



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

**C. Theodore Miller, Secretary**

**June 4 – 6, 2009**

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Reflecting on the 10<sup>th</sup> year since my initial election in 1999 to serve as Indiana-Kentucky Synod Secretary, I first and foremost give thanks to God for the opportunity to serve and for the support system which strengthens me in serving. Although I usually conclude this report with thanks to my family and to our church family at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Crestview Hills, Kentucky, in this especially challenging year it seems fitting to begin with those words.

To say the least, I continue to be inspired both by the love and service to our Lord shown by my wife of 32 years, Dr. Lisa Miller, and our children, now all in their 20s. Our daughter Emily and her husband Mike Barker both have completed masters degrees in education and are teaching in public schools in Northern Kentucky. While Mike teaches high school science, Emily is teaching first grade for a fifth year and finds time to serve in several capacities at Gloria Dei, especially at the contemporary worship service. Our son Tim graduated from Kenyon College in May, was engaged to current Kenyon senior Elizabeth Gottschalk in October, and now is completing the first of a several-year fellowship in pursuit of a PhD in Medieval English at Notre Dame, where he also has found a church home away from home at Christ the King Lutheran Church in South Bend. Our youngest daughter Karen, now a junior architecture major at Miami University, last summer served for a second year as a camp counselor at Lutheran Hills and spent the fall semester studying in Florence, Italy. I truly have been blessed as I consider their walks of faith together with those of so many others with whom I spend so many hours in worship, Bible study, choir practice and fellowship at Gloria Dei.

Our synod and congregations and other ministries, of course, all have been impacted by the current economic circumstances. As all priorities are reassessed, though, we can only trust that our good and gracious God will continue to provide all that is needed in time, talent and treasure to do the missionary work to which we are called individually and collectively. In this year in which the synod has commenced our Every Person A Missionary emphasis and the ELCA has stressed the Book of Faith initiative, the Indiana-Kentucky Synod Council has spent significant time on both endeavors, beginning with the annual retreat held this year on September 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> at Camp Lutherwald.

At the September meeting, Synod Council also approved the organizing documents for the Freed to Lead Fund, supported by a \$741,000 grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc. and designed to address the challenges of educational debt and financial burden for seminarians and rostered leaders. Another focus of Synod Council this year

has been the culmination of the work of the longstanding Camp Incorporation Task Force, which reported at both the November 14-15 meeting held at the Synod Office and the January 24, 2009 meeting held in conjunction with the EPAM kickoff event at the conference center in Fishers, Indiana.

As this report is prepared during the first week of March, only the approved minutes of the September and November meetings have been posted on the Indiana-Kentucky Synod Web site at [www.iksynod.org](http://www.iksynod.org). Minutes of the January meeting will be posted promptly after consideration and approval at the next Synod Council meeting scheduled for April 17-18 at the synod office. At that meeting, Synod Council will be considering the budget to be proposed for adoption by the 2009 Synod Assembly as well as numerous other items, including a recommendation in response to the recommendations from the Camp Incorporation Task Force.

Attendance at Synod Council meetings has been better this year than in any of my previous nine years as Synod Secretary. The dedicated service of so many, including also the synod staff which frequently serves above and beyond the call of duty, is yet another blessing for which the Indiana-Kentucky Synod can and does give thanks. Kate Knoerzer has done an outstanding job in her first year as synod treasurer and we are blessed by her service as well as by the willingness of her predecessor Kevin Bardonner to serve as Synod Finance Committee Chair. Our 24-person Synod Council, though, this year will lose seven members who have served for many years. Pastors Marcus Felde and Martin Gehring both have served the constitutional maximum of two full three-year clergy terms on Synod Council. Lay members Cecil Bultman, Harold Erdmann, Janet Manning and Cheryl Walker all have reached the end of terms in which the six-year constitutional cycle for lay conference representatives changes gender. All of us who have served with all of them thank each of them for giving so much of themselves in service to the Indiana-Kentucky Synod over these many years, during which Janet and Harold both also have served for four years on the Indiana-Kentucky Synod Executive Committee.

Finally, last but certainly not least, Vice-President Judy Rehmel has decided not to seek reelection, meaning that her term of service for over 16 years in that capacity will conclude at the end of August. As I have observed her service for the past 10 years and have pondered recently how best to describe that service, I was fortunate that our Gloria Dei men's reading fellowship last month read the book Built to Serve. I think the author, Dan Sanders, somehow must know Judy Rehmel, because the diligent and consistent manner in which she has chaired the Synod Council and shepherded our Churchwide Assembly delegations indicate that she indeed was built to and loves to serve. Indeed, probably my most cherished memory of my service as Synod Secretary in this past year was the opportunity to participate with Bishop Stuck at the ELCA Region 6 Consultation on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in Adrian, Michigan, where I observed first-hand the love and deep respect of the bishops and other officers of the other five synods in our region for both Bishop Stuck and Judy Rehmel, who also chaired the Region 6 Steering Committee for many years.

We in the Indiana-Kentucky Synod have been and are so richly blessed by the work of so many good and faithful servants in all the varied ministries across our two states!

Respectfully Submitted in His Service,  
C. Theodore Miller, Secretary