Publishing House of the ELCA (1517 Media)

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Statement of purpose

1517 Media is the publishing ministry of the ELCA. The constitutional description of this unit appears in provision 17.40. and the accompanying bylaws and continuing resolutions of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

Report of work 2019–2022

The publishing activities of 1517 Media complement the goals of the ELCA as a whole. 1517 Media joins the ELCA in seeking to activate each of us to invite more people into the way of Jesus and discover together community, justice, and love. 1517 Media shares in the work of becoming a church that supports and partners with vital congregations to reach and embrace younger generations in all their diversity, a church that gives voice to those whose voices have sometimes gone unheard or been dismissed. 1517 Media strives to do these things by creating and distributing resources for Christian worship and faith formation, for study and professional enrichment, and for personal edification and spiritual growth. This work is sustained entirely by the sale of these resources to congregations, institutions, and individuals.

The triennium since the 2019 Churchwide Assembly has included singular challenges to society, to the church, and to this publishing ministry. The profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is well known, especially on activities that involve gathering in person for worship, faith formation, and higher education. 1517 Media saw a double-digit percentage decline in sales of congregational resources during the first two years of this triennium; however, sales recovered strongly in the past year as congregations resumed many of their ministry activities. 1517 Media is grateful for the organizational and fiscal stability that enables it to pursue the ministry to which it is called.

New resources for the church 2019–2022

"How can we support your ministry?" continues to be a foundational question for our work with congregations and church leaders. Congregational resources are developed in partnership with hundreds of contributors across the church under the Augsburg Fortress and Sparkhouse imprints, supporting worship and music, faith formation, and other congregational ministries with a principal and essential focus on the ELCA.

Central to this work and to the life of the church is support for the ongoing and evolving renewal of this church's worship. Published in November 2020, *All Creation Sings: Evangelical Lutheran Worship Supplement* represents the most significant addition to ELCA worship resources since *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (2006). More than 50 contributors and consultants joined the worship teams of the ELCA and Augsburg Fortress to provide two new communion settings (one bilingual, in Spanish and English), a contemplative Service of Word and Prayer, 200 hymns and songs in diverse genres, and expanded prayer resources. Worship at the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly features a broad sampling of these resources, which give special attention to such topics as creation and the earth, society and justice, and lament and praise.

However, the disruption of "regular" worship that accompanied the pandemic has also led to enhanced support for digital versions of worship materials as well as resources for worship and prayer in the home. Sundaysandseasons.com, the ELCA's principal digital-worship planning tool and library, is an essential utility for a large majority of ELCA congregations and organizations, offering content and planning tools to facilitate use of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and *All Creation Sings*. Its Spanish-language content has been expanded to include nearly all the hymns and liturgical materials—more than 600 items—from the ELCA's Spanish-language worship book, *Libro de Liturgia y Cántico.* The range of devotional resources for household use has expanded with the introduction of new annual devotionals for Advent and Christmas as well as "Families Celebrate" devotional and activity card decks.

Supporting the work of congregations as they lead people into deeper Christian faith and practice has also evolved in the face of recent challenges. Staff continue to expand and enrich content on the online platform, Sparkhousedigital.org, which includes more than 15,000 content items from the curriculum portfolio and serves a variety of learning environments, whether in-person or virtual. Quarterly Digital Activity Kits, resources to help congregations engage families with children at home, have been especially popular the past two years.

New editions and enrichments based on the remarkable work of Daniel Erlander continue to be released. A revised edition of *Baptized, We Live: Lutheranism as a Way of Life* appeared in spring 2020, accompanied by a congregational sourcebook to help expand its use. In spring 2021, Augsburg Fortress released a suite of resources for children, youth, and adults based on his *Manna and Mercy* introduction to the Bible.

New books for church leaders and higher education 2019–2022

Books developed with talented authors and thought leaders represent an expanding area of 1517 Media's work. For rostered ministers, students, and other adult learners, Fortress Press publishes titles that support ministry and scholarship. Its program includes an intentional and international outreach to a broad audience with titles that seek to nourish souls, ignite minds, and promote the common good. Books by ELCA authors and teachers include Shauna K. Hannan's *The People's Sermon: Preaching as a Ministry of the Whole Congregation;* Frank G. Honeycutt's *Death by Baptism: Sacramental Liberation in a Culture of Fear;* Timothy J. Wengert's *The Augsburg Confession: Renewing Lutheran Life and Practice;* a newly revised edition of the classic *Minister's Prayer Book*; and a revised edition of *They Are Us: Lutherans and Immigration.* Books on critical issues affecting church and society include two books by Ryan P. Burge, *The Nones* and *20 Myths About Religion and Politics in America;* Renee K. Harrison's *Black Hands, White House: Slave Labor and the Making of America;* and Darrell Jodock and William Nelsen's *Embracing Diversity: Faith, Vocation, and the Promise of America.* Books supporting church leaders in rapidly changing environments include Dennis Jacobsen's *A Spirituality for Doing Justice: Reflections for Congregation-Based Organizers;* an expanded edition of Fred Lehr's *Clergy Burnout: Surviving in Turbulent Times;* and Ross Murray's *Made, Known, Loved: Developing LGBTQ-Inclusive Youth Ministry.*

In addition, Fortress Press brings to its audience a curated list of titles from other publishers and partners, including the catalogue of Lutheran University Press, books from the *Lutheran Quarterly* series, and titles in the "Word and World" series with Luther Seminary.

New books for readers within and beyond the church 2019–2022

Over the past three years, in keeping with the ELCA's goal to be an outwardly focused church, 1517 Media's book publishing programs have expanded, seeking readers both within and beyond the church community. Beaming Books, launched in 2016, offers vibrant, high-quality books for children and their caregivers, developed to help children thrive emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Premiering in 2020, Broadleaf Books is the adult nonfiction imprint of 1517 Media. Rooted in the progressive Christian tradition and reflecting the diversity of human creativity, Broadleaf Books publishes titles that engage readers in fresh, substantive, timely, and inspiring reflection on living with meaning and connection.

Well-received recent Beaming Books titles include *The Boy With Big, Big Feelings* and *The Girl With Big, Big Questions; The Memory Book,* a journal to accompany *The Memory Box: A Book About Grief; Our Father in Heaven: A Lord's Prayer Pop-Up Book; Mother God;* and *Black Girls Unbossed: Young World Changers Leading the Way.*

Well-received recent Broadleaf Books titles include Khristi Lauren Adams' *Parable of the Brown Girl: The Sacred Lives of Girls of Color;* Heidi Barr and Ellie Roscher's *12 Tiny Things: Simple Ways to Live a More Intentional Life;* Steven Charleston's *Ladder to the Light: An Indigenous Elder's Meditations on Hope and Courage;* Yolanda Pierce's *In My Grandmother's House: Black Women, Faith, and the Stories We Inherit;* Julie Rodgers' *Outlove: A Queer Christian Survival Story;* and Pádraig Ó Tuama's *In the Shelter: Finding a Home in the World.*

New office home

In fall 2021, 1517 Media completed a move to leased space at 411 Washington Avenue North, third floor, in Minneapolis's North Loop. Staff are learning new and flexible ways of working both in person and remotely, with continued emphasis on everyone's health and safety. More than 15% of 1517 Media's workforce now lives in locations beyond the Twin Cities area.

Plans for 2022–2025

1517 Media's strategic thinking focuses on continuing to serve customers—in congregations of the ELCA and its full communion partners, in higher education settings and in individual lives—by looking for opportunities to partner with people in communicating the liberating grace of God in an ever-changing world. 1517 Media is always here to serve individuals and support their ministries.

The team at 1517 Media appreciates the many creative partners who contribute to published resources: authors, composers, editors, reviewers, visual artists, writers, and others. In addition, we thank you for your support and use of the resources provided by the ELCA's publishing ministry.

Mr. T. Mark Brokering, *chair, board of trustees*
Mr. Tim Blevins, *president and chief executive officer*