

stage of the call process. That is a lot of things to keep organized. Mindy and Robyn process 8-10 sets of mobility papers per month from rostered leaders outside our synod who are interested in positions in Oregon. Everyone wants to move to Oregon!

Candidacy and mobility tasks take up about 25% of their time. The majority of their day is spent on office work such as answering our phone calls, scheduling meetings, developing and assembling mailings, working on projects, responding to letters, and keeping files current. In the spring, synod assembly preparation – registration and document preparation – is Job #1. Why are their desks so neat?

The next time that I'm stuck in a traffic jam, I will know that our mission support dollars are well stewarded by our administrative synod staff. **They accomplish an amazing amount of work in their 32 hour work week.** I am going to thank them for their great work and you can too.

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 Committee
- 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
2008 Fall/Winter



By the Way, What Good is Benevolence?

Where do our offering dollars go? In many congregations this question is often heard when addressing a cash shortage, balancing the budget or determining how much to give in mission support. (Mission support is that percentage or dollar amount that is sent from the congregation to the synod for ministry. A portion of this is sent on to the ELCA for ministry. Most often mission support is part of the general budget.) Perhaps the place to begin is to recognize that for most Lutheran congregations in Oregon, 96% or more of the offering dollars stay in the congregation or communities served locally.

What is the rationale for this mission support? Some recent writings by Reverend Robert Klonowski, ELCA stewardship staff, suggest five points as rationale for encouraging Mission Support:



1. Giving mission support to a community of faith provides both an identity and a connectedness for the individual and

the congregation. This act connects a person's faith in God with his or her values and passions. We are able to do more together than what one person could do alone and in the process reflect our presence as God's people in our community and the world.

2. Giving mission support to a community of faith supports a scriptural vision of the church.

As Reverend Klonowski writes, "The bible witness is clear here: people of God exist only in community, and their resources to no small extent are under the authority of the community as they are used for mission". Furthermore, "The book of

continued on next page

Acts is absolutely clear about the central importance in the disciplined life of undesignated mission support, about the fact that you are not the only one who has claim on your money.” It is a scriptural vision that helps provide a framework for the ministry and vision of your faith community.



3. Giving mission support is the result of practicing some basic stewardship principles.

As identified by Tom Beaudoin in his book *Consuming Faith* (Sheed & Ward, ©2003), “One of the most fascinating and under-acknowledged aspects of Jesus’ life is his preaching of an economic spirituality, an integration of who persons are and how they use their resources.” (p. 21). First, Jesus clearly teaches that all resources came from and ultimately belong to God. Second, Jesus teaches that the resources entrusted to each person are to be used for the good of all. While these two principles strongly conflict with modern and post modern culture, they are fundamental to our Christian understanding of being a good steward.

4. **Giving mission support is good theology.** As Reverend Klonowski writes, “You are not God, so you give resources for building up His kingdom out of your own control and into the control of God’s people, the church”. It is important to realize the church is not God either. However, through the Holy Spirit the varied spiritual gifts of

the people represent a collective wisdom of the church that is closer to God than any one human being.

5. Giving mission support provides a form

of economic and social justice. When an individual makes a decision about specific generous giving, the one who has the money decides the allocation. This “free-market” approach to giving is appealing to many people. However, if the gifts of God are entrusted to the people of God, should not the people participate in allocation decisions? To look at another institution, what would our local, state and federal government look like if every individual decided what specific programs to

support at each level? This cafeteria approach would provide little consistency or quality, and would overlook the less visible support functions. Within the church representational guidelines, mission support strives to be inclusive and balanced in pursuing a common vision for ministry.

Which of these five points is most important to you? How about to your congregation? Consider these points the next time a question is raised about mission support.

(This article is a recap of an earlier one from SALT Ventures, an ELCA stewardship resource.)

Mission Support and the Oregon Synod Office

*Submitted by Becky Brown,
Stewardship Committee Chair*

While stuck in traffic, do you often wonder what administrative tasks go on in the synod office? Well, I do so I decided to gather some numbers. Mindy Holland generously compiled some rough estimates of the work that she and Robyn Hartwig do. They are busy!

In the area of candidacy this past year, they - managed the paperwork (no small feat) and worked with 19 candidates in the process for ordination, two candidates in the process for consecration as diaconal ministers, and two candidates in the process for commissioning as AIMs (associates in ministry) .

- coordinated four candidacy committee meetings.

In the area of mobility (congregations and pastors match their calls and callings), they

- worked with eight congregations calling new pastors and one call for a diaconal minister.
- worked on three synodical calls for pastors.
- worked with nine calls to interim ministry.
- worked with two ordinations (the first call for a new pastor) and one consecration.

In the Call Process

In April 2008, 22 congregations were in some

continued on next page