

COMPREHENSIVE MISSION SUPPORT STRATEGY

2016 - 2018

PURPOSE

The ELCA needs a clear, comprehensive strategy to more deeply engage its members, congregations and synods in growing in stewardship and Mission Support sharing. A comprehensive strategy for increasing Mission Support will encompass and integrate the various churchwide networks, initiatives and programs that relate to stewardship and Mission Support.

The Comprehensive Mission Support Strategy is first and foremost a call to the spiritual renewal of our church, its synods, congregations and disciples. It is about seeing Jesus, and one another, in the stewardship and mission support decisions we make as disciples who live out our faith individually and communally. It is about a revival in our teaching, encouraging and inspiring every baptized member to grow in their stewardship and faith as they follow Jesus. It is about helping every congregation to see itself as a generous partner in God's mission in the world; thus being renewed in their own life together. May the death and resurrection of Jesus for the life of the world again pull us forward together into God's future.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles undergird this strategy:

+ *We are church.* Our Mission Support interpretation should explicitly express our identity as a church in mission *for the sake of the world.*

+ *We are Lutheran.* We will engage ELCA members around our identity as ELCA Lutherans and what it means for our daily life and stewardship.

+ *We are church together.* The ELCA is one church in three expressions, with multiple networks that must be engaged in a renewed effort to create a movement for growth in stewardship.

+The churchwide organization will reflect a culture of connection, demonstrated by shared vision and strategy for growth in stewardship and Mission Support with clear goals and objectives, accountability and intentional communication.

MISSION SUPPORT STRATEGIC INITIATIVES 2016-2108

1. ESTABLISH MISSION SUPPORT TABLES IN EVERY SYNOD THAT ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MISSION SUPPORT PLAN WITH CLEAR, MEASURABLE OUTCOMES. Our church has made a significant investment in the system of directors for evangelical mission (DEMs) and local Mission Support Tables and it's important that the level of accountability and results match the investment. The following expectations should be met if funding support is to continue:
 - a) Stewardship education and training should be provided for staff (including DEMs) and Mission Support Table participants on an ongoing basis.
 - b) A synodical mission plan should be developed that answers the questions: *Who are we as synod?* and *What does it mean to be the church together?*

- c) Every synod Mission Support Table will develop a plan for stewardship and Mission Support interpretation.
- d) Every synod Mission Support Table will develop an annual plan to engage its congregations, conferences and the local ecology of the church in a Mission Support “ask” that is theologically grounded, attainable, relational, and based on being church together. In the case of a healthy and sustainable congregation, 10% is the assumed goal.
- e) The fruits of the Macedonia initiative will be incorporated into the synod Mission Support Plans.
- f) The synod Mission Support plan, activities and results will be shared with the director for stewardship and the director for Mission Support as preparation for the annual synodical-churchwide Mission Support consultation.
- g) The consultation process will be shaped so that the synod and the churchwide organization together evaluate the prior year Mission Support efforts, revisions to the annual Mission Support process and commitments for Mission Support sharing in the coming year.
- h) The directors for evangelical mission will be responsible for helping foster a culture of connection.
- i) In order to honor the premise of the Mission Support pilots, churchwide work with the synod Mission Support Tables will exclude the five pilot synods.

2. DEVELOP ENHANCED TOOLS FOR STEWARDSHIP AND MISSION SUPPORT INTERPRETATION

- a) Strategic communications should support a culture where congregations see themselves as a part of the ELCA not in competition with other ministries, but as a critical partner in achieving our shared missional objectives. This includes imparting a deeper understanding of all we do together as church, while also inspiring broader and deeper participation.
- b) Mission Support interpretation will help congregations to understand what it means to be part of the wider ecology of the ELCA and their role in supporting its mission and ministry, including Mission Support sharing. Stewardship resources will be directly linked to the ELCA identity and provide interpretation around the use of Mission Support dollars.
- c) A tool kit will be developed for Mission Support consultations with congregations and synods that includes both the congregational commitment form and Stories of Faith in Action.

3. ESTABLISH COORDINATED BUT DIFFERENTIATED ROLES FOR CHURCHWIDE LEADERS

- a) **DOMESTIC MISSION (DM) IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:**
 - Ensuring that Mission Support Tables are established in every synod, an annual stewardship plan is approved and the results shared with the director for Mission Support prior to each annual synodical-churchwide consultation.
 - Central staff will focus work on synod Mission Support Tables and directors for evangelical mission will work with individual congregations.
 - Adjust reporting process within DM so that directors for evangelical mission report directly to the stewardship team on matters related to stewardship and mission support to provide enhanced support, strengthen accountability and create efficient lines of communication.
 - Works with Mission Advancement to develop stewardship education resources.
 - Income Goal: Mission Support income from congregations to synods increases.
- b) **MISSION ADVANCEMENT (MA) IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:**
 - Ensuring that all synod-churchwide consultations are scheduled, planned and completed.
 - Coordinate with synod bishops and directors for evangelical mission regarding Mission Support plans and results.

- Track Mission Support, compile reports and propose Mission Support actions to Office of the Treasurer.
 - Keep all churchwide representatives to synods informed regarding the status of Mission Support plans prior to visits.
 - Oversee director, associate and administrative staff for Mission Support.
 - Income Goal: Mission Support percentage sharing from synods holds or increases.
- c) FORM MISSION SUPPORT STRATEGY COMMITTEE FOR MISSION SUPPORT PLANNING
- The Mission Support Strategy Committee will be convened by the director for Mission Support and include stewardship staff from DM, marketing communications staff from MA and synodical relations staff from Office of the Presiding Bishop (OB).
 - The Mission Support Strategy Committee will lead planning for the 2017 and future Mission Interpreters events. The committee will be encouraged to grow the program together and to find efficiencies in supporting this network along with the Synod Communicators network.
 - The Mission Support Strategy Committee will create opportunities to integrate work around faith practices – Book of Faith.
4. GROW THE MISSION INTERPRETERS AND SYNOD COMMUNICATORS NETWORKS.
- a) Engagement strategy yet to be developed in consultation with the Inter-unit Committee for Mission Support Planning.
 - b) Will look for efficiencies in supporting Mission Interpreters Network along with the Synod Communicators and better leverage the capacities of both.
5. INCREASE STAFF LEARNING AND PLANNING CENTERED ON STEWARDSHIP AND MISSION SUPPORT
- a) Mission Support will be the focus of the 2016 gathering of the directors for evangelical mission, working with MA and OB on agenda and structure and will be a major emphasis at staff meetings going forward.
 - b) Mission Support staff from MA will be included at least once a year on the agenda of meetings of directors for evangelical mission.
 - c) The director for Mission Support will participate in the quarterly meetings of the Director for Evangelical Mission Partners Table.