Annual Report
2016
LITANY

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, the one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave us birth, our light and our salvation.
Amen.

As servants of Christ, we plant and support new congregations each year; we enable congregations to renew their ministries; we work with ethnic ministries to develop resources and networks for ministry, and we share resources for God's work.
Together, we are partners in ministry.

As partners in ministry, we support The Lutheran World Federation's global communion of churches with more than 80 companion churches in other countries.
Together, we accompany others in doing God's work.

As people who accompany others, we send more than 200 missionaries to more than 40 countries, training leaders and evangelists who will expand ministries.
Together, we equip people to be disciples, evangelists and stewards.

As disciples, we equip God's people across this country to be current and future leaders through our colleges, universities, seminaries and lay ministry schools. We especially support and pray for our more than 9,000 rostered leaders.
Together, we are members in the body of Christ.

As members in the body of Christ, we support congregations and synods with resources to assist in asset-based thinking, planning, operating matters and risk management.
Together, we are stewards of God's gifts.

As stewards, we engage in culture and the world to work for justice. This includes engaging in lively conversation about current social, political, environmental and public issues.
Together, we are advocates of God's work for the sake of the world.

As advocates, we facilitate dialogue and common action among communities of other faiths, seeking unity in faith and life with all Lutherans and our six full communion partners.
Together, we are the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A church that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace.

Let us pray. As we are servants in Christ, partners in ministry, people who accompany others, disciples, members in the body of Christ, stewards and advocates, our faith comes through the good news of Jesus Christ and gives us the freedom and the courage to wonder, discover and boldly participate in what God is up to in the world. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide us and give us strength to always do God's work for the sake of the world.
Amen.
Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2

Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song

Jésus, je voudrais te chanter

1 Jésus, je voudrais te chanter sur ma route;
Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey;

2 Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey;
I’ll tell ev’rybody about you wherever I go:

3 As long as I live, Jesus, make me your servant,
May all of my joy be a faithful reflection of you.

4 I fear in the dark and the doubt of my journey;
but courage will come with the sound of your steps by my side.

car toi seul es la vie et la paix et l’amour:
you alone are our life and our peace and our love.

Jésus, je voudrais t’an-non-cer à mes voisins par tout,
I’ll tell everybody about you wherever I go:

Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey;
For you saved me by giving your body and blood.

Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey;
And with all of the family you saved by your love,

As long as I live, Jesus, make me your servant,
we’ll sing to your dawn at the end of our journey.

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As you gather, the following questions are frequently asked about giving and the work of the church. These may be helpful as your congregation engages in conversation about how to grow and thrive in the future.

What is missional giving?
One way individuals and congregations participate in missional giving is when their financial contributions, often called offerings or tithes, to and through their congregation, or other charitable organizations, are intended to do God’s work in the world. We believe this work can be done faithfully through ELCA ministries.

Why give?
For some the answer is God first gave to us, thus through our life we have an opportunity to share God’s generosity with others. This understanding demonstrates giving is a spiritual issue, not a financial one. For other Lutherans, the answer is also an identity issue. We are faithful Lutherans and this is what we do – share with others. This is not an individual experience only, for we are church together, and through our unified giving we do God’s work.

Who gives?
All are invited to give as God has blessed them and as the Spirit moves them.

What to give?
As the apostle Paul wrote of the Christians in Macedonia, “They first gave themselves to the Lord.” Through baptism, confirmation and our confessional statements, each person first gives of themselves to God. Within each person’s faith walk, they are asked to give of their time, talents and resources. This can take many forms.

How much to give?
We teach to grow toward a tithe (10 percent of household income), to a tithe and beyond a tithe as God has blessed you. This may also apply to one’s time.

When to give?
Individuals and congregations are encouraged to give regularly. The practice of “first fruits” giving, sharing a portion of God’s blessings when they are received, is encouraged. This may be weekly, monthly or quarterly. There are also times for special giving. This is often in response to specific needs or opportunities. There are also times for planned gifts. This is often for major projects or at the end of life. All these forms of giving are encouraged.

Where to give?
Most supporters of the ELCA do the majority of their giving to and through their congregation. When growing toward and beyond a tithe, giving to all charitable organizations is considered.

How to give?
All regular giving received by ELCA congregations is considered undesignated. This means the dollars received can be used as determined by a missional budget or expense plan approved by a quorum of the membership and as managed by elected leaders. An increasing percentage of total giving to congregations is being designated for specific purposes. While we appreciate and celebrate all giving and respect the wishes of the donor, we also trust members and elected leaders to make financial decisions that support God’s work in and beyond the local community, both in the present and for the future.

What is Mission Support?
This is the portion of your congregation’s regular financial offering that is shared with your synod. The synod then shares a percentage for God’s work that we do together through our ELCA churchwide organizations, both domestically and globally.