

SYNOD EXECUTIVE REPORT TO THE SYNOD ASSEMBLY  
MAY 2007 SYNOD MEETING

Phil Brown  
Synod Executive

Greetings to each of you in the name of Jesus Christ as we gather for the spring meeting of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. The officers and staff are grateful for your time and commitment given to the ministry and mission of the synod.

I want to take this opportunity to provide a brief summary on my involvements since we were together in January. These written comments will serve as my report for this meeting, primarily because most of what I have been doing will be a part of committee reports and synod discussion/actions throughout the meeting of the synod.

- Personnel will be reporting on the Annual/Comprehensive Reviews of many Presbyters. We continue to examine and modify our processes in order to increase their value to the staff and presbyteries.
- Inter-presbytery conversations continue and Bart Brenner will be sharing with you a synopsis of what is happening and where this creative energy may be leading.
- Closely related, Sue Coller will report on the Albuquerque conversations regarding the future vision and vitality of middle governing bodies.
- And closely connected to these updates will be Cheryl Biller and Diana Barber's comments related to the changing course of National Mission Partnership Funds determined recently in Kansas City. Bart, Manley Olson and I participated there as well.
- Noted in my March 30 and April 25 cover memos are several additional items I have been relating to with other staff and leadership of the synod – all of which will come before you during this meeting.

Most important for me is to share with you an update on Lynn's health and our current challenges. Some of you are aware that since we met in January Lynn experienced a further recurrence of cancer, her third in about two years. While we hold out our hope in her treatment program, the prognosis is not very positive. Yes, we believe in miracles and we, along with countless friends and family members in all parts of the church, are praying for a miracle. Because the cancer has incapacitated her lower body, she is wheelchair bound when she is not in bed. To share lots of details will be of little value. Instead, I want you to know we are hoping to continue an aggressive treatment regimen for the next four to six weeks to determine her capacity to respond favorably. If she does not respond, or if her quality of life becomes further diminished, we will turn to hospice care.

You can rightly assume that Lynn is my primary focus of time and energy. The presence of family and friends has permitted me some freedom to do limited travel, and to spend some hours most days at the office – not because the staff team and presbyters and other have not been very generous to pick up some of my responsibilities and travel commitments, but because it is helpful for me to take periodic breaks. Such is the reason I am able to be a part of this synod meeting, which I know could function quite faithfully, should I have needed to be at home.

Many have been concerned throughout about my own self-care. I appreciate the constant reminders and insistence that I be mindful about a value I frequently preach to others. While I hope it is a discipline I have taken seriously throughout my life, I am well aware that we are walking a path unknown to us and difficult to navigate. Becoming the recipient of the Grace of God does not come easily for those of us accustomed to being an instrument of that Grace for others.

Lynn and I continue to be very grateful for the love and prayers that have poured over us. Thank you.