

March 27, 2022  
The week of 4 Lent

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I'm writing this annual Treasurer's Report to you, the congregations, missions, individuals, and friends of the Oregon Synod, to talk to you about the financial matters of our Synod. I'm putting the final touches on this report after having heard again our Lord's parable in Luke 13, about the father and his two sons. Our pastor told us this morning this story is not about either son, it's about the prodigal (lavish, extravagant) father, who loves both sons unconditionally. It is with the **lavish, extravagant, unconditional love of our God** in mind that I talk to you this day.

We've just wrapped up our fiscal year, ending January 31, 2021, and we're about to gather in our annual assembly to consider the business of the Oregon Synod. This letter should help set the stage for our financial discussions. In these materials, you will find selected portions of our closing FY 2021 Financial Reports, and the FY 2023 Budget which the Synod Council is recommending to you. I'm looking forward to seeing you face-to-face (first time in 3 years!) at our Synod Assembly May 13-15, where I will make an oral report and present the FY 2023 Budget for adoption.

Here's what I'm going to talk about in this report:

- First, I'm going to tell you about the **Income and Expenses of the 2021 Fiscal Year** (FY 2021; February 1, 2021-January 31, 2022; last year). This includes selected pages from the January 2022 Oregon Synod Financial Reports. We look at these monthly reports to learn the details of the prior month's financial events, as well as the current year-to-date numbers. January 2022 shows the details for the entire FY 2021.
- Second, I'm going to give you an **update about FY 2022** (February 1, 2021-January 31, 2023, the year we are now in); because we are not even 2 months into the current year, I don't have much to share regarding results, but I will touch again on the highlights of the budget we've adopted, and at the assembly I will be able to report on actual results for the first 3 months.
- Finally, I'm going to discuss the **FY 2023 Budget** (February 1, 2023-January 31, 2024; next year). We will be asking you, as a synod, at assembly, to approve the budget for the coming fiscal year, which will start February 1, 2023, ten months from now. It has historical information back to FY 2017, if you are interested.

## **SUMMARY**

The financial affairs of the Oregon Synod continue to be sound. Although we did not realize our goal (budget) for Mission Support last year, we increased it by ~\$47,000 over the prior year. Undesignated gifts increased ~\$12,000, or almost 400%. The first year of our

special “synod-designated benevolence,” now called the Courageous Love Fund, raised ~\$69,000. We are grateful for every dollar of support that you have sent to the Oregon Synod.

Expenses are well controlled and finished the year under budget. Primarily, this is due to work we couldn't do because of the continued challenges of COVID. Nevertheless, lower expenses is always a good thing to go with Mission Support falling short of our plan. We ended the year “in the black.”

Synod resources (our restricted and reserve accounts) are well-stewarded and have increased over the past 12 months. However, most of the increase has to do with receiving grant funds ahead of the projects for which they are designated; it does NOT mean new wealth beyond the intended projects.

If this is all you want to know, you can skip down to page 6, where I talk about our current year, and page 7, where I talk about the budget for FY 2023 that will be voted on at the assembly. I know details can be very boring. But because I'm a strong advocate for full transparency, and because I believe every congregation and individual of our synod is entitled to know where our dollars come from, and how they are used, I encourage you to read on!

### **LAST YEAR – FY 2021:**

First, regarding the Profit and Loss and the Balance Sheet for FY 2021 (ended 1-31-2022):

1. **In FY 2021, our primary source of income**, which we call Mission Support (MS) (the undesignated moneys congregations send to the synod which support the synod's general fund, including our 42% tithe of these funds to ELCA churchwide to support our national church), was \$923,943, which was **less than our budget** of \$970,000. However, it was **up from the prior year** by \$46,936, or +5.4%, compared to FY2020. This reverses the long-term trend of declining MS since 2008, when MS was \$1,217,302, the highest dollar amount in the 34 years of the Oregon Synod. This is a welcome change that I hope is the start of another trend!

On behalf of the synod's officers, council, and staff, **we are thankful, and grateful, for every dollar of Mission Support**, from every congregation that shares our synod's mission. Although individual congregations have provided more, less, or the same number of dollars as in the previous year, as a whole our synod has responded to our Bishop's appeal for increased gifts in order to increase our work.

The Oregon Synod also receives **support from ELCA churchwide** to support the synod's directors of evangelical mission (Juan Carlos La Puente and Pr. Melissa Reed). In FY 2021, we received \$114,092, ~\$2,000 more than in the prior year.

**Other income** included gifts made to the synod of \$16,620, which was a 381% increase over last year! However, Other Income and Interest Earnings combined were only \$3,352, compared to \$9,292 in the previous year. Of course, these items are relatively small compared to the total budget, and they are often irregular and unpredictable. One bright spot was the forgiveness of our federal PPP loan; this shows on the books as providing \$89,121 in additional income in FY 2021. This had no effect on our available

cash; this had already been received at the time of the loan in mid-2020, but at least we know we can keep it!

As in the past, our general fund has also been using **draws from various synod Restricted and Reserve accounts** to further support our mission and ministry work, particularly where we had opportunity to match grants offered from churchwide. In FY 2021, we drew \$128,662 from several Restricted accounts and the Primary Reserve; this was the amount in the budget. This was considerably less than the \$227,966 from reserve and restricted funds in FY 2020. As I have told you before, our leadership, particularly with the encouragement of the Synod Finance Committee, has been working to reduce these annual draws to a more reasonable, and more sustainable level. I will continue to make this a priority. My goal is not to preserve our reserve and restricted funds forever; it is instead to make sure we spend these dollars strategically, with clear purpose, rather than spend them by default or accident because we're overspending our income.

Total Revenue for the General Fund in FY 2021 was \$1,325,789. This includes the \$89,121 of PPP loan forgiveness mentioned above. Without this one-time windfall (which did not increase our available cash, as explained above) our effective total revenue was \$1,263,668, \$33,898 more than FY 2020, but \$36,494 under budget.

- 2. Expenses in FY2021 were up marginally from FY 2020, but under budget.** COVID continued to hamper Synod work, so we did not conduct as many activities, and consequently spend as much as planned.

Total General Fund Expenses for FY 2021 were \$1,233,824, which was \$39,312 below budget, and \$4,054 higher than the prior year.

Our support of Churchwide was \$388,506. That compares to \$368,343 in the prior FY, an increase of \$19,713; this is almost the same as our support of churchwide in FY 2019. We have continued our pledge to send 42% of our Mission Support to Churchwide. Growth in MS from our congregations results in increased support to churchwide.

Our gifts in support of affiliated agencies and social ministries were as budgeted: \$27,500. That is \$52,750 less than the prior year, and less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  the amount we were giving prior to FY 2019. This part of our budget has been severely reduced to lower our draws on reserves. It also reflects the thinking of members of the Finance Committee and council that our "benevolences" should be made out of our income, not out of our reserves. Recipients of these gifts included Lutheran Community Services NW, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Pacific Lutheran University, Lutheran campus ministry at OSU, and Camp Lutherwood.

Payments to the Region 1 Center for Mission Financial Services Office (FSO) were \$41,600, exactly as we budgeted, because Region 1 had set these fees ahead of our budget adoption in November 2020. This office does all the bookkeeping for the Synods in Region 1; their services allow us to get our deposits, remittances for bills, payroll, and other financial transactions done accurately, and on time.

We spent \$145,000 on the category we call Program/Service Delivery. This includes direct support to Ethnic and New Ministries in the Oregon Synod which are fiscally independent (we do not manage their fiscal affairs), and Fiscal Agency Ministry Support (specific ministries which are still under the Synod's fiscal oversight and management of funds). This year, for the first time, we did not budget specific amounts for particular ministries and missions, but instead budgeted a pool of money that was left under the direction and control of the DEMs (directors of evangelical mission).

Synod Services includes the Lay School for Ministry/SALM program, Candidacy & Pastoral Care, Cluster Dean support, Consultation to Clergy (a pan-Lutheran program we are part of in the Pacific Northwest), and a small contribution to the Regional Archives that Pacific Lutheran University maintains for all synods in Region 1. This year, our total expenditures were \$16,122, against a budget of \$23,500, and \$3,345 less than FY 2020. Many of these activities were still curtailed by COVID; we should look for increasing demand, and increasing expense, in the years ahead.

Synod Travel was \$3,065 under budget, at \$22,935. That was still \$12,825 more than FY 2020; this shows we are returning to some "normal" activities following COVID. The \$8,000 for Synod Council travel was set aside to be used in the current FY, as covering the expenses of all Synod Council members to attend Synod Assembly cannot be covered by one year's budget.

The largest single cost category for the Oregon Synod is Payroll. In FY 2021, the total compensation and benefits for our staff paid from the General Fund was \$542,018; that was \$5,713 under budget. We did not have all budgeted staff positions filled the entire year, resulting in this saving. It was \$46,053 over the prior year.

Administrative and Overhead expenses, at \$50,593, were also under budget by \$3,812. Included in this category is a \$25,000 transfer to an accrual fund which would cover future transition costs; that is the reason this category is \$24,512 over last year; without that new expense item, Administrative and Overhead would be \$488 less than FY 2020.

**To recap: Total Expenses for FY 2021** were \$1,233,824, which was \$39,312 below budget, and \$4,054 higher than the prior year. Although the pandemic affected the work of our Synod in so many ways, the bottom line for us financially was positive. Although our Mission Support was ~\$46,000 below budget, our total Expenses were ~\$39,000 below budget. Larger than expected unrestricted gifts, strong support for the Courageous Love Fund, support of Churchwide lower than budget because of Mission Support being lower than budget, and expenses lower because of understaffing and travel savings combined to allow us to finish the year in the black ~\$2,800. This surplus was also transferred to the synod's Primary Reserve Fund.

- 3. The Balance Sheet for 1-31-2021** shows Total Assets of \$2,911,391, and Total Liabilities at the end of the fiscal year are effectively \$0. This means our Total Net Worth is equal to our Assets, \$2,911,371. This is an increase of \$336,688 over last year. This increase is a result of two major events: First, we received the second payment of the Lilly Endowment Grant, and we received forgiveness of our PPP loan.

Our Assets are divided into 5 “groups.” Our General Fund (the fund from which we conduct our day-to-day operations) has all of the “01” accounts. Its balance on 1-31-2022 was \$109,963. Our Synod’s Financial Policy says the General Fund must maintain a balance of 8% of the annual budget at all times, which is a little over \$100,000. We are in compliance. While you may notice that this balance is considerably lower than the \$199,907 that we had on 1-31-2021, this difference is only due to the PPP loan funds moving from the General Fund to the Primary Reserve Fund.

We had 19 Restricted Funds (“02” accounts) with balances at the end of the Fiscal Year. All these accounts have been designated as “for specific purposes;” their titles give us a clue.

I’ll use the same example I used in last year’s report: Sometime prior to 2017, the synod received proceeds from a congregation that closed. At that time, the Synod Council elected to set aside a portion of those proceeds for a benevolent gift to an agency or organization outside of the synod. Legacy Emanuel, a hospital founded by Lutherans, happens to be the home of the Oregon Synod’s office. Several years ago, they began planning for a new Chapel for the hospital, and approached the synod, asking if we could help. In 2017, Synod Council responded by designating \$75,000 of the previously mentioned proceeds for the chapel project. Later that year, ~\$14,000 was disbursed to the hospital to assist in initial planning. In FY 2020, we disbursed another \$25,000 from that account to Legacy. The account titled “02-349-10005-Legacy Chapel,” with a balance of \$35,858 on 1-31-22, is what remains to be disbursed. Like so many other things, this project has also been delayed due to COVID, but is now starting to roll. I expect the balance of that fund will be disbursed to that project during FY 2022.

Each of these 19 restricted funds has a purpose. The largest is 02-341-04565-Lilly Grant. You will recall the synod’s Together Lab initiative, under the leadership of Pr. Ron Werner, received a \$1,000,000 grant from the Lilly Endowment to grow, expand and support their work over 5 years. The 1-31-2022 balance of \$723,487 represents the amount of that grant that has not been transferred to Together Lab’s 04 operational Fund, because it’s budgeted for use in subsequent years. The second largest-restricted fund, 02-341-30005-New Beginnings also holds dollars received from closed congregations and is designated for “new ministries.” The Synod Council currently has an additional restriction that the balance in that fund may not decline below ~\$477,000. Of course, the council could adjust or remove that restriction at any time, but for now it acts as a sort of “buffer” to prevent us from spending these dollars thoughtlessly. The 02-341-05935-Primary Reserve Fund, with a current balance of \$198,809, is the third-largest restricted fund. It has no specific use designation and is intended to “be there” in times of unanticipated need or significant revenue shortfall. As I told you earlier, we bulked that fund up by ~\$92,000 this year, but FY 2022’s budget will draw \$41,800 from the Primary Reserve. The 02-341-04715-Byberg Homiletics Fund belongs to the Byberg Homiletics Endowment; we act as their fiscal agent. Their \$69,575 balance is not ours; we simply hold it for them, receiving and disbursing funds for them at their direction.

Funds from restricted accounts designated for specific purposes are not used to pay normal operating costs. However, our recent budgets have all drawn on one or more of these restricted accounts to support synod ministry and mission/vitality initiatives. As mentioned above, in FY 2021, per our budget, we drew \$128,662 from various 02 accounts. However, as also mentioned above, PPP loan forgiveness and the small cash balance in the General Fund at year end allowed us to put \$91,965 BACK into the Primary Reserve Fund. This is good news! The total balance in all 02 Restricted and Reserve Funds on 1-31-2022 was \$1,802,553.

Our synod Mission Loan Fund (an "03" account) holds \$391,787; these dollars are earmarked as available for loan to congregations for capital projects. Only \$35,988 was out on loan on 1-31-2022, and only to two congregations; both loans are being serviced by the borrowers according to terms. Since this fund is being so under-utilized, and there have been no new loans made recently, the Synod Endowment Board, who is charged with administering these loans, has determined the Loan Fund should be repurposed. Under discussion is the possibility of moving some, or all, of the dollars to the synod Endowment Fund, to strengthen it to increase its earnings, thereby allowing more grants to be funded. I expect the Synod Council to receive a recommendation from the Endowment Board soon and make a decision and transfer funds within FY 2022. Since starting this discussion, the Endowment Board has determined they will NOT receive any new loan applications.

Our Mission Funds ("04" accounts) represent 8 specific mission or ministry projects (Community Vitality & Sacramental Organizing, Cully Ministry, Mid-Willamette Latino Outreach Ministry, Queer Enough, SE PDX Thriving Communities Cohort, Spiritual and Theological Mutual Accompaniment, and Together Lab), each of which operate with their own budgets; the Synod provides some financial assistance to these projects, and also acts as their fiscal agent (meaning we receive their income, and pay their bills, on their behalf). The combined cash balance of these accounts was \$414,966 on 1-31-2022; this is a significant increase over the combined balance of \$135,381 a year ago; the single largest factor here are the grants that Together Lab has received through the year, although several other projects increased their cash balances. We can often blame COVID, which prevented or delayed them from doing all their planned activities according to their plans.

Our final group is the synod Endowment Fund ("05" accounts). These are dollars given to our synod as "permanent capital;" the funds are not to be spent, but the earnings of the fund are to be distributed. We have an Endowment Board that oversees receipt of major gifts, and disbursement of earnings. Our Endowment had a balance of \$192,113 at year end, as compared to \$226,251 a year ago. The Endowment Funds have not distributed all their earnings the past several years, so distributions were increased this year; hence the decline. The Foundation Board is NOT dipping into the corpus of the Creative Ministry Fund, and the Delk Fund for Children's Ministry is not a permanent corpus fund, so eventually it will all be distributed as grants.

To summarize: **Total Fund Balance on our Balance Sheet grew during FY 2021**, from **\$2,485,455 at the beginning of the year, to \$2,911,391 at the end of the year**, an **increase of \$336,688**. Setting aside the final disbursement from the Lilly Foundation (\$460,000), our Balance Sheet declined ~\$123,000. This is to be expected, as grants to our mission and ministry/vitality projects are being spent, as was intended. Again, net transfers to the General Fund were nearly offset by strong earnings from our investments. Notably, the ELCA Foundation Ministry Growth Fund (formerly Pooled Trust Fund A) again returned >12% in calendar 2021, which meant ~\$130,000 in growth for the Oregon Synod. Earnings from dollars invested at the ELCA Mission Investment Fund, and in our accounts at Bank of America also helped maintain our Reserve and Restricted Funds, although interest rates are, as you know, extremely low. The synod Finance Committee put considerable discussion into synod investments this last year and recommended to Synod Council that our investments at ELCA Foundation be increased \$500,000; this amount is being dollar-cost-average invested over several months. While we acknowledge the market risks inherent in investments like the ELCA Foundation Ministry Growth Fund, we believe the risk is properly balanced according to our short-term and long-term cash needs.

Finally, our annual audit is in process, and we expect the report to raise no issues. I hope to have the final report before Assembly.

### **THIS YEAR – FY 2022:**

Now, let's talk about **FY 2022, the year we're now in**. It began February 1; as of this writing, I only know results for the first month. Our budget for this FY 2022 is again ambitious, with more work and more financial support needed to achieve this work. Staff recommended, and the Assembly approved a budget that calls for another \$25,000 increase in Mission Support over what was budgeted in FY 2021 (which was \$50,000 over FY 2020), plus a total of \$75,000 in special gifts to the Courageous Love Fund (\$25,000 more than FY 2021) for use for Synod ministries and initiatives. These two revenue lines, which represent the majority of our revenue, **require a 5% increase in our support from last year's plan**, but that means an almost **8% increase over the actual revenue received in FY 2021**. Our Bishop and her staff, as well as my fellow Synod Council officers and members, appreciate the faith and confidence last year's Assembly showed by approving this budget, but now comes the hard part: We need the support of all our congregations, as well as individuals and friends, to achieve the planned revenue in 2022. If you take nothing else home to your congregation, please remember this: **More work, for the sake of the Gospel, requires more of our treasure!**

For the first month (February) of this year, Mission Support totals \$61,625, ~\$1,900, or 3%, less than the same period last year; it's also the lowest February Mission Support since 2012. While the shortest month of the year does not set the trend, (there's always great variability in Mission Support received, month by month, and from any given month one year to the same month in the next), I must continue to stress **achieving the mission of our Synod will require us to do more; we need each congregation to prayerfully consider how they can strengthen their stewardship, and financial commitment to the Synod; we need every congregation to engage in supporting the wider church. Our Courageous Stewardship Table is ready to help you and your congregations understand the work of**

**our Synod, and to see where and why the support is needed.** I want to acknowledge and thank each of the individuals working on this: Bishop's Associate Pr. Melissa Read is staffing this Table; Members include Jeanie Whitten, Dan Potaznick, Sharon Magnuson, Victoria Hart, Bishop Laurie; Bishop's Associate Juan Carlos La Puente, and ELCA Churchwide staffer Nick Kiger. Additional Working Group members include Pr. Chris Kramer, Caitlin Ellwood and Jon Erickson.

Today, expenses are well-controlled, and under budget. The Synod Council did have to make some revisions among the various budget lines, to be able to give our employees a proper COLA (CPI increases in 2021 were double what we budgeted). An additional ~\$9,500 was required for payroll; this was offset with reductions to our Support to Agencies and Social Missions (our benevolences) and Administrative and Overhead.

As I said before, one month does not make a trend. Like last year, our budget included identifying some of the expenses as "contingent upon receiving the income." We didn't need to deal with those contingencies in FY 2021; I pray the same will be true this year!

As in the past, we are still secure, able to pay all our bills, and exercising good stewardship of our reserves. However, ministry and mission will suffer if sufficient resources are not realized. With the concept of "contingent expenses, some of this will happen "automatically," as some expense lines in the FY 2022 budget are contingent upon increased Mission Support and new Special Gifts being realized.

### **NEXT YEAR – FY 2023:**

This brings us to the matter of the **budget for FY 2023**, that begins on February 1, 2023. Following the pattern of the last two years, this budget takes another leap of faith, trusting God to lead our stewardship and **increase Mission Support and Special Gifts AGAIN!**

1. FY 2023 proposes another **\$25,000 increase** in Mission Support from our congregations. This means the total MS would be \$1,020,000, which is ~\$96,000 more than the actual Mission Support received in FY 2021. That is a BIG STEP. However, our Bishop and staff, the Finance Committee and the Synod Council all agree to NOT ask you to take BIG STEPS is to guarantee failure.
2. FY 2023 also proposes \$100,000 in designated gifts for Synod initiatives, missions and ministries. This also is a **\$25,000 increase** over our current year.
3. FY 2023 calls for a **draw of \$126,000 from our synod's Reserve and Restricted Funds**. This is ~\$31,000 less than FY 2022, as well as the smallest draw since 2015. A reduction is appropriate, since we do not have any windfall income like the PPP loan forgiveness we had last year. This budget, like the last three, show strong discipline regarding the use of our reserves.
4. FY 2023 expenses are reasonable, considering expected resources. Let me call out some high points:



- a. COLAs are budgeted, as are benefits and continuing education. Admittedly, we got caught short this year, as CPI went up almost double the 2.1% that we budgeted. This budget allows up to a 4% increase next year.
  - b. Administrative and Overhead costs are budgeted to increase marginally from the FY 2022 budget. Staff travel increases 33% from this year's budget. We believe after 2 years of COVID, with way too many ZOOM meetings, that it's important that our Bishop and her staff get back in front of you, in your congregations, in person. However, we've also learned ZOOM gives us many efficiencies, both of time and dollars. It is my expectation that the combination of getting back in person, plus using ZOOM and other technology, will allow Synod staff MORE face time with you that we had before COVID. Other travel is unchanged, meaning the total travel line is \$5,000, or 19% over this year.
  - c. We will continue to selectively fund new and existing mission and ministry/vitality initiatives. The budget maintains the total spent from the general fund toward missions and ministries of \$175,000 in FY 2022. Again, \$100,000 will come from the New Beginnings Fund, our largest synod reserve fund. The other **\$75,000 will come from your designated gifts to the Courageous Love Fund**. We continue to not budget specific amounts for each individual project, leaving that to the discretion of synod staff, with regular reports to the Synod Council. Making these decisions in "real time" seems better than asking the Assembly to approve specific expenditures for each ministry almost 8-20 months ahead of time.
  - d. Gifts to Agencies and Social Ministries continues to be a challenge. The total of these gifts has declined, from \$117,500 in FY 2017, to \$27,500 in FY 2021. You will recall the reason for this reduction was two-fold: We were making all these gifts from our synod's Primary Reserve, rather than from Mission Support, and we wanted to indicate to our congregations how important it was that we grow our Mission Support. The FY 2022 (this year) budget adopted by last year's Assembly increased our benevolence to \$50,000. The Synod Council's revisions to that budget in January reduced benevolence to \$42,000. After much discussion, the proposed budget for FY 2023 proposes \$38,000 for this line. Personally, I'm not happy with decreasing this area. **Increasing our support** of these agencies (who are important partners in the work of the Gospel) **will require more Mission Support** (am I sounding like a broken record?).
  - e. We will continue an accrual for "Future Transition Expenses," which began in FY 2021. We believe this is important. This is being responsible in our task of managing our synod's financial matters as good stewards.
5. There are concerns about how we manage this budget if the revenues are not realized. I believe the concept of "contingent expenses" that we used the last two years may not be the best method; among other difficulties, it implies we can't make ANY payments to any budget lines marked contingent until our total revenue reaches or exceeds the

budget total, and this won't happen until near or at year end. I don't think anyone believes we should be making our benevolence payments only at year end, for instance. Therefore, there are NO expenses in the FY 2023 budget denoted as "contingent on income".

This begs the question: How will we be disciplined about the budget? I don't know the specifics right now, but as your Treasurer, I will be taking a hard look at things after the first quarter and calling out any potential shortfalls to our Bishop and Synod Council. I will strongly advocate for expense reductions if I believe we are not receiving adequate revenue to cover all expenses as planned for in this budget.

I look forward to talking with you about this at our Assembly May 13-15.

### **FINAL SUMMARY**

The past 24 months have been a strange and challenging time. After the pandemic, wildfires, windstorms, ice storms, and floods, when we thought we'd seen it all, we endured a record heat wave. It does make one wonder "What's next."

I remain convinced God is with us, God is for us, God's saying to us "I've got this!" **Our Lord is a God of lavish, extravagant, unconditional love!**

As in the past, I want to call out a group that advises me, and our Synod, in its financial matters: The Synod Finance Committee. This group, authorized by our by-laws, has engaged fully the task of advising, guiding and encouraging me, and the Synod Council, in money matters. We endeavor to meet five times during the year, to deal with things such as the budget, investments, accounting, and other associated topics. This year, we've gotten back to a more regular schedule, via ZOOM, and I know they are always ready to offer advice and counsel. **I want to thank them for their gifts of time and wisdom.** Besides the Treasurer, **members of the Synod Finance Committee are Bishop Laurie, Vice President Greg SHea, Mel Ussing, Pr. Patricia Hughes, and Violet Thetford. Bob Cornie and Jim Hilliker are completing their respective terms (they've sat with this group longer than I've been Treasurer). One of these positions will be filled by Pr. Rachel Langford, of Emmaus Lutheran in Eugene.**

I also want to continue to invite more of you to engage with us in the financial matters of our Synod. We're always looking for new people to step up and volunteer to help on the Finance Committee, or engage stewardship challenges, or just be willing to provide unique and representative leadership. We're especially looking for younger folks because the rest of us are just getting older! If you think you might be interested, please reach out to me, to Bp. Laurie, or to Vice President Greg. Talk is cheap, folks!

It is my honor to serve our Lord and our Church as Oregon Synod Treasurer. **I appreciate the support of Bp. Laurie, VP Greg, the Synod Staff, and the Synod Council.** Most of all, **I thank God for the encouragement, kindness, and patience of my wife, Nancy.**

I look forward to engaging you at the upcoming Assembly. **I also welcome your questions any time. My cell phone is (503) 991-7006, and my email is [finance@oregonsynod.org](mailto:finance@oregonsynod.org)**

In His service,

Mark Dickman, Treasurer