

Vice President's Report

“My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of the justice burn, wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near and the world is about to turn.”

These words from “The Canticle of the Turning” is about Mary whose life changed dramatically after the Angel announced the good news of the birth of Jesus. In 2001 when Bishop Wollersheim asked me to serve as Vice President of the Northern Illinois Synod, I knew it would be a valuable experience; however, I did not realize my world was about to turn!

I have learned more about the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Northern Illinois Synod (NIS), and its hard working committees in the last few years than I knew all the decades before. I had the joy of meeting wonderful leaders of the ELCA and to hear their views and sermons. I presided over the Synod Council Meetings and participated in the Synod Assemblies. As a Prayer workshop leader at the Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE), God enabled me to encourage and promote prayer ministry in the Synod.

Being of Asian American heritage, I contributed my perspectives at Consultations; spiced up council meetings with Indian food; translated 'Thanks be to God' in Tamil for the Synod Worship Committee; and much more. My involvement with the Global Missions Committee and the Anti racism/Multicultural Committee, enabled me to advance diversity issues and global partnerships in our Synod. As a leader of the Synod I was invited to visit both our Companion Synods - Tanzania and India. I found joy in connecting Northern Illinois Synod congregations to Arcot Lutheran Congregations and thus foster the 'Walking together' relationship.

My life changing experiences as Vice President not only came from the big events but also from the every day experiences in our Synod. I am touched by the spirit and values that prevail in the leadership and people of the Synod. I saw it in the caring nature of our Bishop who stayed by his sick friends on our India trip. I felt it in the loving hugs I received from members of WELCA who are proud of the start they gave me in leadership development. I was moved to tears when someone out of the blue, presented me a personalized book mark at the Assembly. I was amazed when a group responded so generously to my talk about raising funds for the new Arusha Lutheran Medical Center. We have a gem of a Synod in Northern Illinois, let us keep polishing it and keep it shining.

A Vice President's job description in the Constitution is short but that gives the freedom for the Synod to use them in many creative ways. My report would not be complete if I did not express my sincere thanks to Bishop Wollersheim, Sandy Musch, and Synod support staff for their valuable assistance to me. I wish the newly elected Vice President the very best and promise to keep her/him in my prayers.

In God's Peace,

Esther Prabhakar. Vice President 2001 - 2009