



Report of the Executive for Administration

This report provides an overview of progress of the churchwide organization during the 2006-2007 biennium in the alignment of churchwide structure, programs, functions, staffing, and budget with the Plan for Mission affirmed by the 2003 Churchwide Assembly. This survey focuses on activity that is organization-wide or multi-unit in character. It is by no means an exhaustive description of the achievements in alignment in this period of time. The reports to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly submitted by individual units and sections offer collectively a more complete and panoramic view of churchwide endeavors.

As you read this report, you will find that there are several important frames of reference for our organization-wide and multi-unit activities. First and foremost is the Plan for Mission. We constantly are asking the question: "How does this activity relate to and advance this church's mission, vision, and the churchwide strategic directions and commitments for implementation?"

A second frame of reference is the Design for Mission approved by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly in which the organization was restructured, corporate values articulated, and governance patterns changed. The new structure and altered governance patterns are based on organizational principles and cultural values enumerated in the Design for Mission and Church Council report on governance. In response to the actions of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, we are always asking the question: "Are we being faithful to the commitments and values embedded in this new design and plan for governance?"

A third frame of reference in this report is the reality that planning, implementation, and evaluation are activities operating on a continuum. There is always an element of each occurring simultaneously in whatever is being done. Thus, each activity described in this report involves concurrent and ongoing strategic thinking and planning, acting, and monitoring.

Management of the churchwide budget is illustrative of the afore-mentioned continuum. In this interdependent church, information about revenue sources is always subject to change. In addition, opportunities and challenges not anticipated at the time of preparing the annual expenditure authorization require consideration of redirection of funds within the budget. Thus the organization routinely experiences the interplay of planning, acting, and monitoring as it applies to the budget.

A final frame of reference is the actions over the years of the Church Council and Churchwide Assemblies in which churchwide policies and strategies are adopted. The organization honors these actions in its planning and practices. Recent examples are the evangelism strategy and completion of the ethnic ministry strategies.

There are three sections to this report. First, there is a description of the overarching activity in the organization related

to the alignment of planning, functioning, staffing, budgeting, and structure. Second, the report describes the many ways in which the organization has begun to integrate and assimilate into its daily work the Plan for Mission and Design for Mission's vision, values, and commitments. The report concludes with a personal word.

Section One: Alignment

The 2003 Churchwide Assembly, having received and affirmed the Plan for Mission, called upon the presiding bishop to align the churchwide organization's structure, staffing, and budget with the plan. The Design for Mission adopted by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly was the first tangible step in Presiding Bishop Hanson's response to this charge. The design proposal primarily addressed structure and values and secondarily, in some modest ways, budget and staffing.

The period between the 2005 Assembly and the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council was largely consumed with the immediate needs of the organization in personnel selection for new or redesigned units, initial team-building in the redesigned structure, and substantial refinement of unit budgets for the 2006 fiscal year.

New unit leaders were appointed by Presiding Bishop Hanson and the Church Council during this time. These appointments included the Rev. Stanley N. Olson as executive director for the new Vocation and Education program unit; the Rev. Richard A. Magnus as executive director for the new Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission program unit; and the Rev. Sherman G. Hicks as executive director for the new Multicultural Ministries program unit. The Church Council elected Mr. Daniel J. Lehmann as editor of *The Lutheran* magazine. Presiding Bishop Hanson appointed Ms. Kristi S. Bangert as executive director for the Communication Services unit and the Rev. Michael L. Burk as executive for the Worship and Liturgical Resources section in the Office of the Presiding Bishop. In September 2006 Ms. Cynthia J. Halverson was elected by the board of the Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the position of president-elect and concurrently appointed by Presiding Bishop Hanson to the position of executive director-designate of the Development Services unit. Her regular service in these positions begins in September 2007.

During this biennium, Presiding Bishop Hanson appointed the Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock to the position of executive for leadership development in the Office of the Presiding Bishop and with the Church Council reappointed the Rev. Rebecca S. Larson as executive director for the Church in Society program unit. He also reappointed in sections of the Office of Presiding Bishop Ms. Else B. Thompson as executive for human resources, the Rev. Kathie Bender Schwich as executive for synodical and

constituent relations, Mr. Kenneth W. Inskeep as executive for research and evaluation, and the Rev. Randall R. Lee as executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations.

Following the April 2006 meeting of the Church Council, the organization took up more methodically and systematically the task of alignment. At the request of Presiding Bishop Hanson, the executive for administration began this process in May 2006 with development of a paper to stimulate focused conversation on the topic by the Cabinet of Executives. The paper, entitled "Strategic Thinking, Planning, Functioning, Budgeting, and Staffing in the ELCA Churchwide Organization," addressed two questions on our strategic planning: "Where are we and how did we get here?" and "What is our desired destination and how do we get there?" Staggered throughout the paper were 26 questions to which each member of the cabinet was asked to respond. The responses were compiled in a 64-page document. Presiding Bishop Hanson prepared a written response to the compilation of responses. These documents became the basis for conversation at the June 2006 cabinet meeting.

In September 2006 Presiding Bishop Hanson presented a paper to the cabinet addressing the purposes and functions of the churchwide expression within the wider ecology of the ELCA. The paper will serve as a lens for ongoing planning and mission interpretation.

Another concrete outcome of these alignment processes was the cabinet's agreement that prioritization of the multiple programs, activities, and functions of the churchwide organization in the context of the Plan for Mission is an imperative. While staff members in the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Treasurer have taken some strides in this direction in collaboration with the Cabinet of Executives, clearly a prioritization process and instrument that is applied to the entire organization was required.

To this end, a document was developed that lists criteria for identifying programmatic and functional priorities of the churchwide organization. The content of this document is found in the 2007 Churchwide Assembly materials related to the 2008-2009 budget proposal. The churchwide Budget and Planning Team used this instrument to advise Presiding Bishop Hanson on priorities for the new biennial churchwide budget. This process has resulted in significant progress in the alignment of budget, and implicitly churchwide staffing patterns, with the Plan for Mission.

The reorganized structure and annual budget of the churchwide organization, aligned as they are now, are tools and resources intended to serve and support churchwide ministries. The next section of this report describes some of the ways in which these tools and resources have taken form in the daily work of your partners in ministry in the churchwide organization.

Section Two: Integration and Assimilation

The executive directors of the seven churchwide program units, the Communications Services executive director, the presiding bishop, and the bishop's executive assistants meet monthly for the purpose of joint program planning and coordination. Strategic planning by each of the units is a high

priority. Two of the units, Women of the ELCA and Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, are separately incorporated and engage in extensive planning processes with their respective staffs and boards. The other five program units adopted a common vocabulary for unit-specific strategic planning within the context of the Plan for Mission. The organization engaged an external consultant to assist the units in their planning. All now have strategic plans for the period commencing June 1, 2007 through December 31, 2009, such plans to be updated in January 2008 and January 2009.

The unincorporated program units are planning a joint meeting of their program committees in October 2007. This gathering will be similar in purpose to the October 2005 joint meeting and provides the opportunity for orientation of the new class of committee members elected at the 2007 Churchwide Assembly.

A new inter-unit roundtable on intersections of domestic mission and global mission has been organized. There are many occasions when the domestic work of one of the program units has a direct impact on global ministries and partnerships and *vice versa*. This table enables us to encourage collaboration and eliminate surprises or duplication of effort.

Four strategic alliances of churchwide staff are organized around some key commitments of the Plan for Mission. The commitments are justice for women, multicultural ministry, poverty and wealth, and young adult ministry. Each of the alliances has a high level of staff interest and zeal. The alliances are intended to assist the churchwide organization in expressing and deepening those commitments. Alliances use such means as inventorying, imagining, and discussing in order to offer advice and assistance to units and sections. The alliances assist the churchwide organization in understanding and, where necessary, changing its culture in these matters.

Honoring a commitment in the Design for Mission, the organization confirmed in both 2006 and 2007 that it had met or exceeded the 2005 benchmark for budgetary commitments of the organization to multicultural ministries. Action plans and monitoring tools are completed for each of the ethnic community strategies. The Consulting Committee for Justice for Women was constituted and held meetings in October 2006 and March 2007.

A consultation was held in August 2006 on the topic of the future role of the churchwide organization in Christian education. A summary of areas of consensus has been affirmed by those participating in the consultation. This summary will have great bearing on program development, staffing, and budget in the years ahead.

Similarly two consultations were held with the Conference of Bishops on the topic of starting new congregations and the shared roles of synods and the churchwide organization in staffing, funding, and identifying leaders for these ministries. The strengths and weaknesses of the present system and expectations of the partners in funding new starts were clarified.

Another consultation with the Conference of Bishops is being organized at the time this report is written. The consultation will assess the ways in which this church presently supports ELCA congregations and rostered leaders when a disaster occurs, consider the ways in which this support could be

expanded and strengthened, and make recommendations to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the Church in Society program unit, the Conference of Bishops, and other appropriate parties based on this assessment.

Five synodical bishops will participate in the assessment drawn from areas of this church that have experienced different types of disasters, including hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, fires, and human-caused disasters. Churchwide staff members participating in the consultation will be drawn from Church in Society, the ELCA Mission Investment Fund, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, Communication Services, Synodical Relations, and the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

The first critical chapter in the organization's business continuity plan is complete, thanks to the leadership of the Business Continuity Planning (BCP) Team. An employee manual on BCP has been distributed to all staff through educational sessions conducted with each unit. Additionally, each unit and section has an individualized plan identifying internal contact trees and the prioritized functions of the unit in the case of business interruption.

The Human Resources section is working with all units in an examination of position descriptions and titles across the whole organization. Organization charts are in hand for all units.

The Research and Evaluation section is evaluating the effectiveness of the churchwide organization's extensive use of inter-unit staff teams. Some of the questions being asked include what are the best practices, and in what ways do the teams contribute to the culture of coordination and collaboration to which we aspire.

The Operations Team consists of the executive directors of units and sections deemed as constituting the infrastructure of the organization. Each of these units is doing an analysis presently of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats so that the team can self-assess what is being done well, what is not being done well, and what factors in the environment are affecting our infrastructure.

A staff team comprised of the secretary, the treasurer, the executive for human resources, and the executive for administration has reviewed all policies in the churchwide operations policies and procedures manual. Many policies were long overdue for updating or elimination. A revised manual has been distributed to executive leaders.

The Racial Justice Ministries Coordinating Team is co-convened by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Multicultural Ministries unit. The team is advising the coordinator for anti-racism education and training and the director for racial justice ministries in the conceptualization of the next chapter in churchwide leadership to address racism. During this biennium, the coordinator's position was changed from part-time to full-time.

The Raiser's Edge, an integrated, unified database system focused first on ELCA donor information, went live very successfully in October 2006. This is a monumental first step in strengthening our relationship with ELCA members, congregations, and other partners through coordinated and precise communication. The next step is to integrate the contact lists currently held by individual units.

A comprehensive communication strategy for this church is rapidly taking form. One facet of the strategy is to implement many of the major recommendations of assessments conducted in 2005. One of these recommendations called for the convening of a "toolkit committee" to design the ideal communications toolkit for the ELCA. The committee met in April 2007. Members of this committee represented a wide variety of disciplines in the communication field.

The Mission Funding and Interpretation Team convened quarterly by Presiding Bishop Hanson has assigned specific responsibility for coverage and implementation of each of the goals contained in the report of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding.

Conclusion and Personal Word

As you have read, this array of activities has multiple connections to the four frames of reference mentioned early in this report: the Plan for Mission, the Design for Mission and governance proposal, the continuum of planning-acting-evaluating, and policies and strategies of this church. As the churchwide organization is accountable to the Church Council and Churchwide Assembly for these endeavors, your questions or comments are welcomed.

I conclude this report by sharing my intent to retire on October 31, 2007. It has been an incredible privilege to work with and for Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson. He is a gifted, wise, faithful, and courageous leader. I will be forever grateful for this opportunity.

Further, I have great admiration for my colleagues in the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Cabinet of Executives. These leaders bring excellent talents, skills, and experience well-suited to the positions in which they serve. They are outstanding servants of this church.

It has been a great honor to serve in the churchwide organization for twenty years and most recently as executive for administration.

Charles S. Miller, *executive for administration*

This page intentionally left blank.