



The first full year of operation of the Freed to Lead Initiative in 2009 was met with eagerness, excitement, and some interesting learning as we developed grant application forms, awarded our first grants, hired a full-time fund developer and initiated a capital campaign in the midst of a recession.

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

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As March 2010, the Freed to Lead Initiative has awarded grants to 9 pastors of the IK Synod totaling \$295,500. We also consider it an accomplishment that all of our applicants are seeing a financial counselor, addressing financial management skills and developing a financial plan for their future. Response to this has been very positive by all applicants.

Related to this is the fact that each pastor making application is also having a conversation about his/her financial circumstance with the leaders of their congregation in order to secure a pledge of financial support that is related to the match required by the Lilly Endowment, which provided the seed money to establish the fund in 2008. We consider these conversations a significant accomplishment in beginning to address the systemic issues that feed into the financial burden that pastors have been experiencing, because these conversations had not been happening before. Pastors have generally not shared their financial circumstance with their congregations.

Another accomplishment has been the raising of \$309,000 in gifts and pledges at a time of economic uncertainty, recession and high unemployment. Development Associate Joe Skvarenina is to be commended for all his efforts in leading that work.

And finally, we considered it an accomplishment to be able to send \$25,000 of the first year's gifts to establish an Indiana-Kentucky Synod Scholarship Fund for seminarians with the ELCA Fund For Leaders, in this way fulfilling our commitment to having a two track fund that addresses the two sides of training and support of rostered leaders through the two assets that we have available to us, the ELCA Fund For Leaders and the Lilly Economic Challenges Initiative. This move also honored our partnership with the ELCA Fund For Leaders, which has committed \$40,000 per year for three years to help support our full-time Development Associate. They have maintained this commitment to us in the face of significant budget cuts elsewhere in their program and across the whole national office of the ELCA.

### CHALLENGES AND ADJUSTMENTS

The biggest challenge of the year was certainly initiating a capital campaign in the midst of an economic crisis. In August, the Development Board, the full-time Development Associate and the Director met to discuss the implications of the economy on our original capital campaign plans and of finding significant income partners to work with the Development Associate for finding donors. The result of that meeting was an affirmation that there is never a bad time to discuss and promote the Freed to Lead Initiative and

the needs of our rostered leaders. So the anticipation is that all efforts at visiting potential donors and publicizing the initiative will result in gifts as the economic climate improves. Additional ways of creating development partners were discussed, including donor dinners, and a review of the capital campaign plan and its goal of raising \$3.5 million in new money was affirmed in all its parts. In other words, we committed to continue to work the plan.

#### WHAT'S NEXT

The public congregational phase of the Capital Campaign to raise \$3.5 million for the Freed to Lead Fund will be kicked off at the Synod Assembly in 2010 and will last one year, until the Synod Assembly in 2011. The plans for that public phase include not only fundraising, but also bringing the good financial education that rostered leaders are receiving to all congregational members through workshops held regionally and in each congregation of the synod. By helping the financial circumstances of the whole church, we can help the financial circumstance of ministries of that church.

Assisting with the kickoff to the public phase of the capital campaign is the effort to honor the 12 years of ministry of Bishop James Stuck, who steps down from that position this summer. Bishop Stuck has been a fierce and faithful advocate for the needs of rostered leaders for their training and support, and we appreciate his partnership and his whole ministry to the Indiana-Kentucky Synod.

For more on the Bishop's Appreciation Gift, the Capital Campaign and the Freed to Lead Fund, see [www.iksynod.org/FreedToLeadFund/](http://www.iksynod.org/FreedToLeadFund/).

Thank you for your gifts and for your support.

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