

Report of the Vice-President Indiana-Kentucky Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Judy Rehmel

June 5 – 7, 2008

Greetings to all the saints of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod!

It is with thanks and gratitude that I address you this year for your partnership in the work of the synod and the church at large. It is amazing what we can accomplish when we work together as the hands and feet of our Risen Lord. My thanks for your support in this ongoing work! Space does not allow me to list every program and cause within our synod and church, but let me highlight a few.

As we celebrate the accomplishments of the past year, we also look forward to the future and lay the foundation for the continuation of the important work we do. Programs provided by the synod and the church include the recruiting, training and placement of our professional leaders, both clergy and laity. Other programs include social service agencies that touch the lives of one in every 50 people in the whole country, and provide the structure for helping those in need throughout the world with Lutheran World Relief, ELCA Domestic Disaster Relief Fund, and the Hunger Appeal. These social service agencies allow for every donated dollar to go where the donor designates, with no additional administrative costs. Did you know that as an individual, you can contribute directly to any of these causes at any time either by writing a check or going on line and using your credit card?

In our synod, working collectively, we are providing programs that congregations, by themselves, could not support. Our Lutheran Outdoor Ministries program is one of the best in the ELCA, providing year-round opportunities for individuals and groups of all ages with our three camping facilities at Lutheran Hills, Lutherwald and Lake Luther. If you are concerned about the future of the church, you can help in your congregation by seeing that every child has the opportunity to go to camp. To be even more personal, give your grandchildren the gift of a week at camp each year where they can have a great learning experience in a fun-filled environment. It could be the best investment you will ever make, both for the child and for your church.

Another program that greatly affects the future of our church is Campus Ministry, providing support and ministry to our youth on six campuses in our synod. The statistics show that this program, along with Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, have a great influence on the number of people we send to seminaries and on the future lay leadership of our churches. These campus programs support those who, during their college years, will make two of the biggest decisions of their lives—their life's work and their life's partner. It is an investment we can not afford not to make! Indiana and Kentucky each have nearly 100 colleges, and we only have a presence in six locations (one of which is congregation based and supported). These programs have a critical need for funds to provide clergy and professional lay leadership, plus facilities to keep providing programs. I venture to say that nearly all congregations in the synod have young people in college somewhere on our turf. If we don't support them, we could lose not only future membership, but critical leadership. Contributions to Campus Ministry can be made to individual programs at Purdue University, Indiana University, Ball State University, Indianapolis (IUPUI and Butler), the University of Kentucky and Eastern Kentucky/Berea College (based at St. Thomas Lutheran Church in Richmond, Kentucky), or to the program as a whole.

To sum up our collective work as a synod and the church, the opportunities to support every worthwhile program and project are endless. The rewards in supporting these programs either financially or with your time and talents, can be the most rewarding thing you will ever do!

On a personal note, I thank all of you for the prayers, cards, e-mails, and other support over this past year in my experience with colon cancer that began shortly after synod assembly last year. Totally unexpected, and fortunately caught early by a routine screening, my journey through surgery and chemotherapy has been the educational trip of a lifetime. I am making it part of my mission in life to encourage everyone to talk with their doctors about early detection and treatment. It could not only save your life but could keep you and your family from financial ruin. I am so eternally grateful that my expenses are covered; that there is a Certified Cancer Center five miles from my home with five oncologists, and that I have such great support from my church! I have been able to keep up with all the duties of my office, attend churchwide assembly, represent the Indiana-Kentucky at Region 6 and attend all synod meetings necessary.

Thanks be to God!—Judy Rehmel, Vice President, Indiana-Kentucky Synod, ELCA

