

Dear sisters and brothers in the Indiana-Kentucky Mission Territory,

First, let me say **thank you** for the privilege of continuing to serve as your Stewardship Director. It gives me great joy to meet with you throughout the synod and discuss ways we might grow as grateful, faithful stewards of all that God has provided us. I am also thankful for the many ways you continue to support our ministries through your congregations' gifts of Mission Support. For the second straight year, we have exceeded our expected annual income of \$1.7M! Your generosity enables us to reach out to congregations throughout Indiana and Kentucky with loving support, and to strengthen our many collective ministries, including

- Connecting with our partner churches in Indonesia and Chile;
- Serving immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa through the Shalom Ministry in Indianapolis;
- Reaching out to our youth through Bishop's Youth Days;
- Strengthening our campus ministries at IU, Purdue, Butler/IUPUI, Ball State, United Campus Ministries (Terre Haute, IN) and UK;

and so much more.

In my role, I have had the privilege to walk with four congregations in the past year; interact with two leaders to strengthen their leadership in their congregations; lead workshops on Spiritual Gifts at both St. Andrew's, Speedway and the 2016 Synod Assembly; and offer three workshops to around 50 congregational leaders from throughout the synod. Additionally, our synod staff and I have continued to offer our *Growing Steward Leaders (GSL)* Retreats. The GSL Retreat is a two-day retreat for rostered ministers that assists them in their personal financial stewardship and encourages them to see connections between their personal stewardship and congregational leadership.

And now, through a generous grant from the Stewardship of Life Institute and Mission Support, we are pleased to offer a similar retreat for lay leaders! The ***Growing Steward Lay Leader Retreats*** is similar to the GSL retreat, but it is condensed into a one-day format to make it easier for busy lay leaders to attend. All costs for this retreat are paid for by the grant and Mission Support, including food and resources – we will even pay your mileage (reimbursed one car per congregation, ½ the IRS rate) for you to attend. We are offering these at various locations around the synod to make it easier for you to come. I hope you will join us for this important event!

One other resource I would like to highlight is our growing ***Mission Ambassadors Ministry***. Mission Ambassadors are trained by the synod to "tell the story" of the wider church in the local congregation. We have been profoundly blessed by our two volunteer coordinators for this ministry, Phil and Susan Schmidt from Gloria Dei in Crestview Hills, KY: they bring a wealth of experience, energy, and vitality to this work. Please see them at the Assembly if you would like to participate in this life-giving ministry.

Finally, I want to give thanks to God for **YOU**, the people of the Indiana-Kentucky Mission Territory. In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he notes that the people in Philippi are "sharing in the gospel from the first day until now" (1:5). Indeed, you *are* sharing in the gospel with all of us, and I consider it a great privilege to serve among you. Thanks be to God!

Shalom,
Pastor Jerry O'Neal

IK Director of Stewardship & Mission Support