



Mission Endowment Report to Northern

Fund Texas-Northern

Louisiana Synod Assembly

April 29-30, 2022



First, a personal note: *As planned from the beginning, the agreed upon three-and-half year period to serve as Executive Director of the MEF is ending. I am exceedingly grateful to the NT-NL Staff and MEF Board Members, both those who are now members as well as those who have retired from the Board. You have supported me to build and grow this ministry since 2018. The insight and willingness to work on many challenging tasks and the encouragement I have received has been heart-warming and will remain some of the most rewarding years of my life. I've seen three years of very successful Seeds that Change fund-raising events, which exceeded the goals each year. The Board itself has matured and has taken on many new responsibilities,*

while expanding the diversity and geographic area represented by our members. The media exposure has enabled the profile of the MEF to be raised considerably by additional mailings, invitations, Facebook posts, and many videos to tell our grant-giving story. All of this was accomplished during the pandemic which required some realigning and creativity to manage the ever-changing grants, fund raiser, and board meeting logistics.

I am particularly grateful to Bishop Erik for his guidance and support, our donors for their generosity, the team chairs and officers, and most certainly to Pr Donna Wright who has taken on additional responsibilities to keep the ministry of the MEF moving forward. All of you have been talented and dedicated workmates and I am proud to call you friends. God will be with each of us in the future wherever we may be in his service! As I have said many times before, THANK YOU, for this opportunity to serve.

A NEW VISION: This is an exciting future-shaping time for the Mission Endowment Fund. The February MEF Board meeting was my last as Executive Director. Now I look forward to how the vision will develop further with the new person in this position. Knowing from the beginning that I wanted to serve the Synod in this manner for a three-year period, Bishop Erik and I had agreed that the best end-date was after the Assembly in 2022. So, keeping this timeline in mind, I worked as eagerly as possible to implement projects, help grow the investment, and shape the Board into a cohesive and visionary unit. The pandemic required the Board to reassess old ways of doing things and forced us to develop a new vision. I have said many times that it has been a pleasure and an honor to have been given this opportunity. I will continue as Executive Director until early in May. I anticipate, with great excitement, that the new Executive Director will be introduced to the April Assembly.

MEF SUNDAY: Getting to Know the Mission Endowment Fund.

Please mark your calendars for **Sunday, May 15, 2022**. This is NOT a fund-raiser. The Board is developing a media blitz to feature the grant-giving ministry of the MEF. There are 3 goals: 1) To grow awareness of this ministry by sharing information about the structure, purpose, and current initiatives of the Board, 2) To share stories how the grants change lives in the name of Jesus and to communicate how to apply for grants, and 3)





To ask congregations and members to partner with the MEF in prayer to ensure continued success and growth of this grant-giving ministry. Media materials will be supplied to congregations for newsletters, bulletin inserts, a short video or PowerPoint presentations for temple talks, or even a visit from an MEF Board member. Please help us communicate to your congregations how the MEF Changes lives and how the Synod is serving our congregations through this ministry. Materials will be available for each congregation to pick up at the MEF exhibit table at

Assembly. Please come by to register for our door prize.

BOARD MEMBERS: The current Board members now represent churches from a with wider geographic area (from Amarillo to Shreveport and from Wichita Falls to Killeen). Members for 2022-2023 are: Linda Allen (Beautiful Savior/Amarillo); Barry Birchard (Immanuel/Killeen), Pr. Nicholas Chove (Community of Hope and Umoja Chapel/Ft. Worth), Pr Jesus Escamilla (San Gabriel/Alvarado), Katelyn Hicks (St. Stephen/Shreveport), Mark Hinzman (King of Glory/Dallas), Pr Miles Holder (New Hope/Keller) Ken King (Preston Meadow/Plano), PLM Jon Krueger (Faith/Wichita Falls), Steve Maziarz (Gloria Dei/Garland), Pr. John Schelter (Our Savior/Mesquite), Anthony Tucker (Advent/Arlington), Gwen Vernon (Community of Hope/Ft. Worth), Virginia Worley (Christ/Dallas), Pr. Donna Wright (Interim Pastor). Board Member profiles can be viewed here:

<https://giftedandgiving.org/mef-board/>

LEGACY PARTNERS ENDURING VISION FOR MISSION: This initiative has been developed by a special Task Force of the MEF. This is an ongoing educational/informational program to spread the word about the joy of leaving a Legacy Gift so that you can help ensure a strong financial future for your congregation and our Synod's ministry. The purpose is to encourage and motivate NTNL members to be generous with legacy giving. The MEF will not advise or give specific direction regarding investments. The Task Force, under the leadership of Mark Hinzman, has prepared an overview/presentation to get congregational members excited about this new way of practicing stewardship. The Board is grateful to Zion Lutheran in McGregor for their financial support to help underwrite the cost of this initiative. We know faithful Lutherans who have been generous in their lifetimes are happy to continue giving after their life on earth has ended; however, most do not know how to make an end-of-life gift. The materials will provide information about the many ways to Leave a Legacy, from very simply naming the charity in an investment, to including the charity in your will, to more complicated income producing charitable gifting choices. **We are asking congregations to invite MEF representatives to present this forum as in-person, zoom, or hybrid meetings. Perhaps a build-your-own waffle breakfast, spaghetti lunch or dinner, coffee hour, or cocktail hour fits your congregation well.** Please contact mef@ntnl.org to let us know of your interest.



SEEDS THAT CHANGE FUND-RAISER 2022 – GIFTED AND GIVING...HOW GRACE WORKS: Thanks to our generous congregational and individual donors, we were able to **surpass our goal of \$40,000** in October 2021 through our online fund-raising campaign. We solicited talented members of our Synod to create video stories. Video submitters displayed their talents and gave a witness as to how grace works in their lives. The campaign featured each of these video stories on Facebook during October and culminated with a video montage and homily by Bishop Erik. Our sincere thanks goes not only to the donors but also to the **20 individuals who contributed their time and talent.** The Board is grateful to all our submitters: John Parsons, Josh Bradford, Hunter Birkhead, Gilda Harvey, Suzanne Haterius Fusaro, Pr. Jeff Bergeron, Donna Herbener, Anthony Tucker, Mount Olive Lutheran Church, the Spencer family, Ascension Lutheran Church, Linda Ness, St. Peter's Lutheran Church/Monroe, Jon Krueger, Pr. Celene Welch, King of Glory/Dallas, the family of Ruth Hartstein, St. Matthew/Waco, Laura Hunt, and Pr. Neil White. Thanks also goes to the Communications Team for their creativity and persuasiveness to manage this



far-reaching promotional program. The complete Youtube playlist is available here; https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLE1z_uxSxKHZCCD-IV9XRtFDYazUh_KZx. The donor list can be viewed at <https://www.ntnl.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Donor-List-1.pdf>. At this point, the Board is anticipating an in person event on October 15, 2022 for the next Seeds that Change annual fund raiser.

MEF WEBSITE AND CRM: During the 2022 Seeds that Change fund-raiser, Steve Maziarz created a special website for promoting the “*Gifted and Giving... How Grace Works*” campaign. Steve and others are now in the process of re-shaping the website to promote more generally the activities of the Fund. You can visit this website at: <https://giftedandgiving.org/>. The revised website will have a new url – coming soon! Please note that this website is in addition to the MEF’s presence at <https://www.ntnl.org/ministries/mef/>. Another recent acquisition is a **Client Relationship Management System (CRM)** hosted by Bloomerang. This CRM will bring a more sophisticated system of establishing relationships and interactions with MEF constituents and supporters

GRANT ALLOCATIONS: The **total of grants given since 1996 is OVER**

ONE MILLION DOLLARS. The NT-NL is fortunate that the founding members of this board had vision for the future when financial support would be essential to developing new ministries and shaping mission for existing congregations. God has blessed this ministry! There is much to be grateful for as we are “In Mission Together.” The MEF awarded **\$82,000 to 28**



ministries in 2020. Grants totaled **\$60,000 to 16 ministries in 2021.** Covid Relief funds of **\$55,000** helped 7 ministries endure the pandemic. For these two years, **the MEF supported the Synod with \$197,000.** Ask anyone serving on the MEF Grants team during the pandemic and they will tell you it was a “wild ride” to navigate the cancelled projects and reapplications that became necessary. The good news is that the MEF finances have recovered from the additional expenses and the **2022 grants allocation was \$84,600 to 22 recipients.** Good news is that there are several recipients who have created new mission objectives – a sign that new ministries are developing, and creativity is renewing after the long restrictions of the pandemic. Witnessing how the grants engage congregations in mission and change so many lives touched by these congregations is the greatest joy of serving with the Board of the MEF! 2022 grants were awarded to: Christ the Servant/Denton, Church of Damascus Road, Community of Hope/Ft. Worth, Emanuel/Dallas, First/Longview, First Sagrada Familia/Garland, Four Mile-WELCA/Mabank, Four Mile-Youth Group/Mabank, Holy Trinity/Shreveport, Santa Maria de Guadalupe/Irving, Via de Christo, kin-dom community, King of Glory/Ft. Worth, New Hope/Keller, Rejoice (Table)/Frisco, St John/Wilson, St John/Dallas, St John/Bartlett, St Luke’s/Richardson, Latinx Conference (Couples’ Retreat), Latinx Conference (Women’s Retreat), Trinity Evangelical/Miles.

FINANCIAL STATUS: The Board is grateful! With the success of the annual fund-raisers, large gift from Ascension/Garland, legacy gifts, and with the excellent period of growth of the MEF investments, the fund is now just short of **TWO million dollars.** From the humble beginnings in the 1990’s to the awarding of the first grants of \$5,000, this is amazing growth. We are anticipating the Legacy Partners initiative will encourage the members of NT-NL to consider end-of-life gifts that will strengthen both the MEF as well as their congregations in the future.

I will see you at the Assembly with more exciting updates and the introduction of the new Executive Director. I thank you again for the support given to me and the MEF Board to strengthen this ministry in our Synod.

Respectfully submitted March 30, 2022

Handwritten signature of Linda M. Ness in cursive.

Linda M Ness, Executive Director, NT-NL Mission Endowment Fund