



Synod of Lakes and Prairies
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

March 26, 2008

Dear Friends,

We are writing this letter to provide interpretive information about the receipt and expenditure of dollars within the Synod of Lakes and Prairies...to help sessions and presbyteries understand the ministry and mission of the synod. We are pleased to take the opportunity to tell the synod's story.

Most of the money received by the Synod from churches is undesignated and is available for all the work of the Synod. So, our response is to give you an overview about the work of the Synod as we move ahead in 2008 and to invite you to ask questions about any specific area in which you or others may have an interest.

In 2008 The Synod of Lakes and Prairies anticipates a total income of \$2,287,474, broken down into major categories as follows:

- Per capita apportionment \$ 746,338
- Basic mission support 714,999
- Mission partnership funds 300,546
- Investment income 197,500
- Previous years' surplus 138,191
- Other income 189,900

Per capita apportionment is paid to the Synod by the presbyteries to pay the expenses of activities and staffing that are mandated by the Book of Order. This includes the expenses of the Synod Assembly, Synod standing committees, the constitutional committees (Nominating, Committee on Representation, Permanent Judicial Commission) and that portion of personnel and administrative costs that support the Assembly and committees. Historically, per capita is understood to be everyone's "fair-share" support as a connectional church. For 2008, this amounts to \$4.69 per member (12/31/06).

Basic mission support is that portion of contributions from churches to support Presbyterian ministry and mission activities, which is shared with the Synod. Ministry is the activity that partners with presbyteries and the synod to strengthen our Christian discipleship and mission are those activities and relationships that serve Christ beyond ourselves. Each congregation (session) determines whether to divide their undesignated mission dollars as recommended by their presbytery, or to divide them by some other percentage.

Mission partnership funds are those moneys that General Assembly shares back with us to support the work of the Synod historically known as National Mission. The other income items somewhat speak for themselves. If you have an interest in more detail in this area, please let me know.

Expenditures by the Synod in 2008 of \$2,287,474 are allocated into several primary categories as listed below:

- Ministries in partnership \$1,102,000
- Ecumenical and institutional ministries 198,880
- Communication 23,250
- Governance 97,850
- Program personnel costs 171,367

Ministries in partnership – this category represents the variety of ways we partner with our sixteen presbyteries to support and strengthen their ministries with congregations and church leadership. That is, these dollars underwrite our ministry to equip the saints for mission (our presbyteries). During 2008, the Synod will make payments of Comprehensive Presbytery Mission Support (CPMS) to presbyteries for particular ministry efforts in the amount of \$207,000. We also provide Comprehensive Presbytery Staff Support (CPSS) in the amount of \$40,000 each to fifteen of our presbyteries for full-time executive leadership (\$600,000). Our sixteenth presbytery, Dakota, receives a substantial amount from CPMS.

An exciting new line item in the Partnership category is **Presbytery Staffing Partnerships**. This \$85,000 item is made possible in part by the reduction in synod staffing, recognizing that the way we work with presbyteries needs to take on a new form. We will be working with presbyteries to identify and implement new staffing models.

Some of these dollars have been used to help fund multiple-presbytery conversations. These conversations are addressing new ways for presbyteries to partner with one another in ministry and mission, and consider alternative structures and staffing configurations to more faithfully serve the church in a new day.

Other major expenses of the “Ministries in partnership” category include:

- Synod school, an annual educational event open to all, is subsidized in the amount of \$35,000 plus personnel costs.
- COM/CPM Training Event is an annual event to provide training for presbytery committee members of their Committee on Ministry and Committee on Preparation for Ministry. The cost of this event in 2008 is expected to be \$17,000, plus personnel costs.
- Racial/Ethnic scholarships are an expense in which the Synod invests in the education of minorities training for the ministry. The Synod has budgeted \$22,500 in these scholarships to prepare the next generation of pastors and lay leaders. In addition, the Synod benefits from a part time staff member working with Racial/Ethnic ministries.
- Church Development program grants will be made of almost \$100,000 to help churches while they are building the size of a congregation necessary to support their costs. These grants are typically in amounts that decrease over a 5 to 7-year period.
- The Presbytery of Dakota, the oldest presbytery west of the Mississippi and consisting of 21 Native American congregations receives \$100,000 towards compensation of their pastoral leadership. This line item is declining by \$25,000 per year.
- There were a number of smaller programs as well.

Ecumenical and Institutional Ministries – This category focuses on the mission activities of the Synod. Although we do not provide financial support, the Synod implements significant mission through its seven associations of Presbyterian Homes (ministry to seniors) and seven church-related colleges across our six state area. Included in the budget:

- Support of campus ministries in the amount of \$140,000 (an additional \$100,000 is provided from the Westminster Fund of the Synod)
- Support of the Synod’s camp (co-owned with four presbyteries) - \$9,000.
- Support of career development centers - \$25,000.
- Ecumenical media centers - \$23,880

Communication – this category is support of our web site www.lakesandprairies.org and an electronic newsletter that is distributed frequently. We have a full-time professional member of our staff who works

in the communication area, providing consulting services to and developing communication tools for use by presbyteries and churches. We are researching the possibilities of installing a video conference system across the synod to facilitate communication and training possibilities.

Governance – these are the costs of the Synod meetings and functioning as a governing body, including its committees. In addition are the meetings of committees required by the Book of Order and synod units that plan and implement additional programming and support for presbyteries; such as, synod school.

In the near future we will make the effort to translate the Personnel items into the ministry and mission activities described above. In addition, we administer a **Synod loan fund** of approximately \$5,200,000. Below market-rate loans are made to churches and presbyteries for the purchase of church sites and the construction of new buildings, additions, remodeling projects and major repairs. About \$300,000 in new loans was disbursed during 2007 with another \$600,000 approved and awaiting disbursement. This is a “revolving” loan fund with new loans made available as older loans are repaid.

If you would like more information, or more detail in a particular area, please contact us. Best wishes to you in your ministry.

Peace!

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