

**The 2009 Annual Report of
The Evangelical Lutheran Coalition for Mission in Appalachia (ELCMA) to
the Indiana/Kentucky Synod of the ELCA**

*"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed." - Proverbs 16:3 (NRSV)
"Put GOD in charge of your work, then what you've planned will take place." – Proverbs 16:3 (The Message)*

Whatever version you choose, and however you look at it, God has been blessing ELCMA with people and funds this year. Our ministry has grown in a time when many ministries are struggling. There are many examples. Our staff now includes not only an Administrative Assistant but also a Financial Secretary and a Bonding Gardens Coordinator! Just three short years ago it was only me trying to connect sixteen synods and various community groups with each other and resources and trainings.

The Bonding Garden project has been wonderfully blessed. In the 2008-2009 gardening season we began this program with \$3350 and set up five gardening sites. The goal is to teach food pantry recipients to garden in containers. But more than that, ELCMA works to connect participants with resources in their areas such as the cooperative extension office, congregations and matriarchs, local retailers, and their own families. That way each gardener is able to continue gardening in the future, even if we don't get more grants to work with them. ELCMA is working to cut the co-dependency that often accompanies food pantry use. Because of our successes on a small scale last year, we were able to leverage a larger grant for 2009-2010 gardening season. Our goal is to have at least six more sites up this year and in three years to have at least one site in each synod. Further, by the fall of this year we will have a training manual at our website so anyone can follow our model. We want to give a enthusiastic thank you to Dr. Job Ebenezer (www.technologyforthe poor.com) for his idea and his eagerness to mentor us through this process. Look for the Bonding Garden site in your area. Plan a visit to see if this idea would work in your location.

ELCMA's connection with the Directors for Evangelical Mission (DEM) in each synod is growing. We are connecting with various new mission starts including Mountain of Life LC in Blairsville GA, Cross of Grace LC in Jonesborough TN, Trinity LC in Jasper TN, and Pickens SC among others. ELCMA brings our network to these sites offering prayer partners, encouragement, trainings and connections, and as a result ELCMA assists in redistributing resources around our region and beyond. Our commitment to and work with other specialized ministries such as Living Waters LC in Cherokee, NC and Messiah Korean LC in Norcross GA continues as strong as ever. We also remain committed to our work with community groups, especially those with no other Lutheran presence in their areas, such as Appalachian Women's Alliance in Clinchco VA.

As the future unfolds, I see ELCMA moving toward assisting more sites with economic development projects that will strengthen the Lutheran presence in the area. Momentum is growing in rural groups in WV and SC already. Potential jobs relating to the greening of America are offering hope to many areas.

In an effort to finish this report in one page, I want to close by thanking you for your continued support of our ministry, even in the hard times. ***And these hard times are when we really need to show our commitment to walk with our people. Your shared "people power", who make that possible for ELCMA, include: Rev. Paul Row, Marceile and Ed Redmon.*** These dedicated ELCMA people can answer some of your questions. Or feel free to contact the staff at the ELCMA office at www.elcma.org or 724/463-8422.

Respectfully,
Dory Campbell, ELCMA Coordinator