

**Congregational and Synodical Mission**

Partnership Support Application

*Completion Guide*

**Section A: Congregational Information**

1. Insert legal name of the congregation
2. To locate your congregational ID number, contact your Synod Office or your Director of Evangelical Mission (DEM).
3. Insert phone number of congregation
4. Insert your congregation’s primary mailing address, including city, state, and ZIP code.
5. Insert name of Pastor
6. How long has your current pastor served your congregation?
7. Contact your Synod office if you do not know the name of your Director for Evangelical Mission.
8. Select your Synod from the drop-down menu.

**Section B: Grant Category and Information**

1. Check only one. Your Director for Evangelical Mission will assist you in selecting the appropriate category as described by “Partnership Support Program Descriptions.”
2. List the amount of money being requested from the ELCA Churchwide organization. If you are requesting a multi-year grant, write the amount for each year. Do not include grants from other sources such the Synod, other congregations, etc.
3. The Annual Congregational Report Form (previously called “Parochial Report”) is the annual report submitted by Feb. 15 by all congregations of the ELCA.
4. List the amount of the Synod grant.
5. Indicate whether your congregation has received Partnership Support from the LCA/ALC/AELC or ELCA in the past.

**Section C: Missional Plan Background**

1. The expectation is that the congregation has involved neighboring congregations (including our ecumenical partners), Social Ministry Organizations, educational institutions, and the Synod in conversation as the proposal is being developed. For ministries in ethnic specific communities, consultation with local ethnic leaders as well as the appropriate ELCA ethnic community leaders is required.
2. Complete this section with the assistance of the Director for Evangelical Mission. A Synod Mission Strategy outlines the priorities for mission of the Synod.

**Section D: Mission Field and Context**

1. In this section, tell us your story. How is God calling you to respond to what is happening in your community?
2. Identify the area where you will focus your activities (target area, mission field). Tell us about that area. Is it urban, rural, suburban, multicultural, affluent, or economically depressed? What changes are happening in your community? In the brief demographic analysis, describe how the population is shifting in terms of numbers, ethnic composition, economics or any factors that support your plan.
3. Give a general overview of how your congregation has changed over the years. What is happening now within the congregation that makes this an opportune time for the congregation to make a significant change or to support changes that are already occurring? What are the challenges and barriers that your congregation is facing?
4. In this section, list each year over the past 10 years along with the average worship attendance. If there are significant changes in the numbers, describe the reason for those changes. Those reasons may include a change in pastoral leadership, a significant conflict, or a natural disaster.

**Section E: Partnership Support General Criteria**

1. The process of renewal did not begin with this application for funding. Hopefully it began with an awakening to the possibilities for mission. Tell us how you are already engaged in study, prayer and action and how you will continue to be engaged in these throughout the time of the grant. How are you listening to God and each other?
2. The ELCA has limited resources for the renewal of congregations. Requests for these grants are increasing. Financial need is an important criterion. Congregations are expected to share the risk of renewal by using the resources that are available to them including endowment and savings. Congregations may not realize that endowment and other restricted funds may be available for the renewal of the congregation. If the congregation has significant (over $100,000) endowments or savings, it is expected that the congregation will make every effort to access these funds before requesting a grant. Consulting an attorney may be helpful.
3. Mission Support is the undesignated money our congregations send to the synod for our interdependent synodical and churchwide ministries in the ELCA (formerly known as benevolence).
4. Congregations who cooperate and coordinate with others often experience greater health and vitality. Tell how this is happening with your congregation.

**Section F: Objectives and Planning Activities**

SMART goals are actions that have some kind of measurement expressed numerically or qualitatively. These goals will help demonstrate movement toward desired outcomes within a specific time frame. SMART goals hold the congregation accountable to the partners and the community. Each section should typically have one to three goals. Each goal should be followed by strategies or action steps and a timeline. Your Director of Evangelical Mission can share examples of a model application with you.

1. A healthy and vital congregation will grow in many ways. Although numerical growth is not the whole story, it is one indicator of whether a congregation is making the changes necessary to invite new people into its worship and faith life. Tell us about your evangelizing plan (e.g. faith sharing, inviting, welcoming, hospitability) and other actions to increase worship attendance and participation in other ministries of the congregation.
2. Broadly shared leadership is a characteristic of a healthy, growing congregation. How is your congregation intentionally seeking out and equipping new leaders?
3. What is the difference between the people in your congregation and the people outside the doors in the community? How will your plan help you move to a place where the congregation inside your doors looks very much like the community outside? What changes will you need to make for that to happen? What steps are you taking to build relationships with people in your immediate neighborhood and community?
4. Tell how you will assist people in your congregation to grow in their faith, understand and use their gifts and to develop the faith practices such as prayer, Bible study, giving, service in the church, service in the community, and action for justice in the community. How are you listening to God?
5. How will your congregation go beyond the annual stewardship campaign to invite people into a holistic understanding of whole life stewardship? There are many helpful resources available.
6. How will worship change to be more invitational to people from the community? You may consider adding a service or enhancing music and worship to reflect the cultural diversity of your mission field.
7. What are the assets of the community and how can the congregation partner with others to bring about not just the renewal of the congregation but the renewal of the community. How are you involved in what God is already doing in the mission field? How are you listening to your community?