

## What Difference Does Synod Ministry Make?

- **Missional**

Supporting one another in evangelical mission development.

- **Leadership**

A strong church requires effective leadership, both ordained and lay. Jesus devoted major energy to the leadership formation of his disciples. So must we. If you reflect on synod ministry, you notice the prominence of leadership formation, support, development and accountability. These are critical functions to the health of the church.

- **Relationships**

The church is at its best when gifts, burdens and mission are shared. Synod ministry oversees and tends the important relationships, networks and formal structures of our ministry together, helping congregations do together what could not be done well alone.

- **Accountability**

Synodical ministries of decision-making, leadership support and development, congregational support, and extended ministry are structured around the mutual accountability of the community of faith. Decision-making is democratic; leaders are elected by their congregations or appointed by the synod council or the synod assembly. Our constitutions bind us to a confession of faith based on Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. In this way we choose to evaluate and discern our ministry by its faithfulness to Jesus Christ and his Gospel of Salvation.

## Which of these synod ministries have you or your congregation experienced in the last year?

### **Decision-making**

Synod Assembly  
Synod Council  
Synod Boards  
Conference Assemblies  
Task Forces/Committees

### **Leadership Support and Development**

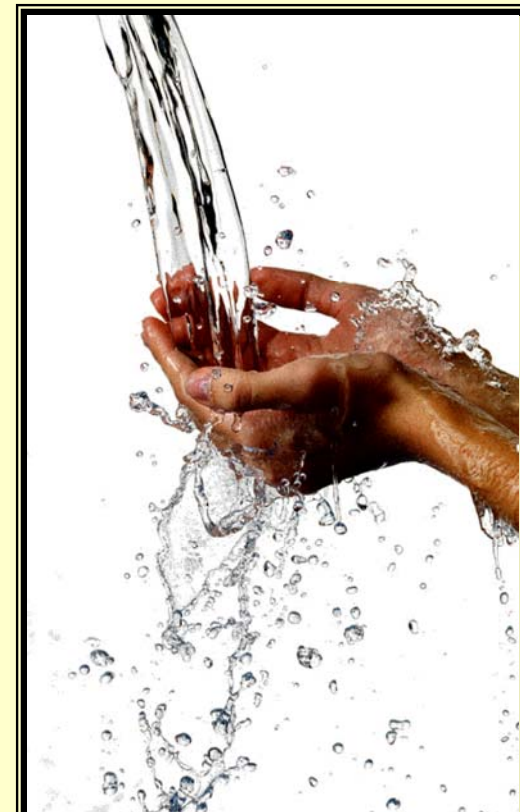
Junior High Youth Gathering  
Senior High Youth Gathering  
National Youth Gathering  
Candidacy Process  
Healthy Congregation Workshop  
Personal visits with synod staff  
Stewardship Seminars  
First Call Theological Education  
LYO Training  
Personal coaching  
Interim Ministry meetings  
Power & Boundaries Workshops  
Youth Ministry  
Spring/Fall Theological Conference  
Church Council training  
Strategic planning consultation

### **Congregational Support**

Call Process  
Leadership transition  
Administrative support  
Crisis/Conflict support  
Preaching by synod staff at anniversaries, installations, ordinations, guest preacher, sabbaticals, crisis  
Communication via: Web site, e-mail, mail, weekly/monthly publications, other  
Resource Service Center

### **Beyond Local Ministries**

Lutheran Campus Ministry  
Minnesota Council of Churches (MCC)  
Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota (LCPPM)  
Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota  
Companion Synod relationship  
ELCA World Hunger Appeal  
ELCA Disaster Response  
Lutheran World Relief  
ELCA Churchwide Committee and task force work  
Women of the ELCA  
Lutheran Men in Mission  
Planned Giving



*A Needed  
Conversation  
Concerning Our  
Ministry Together*  
The Northwestern  
Minnesota  
Synod

The word "synod" comes from two Greek words "syn" (together) and "hodos" (a way)

"A way together" or "walking together"

"Together" is an important idea for understanding Christianity and the Church.

- Christians are joined to the Church through baptism into Christ
  - The Christian Church is understood as "the Body of Christ" with individual parts that all contribute to the whole
- Indeed, there are some things that can't be done alone, but must be done together



Practically speaking, this requires organization

The Northwestern Minnesota Synod includes 21 counties in the northwest corner of the state. It represents:

- 107,082 baptized members
- 271 congregations
- 369 rostered leaders

Broadly speaking, our synod helps congregations do together what they can't do alone. Much of this work falls under two vital areas:

- Support and development of pastors and lay leaders for their congregational ministry.
- Extending and coordinating ministry beyond the local setting.

## What is the Cost of Supporting Synod Ministry?

Congregations base their budgets on regular giving by members. In 2006, congregations of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod reported \$30,662,883 in regular giving.

Each congregation decides annually what amount will be passed on to the synod budget as "mission support." In 2006 congregations sent the synod \$1,677,001 in undesignated Mission Support.



The synod budget divides Support into three general areas

**ELCA:** 51 percent goes directly to Churchwide and worldwide ministry

**Ministry Partners:** 20 percent supports Luther Seminary, Campus Ministry, etc.

**Congregational support through staff, office and programming:** 29 percent provides office, transportation, salaries and benefits for synod staff, as well as program resources.

In 2006, for every \$100 of regular giving by members to their congregations:

\$94.60 supported the ministry of the local congregation \$5.40 went to ELCA/synod "mission support," and of that amount

- \$2.75 funded Churchwide ELCA Ministries
- \$1.08 funded Northwestern Minnesota Synod Ministry Partners
- \$1.57 funded NW MN synod staff, office, and programs

## The Synod Staff...

- Works with congregations in times of pastoral transition.
- Provides support and training for lay leaders.
- Provides support and training in youth ministry for adults.
- Coordinates the work of the Candidacy Commission in overseeing candidates.
- Provides support and training for rostered leaders through educational events, support in transitions, individual conversations and consultations.
- Consults with congregations to provide resources in times of conflict or crisis.
- Provides help, resources and networking for congregations in areas such as stewardship, finances, paperwork and statistics, outreach, worship, constitutional questions.
- Is in touch with congregational leaders by phone, mail, and e-mail, including personal visits with congregations and staff.
- Follows a regular pattern of prayer for congregations, rostered and lay leaders and others in weekly staff devotions.
- Assists congregations in making transitions to being missional congregations.

Synod staff, from top, Bishop Larry Wohlrabe, Pr. Laurie Natwirck, Pr. Steve Peterson, Shirleen Wyland, Erin Anderson, Marsha Hendrickson, Bob Larson, Pr. Keith Zeh, Cheryl Zeh, Michael Stein

