORMAN, ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP

As has been the case for the last several years, the majority of my time these days has been spent on working to identify possible candidates for the congregational vacancies that exist in the synod. This includes perusing the lists of the Rostered Leader Profiles that are available from the ELCA looking for those candidates who might make a good match for the needs expressed by vacant congregations around the synod. I am pleased to report that we have been fairly successful in identifying such candidates. While we still have a number of congregations waiting for possible candidates, overall the number of vacant congregations has substantially decreased. Unfortunately, there still are congregations which, for a variety of reasons, have been vacant for substantial periods of time. And I am sorry to report, that this process has gotten considerably more difficult over the past several years due to a substantial decrease in the number of candidates available. That appears to be due primarily to fewer candidates coming out of ELCA seminaries and this is further complicated by a growing number of pastors who are (and will be) taking retirement in the near future. In response I have broadened the search to include the candidate lists for several other synods of approximately the same size and geographic makeup as that of the C/SIS. This has helped somewhat in this process. This is a very serious and growing concern not just for our synod but for the entire ELCA. Part of the duties of this position is to visit congregations who are currently vacant and review with them the process they need to follow to be able to fill their vacancy—the correct forms to fill out and how to do that, the linking with possible candidates, and the answering of questions coming from these congregations as the process moves forward.

I have also continued as the staff liaison to the synod's Candidacy Subcommittee. The primary role of this position is to insure that all levels of the candidacy process are functioning as they should and to relate our candidacy processes with those of other synods, and to the national ELCA. This position also serves as a liaison between the synod and our candidates at the various levels of the system—to share information, to process problems, and to encourage involvement. This subcommittee plays a critical role in the on-going work of both the synod and the ELCA particularly in making decisions about the fitness for public ministry of potential candidates. During my time staffing this committee, I have come to realize the critical nature of the work within its purview. In addition the subcommittee plays a critical role in guiding, encouraging, and supporting our candidates for public ministry. Each candidate has a "relator" who stays in close contact with the candidates to provide a connection back to the synod in order to be able to address any problems or issues that might arise. We are blessed in this synod to have an exceptional Candidacy Subcommittee which takes its role quite seriously. As I have said in the past, this committee and this synod is committed to making sure that only candidates with outstanding character and strong theological qualifications are allowed to become ELCA pastors.

This will be my last report to the Synod Assembly in that I am retiring from my position at the end of June. I am happy to say that I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with the synod and the work that I have been privileged to do. I have found it to be both interesting and satisfying made all the more so by the great people with whom I have been privileged to share that time. As you know, it is a very dedicated group of individuals who work diligently to assure the best interests of God's people and the purposes of the synod. It has also been a position through which I have been given the opportunity to know and to work with so many of you. Having the opportunity to interact with so many dedicated and mission-driven individuals has, indeed, enriched my life. So thank you all for the privilege of sharing this time with you. God's blessing on you all!!

PASTOR WAYLAND MIDDENDORF, ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP

I serve as synod staff liaison for the Social Ministry, Justice and Advocacy Committee, the Global Mission Committee, and the Synodically Authorized Ministry (S.A.M.) Subcommittee. Another area of responsibility is to visit congregations and conference gatherings in the East Central Conference, Southern Conference, and about half of the West Central Conference. I also serve as the contact person for two closed congregations (Trinity Lutheran, Alton and Immanuel Lutheran, Cairo) until the property has been disposed.

The Social Ministry, Justice and Advocacy reviews grant requests and designates a monetary amount to each grant that is approved. The amount is based on the funds available, number of grants received that meet the criteria, the need and what the impact might be. As a committee we continue to ask why are we here—why do we exist? The Church's ministry is about more than grants, but if our primary action is only to review and approve grants should we continue to exist? I believe the committee has potential as an advocacy partner with LSSI and others as the Church continues its service to those who are on the margins of society. The needs are many and great here in the Central/Southern Illinois Synod and beyond. As a result, education, awareness and continued concern for justice are proprieties.

The Global Mission Committee is in the final stages of planning the trip for Bishop Roth, his wife, Kristina, and seven other team members from our synod to our Companion Synods in Madagascar. The team will leave August 11, 2014 and arrive in Antananarivo, Madagascar just before midnight August 12th. The team will spend the 13th-15th meeting with Malagasy Church officials in Antananarivo, etc. The 16th-17th the team will be in the Ft. Dauphin Synod. The 18th the team will travel to Ambovombe and on the 20th they will begin their return trip home, arriving in the U.S. on the 22nd. During the year we had a visit from Sthela who serves as interpreter for us with our companion synods. She was able to meet with church leaders in Peoria, Bloomington and Springfield. Unfortunately, a scheduled visit in Marion had to be canceled because of weather. We also had anticipate a visit in our synod from Pastor Austin and Tanya Propst who are Country Coordinators for YAGM (Young Adults in Global Mission) sometime in late July and early August. They are sponsored by a number of congregations in our synod and hope to visit with as many of their sponsoring congregations as possible.

The S.A.M. Subcommittee experienced some transitions this year. We have a new Dean of Education, Pastor Blake Duncan, and we are currently looking for an Education Coordinator. At the present time I continue to make arrangements for class locations and attend the first and last class to verify the class roster, and provide the class and instructor evaluation at the end of the class. There are currently sixteen students in various stages of study and two are expected to be recognized at this year's Synod Assembly. We also continue to provide classes and continuing education opportunities for new and existing S.A.M. members. The S.A.M.'s provide an important ministry for our synod.

PASTOR JAMES REENTS, ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP

"The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8) I have found that ministry is much richer when I follow the Spirit rather than try to control the Spirit.

I read Rostered Leaders Profiles that are filled out by pastors who desire to move. Today we receive half as many RLPs as a year ago which makes mobility more difficult. We need more pastors. Encourage your students to consider a seminary education.

I relate to congregations in the Northern and Northeast Conferences. Therefore, I attend monthly meetings of leaders and text studies. I have had the privilege of preaching in sixteen congregations in the past year. I think strengthening the relationship between the synod and congregations is very important. I also was able to network with SAMs by auditing the Old Testament and New Testament classes. Both classes were excellent.

Bishop Roth meets monthly with the Assistants and DEM. Thank you to Pastor Ron Moorman for his faithful service. I will become more involved in the initial visits to congregations seeking a pastor.

The Lay and Professional Leaders Support Subcommittee has been working on a suggested Sabbatical Policy which will be available soon. Sabbaticals are an excellent opportunity for continuing education for pastors. Pastors are encouraged to cover for each other during the three month Sabbatical period. \$8,000 is available from the synod to assist pastors and congregations with Sabbatical expenses. Each could receive a grant of \$1,000. Application forms will be available with the Sabbatical Policy.

Eleven congregations are seriously looking at the possibility of a geographic parish. They are looking at their mission in the future and ways they can support each other. The following congregations are participating in the study: St. John, Anchor; St. Paul, Chatsworth; Trinity, Chenoa; Immanuel, Colfax; Community, Cornell; St. John, Cullom; St. Peter, Dwight; Trinity, Fairbury; St. Petri, Flanagan; St. Paul, Forrest; American, Gibson City; and St. John, Sibley. Some of these congregations are already building relationships by working together in catechism classes and LYO activities. Thank you to Pastor Tom Krieger and Pastor Bob Dealey for their leadership.

Thank you for the privilege of serving God through the C/SIS. I especially enjoyed participating in "Pedal for a Purpose" last year and this year.

PASTOR ROBERT DEALEY, DIRECTOR FOR EVANGELICAL MISSION

As the Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM), I am the staff liaison to the Mission Support & Stewardship Education Committee (MSSEC) and the New & Renewing Congregations Committee (NRCC).

Under the leadership of Pastor Kathy Montira, MSSEC chair, this committee has had two primary emphases: the Macedonia Project and the Mission Interpretation Ministry. The Macedonia Project has focused on three projects:

- 41 congregations ordered and received a free copy of "Not Your Parents' Offering Plate: A New Vision for Financial Stewardship" by J. Clif Christopher. Funding for the books was provided by the ELCA as part of a Macedonia Project grant to help congregations develop a better understanding of stewardship in the 21st century.
- A Year-Round Stewardship Calendar is being developed for distribution to synod congregations.
- A network of Stewardship Contact Persons from each congregation is under development and stewardship resources are being sent to each congregational Stewardship Contact Person.

The second MSSEC emphasis in 2014 has been the re-activation of the Mission Interpretation Ministry (MIM). Doreen Klages serves as the Synod Coordinator for the MIM. To date, 25 persons from fourteen congregations have attended training events held in four of six conferences. Training events will be held in the Southern and Northwest conferences in the fall, 2014. Mission Interpreters are persons, selected by the congregation, who share stories about what the Church is doing on the congregational, synodical and churchwide

levels, with the hope that as congregational members hear these stories, they will be inspired and encouraged to undertake similar ministry projects.

Under the leadership of Pastor Ed Hudelson, NRCC chair, the primary focus of this group is to assist congregations that are in need of renewal. Five committee members have already been trained in Transformational Ministry 2.0, Part I, and the Central/Southern Illinois Synod, in conjunction with the Northern Illinois and Indiana-Kentucky synods will co-host a Transformational Ministry 2.0 (Part I & II) event, August 7-9, 2014; specific details will be forthcoming soon.

In addition to the aforementioned committees, I have been working with three specific congregational groupings to develop an Area Ministry Strategy in three different geographic areas of the synod. The areas include: eleven congregations from the Northeast Conference; ten congregations from the Northwestern Conference; and the five congregations located in Springfield, IL.

In conjunction with Portico Health Benefits, the ELCA Foundation, and the ELCA Mission Investment Fund, "Faith, Family & Finances" presentations were made at three separate locations across the synod (St. Mark, Washington; Mt. Zion, Litchfield; and Prince of Peace, Mt. Vernon) on November 8-9, 2013. Presenters included: Andrea Arey (Portico Health Benefits); Jennifer Prinz (ELCA Foundation); and Enrique Rojas (ELCA Mission Investment Fund).

I have preached and given presentations at 23 congregations. I have led five retreats and met with six church councils.

PASTOR ROBERT DEALEY, COORDINATOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND NETWORKING

In the areas of communications and networking, this past year has been a busy one for the synod. The following projects have been undertaken:

- "For Your Consideration", a monthly electronic ministry reflection piece is sent to rostered leaders and congregations.
- "To The Point!", a bi-weekly e-mail blast is sent to rostered leaders.
- "Mission Matters...", a monthly electronic newsletter is sent to rostered leaders and congregations for congregational distribution.
- A pre/post-assembly fill-in-the-blank sample press release was sent to congregations to submit to local media.
- A 2013 synod assembly summary was sent to congregations for distribution within the congregation. A 2014 synod assembly summary will be sent to congregations after this year's assembly.
- The Central/Southern Illinois Synod webpage was re-designed this past year. Dean Haucap, Chris Wollesen, and Cindy Koonce have provided invaluable leadership for the website re-development. Please visit the website at www.csis-elca.org.
- Assistance provided for the 2013 and 2014 Pedal for a Purpose publicity efforts.
- Plans continue for the development of a synod-wide E-mail Contact list.

I am grateful to Pastors Micah Garnett, Christine McNeal, and Amy Zeittlow for their service as advisors for the synodical communications efforts and to Cindy Koonce for her invaluable assistance in graphic enhancement. Congregations and synodical auxiliaries are welcome to send press releases and ideas for news stories to me at Bob.Dealey@csis-elca.org.