



**Pastor Rudy Mueller  
2010**

**Assistant to the Bishop for Mobility,  
Worship, Leadership Support, and Interim  
Ministry, Stewardship, and Book of Faith  
Indiana-Kentucky Synod, ELCA**

**June 4 – 6,**

*Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain.  
But if it dies it bears much fruit. -- John 12.24*

Death and resurrection are a way of life. We live in the midst of death, but see signs of God's power to give life all around. I have seen both in congregations; I have felt both in my spirit from time to time. In some ways this past year has been one of the toughest. In other ways it has been a year filled with fruit.

I have agonized over the budget cuts that needed to be made because of reduced shared benevolence received in the Synod office. I have grieved over the anger, bitterness and loss because of the ministry policies that were adopted at Churchwide Assembly in August. It has been difficult to say farewell to colleagues – when we began 2009 there were four assistants to the bishop and now there are two.

Yet in the struggles there has been new life. I have rejoiced over my renewed love of the scriptures and the opportunity to have theological conversation. I have embraced the challenge of being Director of 5,000 things instead of just 5. [OK, maybe I haven't really embraced that yet; this "Everything the Bishop asks me to do" thing has gotten a little out of hand!] There have been first calls and new calls, ordinations and commissionings and installations, quilts and kits for Lutheran World Relief.

So let me share some fruit of God's labor in our midst this past year.

**1. Mobility (I write this in March)**

24 calls extended and accepted in 2009

17 new rostered leaders to the Indiana-Kentucky Synod

10 first call rostered leaders

34 congregations looking for a called pastor or a called lay rostered leader

18 have a rostered interim

9 have a synodically authorized minister

We received 7 first call candidates for the clergy roster in the February assignment process.

**2. Worship**

In October we did a Worship for Mission Event entitled **A Still More Excellent Way: Contemporary Music, Luther, and the Future of the Church**. A second was held in March, 2010, and a third is scheduled for April 24. The plenary speaker was Dr. Lorraine Brugh from Valparaiso University, with members of the Synod Worship Committee conducting breakouts.

The ELCA will be training this summer two **Partners in Evangelical Worship** (PEW's). Bishop Stuck appointed Pastor Mike Brown and Associate in Ministry Bonnie Harstad to be the PEWs from the Indiana-Kentucky Synod. They will assist the Worship Committee in facilitating ongoing worship, music, and preaching conversations.

I attended the Institute of Liturgical Studies at Valparaiso in April, 2009, and am planning to attend the 2010 Institute. The Worship Committee continues to publish the bi-monthly newsletter, Sanctus.

**3. Leadership Support**

The annual Professional Leader's Conference was held September 27-29, at Clifty Falls State Park. The guest speaker was Rev. Dave Daubert of A.R.E., who addressed the role of rostered leaders in the vision of Every Person a Missionary. The overwhelming evaluation of those who attended was "Hold it at Clifty Falls every year!" It won't be this year, being held again instead at Turkey Run State Park, September 26-28. The speaker will be Dr. Lamin Sanneh, D. Willis James Professor of Missions & World Christianity and Professor of History at Yale Divinity School.

There are currently 26 First Call rostered persons, plus 15 awaiting call (not including those who we will receive in the February assignment). The 2010 First Call Retreat will be held in May will focus on leadership in the congregation. Two speakers are lined up, Rev. Stan Sneeringer and Rev. Dr. Emlyn Ott.

#### ***4. Mission Support Table***

I only mention this because I am the ELCA's interim stewardship rep. I have no 2009 report to give since I didn't do this 2009, but in 2010 we have begun to put together a Mission Support Table. Our vision is get us all back to the basics of stewardship – both within the congregation and with respect to shared benevolence.

We would like to affirm that all that we have belongs not to us, not the congregation, not even to the Synod, but to God. Playing games in the church with our money (as has recently happened) is poor stewardship.

#### ***4. Synod Staff***

I continually give thanks to God for all the folks with whom I work in the synod office. Bishop Stuck has been a great boss, and I am especially grateful for the work and ministry of Karen Eppert. I don't know if I will be writing you a report next year. I don't know what the office will look like come September (though I do know what my office will look like if I am still here).

In all this I trust in the God who gives life. I know God is in control and God will have God's way with us.

Thanks to all of you for your prayers and support this year. You continue in mine. You may contact me at [rmueller@iksynod.org](mailto:rmueller@iksynod.org) about any of the above matters, as well as anything else that might need my attention. May you bear much fruit in the joy of Christ.

Peace, *Rudy*

God's work. Our hands.