

Seeds Monthly

Dec. 2016 For leaders of ELCA congregations and synods ELCA.org



Called Forward Together in Christ: Strategic Directions 2025

Propelled by a commitment to Lutheran traditions and to being a community of faith that is always forming and being renewed, the ELCA's presiding bishop, Church Council and Conference of Bishops initiated [Called Forward Together in Christ](#) in late 2015. This process sought to engage the ELCA in conversation about future directions. [Strategic Directions 2025](#) is the outcome of that process. Participants in Called Forward Together in Christ – from congregations, synods, the churchwide organization and a wide range of ELCA ministries – resoundingly lifted up similar hopes, concerns and ideas about what should be given importance.

[Read the paper.](#)

'The face of the church is changing'

Around 190 of the ELCA's new congregations are ministries that many would consider "non-traditional." *Living Lutheran's* December cover story looks at three such ministries: one uses a chicken coop for their worship space, one uses a parking lot, and one takes advantage of their beautiful lot of land and worships outdoors year-round. As church membership across denominations declines, church leaders are finding ways for congregations to reconnect with their communities.

[Read the full story.](#)



ELCA Good Gifts

Still shopping for the perfect gift? Give something that will make real, lasting change in the world. Shop [ELCA Good Gifts](#) for more than 50 gift-giving options that support the ministries of the ELCA. From goats to water wells, there's something for everybody on your list. When you give in honor of a loved one, announce your gift with a [printable card](#). Together, we can do more than we ever could alone, making a huge collective impact on the needs of our church and the world.

[Shop now.](#)

WATCH THIS

A message from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- FEB 15** **YAGM APPLICATION DEADLINE**
Young Adults in Global Mission [LEARN MORE](#)
- FEB 15** **VIDEO SUBMISSION DEADLINE**
Your hopes for our church [LEARN MORE](#)
- AUG 7** **ROSTERED MINISTERS GATHERING**
"On the way – together!" [LEARN MORE](#)
- SEPT 10** **"GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS." SUNDAY**
Save the date [LEARN MORE](#)

FEATURED RESOURCES



- Customizable Christmas fliers**
Invite community members to join you for worship. [DOWNLOAD](#)
- 2018 Youth Gathering poster**
Download a free promotional poster. [DOWNLOAD](#)
- Live out your baptism: Epiphany**
Commit to your spiritual health and well-being in the new year. [DOWNLOAD](#)

[MORE RESOURCES](#)

BULLETIN BLURBS

These snippets are available for you to copy and paste into your bulletins.

- Find a congregation**
Are you traveling for the holidays? Congregations all over the ELCA are ready to welcome you for Christmas. Visit [ELCA.org/FindaCongregation](#) to search for a congregation near your home for the holidays. Share this link with friends near and far who may be looking for a church home.
- Send us your videos**
What is your hope for the future of our church? Send us a short video that shares your thoughts and dreams for the ELCA. We are looking for quick, 15-second videos. Grab your cellphone and start recording! Submissions are due Feb. 15, 2017. Email the video to future@elca.org, and if you share on social media, use #ELCAFuture. A few lucky winners may appear in a longer video and receive some ELCA prizes!
- Share your Reformation stories**
What is your congregation doing to observe the 500th anniversary of the Reformation? The editors of *Living Lutheran* want to hear from you! Stories will be posted in the new community section of LivingLutheran.org dedicated to highlighting Reformation commemorations across the church. Send stories of 300 words or less, plus photos, to LivingLutheran@elca.org, with "Reformation story" in the subject line.



March 8 marks International Women's Day, a day dedicated to celebrating women's achievements throughout history and across nations. On this day, the ELCA will encourage gifts to the campaign's [International Women Leaders Initiative](#) and share the impact, both future and present, on communities around the world. Please save the date and watch your inbox for additional details on how to get involved! *Congregations and synods will receive an International Women's Day booklet as part of the 2017 annual theme kickoff packet in January. [Preview the packet here.](#)*

The International Women Leaders initiative, a priority of *The Campaign for the ELCA*, is our church's commitment to intensify our efforts to provide leadership development opportunities for international women from our global companions. Already, the initiative has reached nearly 100 international women with training, networking and educational opportunities, including special seminars in Wittenberg, Germany.

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