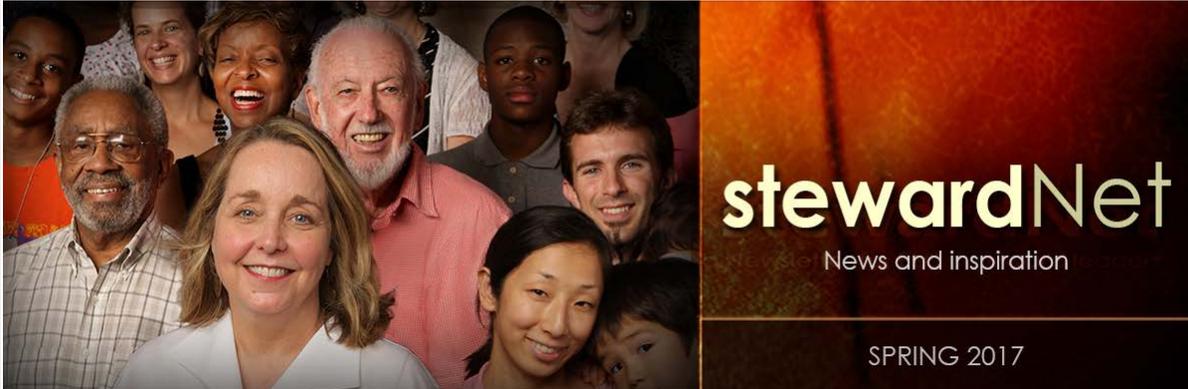


Having trouble viewing this email? [View in browser](#)



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

*You're receiving this email because you or your congregation indicated you are a stewardship leader in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). If you'd prefer, you may [unsubscribe](#).*

Dear friend in Christ,

How is it that systems thrive? One explanation might identify an abundance of resources and assets, positive momentum, or being in the right place at the right time. Other insights might reflect on the importance of adaptation, collaboration, grit, resilience, creativity and innovation. Either way, when we are talking about human systems like families, organizations and communities, leadership needs to be understood as a critical ingredient for thriving. After all, it is through leaders that we manage what is working, change what isn't, and grow in our ability to make a difference. Is it any wonder that Jesus started and then built his public ministry by multiplying leaders?

Perhaps it isn't surprising then that leadership development is picking up steam as a hot topic in our church. From top to bottom, the shortage of leadership is becoming so apparent that some are calling it a crisis. In more and more places, we don't have enough clergy and lay leaders who can envision, organize, evangelize, preach, teach, financially support and do everything in between. All of that calls into question hopes for a thriving ELCA ecology.

As I think about the challenges of stewardship ministry, it seems to me that our difficulties are primarily about the same issue of multiplying leaders. Doesn't it make sense that growing leaders is also about growing stewards, which is also about growing imitators (disciples) of Jesus? If we have a crisis in any one of these, don't we then have a crisis in all three? That is why I'm looking forward to the emerging consensus that growing leaders, stewards and disciples is foundational to the thriving church we all desire.

We are a church that is energized by lively engagement in our faith and life. I continue to thank you for your leadership and for doing God's work with a faithful, generous heart!

Faithfully,

Steve Oelschlager  
Stewardship Program Coordinator  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## Deliberations on leadership

From bishops, seminaries and beyond

When the conference of bishops met last month, leadership development was a focus. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton stated, "leadership and congregations need to be our primary emphasis as we begin the '[Called Forward Together in Christ](#)' process."



Bishop William Gafkjen from the Indiana-Kentucky Synod added, "We unanimously agreed to issue a call to prayer that the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers into the harvest that beckons for more ministers and leaders of various sorts." "We also committed to establishing a working group that will collaborate with seminary leaders and others over the next two years to effectively address this profound need, not only for more rostered ministers and lay leaders, but faithful, wise and courageous leaders who will provide the forms of ministry and leadership needed for this new day in which we find ourselves."

You can read more about the conference of bishops meeting [here](#). Also, check out Presiding Bishop Eaton's [Leadership Initiative](#) and [Trinity Seminary President Rick Barger's call](#) for every congregation to lift up leadership discernment. Finally, watch Eboo Patel's [recent address](#) at the Lake Institute on Faith and Giving on a particular need to multiply interfaith leaders.

---

## A culture of leadership (and stewardship)

Congregations, synods and beyond

Part of creating a culture of leadership is recognizing that all people have the potential to behave as leaders, even if they are not in positions of authority. Some ELCA congregations are advocating this leader-leader model by hosting syndicated leadership events like the [Global Leadership Summit](#) and [Leadercast](#), or by creating their own leadership [training programming](#). Synods are also getting creative in offering [leadership schools](#). How might our ELCA ecology better emphasize to all people at all ages that God created us on purpose, with a purpose, to make a difference with the gifts that God has given to us?



---

## Stewardship leadership

Stories from stewardCast

If you were unable to join us for our stewardCast live-streamed event on March 4, please watch the valuable stories and examples of multiplying stewards and leaders across generations, including:

- Pacifica Synod [Bishop Andy Taylor](#) sharing his belief that faith and finances (discipleship and stewardship) are interconnected.
- The [Rev. Taryn Montgomery](#) from Bread of Life Lutheran Church in Minot, N.D., talking about growing a culture of generosity that among other things led to significant increases in member giving and mission support.



- [The Rev. Greg Meyer](#) from Jacob's Well in Minneapolis sharing ideas and practices from their congregation that have helped it become self-supporting.
- [Linda Staats](#) describing the Generosity Project workshops hosted by synods to equip all ages to be steward leaders. (A Generosity Project resource will be more broadly available this September. Contact [Linda](#) for more details.)

### Opportunities to develop leaders

Mission interpreters share the stories

Harry S. Truman once said, "In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still." All groups and organizations require leadership if they are to continually move forward. It's that way in the ELCA too.

Opportunities to nurture and grow leaders in our church are present across ages and expressions, from congregations to Lutheran camps, schools, colleges, universities and seminaries. Leadership growth happens through experiences with camping ministry, campus ministry, chaplain ministry and advocacy work, to name a few.



If you're looking for ways to start a discussion around leadership in your congregation, you might begin with [Stories of Faith in Action](#) where you'll find stories that center on leadership. If you'd like to hear more about how our ELCA raises up leaders for the future of our church, consider inviting a mission interpreter to your congregation. Mission interpreters tell stories of how, together, we support developing leaders throughout our church. Contact [Denise Ballou](#) if you'd like to hear more about the mission interpretation ministry of our ELCA.

### Other items of interest

Resources, learning opportunities and more

- The 2017 issue of Giving Magazine is now available and can be [downloaded](#) free from the ELCA website. The issue focuses on the theme "living generously" and includes the "Live Generously Congregational Financial Response."
- Vanco Payment Solutions currently has an offer to get online giving setup for your congregation without monthly fees for the first year. To learn more about the potential for online giving, watch this [presentation](#) from stewardCast. Contact [Vanco](#) to take advantage of this offer before it expires on June 5. You can reach Vanco at 800-675-7430 and select "2" to connect with the sales team.
- See the difference your Mission Support makes in this new [video](#) showing congregational renewal efforts at Breath of God Lutheran Church in the Baltimore area.
- A free Congregational Survey for Growing Stewards & Mission will be available to all ELCA congregations on May 1. Respondents will indicate their perspectives, practices and skills related to gratitude, generosity, giving, mission interpretation and Mission Support. These responses can provide a baseline for monitoring progress on efforts to improve in one or more of these areas within a congregation. For additional information, contact [Neil Bullock](#).
- Christianity Today's Church Law & Tax is conducting the 2017 National Church Compensation Survey as the basis for its print and online tools. You can complete the confidential survey [here](#) and then receive one of three resources as a thank-you.

---

### Sayings, quotes, thoughts

John Maxwell

“Leaders who develop followers impact this generation. Leaders who develop leaders impact the next generation.”

---

### Biblical foundations

Matthew 20: 24-28

When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

### Upcoming events (watch the [calendar file](#) for details)

June 22

stewardTalk

3 p.m. Central at 877-820-7831 and participant code 6314685#

[Sign up for more information.](#)

Aug. 7-10

Atlanta

**ELCA Rostered Minister Gathering**

Includes discipleship and stewardship coaching at the Interactive Center. Offerings will include three to four free coaching sessions for some attendees.

Aug. 24

stewardTalk with Victoria Flood on Mission Support

3 p.m. Central at 877-820-7831 and participant code 6314685#

[Sign up for more information.](#)

Nov. 29 – Dec. 1

Nashville, Tenn.

[Generosity Next Conference](#) from the Ecumenical Stewardship Center

[Full calendar](#) | Subscribe to [Our Calendar File](#)

**Get connected** | Find ELCA [stewardship resources online](#)



We'd love to hear from you! Have a link or idea you want to share in our next issue? Email [stewardnet@elca.org](mailto:stewardnet@elca.org).

You're receiving this email because you or your congregation indicated you are a stewardship leader in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Update your email preferences or [unsubscribe](#).

[Privacy Policy](#) | [ELCA.org](#) | [ELCA Community member? Manage your preferences](#)