

Report of the Secretary
April 2008

Wow! I can't believe that it's Assembly time again. This Assembly completes my four-year term as Synod Secretary. The time has gone by quickly, partly due to the exciting things are going on around the synod. I'll recap some items here.

The 22 members of the Council, along with the vice president, the treasurer, the Bishop and I, have met four times this past year, and the Executive Committee of the Council has met three times. Even though we are spread across the synod territory, we are always in contact by phone and email.

The "first ever" synod profile assessment occurred this past year. People from across the synod participated by answering questions through a survey and in-person meetings. The data tell an amazing story with the results available on the Synod website (www.spselca.org). This process may prove so valuable as to serve as a model for other synods.

All three of the discipling teams – Word and Sacrament, Leadership Disciplining and Witness and Service - have been very active this past year. Three congregations have attended the Catechumenate training this past year and more congregations plan to attend this coming year. This faith formation process is proving to be a wonderful way for congregations to welcome "seekers" into the faith. The worship workshop "Leading the Peoples' Song" presented by Marty Haugen in January was full!

One team will lend support to clergy and their mentors or spiritual directors. This action comes as a result of the Listening Posts held this past year across the Synod, where clergy were free to express their needs. And, one team continues to advocate support for SAWCs (Synodically Authorized Worship Communities) and mission congregations. New starts in various locations and more diverse ethnic/language groups are being explored.

We are now in the fourth year of our ten year budget plan. Much emphasis has been placed on our new missions. Second Mile Giving is in full swing resulting in good responses to the opportunity to give to our Mission Partners.

The Synod Council has been about "your" business this past year. We have appointed over 30 people to positions of leadership, both for Synod committees and Partner agencies. Over 30 pastors and AIMS have been issued calls to special service. Ten congregations have submitted changes to their governing documents which were then approved by the Council.

Now, as we look forward to the future of this Synod, we will elect a new bishop. Both challenges and opportunities lie ahead. May the Holy Spirit bless us and our newly elected bishop.

And now my thanks. Thanks for the opportunity to serve as your secretary. It has been a time of growth for me - personally and spiritually. I have made so many new friends and learned more than I ever thought possible about the ministry of the Synod and the ELCA. I am truly thankful to God for this opportunity.

I must also thank my staff helpers. Pr. Noreen Meginness and her assistant, Ms. Sue Schultz, helped me at every turn. Fresno and Oakland are miles apart, but our connection has been strong. Mr. Chuck Ruthroff helped with legal issues, financial issues and historical items. (How was all this accomplished before computers?) Vice President Larry Moeller assisted me with learning the functions of the Synod Council – thank you, Larry. And, all of us work with a most delightful bishop! My personal thanks to Bishop Mullen for his leadership and service. I pray for God's blessings on his future endeavors.

God's grace to you all.
Kathy Werfelmann