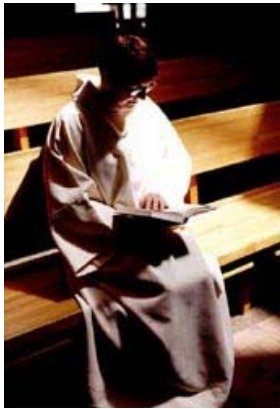




INDIANA-KENTUCKY SYNOD + ELCA

The **Freed to Lead Fund** was established in September 2008 to assist in the training and support of pastors and lay rostered leaders in the Indiana-Kentucky Synod by providing Scholarships for endorsed seminarians and Leadership Grants to rostered leaders actively serving in ministry for 1. Theological education debt, 2. Pension assistance and 3. Special circumstances that create undue financial burden.



The **Freed to Lead Fund** was initiated with a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment, which provided matching seed money to encourage churches and church members to contribute to assist rostered leaders. Also providing matching money to this fund is the ELCA Fund for Leaders for contributions made to seminary scholarships.

According to the fund's organizing documents, "The **Freed to Lead Fund** is established to uphold the great gift of ministry that rostered leaders provide in service to our Lord Jesus Christ through the Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Fund further finds value in the significant relationships that exist between rostered leaders and congregations and is therefore established to strengthen those relationships so that ministry may be enriched in ways that are unencumbered for both rostered leaders and

congregations. This Fund will provide a holistic approach to the training and support of rostered leaders for ministry in the church."

CHALLENGES IN THE CHURCH

The establishment of the Freed to Lead Fund arises out of a number of challenging systemic factors in the church:

1. **Rising costs of seminary education:** The average annual tuition at an ELCA seminary is \$12,000, which with living expenses, brings the cumulative cost of attending 3 years of seminary to a range of \$70,000 to \$102,000.
2. **Rising seminary education debt,** averaging \$38,000 in 2006 in the ELCA. 70% of seminary students take out loans to fund their education and can anticipate monthly loan payments of \$300-600 in their first calls.
3. **Low income of rostered leaders in smaller churches** impacts the ability of first call pastors to meet monthly payments for education debt.
4. **Low pension contributions** as a result of low income also impacts the ability of rostered leaders to move comfortably into retirement.
5. **Poor stewardship in ELCA parishes:** The average giving in the ELCA is 2% of annual income, which is far below the Biblical tithe of 10%.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

The **Freed to Lead** initiative will meet these challenges through a capital campaign beginning in 2009 with a goal of raising \$3.5 million in new money. Fund administrators will also be empowered to address and advocate for change to systemic issues that create the economic challenges that rostered ministers face and provide a holistic approach to the training and support of rostered leaders for ministry in the church.

