

Summary Report: 2007 IN-KY Synod Assembly Ascension Lutheran Church

Representatives: Stan & Linda Hunter

We thank you for the opportunity to serve as your representatives to the 2007 IN-KY Synod Assembly held 8-10 June in Ft. Wayne, IN. This event has a special reflection for us in that it was fifteen years ago that we were delegates to the Florida-Bahamas Synod Assembly when we were notified about our relocation to Kentucky!

We will very briefly cover some of the highlights observed. We cannot perform complete justice to the events of this year's Assembly within the confines of this document. In addition to this Summary Report, a package of material is available in our congregation office for your review. We encourage all to volunteer at least once in their Christian life to see how our Synod functions and how we function as a people identified in Christ.

Bishop Mark Hanson noted this is the 20th anniversary year for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Major items of business for this Assembly are Adoption of Agenda, Nomination for vacant positions, Assembly action on proposed resolutions, review/approval of proposed 2008 budget, and a selection of various information group sessions.

Bishop Stuck opened the Assembly followed by a Keynote Address from Rev. Ruben Duran. Pastor Ruben Duran serves as Executive for New Congregational Development in the Division for Outreach of the ELCA. The Assembly Agenda was accepted and the Nominating Committee provided its report and nominations.

Election for open positions was as follows:

Synod Secretary	Ted Miller
Synod Council – Clergy	Pastor Vicki Garber
	Pastor Timothy Kramer
	Pastor John D. Malzahn
Synod Council – Youth	Emily Hogg
Consultation Committee – Clergy	Pastor Robert L. Hetzel
Discipline Committee – Clergy	Pastor Victor F. Kolch
	Pastor Matt Manning
	Pastor Robin Owen
	Pastor David Schreiber
Discipline Committee – Lay/F	Marlys L. Batterma
Discipline Committee – Lay/M	Terry Seitz

The Bishop's Report opened with comments on the Mission Statement of the IN-KY Synod as "...making Christ known ...through empowerment, equipping, and encouragement of each other." Last year he made a personal goal of visiting each congregation in the Synod. To date, he has visited with 60+ of our congregations. He continues to make visits in his commitment to our 230 congregations. In addition, he commented on the expenditures of our past year's budget. In your giving to the IN-KY Synod, 50% went to the benevolence of the ELCA, 25% retained to benevolence within the Synod ministries, and, 25% applied to the Synod operational costs.

In continuing comments, the Vice President Report advised that the last Base-Dollar Year was 1967 where one dollar (\$1) would equal 100 cents. In order to represent that same one dollar (\$1) today, you would need slightly more than six dollars (\$6); hence, a 1967-based \$5 donation would equal \$30 today.

The Director of Outreach Report, noted the following facts:

Fact: 70% of all ELCA members are NOT in worship each week.

Fact: In most communities in Kentucky and Indiana, somewhere between 45% and 65% of all persons do not belong to a community of faith.

Fact: By 2025, only 20% of all persons under age 20 will have spent more than four months as an attendee of any church.

Terri Dillon, Director of Outreach, views these statistics as a "...glass half full...", hence, an opportunity.

The following Section was approved and added to the Synod By-Laws:

S11.04.12 Leadership Support Committee

The purpose of this committee shall be to support the rostered leaders of this synod. Among the functions of this committee shall be:

- a. Planning and convening an annual ministerium for rostered professional leaders which will provide continuing education, mutual conversation and encouragement, and an opportunity for conversation with the bishop and the synod staff regarding the mission of the synod.
- b. Develop ways to support retired rostered persons, including convening synod and/or regional gatherings to explore existing needs and resources for such persons, and seeking ways in which talents and experience can be further utilized in the life of the synod and its congregations.
- c. The chairperson of the committee, in consultation with the bishop following the receipt and analysis of annual Reports to the Bishop, shall determine trends and needs that this committee may address to assist rostered persons.

- d. Encourage continuing education among rostered persons and administer the funds of the synod that are available for continuing education grants,
- e. Support first call persons through the First Call Theological Education program of the ELCA.
- f. Be in conversation with those rostered persons in specialized ministries to offer support and collegiality.

Other select comments from the Assembly Reports:

The **Academy for Mission** encourages all congregations to make use of the Congregational Resource Center at the Christian Theological Seminary located in Indianapolis.

The **Older Adult Ministry Committee** has identified the week of 14-21 October, this year, as OAM week. Resources are available at www.inky.org, Our Ministries, Older Adult Ministries. This year's theme is "Loving – No Strings Attached".

CELEBRATE: 1907 – 2007. It marks the 100 anniversary of **Lutheran Campus Ministry**. The date of 1907 is identified because that was the year the first campus pastor was called to a state school campus. The pastor was Howard Gold – the place was the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Ted Miller, Synod Secretary, encourages continued support of our Campus Ministries.

Danielle Burrus, **Synod Communications Coordinator**, advises that, "Good communication is an interactive process; we feed each other with news and resources to empower, equip, and encourage people to Make Christ Known. Part of my ministry as a communicator is to keep us tied together, connected with each other as clergy and lay leaders serving in congregations and on ministry teams, and as part of the greater Church, all within one Body of Christ. Please continue to visit the I-K Synod Web site; I try to keep its content current and useful. The *Epistle*, a newsletter for rostered and lay leaders, lists current call information, prayer concerns, a synod calendar, book reviews, articles and resources. Each Wednesday, I send out an email newsletter to clergy, church administrative assistants, worship and music leaders, youth, candidates, and other synod friends. This newsletter contains prayer concerns, synod announcements and reminders, publicity for events happening throughout the two-state area, educational opportunities, church wide events, and links to downloadable resources on the Internet. I encourage everyone to subscribe to this email and use it as a resource for ministry."

There were a number of Breakout Sessions at the Assembly. We elected to attend:

Pending Resolutions

Resolutions presented to the assembly are not just opportunities to vote; they are invitations to conversation and action in the name of Christ under the umbrella of our common mission to make Christ known. Participants in this breakout had opportunity for discussion of those resolutions before this year's assembly, their background, implications of their adoption, and the nuances of the issues behind them.

Only one resolution came before the Assembly. It was #R-1-07: Resolution Concerning the New England Synod "Guidelines for Blessing of Same-Sex Unions".

Have You Heard? Yes, Lutherans Can Talk about Sex!

How can you make the best use of the third ELCA study on human sexuality, "Free in Christ to Serve the Neighbor: Lutherans Talk about Human Sexuality"? Rev. Roger Willer provided an introduction to the study and highlighted its key themes, such as the reading of Galatians, attention to freedom and responsibility, the commercialization of sexuality, and more. He shared suggestions gained from those who have led the study for effective leadership, such as setting the tone and dealing with time limitations. Leader: Rev. Roger A. Willer, Co-Director of the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality.

This session was a discussion of Part 3 of the ELCA Studies on Sexuality. While the pending resolution before the Assembly is a part of this study, it represents but a very small segment of interest. The Study is an effort to address the sum of human sexuality resulting in a Social Statement for the ELCA and hence a reflection of our profession of faith in the gospel of Christ. We have passed to the congregational office a copy the workbook: "Free in Christ to Serve the Neighbor: Lutherans Talk about Human Sexuality". We are encouraged by Rev. Willer to take up this study and provide our feedback into the collective analysis of the ELCA. There is not sufficient time to cover the entire study, but there is time to review/study select segments and return your response by 1 August 2007.

The **Proposed Budget** for the coming Synod year was reviewed, discussed, accepted. Our own Ken Gustafson, Synod Council – Lay Member, expressed concern on the Assembly floor about the use of one-time funds to offset budget deficits. The result of this action will be the elimination of such funds and detract from their intended purposes.