

Humorist aids Lutheran fund drive

Garrison Keillor writes letter for \$30,000 crusade for ministry's aid to needy.

By BILL NORTON
Staff Writer

Garrison Keillor, bard of the mythical Lake Wobegon, humorist and late-blooming Lutheran, is plucking at the purse strings of fellow Lutherans.

In a fund-raising letter circulating in Kansas City, the author and radio star writes: "Spare me, you may be thinking, 'yet one more plea from yet another fading semi-celebrity trying to hitch his

sunken career to some nebulous good cause.'"

His chosen cause is the Metropolitan Lutheran Ministry.

Keillor, who owes his early fame to his days as host of "A Prairie Home Companion" on public radio, is chairman of a telephone fund drive that will start today.

Keillor's chairmanship is long-distance. He is making his appeal through the letter, which is being sent to about 15,000 area households. His schedule prevents him from making an appearance here in the drive, ministry officials said.

The goal of the drive, the fifth annual

Sound the Trumpet for Change campaign, is to raise \$30,000 for the ministry's programs to help the needy.

"This is the first time ever the agency has had a major celebrity chair this," said the Rev. Tom Ford, the ministry's executive director.

Recruiting Keillor was Ford's idea. For several years, Keillor was the chairman of a fund-raising campaign for Lutheran Social Services of Southern California, where Ford served before coming to Kansas City last fall.

Keillor, 51, was reared in the Church of the Brethren while growing up in Minnesota. He became a Lutheran about eight years ago.