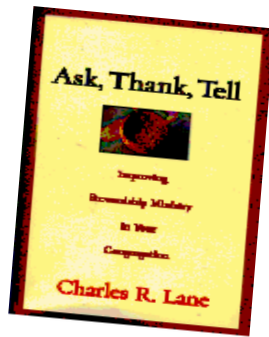


**June 16
Region One Steward
Leader Event**

Event sponsored by
ELCA Region 1
& Oregon Synod
Stewardship Team
8:00 am - 2:30 pm
Zion, Oregon City, OR



**Ministry Demands Growing?
Ministry Resources NOT?**

This seminar addresses critical plateau issues for churches looking to grow.

A Conversation with Charles R. "Chick" Lane Charles R. "Chick" Lane currently serves as Director for Stewardship Key Leaders, a program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Prior to that, he served congregations in Butler, Pennsylvania, and Fridley and Wadena, Minnesota. He also served for nine years on the synod staff of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA. He authored, *"Ask, Thank, Tell: Improving Stewardship Ministry in Your Congregation"*, which was published by Augsburg Fortress in January, 2006.

'Chick' is committed to helping God's people grow in their relationship with Jesus through the stewardship of all God has entrusted to them. For more information call Janet at 800-755-5831 ext. 103 or jnelson125@hotmail.com.



Give Me A Map

The Synod Stewardship Committee has developed the Synod Stewardship Strategic Plan for the Oregon Synod, ELCA. It is available online at www.oregonsynod.org/about/stewardship.php

Oregon Synod Partner Ministries Supported

- ELCA- churchwide
- Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
- Luther Seminary
- Pacific Lutheran University
- Campus Ministry - 8 sites
- Lutheran Community Services Northwest
- Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
- Consultation to Clergy
- Lutheran Education Network Support (LENS)

Oregon Synod Ministries

- Synod Mission Initiatives
- Mission Strategy
- Candidacy and Pastoral Commitment
- Communication Committee
- Outreach Committee
- New Congregational Starts
- Latino Strategy
- Multicultural Committee
- Congregational Ministries
- Church and Environment
- Global Missions
- Education Committee
- Youth Committee
- Worship Committee
- Stewardship Committee
- Endowment Fund

We Are Gifted

is a stewardship publication of the Oregon Synod.

WE ARE GIFTED...

OREGON SYNOD
Quarterly Stewardship Mailing
2007 Spring



Mustard Seeds Project

by Pastor Ron Nitz, Mt. Carmel, Portland

For the last few years, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has been sending out invitations to congregations and agencies to apply for grants, ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000 (for congregations), for projects related to encouraging giving to endowments and other forms of stewardship in the congregation.



Mt. Carmel had considered these grants before, as a way to build up interest in and support for its rather meager Endowment Fund, but we couldn't figure out how to use even \$5,000 to do this in such a small congregation as ours. Then, last year, we hit upon the idea to make use of the talents of a new member, Courtney Hermann, who was teaching classes on film at the Art Institute, to produce a brief DVD, utilizing the experience of small congregations in receiving and using such gifts. With her considerable help and expertise, we were able to formulate a plan to produce materials not only for Mt. Carmel, but for all

the "smaller" congregations of the Oregon Synod, and others as needed. Nicknamed "The Mustard Seed Project" for our hope that it would make 'big things' grow from the 'small seeds' of people's generosity, we planned a budget of \$20,000 for this project, of which Thrivent granted us \$15,000.

Our plans call for a brief (ca. 10-minute) video, with interviews of those who make gifts (How did you decide to do this?), and ministries who receive such gifts (What do you plan to do, or did you do with these gifts?). The hope is that those who see the video might not only be led

continued on page three

Defining Stewardship

by Becky Brown, Oregon Synod Stewardship Chair

When you hear someone at church talk about stewardship, about what do you think this individual is speaking? Is she just asking for more money for the budget? Is he relating a story of how God has

“Leave a gift as a testimony to the depth of your Christian faith and your passion for God’s mission: leave the fruits of your gift to the work of the Holy Spirit.”

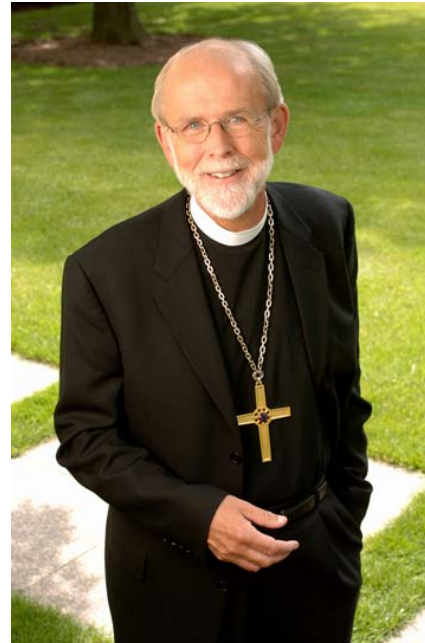
abundantly blessed him? There are almost as many definitions for stewardship as there are stewards.

The synod stewardship committee has collected a few definitions of stewardship. We contacted various ELCA bishops across the United States and asked them for their definitions. The response was underwhelming. One assistant to the bishop answered the question by describing the steps that the synod office does to bring in the annual letters of intent from each congregation. One bishop declined to answer and several others just ignored the request. It is hard work to come up with a definition!

Our Presiding Bishop, Mark Hanson, has a definition: “Leave a gift as a testimony to the depth of your Christian faith and your passion for God’s mission: leave the fruits of your gift to the work of the Holy Spirit.” Presiding Bishop Hanson was responding to a question from someone affiliated with the ELCA Foundation Board so his answer was focused on end of life gifts. We do not have to wait until the end of our lives to show how deeply we believe our Christian faith or feel our passion for God’s mission.

Presiding Bishop Hanson will be our speaker at the stewardship luncheon (11:30 am – 12:30 pm at the Eugene Hilton) just before the synod assembly starts on May 18th. If you would like to attend, please see the stewardship page on the synod website for separate registration information. Seating is very limited so you will need to RSVP. Presiding Bishop Hanson will talk about his stewardship life and the importance of stewardship in a congregation’s life.

Last year, the synod stewardship committee developed its definition of stewardship as a part of its strategic plan. “Stewardship is how we live our lives after we are baptized and includes how we



*ELCA Presiding Bishop,
Mark Hanson*

spend our resources, our time, and our talents to do God’s will.”

Charles “Chick Lane has written a book called “Ask, Thank, Tell.” (see the back article in this newsletter). He defines a congregation’s stewardship ministry to be first and foremost about making and growing disciples. We Lutherans are so nervous about slipping into works of righteousness that we are too quiet about discipleship. We can think of stewardship as the way to help us grow in our relationship with Jesus through the use of the time, talents, and finances God has entrusted to us.

Mustard Seeds

continued from page one

to feel they can make such a gift also, but feel good about the creative way in which such long-term gifts are being used. Along with the video, there will be a template of an endowment fund brochure that could be adapted for use by any congregation, and a Bible study on the theme of “faith as a mustard seed...” to support the use of the video in the congregation. Gift recipient ministries that may be included in the video presentation (depending on space available) are: Peace, Burns, and Bethel, St. Paul, St. Timothy, & Mt. Carmel, Portland. Our plans call for the video to be premiered at the upcoming Oregon Synod Assembly, and for the packets to be mailed as a gift to the roughly 60 congregations of the Oregon Synod that worship less than 100 per Sunday.

Additional copies will be available for use by Tricia Larsen, Oregon Synod Director for Planned Giving, and may be made available to other congregations, as well. We are excited to see the work progressing almost on schedule, and have been assured that at least the video will be ready for the synod assembly. We hope this little “mustard seed” effort will provide a tree full of benefits for the congregations of the Oregon Synod!