

Discipleship Team - Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee's goal and challenge is to help all congregations of this synod embrace a vision of releasing *first and best* for the ministry of Jesus Christ. The committee responds to this challenge by being a resource for congregations. Committee members volunteer their time for stewardship education, presentations, and consultations. The committee plans, presents, and sponsors annual stewardship forums and conferences. The committee monitors congregational mission support received by the synod, reviews actual dollars given versus intent reported, and conducts an annual mission support commitment follow-up.

This past year the Committee sponsored the following activities:

April 28, 2007 – co-sponsored with the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago our annual spring stewardship conference titled, *Whitewater Stewardship! How Christian steward leaders navigate 21st century cultural waters*. The keynote speaker and presenter was The Reverend Scott C. Schantzenbach, Assistant to the Bishop and ELCA Stewardship Specialist in the New Jersey Synod. The conference offered six “Tools-for-the-Belt” workshop sessions. During lunch, Bishop Landahl discussed stewardship and other issues in our synod and answered participants' questions. Attending this event were 62 participants, from 35 congregations.

September 26, 2007 – held our tenth annual fall stewardship conference titled, *Divine Generosity in the Gospel of Luke, Resistance & Release and Restoration & Renewal* at the ELCA Lutheran Center. Our keynote speaker and presenter was the Rev. Dr. Ray Pickett, a professor of New Testament at Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest. Dr. Pickett addressed how Luke's story of Jesus challenges the promises and practices of a market system that keeps people beholden, and how the practice of divine generosity in our life together leads to renewal and restoration. Attending this event, were 84 participants, from 47 congregations.

April 26, 2008 – co-sponsored with the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago our annual spring stewardship conference titled, *Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share*, the name of the comprehensive stewardship program being presented. The keynote speakers and presenters were Dr. Ed Kruse, ELCA Director for Stewardship, and Mr. Keith Mundy, ELCA Assistant Director for Stewardship. Four workshops on using a narrative approach were offered after Dr. Kruse's presentation. And, four workshops on implementing the program were offered after Mr. Mundy's presentation. During lunch, Bishop Miller discussed stewardship using narrative and visuals to explain his understanding of stewardship. Attending this event were 79 participants, from 44 congregations. Each congregation received a *Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share* program CD-ROM underwritten by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

The committee is currently in the planning stages for the 2008 annual fall stewardship conference. As of the writing, there are no details to share.

Mission support receipts for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2008, were \$3,681,335 an increase of \$76,134 over last year. The synod released 70% of the \$3,681,334; \$2,024,735 (55%) to the ELCA churchwide organization as undesignated mission support (benevolence) and an additional \$555,976 (15%) in grants to eleven synod partners. First we give thanks to God for all God's blessings and then we thank you, the people of God in this synod, for your stewardship of the money necessary to effectively do the work of Jesus Christ in the world.

Thank you to the members of this committee, especially, Rev. Paul Johns, Maureen Gergolla, and Rev. Booker Vance. Also, thank you to the synod office staff for all their help.

The committee continues to declare its willingness to offer assistance to congregations in stewardship presentations, education, and in program planning and response. Please contact me if such service is desired. Also, if you have questions, wish to serve on this committee, or need any other information concerning this committee, contact me.

Respectfully,

Steven L Homberg

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Section VII - Ministry Teams

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