

# Synod Stewardship Strategic Plan For the Oregon Synod – ELCA

November 24, 2005

*“Living in and responding to God’s amazing grace.”*

## VISION STATEMENT

The primary purpose of stewardship is to serve the will of God. Stewardship is how we live our lives after we are baptized and includes how we spend our resources, our time, and our talents to do God’s will. In all of our congregations’ programs, structures, and behaviors, we will strengthen the daily-life stewardship of all our members so that God’s creating, redeeming, and sanctifying activity will flourish in the world.

## LEADERSHIP EXPECTATIONS AND PRACTICES

The Oregon Synod is committed to equipping congregations and leaders to meet their challenges and fulfilling the mission our Lord established for his church. In accomplishing this, the bishop and all synod personnel, including synod staff, Synod Council, all synod leaders and all rostered personnel, will model good daily-life stewardship, teach others, and see stewardship as an integrated part of synod ministry. These efforts will include the following:

- Providing resources for congregational life and assisting members of synod congregations in carrying out their ministries in the world.
- Communicating regularly and placing a frequent emphasis on stewardship themes and activities.
- Teaching all rostered personnel the principles of financial stewardship, leading by personal example, and encouraging the multiplication of leaders in congregations.
- Assisting leaders in identifying, exploring, and using their gifts to connect individuals, congregations, and ministries.
- Being comfortable talking about money and stewardship.
- Stressing accountability in all aspects of synod stewardship work including relationships with churchwide deployed stewardship staff.
- Challenging all leaders in congregations to be models of faithful generosity and providing strong financial support to the synod.
- Placing a strong emphasis on mission support growth at all levels in the church.
- Orienting and educating new Synod Council members, new synod pastors and first call pastors regarding financial stewardship and their role in funding the ministries of the church.
- Recognizing and encouraging the mutual interdependence with and between all congregations.

In addition to the above responsibilities, the synod council shall:

- Periodically review and bi-annually approve the Synod Stewardship Strategic Plan including providing the support, resources and participation for implementation of the plan.
- Annually develop and approve an integrated Synod Financial Plan, detailing both income and expenses.
- Annually visit each congregation in the synod, lifting up the ministries of the congregations and the partnership of each congregation and the synod.
- Recognize and appreciate synod personnel, including synod staff, Synod Council, all synod leaders and all rostered personnel who demonstrate good examples of steward leadership.

In addition to the above responsibilities, cluster deans shall encourage all stewardship expectations and practices within their clusters.

The Synod Candidacy Committee shall adopt guidelines to ensure rostered personnel entering the synod are models of good financial stewardship and will encourage mission support growth.

Mission Interpreters shall develop and present an effective Mission Interpretation Program making it available to all congregations. This program shall:

- Tell the stories of the local, national and worldwide ministries of the Oregon Synod and the ELCA beyond the walls of each congregation.
- Establish connections with and between the congregations of the Oregon Synod.
- Thank congregational members for their ministries through their mission support.
- Assist congregational members to grow and move into a deeper understanding of their daily life in Christ.

An effective Planned Giving Program shall be developed and presented to congregations and individuals including education about the Synod Endowment Fund.

Congregations shall be encouraged to tithe mission support per the 1991 Oregon Synod Congregational Resolution (Appendix B).

## STRATEGY GOALS

Through programs, structures and behaviors, congregations of the synod will strengthen the daily life stewardship of all their members so that God's creating, redeeming and sanctifying activity will flourish in the world. These actions shall be measured by the following goals:

- That all congregations are actively involved in mission in their communities.
- That a minimum of seventy percent (70%) of all synod congregations are represented and actively involved in synodical ministries and activities.
- That a minimum of two percent (2%) of each congregation's lay membership is actively involved in synodical ministries and activities.
- In accordance with Vision and Expectations III, one hundred percent (100%) of clergy are actively involved in synodical ministries and activities.

God's creating, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world is supported by ministries of the ELCA. Synod support shall be measured by the following goals:

- Raising the percentage of mission support of the Oregon Synod to the ministries of the ELCA to the average percentage of mission support of the 65 Synods of the ELCA by 2008 fiscal year. (Current Oregon Synod support is 42.9%; the average of all synods in 2003 was 50.7%. The increase would be approximately 2.6% per year, or an increase of approximately \$29,337.00 per year above year 2003 mission support.)
- Raising the percentage of mission support of the Oregon Synod to the ministries of the ELCA to five percent (5%) above the average percentage of mission support of the 65 synods of the ELCA by 2012 fiscal year. (The increase would be 1.25% per year, or approximately \$14,106.00 per year.)
- Raising the percentage of mission support of the Oregon Synod to the ministries of the ELCA beyond the 2012 fiscal year by one half percent (1/2%) per year. (The increase would be 0.50% per year, or approximately \$5,642.00 per year.)

## STAFF PRACTICES

The synod shall have a designated stewardship staff person who dedicates at least one quarter of his or her time to synod and congregational stewardship activities. The selection of the designated stewardship staff person shall be undertaken jointly by the bishop and churchwide stewardship staff. The synod shall adopt clear and uniform expectations of synod stewardship staff. The stewardship staff shall work interdependently to:

- Develop and implement an effective fully integrated stewardship strategy and plan that fits well with the strategic plans of the synod and ELCA.
- Develop a functional team to implement the stewardship strategy and plan.
- Nurture partnerships built on active coaching relationships with leaders.
- Utilize ELCA, Region One and other resources where appropriate.
- Improve personal effectiveness through continuing education.
- Participate in professional organizations.

## SYNOD PERSONNEL

ELCA churchwide rostered staff:

- Stewardship leadership support through the Division of Evangelical Outreach and Congregation Mission.

Synod employed staff:

- Bishop: Bishop Paul Swanson
- Designated stewardship staff person: Pastor Phil Reitz
- Area Ministry Stewardship Specialist: Danielle Beam
- Assistant to the Bishop: Pastor Zane Wilson
- Congregational Ministries Coordinator: Deaconess Deb Mantey
- Director of Planned Giving: Dr. Patricia Larsen

Synod volunteer staff:

- Synod Stewardship Committee
- Mission Interpreters
- Consecration Sunday leaders
- Congregational Stewardship Committees
- Synod Endowment Committee
- Congregational Endowment Committees

## SYNOD STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS

### A. Mission Support

Mission Support refers to the financial support (benevolence) which congregations provide for the ministry of the wider church. During the current school year and continuing thereafter, the synod shall conduct an annual consultation process that focuses on:

- Discussion with leaders in every congregation.
- Personal contact with a targeted 33% of synod congregations each year.
- An intentional consultation process for submission of annual statements of intent.
- Monthly communication with individual congregations regarding mission support.
- Monthly monitoring of mission support giving.

- At least a one percent (1%) per year increase of regular giving in the congregation for mission support.
- Special attention to affirm and strengthen congregations providing the largest amount and percentage of mission support.
- Consistent and persistent expressions of appreciation to leaders and congregations.
- “Adopt a Project” – connecting congregations with projects that grow ministry, such as global mission, hunger, etc.

### B. Rostered Personnel Education

During the current school year and continuing thereafter, the synod shall provide stewardship training and education for all rostered personnel through programs that focus on:

- Annual pastoral stewardship training.
- Annual first call pastors stewardship training.
- Annual interim pastors training.
- Stewardship leadership training for pastors coming into the synod.
- Personal “money autobiography” story development.
- Rostered leader’s role.
- Sermon content: ministries of the congregation, synod and ELCA.

Beginning within the next three years, the synod shall provide additional stewardship training and education for all rostered personnel through programs that focus on:

- Pastoral Steward Leaders training.
- Programs (coaching) for pastors, such as peer group work, personal finances and money autobiography.

### C. Stewardship Education and Leadership Development

During the current school year and continuing thereafter, the synod shall provide stewardship training, education, and leadership development for all congregational personnel through programs that focus on:

- Synod Assembly workshops.
- Living Faithfully workshops.
- Living the Vision seminars.
- Consecration Sunday Leaders training.
- Congregational Steward Leaders training.
- Synod Council training.
- Congregation council training.
- Stewardship book reviews published in synod newsletter.
- Congregational and personal “Basic Finance 101” training.
- Spiritual Gifts Inventory (available on the Oregon Synod and ELCA websites).
- Year-round stewardship education. (Stewardship is our response to God’s word and generosity all year long, not just finances in the fall.)
- Personal “money autobiography” story development.
- Children and youth training.
- Parents’ resources.
- Asset-based thinking training.

Beginning within the next three years, the synod shall provide stewardship training, education, and leadership development for all congregational personnel through programs that focus on:

- Congregation council stewardship training.
- Congregational stewardship leaders workshops.
- Annual stewardship themes.
- A youth troupe to perform “To the Castle” and other productions.
- Writing workshop for stewardship leaders.
- Parental training for teaching children, such as Share/Save/Spend or 10/10/80.
- Youth leader training.
- Confirmation students and leader training.

#### D. Mission Interpretation

During the current school year and continuing thereafter, the synod shall provide mission interpretation for all congregations which tell the stories and worldwide ministries of the Oregon Synod and the ELCA beyond the walls of each congregation.

- Tell the ministry stories of the Oregon Synod and the ELCA.
- Establish connections with and between congregations.
- Assist congregational members to grow in their understanding of their life in Christ.
- Thank congregational members for their mission support of the synod and churchwide ministries.

#### E. Planned Giving

During the current school year and continuing thereafter, the synod shall provide planned giving education and resources for all congregations and congregational members through programs that focus on:

- Endowment workshops.
- Legacy planning.
- Outliving your money and how to leave it (charitable giving).
- Living the Vision event.

#### F. Communications

During the current school year and continuing thereafter, the synod shall provide stewardship communications to all congregations and congregational members through programs and publications that focus on:

- “Giving Thanks” quarterly publication. (ministries that are supported, who’s being impacted and results of what’s being accomplished)
- Partnerships between congregations and the synod.
- Identifying the relationship between congregations and the synod.
- List of “Best Stewardship Practices” for Oregon Synod congregations.
- Listening post with generous givers and congregations.
- Improved thank-you notes to congregations.
- Synod council communications
- Website stewardship resource links.
- Listing of stewardship themed books and publications.

Beginning within the next three years, the sSynod shall provide stewardship communications to all congregations and congregational members through programs and publications that focus on:

- Resourcing and linking congregations.
- Sharing of congregational communication links.
- Every congregation needs a vision or goal.
- Develop congregational contacts / relationships.
- Culture of Principles and Practices

#### G. Related Strategies

During the current school year and continuing thereafter, the synod shall provide related stewardship strategies for all congregations and congregational members. These include:

- Healthy Congregations
- Natural Church Development

### RESOURCES AND WORKSHOPS

#### A. Synod Stewardship Committee Programs

- New Consecration Sunday
- StewardShops
- Consecration Sunday Leader Training

#### B. Financial Response Programs (ELCA developed)

- New Consecration Sunday
- Stewardship in the Small Membership Rural Congregation
- Stewardship in the Small Membership Urban Congregation
- We Say Yes
- Where Your Heart Is
- With God's Permission
- Legacy
- Giving Magazine Response Method Set

#### C. ELCA/Augsburg Fortress Stewardship Publications

- Step by Step: Fostering Financial Stewardship in Your Congregation
- Whys and Hows of Money Leadership
- The Great Permission: An Asset-Based Field Guide for Congregations
- How to Improve Financial Stewardship: A Guide for Congregations
- The Whys and Hows of Money Leadership: A Workbook for Pastors and Lay Leaders
- Our Stewardship: Managing Our Assets
- Living With Money
- To the Castle, A Musical for Stewards
- Created and Called: Discovering Our Gifts for Abundant Living
- Making Christ Known
- Spiritual Gift Inventory

#### D. Area Ministry Stewardship Specialist (ArMSS) Workshops

- Kids, Money and Stuff
- Ventures: Partners in Stewardship Growth
- AppleTree
- Faith, Money and Security
- Gifts Unlimited: Exploring God's Abundance

#### E. Miscellaneous Stewardship Resources

- "TradeWinds"
- Assessment Tools for Stewardship Ministry
- "Gifts Unlimited"
- Introductory Workshop
- "You Have Permission"
- "Growing Leaders"
- "Stewardship Now" - the on-line newsletter
- Thrivent programs
- "Good Sense" by Willowcreek (Stephen Ministries for financial issues)

## Appendix A - Background

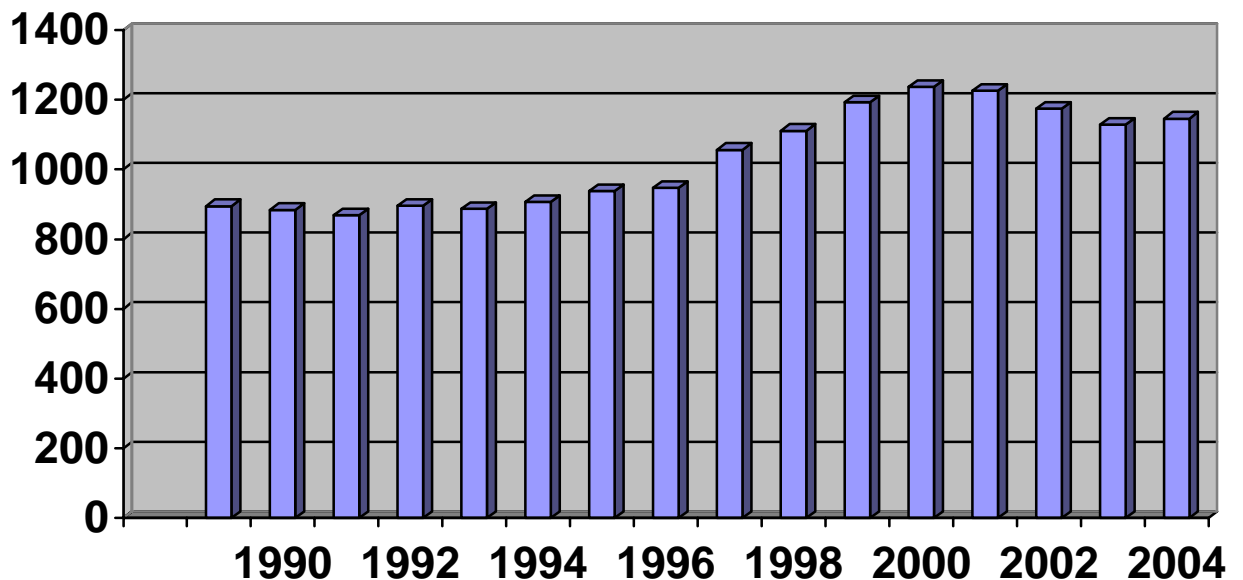
Stewardship is important! We need to talk more about stewardship and stewardship education, about saying “Yes to God’s work in the world.”

For the past five years, congregational giving to the synod has been on a downward trend. Congregational membership has also been on a downward trend. These patterns need to be changed from downward trends to upward trends. The synod stewardship committee 18 months ago embarked upon development of this Synod Stewardship Strategic Plan so that stewardship will become more important to everyone in the synod, from leadership to those sitting in the pews.

It is useful to create stewardship expectations for all synod and congregational leaders, to become part of the culture of each, as something one can grow into. Stewardship expectations and practices for rostered and lay leaders are currently NOT written down anywhere and are rarely discussed. The Synod Stewardship Strategic Plan lists and discusses stewardship expectations. They may be difficult to hear, but form a basis to start serious stewardship discussions in the synod.

This plan also requires the stewardship committee to develop the many necessary resources to assist congregational leadership in daily-life stewardship education.

### **Undesignated Benevolence 1989-2004**



**Appendix B – 1991 Tithing Resolution**

SA.91.6.23.14                      VOTED to adopt Resolution #9 – Tithing Resolution. (Beverly Allert, mover.)

Mr. Frank Yraguen spoke to motion and encouraged the resolution to be considered as an action item and that the assembly delegates take the financial concerns of the Oregon Synod back to our congregations. He concluded that every ministry of the Mission Life Commission is being cut back financially.

**R E S O L U T I O N   # 9**

TITLE:    Tithing Resolution

ORIGIN:        Oregon Synod Council

WHEREAS        the Scriptures advocate the practice of Christian giving that grows out of our thanksgiving for everything that God has done for us and because of a relationship has been established with God through our Baptism; and

WHEREAS        the historic and scriptural benchmark for giving has been the tithe; and

WHEREAS        the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through its Mission 90 emphasis encourages the giving of a tithe or more of our income to Christ’s mission; and

WHEREAS        the practice of tithing is a commendable expression of Christian discipleship, as well as a means of extending Christ’s mission; and

WHEREAS        the congregation needs to model this example that it is asking of its members; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED        that the Oregon Synod encourages all congregations to participate in Mission 90 “TITHERS BY THE MILLION” emphasis, using materials provided by the ELCA that will be sent to all congregations by the bishop; and

BE IT RESOLVED        that the congregations of the Oregon Synod invite their members to commit themselves to tithing as a way of life by moving toward and beyond the giving of 10% of their income for Christ’s mission in the Church and the world; and

BE IT RESOLVED        that each congregation of the Oregon Synod be encouraged to give a minimum of 10% of its income to the work of the Synod and the ELCA through undesignated benevolence and that each congregation be encouraged to grow in giving by 1% of its income until attaining at least 20% of its income being given to undesignated benevolence.