*Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*

**Synodical Renewing Congregations Strategies**

*Opportunities to share the good news of Jesus and serve our neighbors are all around us.*

*In order to reflect our ever-changing neighborhoods and*

*actively engage in God’s mission in the world,*

*strong, vibrant congregational ministries are continually in a process of renewal.*

*In these ministries, places within our own communities,*

*God is at work in the ELCA, building the church.*

Through *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, we have the opportunity to increase our efforts through ELCA synods to engage more congregations in strategic renewal initiatives. The goal is to create diverse, vibrant and growing communities of faith focused on increasing their support of and engagement in God’s mission, both locally and globally.  A focus on the identification and funding of congregational renewal in ethnic-specific, multicultural and poverty contexts within each synod will continue to be a priority for the Renewing Congregations program.

The *Synodical Renewing Congregations Strategies* initiative makes resources available to support synodical renewal strategies as synods engage and accompany congregations with intentional congregational renewal processes, including training, networking, leadership development and coaching. Examples include:

• A synod-wide renewal strategy to accompany more than half of its congregations in a discipleship/faith practices and evangelizing initiative (e.g. Fostering Vibrant Faith)

• Renewal (training) cohorts throughout the synod with coaches for the pastors and renewal teams

• Small congregation renewal initiatives

• Rural and small town ministry renewal initiatives

• Urban ministry renewal initiatives

• Emergent ministry initiatives

• Synodical or regional “intentional ministry” conferences – mission development/redevelopment training for rostered leaders

• Coaching systems for renewal/redevelopment/area ministry strategy teams, renewal leaders and pastor redevelopers

This document provides information about the proposal development, review, and evaluation process. Please develop a project proposal that addresses the grant criteria, guidelines, and summary as outlined. The synod grant request may be up to $50,000, with a clear presentation of the synod’s initiative budget. The content of the initiative should be in addition to the basic work of the synod’s congregational renewal table (or similarly purposed group). These grant dollars are intended for new ministry foci, not the basic operation of the synod’s renewal mission table/congregational renewal program (i.e. expenses related to regular meetings, activities or events).

Please note the following for proposal development:

* Grant Criteria are to be addressed in the synod’s proposal as *expectations*.
* Grant Guidelines are *significant recommendations* for elements to be included in the proposal.
* The Summary communicates the *primary intended outcomes* of the initiative.

ELCA Campaign Renewing Congregations Initiative Review Tables will review grant proposals on a quarterly basis using an interdependent peer review process involving a representative group of synodical bishops, directors for evangelical mission (DEMs), and other churchwide staff.  Awards will be made on the basis of alignment with the grant criteria, the quality of the proposal and the potential for greatest impact. Grant awards will be furnished as campaign funds are received and made available for distribution.

**GRANT CRITERIA**

1. A clear, succinct statement of the desired outcome of the synod’s proposed initiative along with a defined, measurable plan for implementation [in SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely) goal format] will be presented by the synod. In addition to goals, the synod will develop its own indicators for *process/strategy* and *impact* outcomes (see Grant Guidelines, #1).
2. Congregational covenants that acknowledge and demonstrate a willingness, readiness and commitment to change, will be developed by each synod to ensure mutual accountability and effective tracking for each congregation in the synod’s initiative.
3. A budget will be submitted based on a plan that effectively uses the grant funds. All unused grant dollars will be returned to the ELCA.
4. Synod financial investment will be reflected in the budget of the Synodical Renewing Congregations Strategies initiative.
5. A Renewing Congregations Mission Table (e.g. team, committee, leadership group) is in place by six months after the initiative commences.
6. A synodical Renewing Congregations Missional Plan outlining the vision to accompany congregations for strategic renewal in the synod, including the resources, tools, and processes will be organized by the end of the grant period.
7. The synod agrees to evaluate and participate in interdependent evaluation of the synod’s initiative, in addition to sharing the learnings with the churchwide organization and other synods. The synod will monitor and adjust the initiative plans as needed. Mid-term and annual/final progress reports will be submitted.
8. The synod proposal must be accompanied by the Director for Evangelical Mission and Synodical Bishop, and endorsed by one of the following: Synod Council or the synod Executive Committee.

**GRANT GUIDELINES**

1. In addition to process/strategy outcomes, the defined, measurable plan for implementation with outcome indicators identified by the synod could be based on one or more of the following congregational development/renewal *impact* outcome expectations:
2. Clarity of Purpose, Identity, Core Values/Guiding Principles, Context, and Missional Plan
3. A deepening of discipleship of those involved in the ministry (discipleship/faith practices)
4. Growth in worship attendance and participation in the life of the congregation (evangelizing outreach);
5. Empowered leadership that is self-reliant (shared leadership; leadership development);
6. Community Engagement (community partners; social ministry and justice)
7. Inclusive of all in the service area (the congregation is more and more reflective of the demographics of the mission field)
8. Sound stewardship practices and growth for minimum of 10% of income given to the synod as Mission Support (holistic year-round stewardship plan)
9. Contextual worship and music ministry (quality & relevant worship life)
10. Effective Networking (connectedness to ELCA congregations, ecumenical and community partners)
11. Consider opportunities for congregational renewal in ethnic-specific, multicultural and poverty contexts as a priority.
12. Consider options for engaging and integrating synod teams and ELCA-related institutions and organizations in this effort.
13. An intentional effort to highlight the benefits of this initiative in connection with existing or planned synod appeals.
14. An organizational plan that involves, encourages, equips and supports the multiplication of leaders within the synod, especially young adult leaders and people of non-European descent.
15. An approach that includes effective actions or elements that can be shared with other synods.
16. Consider opportunities for a regional initiative(s) partnership(s).

**SUMMARY**

The Campaign for the ELCA’s Renewing Congregations initiative ministry will multiply the number of existing congregations engaged in intentional renewal to fully participate in God's mission in the world. This work will enable people in congregations to deepen their spiritual lives and faith practices, discern the work God is already doing among and around them, help them better welcome and retain people to participate in God's work and refocus for effective mission in the communities where they live and work. After the renewal process as they continue the renewal journey, congregations experience enhanced personal discipleship, growth and diversifying that reflects their communities and fuller investment in God’s mission, both locally and globally. Engaging congregational renewal in ethnic-specific, multicultural and poverty contexts is an ongoing priority of this church.