



May 2009

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. We are using this letter as an opportunity to give you an overview about the work of the Synod as we move along in 2009 and to invite you to ask questions about any specific area in which you or others may have an interest.

During 2009 the Synod of Lakes and Prairies anticipates a total income of about \$2.23 million. The revenue falls into the following major categories, rounded to the nearest thousand:

• Per capita apportionment	\$ 742,000
• Basic mission support	648,000
• Mission partnership funds	276,000
• Investment income	186,000
• Previous years’ surplus	179,000
• Other income	195,000

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 of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). 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” to support our connectional church. For 2009, this amounts to \$4.80 per member, and the Synod recently voted to maintain the same level in 2010.

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 is 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 us know.

The Synod’s 2009 budget includes expenditures of about \$2.23 million, allocated into several primary categories as listed below:

• Ministries in partnership	\$1,034,000
• Ecumenical and institutional ministries	197,000
• Communication	24,500
• Governance	96,000
• Program personnel costs	175,000

- Ecclesiastical Personnel and Administration

700,000

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 – our presbyteries – for mission. During 2009, the Synod will make payments of Comprehensive Presbytery Mission Support (CPMS) to presbyteries for particular ministry efforts in the amount of \$155,000. We also provide Comprehensive Presbytery Staff Support (CPSS) in the amount of \$40,000 each to fifteen of our presbyteries for executive leadership (\$600,000). Our sixteenth presbytery, Dakota, which has no staff, receives a substantial amount from CPMS – \$85,000.

A relatively new item, Presbytery Staffing Partnerships, is made possible in part by the reduction in synod staff in recent years. The fund, budgeted at \$79,000, has enabled the Synod to work in new ways with its presbyteries in terms of staff. It has allowed the Synod to assist presbyteries with staff support when presbytery personnel resources have been drawn in different directions. 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 2009 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 and Redevelopment program grants are budgeted for \$90,000 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, will received \$85,000 this year as compensation for their pastoral leadership. This line item is declining by 15 percent per year.

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 six Presbyterian Homes (ministry to seniors), seven church-related colleges across our six state area, and one social services agency. Included in the budget are:

- Support for campus ministries in the amount of \$140,000 (additional funds, approaching \$100,000, are provided from the Synod’s Westminster Fund)
- Support of the Synod’s camp (co-owned with four presbyteries) - \$7,000.
- Support of career development centers - \$25,000.
- Ecumenical media centers - \$23,880

Communication – This category, budgeted at \$24,500, includes support for www.lakesandprairies.org, the Synod’s Web site, and a biweekly electronic newsletter, “Keeping in Touch.” 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. The fund is also used to

support networks to support the flow of information between and among the presbyteries of the Synod, and to work with other communicators in the Synod and throughout the church to improve communication.

Governance – These are the costs of the Synod meetings and functioning as a governing body, including its committees. In addition it supports 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.

We also administer a Synod loan fund of approximately \$5.2 million. 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. 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.