

EXECUTIVE REPORTS (Officers, Deans)

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Grace and peace to you in the name of the Triune God!

With humility and gratitude I present my first report as bishop of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. The humility comes from the high regard I held for those who preceded me in this office. During my thirty years as a parish pastor in northeastern Pennsylvania, three individuals occupied this office. As I watched them from my congregational perspective, they impressed me by the example of their faith and by their leadership skills. It is humbling to assume the responsibilities they so capably carried out. The gratitude comes from the immense respect I hold for the rostered and congregational leaders of this synod. I am thankful for a new opportunity to work in Jesus' name with a community of believers so dedicated, so competent, and so faithful.

In the first months of my tenure I had contact with large numbers of synod members in a wide variety of settings. Congregational celebrations, meetings of social ministry organizations and the board of Muhlenberg College, installations of rostered leaders, sessions with congregation councils, synodical events that drew people from across our territory, and mission district gatherings: all provided me insights into the dimensions of the faith and ministries that define the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. This synod is bearing witness daily in dynamic ways that touch people with the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ. We have many reasons for which to be thankful!

I want to thank especially the congregations that hosted "Evenings with the Bishop" in the early weeks of my tenure. By graciously and hospitably sharing their facilities, these congregations afforded me valuable get-acquainted-time as my transition into this office got underway. The hours spent in question-and-answer sessions and during the social time helped to make me more aware of interests and concerns in the wider, synodical context.

Assistance offered by churchwide staff of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and by the Conference of Bishops was also valuable to me. I joined the other eight newly elected synod bishops in Chicago for five days of orientation. It was an intensive and thorough process that assisted all nine of us in reaching a higher level of insight into our new calls. Our first meeting with the Conference of Bishops, last October, included

time during which "veteran" bishops worked to assure us of their support and their readiness to assist us when early challenges came our way.

Members of the synod staff were also a source of invaluable aid from the first days after my election last May. Bishop David Strobel promptly invited me to staff meetings and extended time from his schedule to make me aware of the responsibilities that would be coming my way. I want to express publicly my appreciation for David's thoughtful help and guidance. In response to my desire to insure that synodical life not be unnecessarily disrupted by the transition, associates and support staff graciously agreed to continue serving in their positions until I was able to make final decisions about my staff configurations. Their dedication to the ministries and mission of this synod contributed significantly to my ability to assess a variety of factors.

I also want to note the loving support and patient understanding extended to me by my wife Linda during the transition from congregational to synodical responsibilities. Her ability to bring calm and wisdom to the days of confusion and uncertainty made it possible for me to go from week to week in this new endeavor. She made vital contributions to my confidence during a period of time that was surely as demanding for her as it was for me. I am blessed beyond measure by our life together.

Two matters received a good deal of my attention when my term began on August 1. First, some momentum had gathered behind the outcome of the February 2008 bishop's conference. Sobering demographic and congregational trends in the synod were laid out at the conference. A call to address the trends was brought to the synod council, which forthrightly committed itself to exploring new efforts in outreach, evangelism, and discipleship. The council's first steps have led to a focus on "The Hope that Is in Us," an ever-broadening process of mission revitalization. In consultation with the Rev. Dave Daubert, an ELCA pastor and partner in *A Renewal Enterprise, Inc.*, the council endorsed a process that would engage rostered leaders at the 2009 bishop's conference and then expand to incorporate spring mission district assemblies and the synod assembly in early June. The two-fold intent of the council-initiated process is (1) to discern a mission-driven purpose that will guide the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod into the next decade and (2) to encourage asset-based ideas that will give shape to the mission-driven purpose.

The second matter to receive much of my early attention was staffing decisions. The process I described in the preceding paragraph influenced my decision-making about staff. Because outcomes of the council-initiated process will guide my staff and me as we seek to provide meaningful leadership to mission districts and congregations, I wanted to gather associates willing to share my commitment to the synod council's mission focus. My deep gratitude goes out all who have accepted new responsibilities or who have renewed their commitments to existing responsibilities for synodical ministry. One of the next steps to be taken is enhancement of the ways in which we work together as a staff. I was also influenced in my decision-making by the effect on mission support caused by the serious economic circumstances that befell our nation. In order to continue providing pastoral care across the synod territory, I moved *away from* reliance on full-time staff with many responsibilities and *toward* part-time staff with focused responsibility. I am working on turning the relinquished responsibilities over to qualified individuals, groups, or existing entities so that vital ministries will not be lost.

Having described parts of the transition and important early developments, I might go on to inform you of more detailed activities during my first year as bishop. The activities would include the Conference of Bishops' trip to Israel, first call procedures, addressing the issue of human sexuality, mobility of rostered leaders, congregational transitions, meetings with mission district deans, and involvement in Region 7 responsibilities. It would take pages to describe what unfolded in the pursuit of these and any other activities. Instead of giving drawn out attention to such matters, I will conclude my report by emphasizing the important role played by the 150,000 baptized members of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

Baptized into Christ, the 150,000 Lutherans of this synod are a people with a mission. The mission is helpfully defined by the theme of this year's assembly: **God's Work, Our Hands**. Historically our synod has been at the forefront of the Lutheran witness not only in Pennsylvania, but also across the church. Changing social and cultural contexts, growing complexity in the religious composition of the population, and challenges to mainline congregations that once dominated our region have now created uneasiness for many of the faithful. In the face of these circumstances, however, I want to call you to renewed commitment to the gospel-centered mission of this church. What opportunities God has given us to proclaim the love, forgiveness, peace, and hope promised and fulfilled in the Risen Jesus!

In my thirty years of ministry in this synod I witnessed the miracle of the loaves and fishes

repeated time and time again by faithful disciples in scores of congregations. The faithful disciples were people in the towns, villages, rural areas, and cities north of the Blue Mountain and south of it. They were in small congregations and large. They lived out their faith in the simple confidence that the grace of God cannot be put to death by any power or by any demographic trend. They are people like you, and they want you to know that you are not alone in your desire to be faithful witnesses.

It was with a good measure of trepidation that I consented to having my name go forward in the election process at last year's assembly. I consented, though, because of a certainty deep within me that Lutherans in northeastern Pennsylvania are a blessed people; that they have extraordinary capacity to respond to God's call to serve in Jesus' name; and that the promise of God to uphold and strengthen them was sure. Now I invite you to join me, to let your name go forward, in a renewed witness to the life-giving love of God in Jesus Christ.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1,2)

May God bless us as we move into the future that God has prepared for us. Your servant in Christ,

Samuel R. Zeiser, bishop

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

The year 2008 was indeed the most action filled year for those of us on Synod Council that I have encountered in my eight years as Vice President. We bid farewell to Bishop Strobel and welcomed Bishop Zeiser as our new spiritual leader. We as a synod owe a great deal of gratitude to the Program and Review Committee of the council as the planning of events prompted by the election of a new Bishop at our Synod Assembly the end of May demanded a great deal of their time. These events helped to prepare voting members for the actual election which was an amazing process. Several people said that this assembly was the most spirit filled assembly they had ever attended. We owe a great deal of gratitude to the final seven candidates for their participation.

A Transition Team, appointed to oversee the farewell events for Bishop Strobel and the Installation events of Bishop Zeiser, was ably chaired by

Pastor Denton Kees. The enthusiasm at the farewell event at the Synod Assembly for Bishop Strobel was a marvelous tribute to his leadership of the synod for the last twelve years. The Installation of Bishop Zeiser was held at Elm Park Methodist Church in Scranton with over 1,000 in attendance. It was a magnificent service with spectacular music. All the process of the transition has been compiled at the synod office for reference at the time of the next election.

At the Bishop's Conference in January two synod council members, Pastors Carl Shankweiler and Sam Zeiser, heard Kenneth Inskeep's (ELCA Office of Research and Evaluation) presentation on the declining membership of our congregations within the ELCA. They then proposed to the synod council that we undertake a study of the mission and ministry of the congregations within our synod. The synod council affirmed this action and invited Kenneth Inskeep to our June meeting for conversation. At our retreat in November Dave Daubert of ARE (A Renewal Enterprise) led us in our discernment, strategy and direction with this process. Again, the Program and Review Committee has been asked to facilitate this within the synod. We are in the midst of this process at the moment.

The Synod Council has met four times during the year at various locations throughout the synod plus participating in a retreat. We have grappled with budget realities and struggled to keep our mission support to our ministries and the ELCA as high as possible. It is an ongoing challenge.

I continued on the Planning Committee of the PA Lutheran Network and the Board of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia as well as the synodical committee relating to our companion diocese in Tanzania.

As I finish out my two terms as Vice President I want to thank you for your encouragement and accompaniment in our ministries of the synod. I have discovered such depth and breadth of commitment to the mission and ministry of the church within this synod and feel a huge debt of gratitude for the opportunity to serve in this capacity. I thank Bishops Strobel and Zeiser for their support. They are true servants of God. And I would be remiss if I did not give a special "thank you" to Dr. Catherine Ziel for her steady and unwavering organizing of all things related to Synod Council and her patience with a Vice President full of questions.

I commend you to Almighty God as you go forward in mission and ministry.

Priscilla Schlenker Kinney, vice president

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

The following changes took place since the 2008 Assembly:

Roster of Ordained Ministers

Ordinations

Dean, Marjorie A., February 22, 2009

Haines, Elizabeth A., August 24, 2008

Holben, Brian R., August 16, 2008

Obrecht, Paulette K., February 8, 2009

Received from other Synods

Jenkins, Brett I., Allegheny, February 1, 2009

Michel, Herbert H., Southeastern Pennsylvania, March 1, 2009

Oldland, Charles H., Lower Susquehanna, January 1, 2009

Received from Another Church Body

Oslík, Drahomir, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Slovak Republic, June 8, 2008

Transferred to other Synods

Cheedie, Heeralal, Southeastern Pennsylvania, September 1, 2008

Newman, David A., Central States, February 15, 2009

Poole, Patrick W., South Carolina, September 2, 2008

Shook, Daniel A., Southeastern Pennsylvania, March 1, 2009

Wisco, Sandra J., Virginia, August 24, 2008

Zimmermann, William E., New Jersey, December 14, 2008

Reinstated to the Roster

Grubb, George, November 17, 2008

Resigned from the Roster

Bileck, Gregor, July 20, 2008

Bileck, Liddy J., July 1, 2008

Removed from the Roster

Koonen, James D., June 28, 2008

Deaths

Johnson, Nils, September 26, 2008

Kern, Charles M., June 21, 2008

Lauchnor, Mark A., July 28, 2008

Marshall, Robert J., December 21, 2008

THE REV. NILS JOHNSON was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on April 3, 1930, the son of Nils and Hazel (Caulk) Johnson. He was a graduate of Indiana University (1955) and the Oberlin Graduate School of Theology (1988). At various times he also studied at the University of Baltimore, University of New Mexico, and Drew University. During the Korean conflict, he served in the United States Air Force.

Ordained by the Ohio Synod in 1960, he served as pastor of the following parishes: Stettler and St. Jacobs, both in Miamisburg OH (1958-1963); and Epiphany, Warren Township NJ. In 1963 he was called to be the campus minister at Kutztown University, where he served until his retirement in 1992. Following his retirement he served as interim chaplain at Muhlenberg College.

Pastor Johnson served on the board of directors of Campfire Girls, Friends Inc., and Reading Berks Habitat for Humanity. Working in the synod, he was deeply involved in establishing campus ministry programs at various colleges in North-eastern Pennsylvania.

He and his first wife, Marian Baker, were the parents of four children, Nils, Todd, Marta and Peter. On June 23, 1979, he married Crystal Leibensberger and became stepfather to two sons, Timothy and Thomas.

THE REV. CHARLES M. KERN, son of the Rev. Rufus E. and Florence (Haring) Kern, was born in Quakertown on February 23, 1917. He was a graduate of Muhlenberg College (1938) and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (1942). He earned his S.T.M. degree at Philadelphia Seminary in 1951.

Ordained by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania in St. John, Hamburg, on November 8, 1942, he served as follows: pastor of Ringtown-Brandonville Parish (1942-49); St. Peter, North Wales, (1949-56); St. John, Allentown (1956-60); Cedar-Jerusalem (Western Salisbury) Parish, (1960-63); Cedar, Cetronia, (1960-76). He was appointed by the Synod as the first full-time chaplain at The Lutheran Home at Topton, where he served until retirement in 1982. He also served as interim pastor at St. Peter, Macungie (1982-1986).

During his ministry Pastor Kern served as a member of the Artman Lutheran Home board in Ambler; leader in the Sector Program of the East-

ern Pennsylvania Synod; dean of the Allentown District; member of the Lutheran Social Services Committee; and member of The Lutheran Home at Topton board of trustees.

Pastor Kern was married to Kathryn Rau of Hamburg on September 9, 1939. She died in 2002. They were the parents of three children, Karen J. Powel, W. Timothy Kern, and Ann Kern-Mangold.

THE REV. MARK A. LAUCHNOR, son of Edwin and Cora (Kern) Lauchnor, was born in Slatington, RD#1, on December 25, 1917. He was a graduate of Muhlenberg College (1938) and the Philadelphia Seminary (1941). Ordained by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania on September 7, 1941, he served as pastor of the following parishes in Pennsylvania: St. John, Slatington (1941-1946); Trinity, Lehighton (1946-1959); St. Andrew, Perkasio (1959-1968); St. John, Kutztown (1968-1981). He retired on January 1, 1982. In his retirement, he served for several years as visitation pastor at St. Paul, Fleetwood.

Other services to church and community include secretary of the Wilkes-Barre Conference (1950-56); board of directors of Lutheran Home at Hazleton, one of the original members of the board of directors of Gnaden Huettten Hospital in Lehighton, dean of the Lehighton District; ULCA convention delegate; board of directors of Lutheran Home in Germantown (1961-1968); member of Executive Board of Ministerium of Pennsylvania in 1958 and of the Eastern Pennsylvania Synod in 1967.

On June 6, 1942, Pastor Lauchnor was married to Carlene Geske of Allentown. They were the parents of two daughters and a son: the Rev. Dr. Janet Ramsey, Kathryn Lauchnor Matthieson, and Terrence Lauchnor.

THE REV. ROBERT J. MARSHALL was born in Burlington, Iowa, on August 26, 1918, the son of Robert M. and Margaret (Gysin) Marshall. He graduated from Wittenberg University in 1941 and from the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1944. He did graduate work at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago and over the course of his ministry was awarded more than a dozen honorary degrees.

Ordained by the Wartburg Synod of the ULCA in 1944, he served as pastor of Grace, Alhambra, California, from 1944 to 1947, when he joined the faculty of Muhlenberg College. In 1953 he took a position on the faculty of Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary, where he taught until 1962, when he was elected president of the Illinois Synod. In 1968 he was elected president of the

Lutheran Church in America. His guidance of the LCA helped pave the way for the merger which formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

In 1978 Pastor Marshall concluded his service as president and became director of Mission, Service, and Development for the Lutheran World Federation. In 1981 he returned to teaching, serving on the faculty of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary from 1981 to 1988, and Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago from 1988 to 1999.

Pastor Marshall married Alice Johanna Hepner in 1943. They were the parents of two children, Robert E. Marshall and the Rev. Margaret Niederer.

2007-2008 Pastoral Changes

Bileck, Gregor, Jacobs, Pine Grove, to resigned from roster, July 20, 2008

Bileck, Liddy J., associate, Trinity, Pottsville, to resigned from roster, July 1, 2008

Boyer, Brenda J., Grace, East Stroudsburg, to retirement, January 1, 2009

Chaveas, Richard W., Allegheny, Knauers, to on-leave-from-call, September 22, 2008

Cheedie, Heeralal, associate, St. Paul, Tannersville, to on-leave-from-call, July 28, 2008, to Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, September 1, 2008

Dean, Marjorie A., newly ordained, to associate, Holy Spirit, Emmaus, February 22, 2009

Freed, Dody S., St John, Williams Township, to on-leave-from-call, November 17, 2008

Gade, Mary W., Ziegels, Breinigsville, to Associate of the Bishop, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, February 15, 2009

Grubb, George, restored to roster, to interim, Allegheny, Knauers, November 17, 2008

Haines, Elizabeth A., newly ordained, to Hope, Bowers, August 24, 2008

Hammel, Phyllis M., Christ, Schoenersville, to retirement, January 1, 2009

Haring, Lynda R., Zion, Womelsdorf, to retirement, July 1, 2008

Hasemann, Marilyn, on-leave-from-call, to New Jerusalem, New Jerusalem, February 15, 2009

Heckler, David A., St. Paul, Hawley, to on-leave-from-call, June 1, 2008

Heffelfinger, Harry, on-leave-from-call, to chaplain, Arcadia Hospice, Allentown, February 1, 2009

Holben, Brian R., newly ordained, to Jerusalem, Trachsville, August 16, 2008

Jenkins, Brett I., Allegheny Synod, to Christ United, Hamilton Square, February 1, 2009

Knox, Rebecca W., on-leave-from-call, to part-time, St. Luke's/Christ Partnership Parish, Reading, January 1, 2009

Kochanski, Lori, chaplain, Hospice St., John, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries, to on-leave-from-call, October 24, 2008

Kuntz, Clark W., Hope, Cherryville, to retirement, September 1, 2008

Lengert, Kim L., on-leave-from-call, to non-stipendiary pastor, Community, Vinemont, October 6, 2008

Minnich, John P., Nativity, Allentown, to St. Michael's Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Nativity, January 13, 2009

Moore, Nancy L., assistant, St. John, Nazareth, to St. Matthew, North Weissport, September 2, 2008

Newman, David A., St. Paul, Easton, to Central States Synod, February 15, 2009

Obrecht, Paulette K., newly ordained, to St. John, Pen Argyl, February 8, 2009

Oldland, Charles L., Lower Susquehanna Synod, to St. Peter, Reinerton, January 1, 2009

Oslík, Drahomir, newly received onto the roster, to assistant, Trinity, Robesonia, June 8, 2008

Osterhout, Bruce G., Christ, Reading, to St. Luke's/Christ Partnership Parish, Reading, January 1, 2009

Pagotto, Anthony P., St. James, Zenith, to Dinkey Memorial, Ashfield, October 1, 2008

Pelletier, Phyllis A., Nanticoke-Pond Hill P. C., to on-leave-from-call, January 3, 2009

Poole, Patrick W., Holy Trinity, Kingston, to South Carolina Synod, September 2, 2008

Quiñones, Nelson, assistant pastor, St. John, Allentown, to Christ, Easton, July 1, 2008

Strobel, David R., bishop, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, to retirement, August 1, 2008

Werley, David, interim, Morgenland, Lowhill Township, to interim, Christ (Little Moore) UCC, Danielsville, February 1, 2008

Wickert, Grant A., Calvary, Laureldale, to retirement, January 1, 2009

Wisco, Sandra J., Kissinger, Wyomissing, to Virginia Synod, August 24, 2008

Zeiser, Samuel R., Christ, Allentown, to bishop, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, August 1, 2008

Zimmermann, William E., Advent, West Lawn, to New Jersey Synod, December 14, 2008

Roster of Deaconesses

Death

Hoover, Janet M., August 13, 2008

SISTER JANET M. HOOVER was born on January 19, 1928, in Toledo, Ohio. Her parents were Lester and Garnett (Murphy) Hoover. After three years of study at the University of Toledo, she graduated from Wittenberg University in 1952. She then spent two years at the Lutheran Deaconess School in Baltimore. In addition, she earned a degree in Religion Education from New York University in 1965. She was consecrated as a deaconess of the United Lutheran Church in America at Glenwood Lutheran Church, Toledo, Ohio, on August 30, 1953, the first deaconess to be consecrated in that church.

Following her consecration, she served in the following places: parish deaconess, St. Paul, Grand Island, Nebraska; parish deaconess, Trinity, Kenosha, Wisconsin; parish deaconess, Church of the Incarnation, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; director of Christian education, St. John, Parkville, Maryland; director of Christian education, Good Shepherd, Glen Rock, New Jersey; house administrator, Lutheran Deaconess Community; adult day care program director, Lutheran Home at Topton; director of Christian education, Atone-ment, Wyomissing; live-in house manager, Share-a-Home Senior Living, Bethlehem.

In retirement Sr. Janet continued to be active in her congregation, Messiah, Bethlehem, and as a tour guide.

Roster of Associates In Ministry

Received from Other Synods

Frederick, Richard A., South Carolina, June 23, 2008

Congregational Changes

St. Paul, Cementon, closed September 4, 2008

Barbara-Anne G. Taylor, secretary

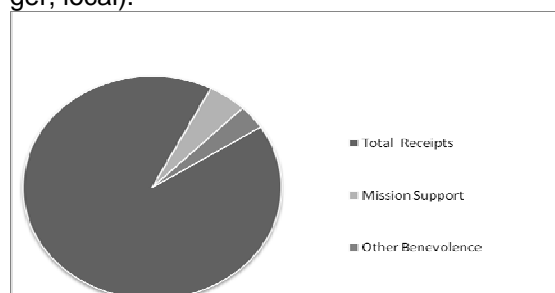
REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Mission Support decreased 3.5% vs. the previous year, and was 3.7% below the budgeted target for 2008. Designated giving for World Hunger, disaster relief, social ministry agencies etc. was 14.4% below prior year.

	2008	2007	2006
Mission Support			
ELCA (53%)	\$1,556,126	\$1,611,929	\$1,658,443
NEPS (47%)	<u>1,379,960</u>	<u>1,429,446</u>	<u>1,470,695</u>
	2,936,086	3,041,375	3,129,138
<i>vs. prior year</i>	-3.5%	-2.8%	
Designated			
Hunger, Disaster Response, other	<u>482,872</u>	<u>564,382</u>	<u>615,838</u>
<i>vs. prior year</i>	-14.4%	-8.4%	
Total	<u>\$3,418,958</u>	<u>\$3,605,757</u>	<u>\$3,744,976</u>

Congregational Budgets and Mission Support

Total receipts for all congregations in the synod totaled an estimated \$60 million in 2008. As noted above, approximately \$2.9 million (5%) of this income was earmarked as support for work of the NEPS and the ELCA at large. An additional 4% was designated as other benevolence (e.g. hunger, local).



Synod Budget

Spending for the year was approximately \$150,000 below planned levels, which helped keep the deficit (use of other funds) below projected levels in spite of the shortfall in Mission Support. The major reason for the favorable spending variance was lower than anticipated transition expenditures related to the election of a new bishop.

NEPS	Budget Performance		
	" PRELIMINARY "		2007
	2008		
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>
Expenditures	<u>\$1,458,497</u>	<u>\$1,608,585</u>	<u>\$1,486,881</u>
Funded by:			\$
Mission Support	\$1,379,960	\$1,433,500	1,429,446
General Fund	<u>78,537</u>	<u>175,085</u>	<u>57,435</u>
Total	<u>\$1,458,497</u>	<u>\$1,608,585</u>	<u>\$1,486,881</u>

Consolidated Financial Picture

The information summarized above relates to our regular synod budget which is incorporated into the General Fund activities of the synod. Consolidated financial results for all synod funds including activity in the various endowment related funds for the year 2008 will be available as part of our 2008 Auditor's Report. Preliminary information would suggest a reduction in Net Assets of approximately \$1.5 million (25%) for the year related to the overall decline in investment values during the period. Summary results on a consolidated basis (all funds) for the prior 2 years are shown below:

(12 months ending Jan. 31 - \$000)

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
SUPPORT & REVENUE		
Benevolence	\$ 3,069	\$ 3,107
Designated Gifts	<u>1,026</u>	<u>796</u>
(Hunger, agencies etc.) Sub-Total	<u>4,095</u>	<u>3,903</u>
Investment Income	217	142
Rental Income	9	9
Net Gains	(233)	346
(Realized & Unrealized)		
Beneficial Trust	<u>(22)</u>	<u>14</u>
Total Support & Revenue	<u>4,066</u>	<u>4,414</u>
EXPENSES		
ELCA Benevolence	\$ 1,630	\$ 1,651
Designated Gifts	<u>549</u>	<u>591</u>
(Hunger, agencies etc.) Sub-Total	<u>2,179</u>	<u>2,242</u>
Program Services	879	817
(Ministries & teams)		
Supporting Services	<u>1,006</u>	<u>1,004</u>
Total Expenses	<u>4,064</u>	<u>4,063</u>
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	<u>\$ 2</u>	<u>\$ 351</u>

David J. Hinrichs, treasurer

REPORT OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL

The Synod Council met four times since the last Assembly. Numbers preceding resolutions of the Council indicate the year, month, and sequence number of the resolution. Recommendations for Assembly action appear in **bold face type**. All items are presented for review by the Assembly.

Administration

(2008.6.4) Resolved, that the Global Mission committee be given permission to contact synod congregations to solicit funds to pay for the ship-

ping of medical supplies to Bulongwa Hospital in the South Central Diocese of Tanzania.

(2008.6.9) Resolved, that the Administration Committee be authorized to review nominations and select a recipient of the 2008 Wilson Touhsaent Award for Significant Social Ministry, on behalf of the Synod Council.

(2008.6.10) Resolved, that the Synod Secretary be instructed to send a letter to those pastors residing on the territory of this synod who were absent from the synod assembly without submitting an excuse, reminding them of the constitutional responsibility in this regard.

(2008.6.11) Resolved, that the Synod Secretary be instructed to write to the secretaries of the congregations which had no registered lay voting members or only one lay voting member and presented no excuse for such absence, calling attention to the constitutional requirement in this regard, and to send copies of the letters to the respective deans; and that, in the case of congregations that had no voting members and did not present excuses, personal consultation as deemed appropriate by the Mission District dean be effected between Congregation Councils and pastors of those congregations and a representative or representatives of the Synod (Mission District deans, Synod staff persons, or Synod Council members), with arrangements for such consultation to be initiated by the Mission District deans.

(2009.1.2) Resolved, that 2009 Executive Staff compensation be set in accordance with the following schedule, reflecting 1) total compensation, and 2) for ordained staff members the amount of base salary, social security allowance, and housing allowance. The amounts designated as housing allowance shall apply to calendar year 2009 and all future years unless otherwise provided by this Synod Council. (Numbers are rounded to the nearest dollar.)

Name	Base Salary	Housing	Social Security	Total
Zeiser	\$55,186	\$15,000	\$5,814	\$76,000
Ziel	\$43,919	\$15,000	\$4,881	\$63,800
Bennethum	\$40,861	\$24,000	\$5,373	\$70,234
Garbe	\$45,396	\$12,000	\$4,754	\$62,150
Gade	\$39,257	\$18,000	\$4,743	\$62,000
Handwerk	\$ 3,724	\$ 5,000	\$ 723	\$ 9,447
Simmons ¹	\$10,753	\$ 4,250	\$1,640	\$16,913
Simmons ²	\$10,678	\$12,750	\$1,941	\$25,369
Matthias-Long	\$49,690		\$3,801 ³	\$49,690
Weiser ⁴	\$57,154		\$4,372 ³	\$57,154
Schelly	\$49,314		\$3,773 ³	\$49,314

¹For period 2/1/09 through 4/30/09

²For period 5/1/09 through 1/31/10

³Employer's required share (7.65%)

⁴Salary shown is full year; anticipated retirement 2/28/09

(2009.3.6) Resolved, that the Synod Staff be granted one additional week of vacation in 2009, in lieu of a raise. Part-time staff will receive extra vacation pro-rated appropriately. This additional time is for 2009 only.

Assembly

(2008.10.1) Resolved, that the policy for Synod Assembly displays be amended as follows to include forums, and that the existing guidelines for displays be amended and incorporated into this policy (underlining indicates additions; ~~strike-through~~ indicates deletions):

Synod Assembly Display And Forum Policy

It is clear that there are a great number of organizations, agencies and institutions that do good and commendable work on the territory of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. While they could no doubt use display and forum opportunities ~~space~~ at our Synod Assembly effectively and constructively, practical, theological and other concerns require some restrictions ~~on displays~~. Therefore, it is the policy of this Synod that display space and forum time is available only to:

1. Mission Districts, congregations, commissions, committees, task forces and teams of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.
2. Those agencies and institutions that are a direct outreach ministry of the ELCA and/or the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod; ELCA educational institutions; and the Pennsylvania Council of Churches.
3. The Lutheran fraternal benefit societies.
4. Augsburg Fortress Publishers (which is the only group with permission to sell goods).
5. Persons representing our companion synods, LWF partner organizations, and full-communion partners.

Other church-related groups and individuals may apply to the Synod Council for a one-time exception to the policy on displays or forums at an assembly. The decision of the council is final.

The following guidelines will apply to all displays and forums:

1. Displays and forums are to be related to the ELCA and Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod or their ministries.
2. Personal attacks and defamation are prohibited. In presenting a point of view, civil and respectful language must be used.
3. Displays and forums are not to promote ideas or activities in opposition to provisions of the

ELCA, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, or Congregational Constitutions.

(2009.3.5) The following resolution is recommended to the 2009 Synod Assembly:

Resolved, that the 2009 Assembly program (as printed in the Bulletin of Reports) be adopted.

Bear Creek Camp

(2009.1.5) Resolved, that \$10,000 be taken from the Prosser-Pahse-Mission Fund for a special grant to Bear Creek Camp for a matching-funds appeal in 2009.

Bishop - Resolution of Appreciation

The following Resolution of appreciation was adopted unanimously:

(2008.6.13) Resolved, that the following resolution of appreciation be included in the minutes of the Synod Council, and that it be conveyed to the entire Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod through the synod's publications:

Resolution of Appreciation

WHEREAS the Reverend David Richard Strobel has served faithfully as bishop of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod from August 1, 1996, and will have completed two full terms in this office on July 31, 2008; and

WHEREAS his service as an ordained minister of the church has also included service to six congregations in Pennsylvania and Illinois; and

WHEREAS throughout his ministry, his wise teaching, insightful preaching, and perceptive leadership have guided and deepened the faith of countless people whose lives he has touched, and

WHEREAS he has served the wider church with distinction, using his gifts in service to the Conference of Bishops, the churchwide structures, our seminaries, agencies and institutions, while at the same time being an effective leader to our synod, its congregations, and its leaders, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Synod Council of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, on behalf of the pastors, associates in ministry, deaconesses, diaconal ministers and congregations of the entire synod, express its heartfelt gratitude to David R. Strobel, our pastor and bishop, our respected partner, and our wise colleague, who, throughout his ministry has borne witness to our Living Lord through his humility, his diligence, his caring, and his always articulate proclamation of the Gospel; and be it further

RESOLVED, that these declarations of esteem be recorded in the permanent records of the minutes of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and a suitably prepared copy be furnished to Bishop David R. Strobel; and be it further

RESOLVED, that, as a further expression of the synod's esteem for Bishop Strobel, he be designated Bishop Emeritus of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

Calls, Appointments, and Roster Maintenance

(2008.6.1) Resolved, that the Synod Council endorses the decision to remove the Rev. James Koonen from the roster.

(2008.6.7) Resolved, that in accordance with sections 7.31.16. and 7.52.22. of the ELCA Constitution, "on leave from call" status be approved as follows:

Clergy (first year): Katie Lyon

(2008.6.8) Resolved, that the Synod Council requests that the ELCA Conference of Bishops approve an extension of on-leave-from-call status

beyond the normal three year limit for the Rev. James Covert.

(2008.6.12) Resolved, that a call to special service be issued to the Rev. David Werley to serve as pastor of Christ (Little Moore) United Church of Christ, Danielsville, effective March 31, 2008.

(2008.10.6) Resolved, that in accordance with sections 7.31.16. and 7.52.22. of the ELCA Constitution, "on leave from call" status be approved as follows:

Associate in Ministry (second year, graduate study): Cinda Brucker

(2009.1.6) Resolved, that a call to special service be extended to the Rev. Charles Oldland to serve as interim pastor of St. Peter, Reinerton, effective January 1, 2009.

(2009.1.7) Resolved, that a call to special service be extended to the Rev. George Grubb to serve as interim pastor of Allegheny, Knauers, effective November 17, 2008.

(2009.1.8) Resolved, that a call to special service be extended to the Rev. Harry Heffelfinger to serve as chaplain, Arcadia Hospice, effective February 1, 2009.

(2009.1.3) (Resolved, that the Rev. Carl Shankweiler be hired as part-time Associate of the

Bishop relating to the Schuylkill Mission District, effective February 1, 2009.

(2009.1.4) Resolved, that the Rev. Niels Nielsen be hired as part-time Associate of the Bishop relating to the Pocono Mission District, effective February 1, 2009.

(2009.3.8) Resolved, that in accordance with sections 7.31.16. and 7.52.22. of the ELCA Constitution, "on leave from call" status be approved as follows:

Clergy (first year): Richard Chaveas
Dody Freed

Clergy (second year): Elizabeth Huweiler

(2009.3.9) Resolved, that a three-year term call be issued to the Rev. Lori Kochanski to serve as pastor of St. Paul, Easton.

Congregational Matters

(2009.3.7) Resolved, that St. Peter, Plainfield, and Trinity, Wind Gap, be given permission to merge

at the current location of St. Peter, upon positive votes of both congregations.

Elections

(2008.10.5) Resolved, that the following persons be elected to terms on the board of directors of Good Shepherd Hospital: Sandra Jarva Weiss, David Campli, Daniel Wilson.

(2009.1.9) Resolved, that Christopher Carter be elected to a term on the board of Bear Creek Camp.

(2009.3.1) Resolved, that Barbara-Anne Taylor be nominated to serve as Secretary of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

(2009.3.2) Resolved, that David Hinrichs be nominated to serve as Treasurer of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

Finance

(2008.6.2) Resolved, that the 2009 Spending Policy be as follows, based on percentages of the fund's average asset value over the 5 year period from 2003-2007:

Prosser/Pahse/Mission Fund, 10% of assets, \$56,290

Student Education Fund, 10.2% of assets, \$25,000

Leadership Development Fund, 9.1% of assets, \$4,000

Social Ministry, 7.9% of assets, \$60,000

(2008.6.5) Resolved, that up to \$1,500 from the Prosser/Pahse/Mission Fund be allocated for the purchase of worship supplies for use at synod assemblies, the installation of the Bishop and all other synodical worship gatherings.

(2008.6.6) Resolved, that up to \$1,500 from the Prosser /Pahse/Mission Fund be allocated for a keynote speaker for Advocacy Day on November 1, 2008, jointly sponsored by the synod, Lutheran Congregational Services, and LAMPa.

(2008.10.2) Resolved, that the Prosser-Pahse-Mission Fund grant up to \$3,000 to help support a 2009 synodical conference about homosexuality.

(2008.10.3) Resolved, that the revised policy for the Prosser-Pahse-Mission Fund be adopted.

(2009.3.4) Resolved, that a one-time grant of \$12,000 from the Prosser/Pahse/Mission Fund be distributed at the rate of \$1,000 per month to Source of Love Indonesian Lutheran Church, contingent upon the successful completion of a background check for the pastor.

“LIFT” Event

(2008.10.4) Resolved, that the Prosser-Pahse-Mission Fund grant \$6,000 to the 2009 LIFT program.

Lutheran Archives Center

(2008.6.3) Resolved, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, through its Synod Council and the office of the Bishop, recommend to dissolving ELCA congregations and agencies in this synod that a minimum contribution of \$3,000 of their assets, upon dissolution, be made to the Endowment Fund of the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia, the interest of which will be utilized to provide perpetual care for these records; and that if the assets of said congregations and agencies should come to the treasury of the synod without a grant to the Archives Center having been made, that the synod will forward \$3,000 to the Lutheran Archives Center provided that the congregation's or agency's assets are sufficient to cover such a grant.

Spending Proposal

(2009.1.1) Resolved, that the 2009 Spending Proposal as revised be adopted, with this proposal based on a projected income of \$2,800,000, a deficit not in excess of \$130,000, a synod-ELCA

ratio of 49-51%, and a grant to the Philadelphia Seminary of \$160,000.

(2009.3.3) The following resolution is recommended to the 2009 Synod Assembly:

Resolved, that the 2010 program proposal (February 1, 2010, to January 31, 2011) be adopted. The Synod Council is hereby authorized to establish the 2010 spending program no later than its January, 2010, meeting, making any necessary adjustments to the budget proposal in light of both realistic anticipation of receipts and synod priorities (in consultation with the ELCA Treasurer with respect to the ELCA portion thereof.)

Barbara-Anne G. Taylor, secretary

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF DEANS

The Committee of Deans met in June, September and October. Two subsequent meetings, in December and February, included the synod staff.

At the June meeting, the deans reviewed the recent synod assembly. Suggestions included doing a better job of communicating the availability of the Bulletin of Reports, considering having an assembly chaplain, and offering the forums more than once. It was suggested that we should incorporate the emphasis on prayer in this assembly into other assemblies. Pastor Daun McKee and Pastor John Richter presented information about the ministries of Diakon. This year they provided uncompensated care of \$2.2 million at Topton, \$470,000 at Luther Crest, \$81,000 at Pocono and \$1.1 million through Family and Community Services, totaling nearly \$5 million in this synod and nearly \$13 million throughout their service area.

In September the deans met for the first time with Bishop Zeiser and heard updates on the Evenings with the Bishop and the Book of Faith initiative. The bishop discussed his approach to determining the staffing needs of the synod and invited the deans to discuss how they understand their role.

The October meeting was devoted entirely to a discussion of the role of the dean, focusing on the issue of pastoral care for rostered leaders. This conversation led to the suggestion that it would be helpful to include the synod staff in the discussion. As a result, two further meetings took place to explore the relationship between staff and deans in their shared work with the mission districts.

Anniversaries of Rostered Service

2009 marks the 25th anniversary of rostered service for the following leaders:

Linda L. Bonfiglio-Boyer
Brenda J. Boyer
Kurt E. Garbe
Christopher N. Hershman
William S. Maxon
Thomas A. Neel
Grace C. Olson
Keith K. Rohrbach

Observing their 40th anniversary of ordination are:

Kenneth C. Feinour Jr
Donald L. Henderschedt
Daun E. McKee
C. Albert Wagaman

Celebrating their 50th anniversary of rostered service are:

C. David Godshall
Roy E. Gulliford
Paul J. Hoh
Richard L. Miller
Elton P. Richards
Dale E. Sandstrom
William H. Sunderland
Donald W. Wert

Celebrating their 55th anniversary of rostered service are:

Paul H. Feil
Clarence D. Reeser
Robert F. Sauers
Richard H. Schaefer

Celebrating their 60th anniversary of ordination are:

John M. Aurand
Joseph H. Deibert
Alfred H. Erb
James B. Miller
David R. Williams

Celebrating his 65th anniversary of ordination is:

Ralph R. Hellerich

Celebrating their 70th anniversary of ordination are:

Phares O. Reitz
Gunther J. Stippich

THE REV. C. DAVID GODSHALL, the son of Luther V. and Elizabeth C. Godshall, was born on December 3, 1934, in Pottstown. He graduated from Muhlenberg College in 1956 and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 1959.

Following his ordination in May, 1959, he served as pastor of St. Luke, Gilbertsville (1959-1965); St. Mark, Birdsboro (1965-1984); and St. Stephen, Allentown (1984-1999). Following his retirement, he served as interim pastor of St. Timothy, Allentown, and assisted at Grace, Allentown.

Pastor Godshall has served his church and community in many capacities. He has been active with the Birdsboro Community Ambulance Service, the exchange student program of Boyertown High School, and the ecumenical ministry recognition of the Chapel of the Four Chaplains in Philadelphia. He has served on the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod examining committee, the board of Lutheran Inner Mission Society, Reading, and the Ecumenism Committee of the Lehigh County Conference of Churches, as well as being dean of the Lehigh Mission District and mentor to first-call pastors.

On June 20, 1958, Pastor Godshall married Barbara Groller. They are the parents of three daughters, Dr. Christine Conway, Pastor Amy Godshall-Miller, and Laurie Vlasak.

THE REV. ROY E. GULLIFORD, the son of William E. and Emily M. (Lauff) Gulliford, was born on December 20, 1934, in Philadelphia. He graduated from Gettysburg College in 1956 and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 1959.

Following his ordination in 1959, Pastor Gulliford served several congregations: St. John (Mayfair), Philadelphia (1959-1960); St. Paul, Lionville (1960-1964); and Reformation, Reiffton (1964-1970). In 1970 he became executive director of the Eastern Pennsylvania Lutheran Camp Corporation, where he served until his retirement in 1996. He was active in the American Camping Association, serving as section vice president, and also served on the synod's Parish Life Committee.

Pastor Gulliford married Marilyn L. Kreider on May 24, 1958. They are the parents of one son, Bradley.

THE REV. PAUL J. HOH was born on September 27, 1934, in Lancaster, the son of Ernest J. and Ruth C. (Kirsch) Hoh. He graduated from Denison University, Granville, Ohio (1955) and the Lu-

theran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (1959).

Ordained by the Central Pennsylvania Synod in 1959, Pastor Hoh's first call was as pastor of Christ, Reading (1959-1966). In 1967 he became the executive director of the Reading-Berks Human Relations Council. In 1969 he joined the staff of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod as an Assistant to the President, a position he held until 1975 when he became pastor of St. John, Reading. In 1992 he became Vice President for Inner Mission and Community Ministries for the Lutheran Home at Tipton, where he served until his retirement in 1997.

Pastor Hoh's involvement in church and community has been extensive and diverse. His church service has included the boards of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and the Lutheran Coalition on Public Policy, the management committee of the LCA's Division for Mission in North America, and the social ministry committee of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches. In the realm of community service, he has been involved with the Reading Redevelopment Authority, the Berks County Prison Society, the YMCA of Reading and Berks County, Glenside Community Association, the Equal Opportunity Council of Berks County, and the Reading Parking Authority. From 1965 to 1966 he served as a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, and from 1995 to 2002 he was president of the Reading City Council.

Pastor Hoh was married to Mary (Kate) C. Houseman on June 17, 1956. They are the parents of four children, Christopher, Robyn, Eric and Scott.

THE REV. RICHARD L. MILLER was born on December 10, 1932, in Centerport. His parents were Clark T. and Dorothy (Rentschler) Miller. A 1954 graduate of Albright College, he then graduated from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 1959. He was ordained on May 15, 1959, by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania.

Following his ordination, Pastor Miller served as assistant pastor of St. John, Boyertown, from 1959 to 1961. In 1961 he was called as pastor of Holy Cross, Bethlehem, and he served there until his retirement in 1996.

On August 5, 1961, Pastor Miller was married to Judith Mae Dotterer. They are the parents of three children, Rebecca Ann, Michael David, and Matthew Daniel.

THE REV. ELTON P. RICHARDS was born on July 24, 1932, in Chester, Pennsylvania, the son

of Elton P. and Lillian (Russell) Richards. He graduated from Dickinson College in 1954 and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 1959. He earned a Master of Theology degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1966. He has also been awarded honorary degrees by both Muhlenberg and Albright Colleges.

Ordained on May 15, 1959, by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, Pastor Richards served the following congregations: St. Paul, Ardmore (1959-1961); Resurrection, Levittown (1962-1968); Trinity, Reading (1968-1989); St. John, Des Moines, Iowa (1989-1997). Following his retirement in 1997, he continued to serve the church as an interim pastor and through his involvement with Grandview College.

Pastor Richards has been involved in a variety of civic, social and humanitarian agencies, including Community General Hospital, United Way, the Lutheran Home at Tipton, the Greater Reading Council of Churches, Planned Parenthood, Berks County Senior Citizens Council, the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Muhlenberg College, and Albright College. He has been highly regarded as a preacher both in the Lutheran Church and ecumenically and has been heard on The Protestant Hour.

On June 23, 1962, Pastor Richards married Anne Elizabeth Schland. They are the parents of two sons, Elton Russell and David Roy.

THE REV. DALE E. SANDSTROM was born on June 24, 1933, in Enderlin, North Dakota. His parents were Arthur M. and Anne (Langland) Sandstrom. In 1955 he graduated from Concordia College, Morehead, Minnesota, and in 1959 he completed his seminary education at Luther Seminary. In 1972 he earned an MBA degree in hospital administration from Wagner College. He was ordained in Glendive, Montana, on July 11, 1959, by the American Lutheran Church.

Following his ordination, Pastor Sandstrom served the following congregations: Bethany Eidsvold, Big Fork MN (1959-1963); Shiloh, Elmore MN (1963-1967); Our Savior, Staten Island NY (1967-1972); and Holy Trinity, Rockaway NJ (1972-1978). From 1972 to 1978 he served as Assistant Administrator and then Assistant Vice President of Nyack Hospital, Nyack NY. In 1978 he was called to serve as president of The Good Shepherd Home and Rehabilitation Hospital, Allentown, where he served until 1995.

Always active in the field of social ministry, Pastor Sandstrom served as secretary of the Lutheran Social Services System, and as chair of the Association of Christian Social Ministry Executives, and was involved with the American College of Health Care Administrators.

On June 5, 1956, Pastor Sandstrom was married to Lillian Gustavsen. They are the parents of three children, Peter Dale, Marcus Rolf, and Kari Lynn.

THE REV. WILLIAM H. SUNDERLAND, the son of Percy and Marie (Emilius) Sunderland, was born on January 9, 1933, in Philadelphia. He graduated from Muhlenberg College in 1956 and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 1959. He was ordained in that year at Immanuel, Souderton, by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania.

Following his ordination Pastor Sunderland served as assistant pastor of Grace, Shillington, from 1959 to 1966, when he became senior pastor of that congregation. In 1979 he was called as executive director of the Lutheran Inner Mission Society (East Berks, West Berks and Schuylkill districts) where he served until his retirement in 1991. Following retirement he became the executive director of the Reading Emergency Shelter. He also served as a contract chaplain at Wernersville State Hospital and as interim and supply pastor at numerous congregations.

Pastor Sunderland married Mae A. Garito on April 28, 1962. They are the parents of one daughter, Ruth Ann.

THE REV. DONALD W. WERT, the son of Raymond E. and Mildred G. (Kidd) Wert, was born on May 29, 1933, in Catasauqua. He graduated from Moravian College in 1956 and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 1959.

He was ordained on May 23, 1959, by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. He served as pastor of the Line Mountain parish (1959-1962); the Grimsville parish/Zion, Krumsville (1962-1973); St. Paul, Orwigsburg (1973-1979); Huffs, Huffs, and New Jerusalem, New Jerusalem (1979-1986); and Union, Neffs (1986-1995). Following his retirement in 1995, he has continued to serve as an interim and supply pastor.

Pastor Wert has been active in church and community activities throughout his career. He served as mission district dean and as a member of the synod Stewardship Committee, Rural and Appalachian Ministry Committee, and Executive Board.

On July 31, 1954, Pastor Wert married Janice Ruth Reichard. They are the parents of three children, Robert Thomas, Ronald Timothy and Randall Todd.

Catherine A. Ziel, executive associate of the bishop