

WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE PORTION OF MY RESURRECTION OFFERING (6.2%) THAT GOES TO SUPPORT THE SYNOD AND ELCA CHURCHWIDE?

From time to time, it serves us well to reflect upon how the many layers of the ELCA – and the impact of our joint ministry -- is felt in the communities we are being called to serve both locally and around the globe. Through this body, united in Christ, we do God's work – for the sake of the world. Here are just a few examples on how our interdependent ministry is making a difference in the world God calls us to serve together. Together, we:

- Send missionaries to engage in global mission (260 missionaries in 50 countries)
- Gather the youth of this church together to share, grow and serve their neighbors (37,000 youth and adults gathered in New Orleans in July 2009)
- Serve one in every 50 people across the United States and the Caribbean, every year, through Lutheran social ministry organizations
- Provide financial support to global companion churches in evangelism and outreach, development of church leaders, sustainable community and agricultural development, primary health care, and basic education.
- Envision, plan, and support the planting of new congregations, and assist established congregations seeking transformation and renewal
- Educate and prepare pastors through support for ELCA seminaries
- Respond to hunger in the world and work toward sustainable, long-term solutions (\$20 million given annually through ELCA World Hunger appeal)
- Provide relief when disaster strikes in our communities or across the globe
- Welcome and provide resettlement support to individuals who have fled persecution in other countries
- Reach out to young adults through Lutheran schools, outdoor ministries, and campus ministries at colleges and universities
- Engage as a global, Christian community, including global relief and development through the Lutheran World Federation, World Council of Churches, and National Council of Churches in Christ

Through the ministry of the Sierra Pacific Synod, we have been called to work together to:

- Support the work of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and California Lutheran University
- Partner with Lutheran Social Services and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in disaster preparedness and disaster response ministries
- Encourage the work of the Sierra Pacific Synod Youth Committee as they support the work in many of our congregations in youth ministries. We will also welcome in May, 2010, members of the SPSYC as voting members at our Assembly
- Celebrate the work of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries and Mt. Cross Bible Camp in providing on-site and Day Camp programs for young people's faith development
- Cast a new vision for the work of the synod in supporting congregations and ministries in northern California and northern Nevada through deployed staff and accessible office sites – a process we hope to complete during 2009-2010.
- Lift up the need for greater sensitivity to the diversity of the mission field where God has put us to work through the work of the Racial and Ethnic Ministries Working Group
- Continue to support that has begun in Rwanda through the Rwandan School Project, the health clinic in Mumeya, and the many companion congregation relationships that currently exist
- Hear the voice of Christ calling us to advocate for and minister to those most in need through the work of Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Nevada, the Lutheran Office of Public Policy in Sacramento, and Lutheran Social Services of Northern California
- Supported 11 people (pastors and lay) who attended a coach training event in order to serve the congregations in our synod seeking coaches.
- Sponsored educational opportunities for lay people in worship leadership and the Catechumenate.
- Sent 9 pastors to attend intentional interim training events in order better to serve our congregations during vacancies

It is of vital importance for the success of these ministries that all layers of the church's life be lifted up and supported – our interdependence is the key to the work we are called to do. When we work together we are doing God's work in ways that no individual, no congregation, nor synod can do alone. It is God's work -- our hands. ***Bp. Holmerud***

ON THE ISSUE OF “GIVING” TO RESURRECTION, THE SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD, & THE ELCA

⁶The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Some of you have indicated that, because of your disagreement with the ELCA Assembly’s decisions, you are considering or choosing to withhold funds from our congregation and give to other charities or that you will give only to a designated fund at Resurrection so that no portion of it will go to the Sierra Pacific Synod and the ELCA Churchwide Ministries. The church council is continuing to explore if and how that might be made a possibility. Please consider this decision very prayerfully and carefully. There are many more pertinent ways to communicate your feelings with the ELCA. Each one of you can write letters, send emails, and make phone calls to our congregation leaders, our Sierra Pacific Synod leaders and staff as well as to the leaders and staff of the ELCA.

Here are some questions from Bishop Wayne Miller to reflect upon before considering withholding or redirecting mission support dollars as a protest against the ELCA Assembly action:

- **Who will be helped and who will be hurt by this decision?**
- **Is this likely outcome consistent with your intention?**
- **Explain the understandings of “church” and “stewardship” that are expressed and modeled by this choice.**
- **If members of your own congregation follow this example, what would be the likely impact on your local mission as a congregation?**
- **With these things in mind, who would be helped and who would be hurt by this choice?**
- **Is there a better way to accomplish what you’re trying to do?**
- **Explore all you can about all of the ministries including Mt. Cross Camp, Lutheran Social Services, colleges and universities, missionaries, hunger programs, disaster relief, youth ministry support, etc. that are part of our interdependent church body of the ELCA. Go to the websites at www.spselca.org and www.elca.org and learn as much as you can about what our congregation’s support does for ministry and mission in the world.**
- **How many lives will be affected by your decision to withhold funds from these critical ministries?**

Membership: LCR Constitution

*C8.04. It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:

- a. Make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments.
- b. Live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church.
- c. And support the work of this congregation, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.