

Commentary on the 2011 Proposed Budget

Overview

The 2010 budget for the Saint Paul Area Synod was reorganized into categories that more closely align with the portfolios of synod staff—shifted in the summer of 2008 when three new persons joined the staff—as they engage congregations and leaders as partners and catalysts in building connections through collaborative, supportive relationships. Budgets printed include those for 2008 and 2009 in the prior format, and 2010 and 2011 in the revised format.

Key elements of the revised format

The 2010 and 2011 format reflects a shift in focus of staff portfolios. The three budget lines previously assigned to the leadership teams and the urban strategy line have been merged into two new lines: Mission Strategy Development (\$20,000 for 2011) and Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission (EOCM)/Synod Mission Start-Up (\$7,500). Mission Strategy Development will provide funding for leadership training, events, and collaborative mission initiatives among congregations throughout the synod—urban, suburban, and rural. The EOCM/Synod Mission Start-Up will provide the synod contribution of funds (\$7,500) for congregations under development. In the past, this has not been a line item in the budget and funding for mission starts has come through Crossing Bridges or through designated gifts from congregations.

Another change in the 2010 and 2011 budgets has been transferring support for Region 3 from the Synod Partnership Ministries category to Synod Ministries. Synod support for the Region 3 coordinator and ministry among the nine synods in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota is calculated on a fair share basis and not as a percentage of the budget. Since the work of the Region 3 coordinator supports synod work around candidacy and some other training efforts, it is more appropriate to place it under Synod Ministries, which encompasses line items for Synod Ministry Initiatives and Synodical Support of Leaders and Congregations in the 2010 and 2011 budgets.

Income

The 2011 proposed budget is based on an estimate of what the Saint Paul Area Synod estimates it will receive in 2011:

- **Congregational Mission Support** is budgeted taking into account the shortfall experienced in 2009, which resulted in a significant downward revision of the 2010 budget in January of 2010 by the synod council. The final month of the 2009 fiscal year showed dramatic improvement, and we now believe that the expectation of \$2,200,000 in mission support for 2011 is reasonable, given that our 2009 income came in less than one percent lower than that.
- **Churchwide Expense Offset** from Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission (EOCM) provides partial support for in-office expenses for the assistant to the bishop for evangelical mission, the position funded by the churchwide EOCM unit.
- **Salary Offset for Companion Synod** reflects some revenues anticipated to cover the increase in staff time because of the increased financial activity in coordinating funding for our companion partnerships.
- **Interest and Miscellaneous** includes income from interest on checking accounts as well as miscellaneous income.
- The revision to the 2010 budget, done at a time prior to the final month upsurge, included a \$7,500 figure to be transferred from designated reserves for new mission starts, aligned with the budgeted amount for that same purpose. Should income exceed the cautious figure set for congregational mission support, such a transfer may not be needed.

Expenditures

Synodical Support of ELCA Churchwide Mission amounts to 50 percent of undesignated congregational mission support. The contribution is calculated and submitted monthly.

Synod Partnership Ministries include support for this synod's six partners in ministry—agencies, institutions, and specialized ministries supported through the synod budget. Partners in ministry receive monthly funding through mission support income using a formula based on the percentage of total support the partner receives. The formula maintains each ministry's support as a fixed percentage of the overall mission support given by congregations. The synod council completed a program review with each partner in 2007; all six Minnesota synods joined in a conversation with these partners in 2008 and again in March of 2010. With all synods experiencing budget pressures, our synod council decided on a percentage of the whole budget to be used for partnership ministries of 12 percent. This is about two percent lower than previously, but still at the top of the six synods in Minnesota. A brief overview of each partner in ministry follows:

Luther Seminary relies on support from the ELCA churchwide and synods in Regions 1 and 3 in addition to tuition and income from designated giving for its operating expenses. Synod and churchwide support accounts for 10 percent of the budget of Luther Seminary.

Lutheran Campus Ministry (LCM) represents ELCA ministries to students on campuses at Bemidji, Duluth, Mankato, Marshall, Moorhead, Morris, St. Cloud, the Twin Cities, and Winona. LCM relies totally on support from synods and churchwide for its budget. LCM has not curtailed ministry sites over the past 10 years, though its funding has diminished by nearly half. There is a major re-thinking underway as to how campus ministry will be done in the future, both in Minnesota and elsewhere.

ELCA Colleges and Universities receive funding from all 65 synods. The Saint Paul Area Synod helps support the 12 ELCA colleges in Regions 3 and 5 (Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois). This support line is a small amount of a college's budget, recognizing that as a very small proportion of actual operating costs, the presence of financial support is more symbolically significant than financially critical.

Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota (LCPPM) is funded by all the Minnesota synods and the ELCA's Church in Society. Funding provides for staffing and program expenses for this ministry which provides a Lutheran voice in public policy advocacy. In addition to our financial contribution, our synod provides rent-free office space for LCPPM.

Minnesota Council of Churches (MCC) is an autonomous, interdenominational organization of member communions throughout Minnesota. Through MCC we work jointly with other church bodies. (The 2008 actual amount reflects a one-time grant of \$25,000 for the transfer of Minnesota Without Poverty from our synod to the MCC.)

Southeast Asian Ministry works with the spiritual and physical needs within the immigrant community for not only those from Southeast Asia, but also from other parts of the world:

Synod Ministries include funding that supports work that arises out of the collective mission and ministry of the Saint Paul Area Synod and efforts that equip and support leaders and congregations.

Region 3 Fair Share support includes the work our synod does cooperatively with the other eight synods in Region 3, focusing on congregational ministry, personnel, candidacy, and mobility issues. This budget line also includes our synod's support for the synod archives located at Luther Seminary. Region 3 is an administrative entity in the ELCA structure and is funded on per member dues by the nine constituent synods.

The **Planned Giving Partnership** includes both metro synods, the ELCA Foundation, and ELCA agencies and institutions in and around the Twin Cities to support the work of Brenda Moore, the full-time regional gift planner who works with congregations and individuals in this synod around planned giving for ELCA ministries. We provide administrative support for this effort and receive \$1200 in annual income.

Companion Synod: Iringa and Guatemala Seventy congregations are partnered with congregations in Tanzania. These funds support infrastructure related to those partnerships, the work of our companion synod coordinators in Iringa, and exchange visits. The companion synod relationship with the Augustinian Lutheran Church of Guatemala involves nine congregations in partnerships. In 2008 these amounts were \$25,000 for Iringa (the same budgeted amount for many years though the partnership has grown considerably) and \$1,000 for the new relationship with Guatemala. For 2009 the synod council proposed amounts of \$25,000 and \$4,000, respectively, to more accurately reflect the comparative money and congregational involvement in these two companionships. The 2008 synod assembly voted to increase the 2009 Guatemala line item to \$8,000 and decrease the Iringa line item to \$21,000. The 2010 budget maintained the level of funding for the Guatemala partnership and increased the Iringa budget by \$4,000 to bring it back to the long-standing support level. The 2009 income shortfall led the synod council to reduce each of these amounts by \$2,000 for 2010 and 2011.

Mission Strategy Development combines line items previously identified for support of programmatic efforts around the threefold vision leadership teams and the urban strategy to fund training, events, and collaborative mission initiatives among urban, suburban, and rural congregations.

EOCM/Synod Mission Start-Up will provide the synod contribution of \$7,500 to those congregations under development by the ELCA Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit.

Line items for candidacy, call process, first call theological education, rostered support, and assistance to congregations, children, youth, and family ministry, gatherings for rostered persons, conference assemblies, communications, and various committees and task force groups provide funding and support for leaders and congregations. The communications line item funds all electronic and print communications.

Synod Staff Ministry reflects office and personnel expenses related to salary and benefits for 7.6 FTE (salary and benefits for the assistant to the bishop for evangelical mission are paid by the churchwide organization), continuing education, office expenses (includes rent and utilities), general expenses around auditing, contracted services, equipment, insurance, telephone, and data base.