

## OTHER COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

### ELCA MISSION INVESTMENT FUND

The Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA continues to serve this synod by providing vital loans for capital projects to new mission congregations, established congregations, and ELCA-related ministries. The fund is able to fund these loans through the sale of investments to ELCA ministries and congregation members.

Nearly 800 MIF loans totaling more than \$465 million are at work today in ELCA ministries throughout the United States, Virgin Islands and the Caribbean.

In the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, 11 congregations and ministries currently have Mission Investment Fund loans totaling \$3.4 million while many individuals and 102 ministries, including this synod, have investments in the fund totaling \$10.2 million (as of February 2010).

MIF serves ELCA ministries. In addition to the ministry loans and investments that it offers, the fund provides consulting services to ELCA congregations through its church building consultants and staff architects. The consultants help congregations design building programs that support their mission and evaluate the effectiveness of existing facilities or plans for new facilities. Staff architects provide initial schematic design proposals that congregations can take to local architects. The consultants' and architects' services are provided at no charge. Area representatives are available to meet with congregations and ELCA-related ministries regarding the fund's loan and investment opportunities.

Has your congregation invested? Have members of your congregation invested? Join the thousands of individuals, ELCA congregations, ELCA-related ministries and synods – including the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod – that are earning interest on their investments as they help to build the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Your participation enables the fund to continue this vital ministry. A variety of fixed- and adjustable-rate investment opportunities are available and may be opened with initial investments of as low as \$5. Information on investments and ministry loans is available at [www.elca.org/mif](http://www.elca.org/mif) and through the fund's representatives listed below who serve this synod.

Thank you for your support of and participation in the Mission Investment Fund. It is a joy to work in partnership with you for the advancement of God's kingdom.

*Mark Wimmer, area representative*  
*Jeff Spann, church building consultant*

### EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN COALITION FOR MISSION IN APPALACHIA (ELCMA)

*"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 the 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 an enthusiastic thank you to Dr. Job Ebenezer ([www.technologyforthe poor.com](http://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 West Virginia and South Carolina 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: the Rev. Chip Fairchild, the Rev. Kurt Garbe, the Rev. John Hazel, the Rev. David Heckler, the Rev. John Houck, the Revs. Wayne and Michele Kaufman, the Rev. Tony Paggotto, the Rev. Glenn and Mary Simmons, and Bishop Samuel Zeiser. 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](http://www.elcma.org) or 724-463-8422.

*Dory Campbell, ELCMA coordinator*

### **LUTHERAN ADVOCACY MINISTRY IN PENNSYLVANIA (LAMPa)**

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania (LAMPa) is a partnership ministry of the Church in Society Program Unit of the ELCA, ELCA World Hunger, the seven ELCA Synods, Lutheran social ministry organizations, seminaries, colleges and other agencies and institutions located in the Commonwealth. Our advocacy ministry is guided by Scripture, the ELCA Constitution and continuing resolutions as well as the social statements passed by the church in assembly.

Advocacy is part of the vocation of the baptized to "strive for justice and peace in all the earth." LAMPa partners with the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod through providing education, equipping events, and opportunities for congregations and individuals to engage in advocacy with their representatives for just public policy in our state government. Through congregational forums, synodical workshops, youth gatherings and the

annual Lutheran Day at the Capitol, LAMPa provides education on these complex issues and how we as Lutheran Christians discern our baptismal calling to respond to the needs of our neighbors. LAMPa offers advocacy opportunities through *ACTIONET*, a network of Lutherans who write, call, and visit legislators around issues of the common good, the Ambassadors Ministry of individuals in an intentional relationship with their legislators, and a facebook group. Contact the LAMPa office ([www.lamp.org](http://www.lamp.org)) to sign up, and pass the word around to friends and fellow congregants!

LAMPa is engaged in the effort to end hunger in Pennsylvania, and we are working to ensure that state budgetary priorities are faithful to the needs of the poor and vulnerable. In 2009 we worked towards increasing affordable housing through creation of a state housing trust fund and sufficient funding for programs that serve the poor, such as emergency food, home heating assistance, basic and early childhood education. LAMPa also worked to promote access to health-care through advocacy for expansion of health care options for low income persons in Pennsylvania and partnered with the ELCA Washington office in national health reform. In 2010 LAMPa will be leading efforts to establish a statewide Poverty Reduction Commission to provide the first comprehensive overview of poverty, and poverty solutions, in Pennsylvania.

LAMPa is deeply appreciative for the financial commitment of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod to advocacy and public policy ministry in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with and for the poor, vulnerable, disenfranchised, and for all of God's creation. We were blessed in 2009 by the leadership of Bishop Samuel Zeiser and the time, talents and commitment of Ken Miller and Judy Gifford, synod representatives to the LAMPa Policy Council. Both have stepped down after completing three year terms. We look forward to welcoming the synod's new appointees in 2010.

The success of our advocacy efforts depends on the involvement of Lutheran Christians to advocate for just public policy. The churches of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod have a strong sense of mission to serve those in need. We ask you to consider working with LAMPa and together address the root causes of hunger in Pennsylvania. As a ministry of advocacy for this synod, we are available to speak to your congregation. To schedule a visit or to learn more about the work of LAMPa, please call us at 717-545-3500, email us at [lampa@lamp.org](mailto:lampa@lamp.org), or visit our website, [www.lamp.org](http://www.lamp.org).

*Amy E. Reumann, director*

## **LUTHERAN PLANNED GIVING OF CENTRAL AND NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA**

Lutheran Planned Giving of Central and Northeastern Pennsylvania brings together the ministry partners in our area along with the churchwide ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to promote charitable giving. As the Executive Director of Lutheran Planned Giving and a charitable gift planner for the ELCA Foundation, I am ready to provide donor education, assist donors with their charitable gift planning, work with congregations as they establish a mission endowment fund, and assist congregations to grow their endowment fund. These services are available to any Lutheran congregation or ministry without charge or obligation.

Even though the economy is slowly rebounding, the economic recovery is far from over and the times continue to remain unsettled. The stock market has made a steady climb since 10 March 2009, but many people still remain unemployed or underemployed. The demand for charitable services remains high. Furthermore, as I write this report it is one month since the devastating earthquake in Haiti. The nation of Haiti will need support for many years to come to overcome the disaster. Through all of this, members of the ELCA remain generous in giving to those ministries which catch their passion. Whether it means a hot meal and shelter for the homeless, a bed in a nursing home for someone who cannot otherwise afford it, more affordable education, an outdoor camping experience to help grow faith, or a place to worship on a Sunday morning, your gifts can make a difference. One of the goals of the Lutheran Planned Giving program is to encourage folks to include charitable giving as part of their estate plan. And a second goal is to encourage people to remember their congregation and other favorite church ministries in those gifting plans.

In the seven years of operation, LPG has closed over \$5 million of revocable and irrevocable gifts. In 2009 I conducted 8 Legacy Seminars and made 26 mission endowment consults helping congregations establish endowment funds or tune up existing endowment funds. I made 188 donor calls which resulted in 33 irrevocable gifts totaling \$319,158 and 2 revocable gifts for \$1,000,000. In my service area, I also assisted 3 congregations to establish new accounts in ELCA Endowment Pooled Trust-Fund A and directly or indirectly helped many other congregations increase their participation in Fund A. The ELCA Endowment Pooled Trust-Fund A is a balance fund managed by the ELCA available to any ELCA related ministry.

In 2009, the ELCA provided several training opportunities for me to keep my skills up to date. First, the regional gift planners and the senior staff of the ELCA Foundation met twice for staff training. I attended the annual educational conference of the Partnership for Philanthropic Planning (formerly National Committee on Planned Giving). Also, I am a member of the Planned Giving Council of Central PA, a local chapter of the Partnership for Philanthropic Planning. In 2009, I attended 4 educational seminars presented by the Planned Giving Council.

Finally, thank you very much for your support. Your synod, 16 other ministries, and the ELCA underwrite the Lutheran Planned giving program. Without your financial support, words of wisdom, and encouragement, and especially your prayers, I would not have been able to accomplish what I did. Your support is essential to the success of this program. For more information about the Lutheran Planned Giving Program or to schedule a Legacy Seminar, please contact me at 570-374-2044 or [kramerga@ptd.net](mailto:kramerga@ptd.net).

*Gregory A. Kramer, executive director*

## **PENNSYLVANIA LUTHERAN NETWORK**

### **Mission**

The Pennsylvania Lutheran Network (PLN) is committed to cooperation, collaboration, and support for mutual benefit in ministry to insure that no part of the church need stand alone in our calling to be faithful to the mission God has entrusted to us.

### **Value Statement and Purpose**

The PLN is an aggregation of the Specialized Ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Pennsylvania intentionally organized for mutual support and collaboration as we work to extend and focus the ministry of ELCA congregations in Pennsylvania.

The PLN is a facilitating mechanism through which the synods, institutions, and organizations related to the ELCA in Pennsylvania can maintain relationships, cooperate, and collaborate in ways that can fulfill already existing commitments to the ELCA, to each other, and to the public.

The PLN is not a new organization to join, but a network in which all can participate, fully or selectively, to sustain values and fulfill goals for their mutual benefit in ministry, education, and service in church and society.

## Activity

The PLN gathers annually in assembly to consider a topic of interest, to reconnect partners in ministry, and to provide the opportunity for cooperative efforts in our shared ministry.

In 2010, the assembly focused on *The Ecology of the Church: Planning for the Future of the ELCA in Pennsylvania*. Participants were engaged in a conversation around the present study of the ELCA and its implications for our life together. Our presenter was the Rev. Dr. Wyvette Bullock who serves as the Executive for Administration in the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

A Planning Council meets between assemblies to provide direction for the network.

*Ralph E. Jones, convener*

## REGION 7

In 2009 the Region 7 office underwent big changes in staff and in the distribution of work that is done on behalf of the synods and the churchwide expression. In February we learned that, due to budget reductions, the three campus ministry coordinator positions in the ELCA were being eliminated and that the Coordinators for Ministry Leadership would take on the administrative duties formerly handled by the Campus Ministry Coordinators. Churchwide financial support for the administrative assistant was also eliminated. In November, we learned that further reductions meant the elimination of the position of Director of Candidacy, and that the work of candidacy would be shared between the Assistant Director for Leadership in Vocation and Education and the nine coordinators.

The bishops and the staff of the region believe that the work of the region is critical to helping all of us carry out the mission of the church. To that end, the steering committee has worked with us to reduce our expenses, and to use the small amount of "contingency money" that we had accumulated over the years to make the stretch.

I continue to meet with all seven synods' candidacy committees to provide resources and support to them, to convene faculty panels at the seminaries to assist candidates coming from other traditions and through TEEM, and to provide training as needed by the committees and their leadership. In addition, I am getting to know the 18 or so campus ministries in the region, visiting with their staff and boards and learning how to convene required reviews and provide oversight of the churchwide financial support. We also continue to work with regional initiatives like the First

Call Theological Event each January, and the triennial Region 7 Youth Gathering.

Yvonne has increased her responsibilities in the office, continuing to handle our finances, and registration, and doing more with the coordination of regional gatherings that are requested by our churchwide partners. She is also a good source of information and support when synod staff have questions.

So, as in all of the church we are looking for creative approaches to reduce expenses while maintaining mission. We thank the synods for being our partners, and in all of this we rely on the Grace of a God who never fails us. To God be the Glory!

*Peggy Wuertele, coordinator*

## WOMEN OF THE ELCA

The three expressions of the Women of the ELCA (Congregational Units, Synodical, and Churchwide) are active in ministries that promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and in the world. Our women advocate for those that cannot. They are diligent with their financial gifts that are used for grants to seminarians and to social organizations whose needs compliment the mission of W/ELCA and the support of World Hunger and Disaster Response. Congregational Units continue to support the needs of LWR, brought on by natural disasters, through their donations of health and school kits, baby layettes and quilts.

There are a wealth of resources available that help women grow in faith and support them on their spiritual journey as they develop and nurture relationships and opportunities to serve. However, many congregations and several clusters are struggling to encourage younger women to become involved in W/ELCA and continue to meet and carry out the purpose of the organization.

Synodical and Cluster events, this past year, connected us through:

- our Raising up Healthy Women and Girls initiative that promotes our women's complete health - emotional, spiritual and physical.
- our "Ripple Effect" workshop where we learned how a small wave can ripple out and touch many with its healing power and how our actions not only affect us, but our family, friends and all the people around us.
- our visit and financial support to our partner congregations in the South Central Diocese of

Tanzania where we saw first-hand how our sisters and brothers live in this land of scarcity, disease, and poverty, yet overflowing with hospitality and the love of Jesus expressed in their harmonious songs, testimonies, and prayers.

- our Spiritual Growth event where we experienced the power, effectiveness, and joy of prayer, including a World Day of Prayer presentation for the women in Cambodia and a tutorial on how and where to navigate the resources available through the Internet.

Looking forward, our 21<sup>st</sup> Convention will be held at Christ's United in Ashland on June 12, 2010 under the theme of "Building to Last Forever." Our synodical newsletter, *The Flame*, and detailed information about the convention can be found on the synod website at [www.godslove.org](http://www.godslove.org).

*Patricia A. Reitnauer, president*

### **ASTaR**

The Appalachian Small Town and Rural Committee meets on a regular basis in Conyngham, PA. We attempt to address the concerns of congregations in our synod located in the Appalachian region and those in small towns and rural areas. This past year most of our work focused on reviewing grant applications for the Clark Trust. There were many excellent applications for new ministries and we were able to give away all of the money.

The ASTaR committee also serves as the liaison between our synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Coalition for Mission in Appalachia (ELCMA). We sent four delegates, Bishop Zeiser, the Revs. Glenn Simmons, John Hazel, and Michele Kaufman, to the annual ELCMA Assembly in Morrisville, Tennessee. The Rev. Wayne Kaufman is a member of the Coalition Council. ELCMA is a Coalition of sixteen synods and Institutions in fourteen states that contain Appalachian counties. They have produced a *Handbook for Small Churches* and a *Sunday School Curriculum*; they also monitor advocacy issues throughout the region and network between synods for advocacy and disaster needs. Their current major project is a Bonding Gardens Project with locations throughout the territory including Ashfield in our synod. If you would like to serve on the committee or would like more information, contact Wayne Kaufman or Glenn Simmons.

*Wayne Kaufman, chair*