

Report of the Secretary and Synod Council Indiana-Kentucky Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

C. Theodore Miller, Secretary

June 5 – 7, 2008

Looking back on my ninth year as Indiana-Kentucky Synod Secretary, I give thanks to our gracious God for the opportunity to serve with so many dedicated missionaries using their God-given gifts in so many forms of ministries across our two states. Special joys this year included both serving as a voting member at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in August in Chicago and participating in the process to begin a multi-year emphasis in the I-K Synod centered around our Synod Vision “Every Person a Missionary” (EPAM).

Synod Council in recent years has reduced the number of meetings to five per year, with one of those gatherings being a brief meeting immediately preceding the annual Synod Assembly. The other four meetings, starting on Friday evenings and ending on mid-afternoon on Saturdays, continue to include significant time in bible study and worship as well as addressing the business of the I-K Synod. The signed minutes of Synod Council meetings are posted on the website at www.iksynod.org shortly after approval at the next meeting. As this report is written in early March, therefore, the only meeting minutes finalized since the 2007 Synod Assembly in Fort Wayne involve the September 14th and 15th retreat at Lutheran Hills Camp and the November 9th and 10th meeting held at the Synod Office. The minutes of the meeting held on January 25th and 26th will be available after consideration at the meeting scheduled for April 11th and 12th.

The September retreat began with a farewell celebration dinner for Assistant to the Bishop Terri Dillon, followed by worship. The Saturday session began with an orientation and a Bible Study on “Every Person a Missionary” led by Assistant to the Bishop Pastor Bill Gafkjen. Highlights from the business session for both the September and November meetings included positive benevolence trend reports. With regard to changes in the synod office, ELCA Region 6 Coordinator AIM Marilyn Smith now works out of our IN-KY Lutheran Center, where the responsibilities of office manager have been added to the portfolio of Assistant to the Bishop Pastor Rudy Mueller. As for the other areas for which Terri Dillon had primary responsibility, Synod Council in September also extended a call to Pastor Heather McCulloch to serve as an Interim Assistant to the Bishop.

A significant portion of the November meeting focused on Campus Ministry and strategic missional decisions considered in view of the financial challenges faced by the five campus ministries financed in part by the I-K Synod. A preliminary proposal for the multi-year missionary emphasis EPAM was considered and approved in concept, with implementation to begin with a strategic plan crafted by Synod Council beginning in

January of 2008 with the assistance of the Chicago-based A Renewal Enterprise (“ARE”) as a consultant.

In January, as in November, the financial report showed revenue exceeding expenses without tapping any of the \$100,000 in one-time “council designated” funds budgeted for operations. In addition to an ELCA Churchwide Consultation led by ELCA Director for Mission Support Pastor Craig Settlage and newly elected ELCA Secretary David Swartling, the January meeting included leadership for both the bible study and a preliminary examination of what it means to be a missionary in the I-K Synod by two of the full-time staff members of ARE, consultants for the still-evolving multi-year EPAM initiative.

As I scan the hundreds of pages of minutes of the first 50 Synod Council meetings for which it has been my privilege to serve as I-K Synod secretary, I thank God for the work of so many faithful servants in this Church. Especially I thank God for the dedicated and Spirit-filled service of my fellow officers of the I-K Synod and, this year in particular, for the leadership and witness of Vice-President Judy Rehmel as she has continued to give the gift of her time and talent despite her illness. I also thank God for the amazing family support system which makes my service possible, especially for my wife of 31 years Dr. Lisa Miller and our children. Over the years, many of you with whom I have served the I-K Synod have expressed interest in the development of our children, who ranged in age from 11 to 17 when I first was elected to this office. As of this summer, we no longer have any teenagers. Our daughter Emily, a 2004 Valparaiso University grad who received her masters degree in elementary education this year, is completing her fourth year as a first grade teacher. Her husband, Mike Barker, is completing his M.A.T. this year and teaches high school science. Our son Tim graduates in May from Kenyon College with a double major in English and Classics and will next pursue a PhD in English. Our daughter Karen, a sophomore architecture major at Miami University, looks forward to a second summer as a counselor at Lutheran Hills. My family, my church family at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Crestview Hills, and our I-K Synod and ELCA family all are true blessings in my life.

Respectfully Submitted in His Service,

C. Theodore Miller, Secretary