



Report of Mission Advancement

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New.

25 YEARS TOGETHER IN CHRIST

Statement of Purpose

The Mission Advancement unit is responsible for coordinating this church's communication, marketing, public relations, mission funding, major gifts, planned gifts, and constituent data management. The governing description of this unit appears in continuing resolution 16.12.C11., printed in Section XII of the *2013 Pre-Assembly Report*.

Report of Work 2011–2013

Marketing Communications

Marketing Communications supports work in strengthening the identity and mission of the ELCA through focused, strategic, and integrated communication with members and the wider society.

The Marketing Communications team is organized into three work groups that collaborate interdependently in their work. The three groups are *Marketing* (marketing strategies and planning, direct mail/email appeals, brand integrity and stewardship, and fundraising support communications), *Public Relations* (news and feature story development, media relations, messaging strategy, social media content, print, and online publications), and *Digital Media* (website development and maintenance, video production, graphic design, and social media support).

Since the 2011 Churchwide Assembly, the Marketing Communications team has:

- Developed and implemented brand identity guidelines to portray a consistent look and feel across all communications for the ELCA and its sub-brands.
- Enhanced communications associated with major fundraising programs, including the development of strategic marketing plans for the launch of the ELCA Malaria Campaign and six other sub-brands of the ELCA. Created a draft case statement and other support materials for the proposed ELCA 25th Anniversary Campaign.
- Offered training and mutual learning opportunities to synod communicators through a synod communications training event and interactive online seminars.
- Provided significant media relations support and guidance to many synods and congregations in connection with incidents and issues that garnered attention and scrutiny from news media.
- Grown the ELCA Facebook fan page base from 23,000 fans to 36,000. It is an increasingly common way in which we connect with members by sharing daily inspiration, stories, and news.
- Produced 151 professional-quality videos for use at annual synod assemblies and for other special needs, purposes, and events. Videos posted on [YouTube](#) offered members words and images of hope, comfort, and inspiration at strategically identified times. Views of ELCA videos on YouTube totaled 300,000.
- Provided synods and congregations with resources and toolkits to enhance their stewardship efforts, celebrate the ELCA's 25th anniversary, and participate in "God's work. Our hands." Sunday, a dedicated day of service to take place on Sunday, September 8, 2013.
- Initiated a comprehensive redesign of our primary Internet website, *ELCA.org*, from the ground up to better serve ELCA members.

The Lutheran

The Lutheran is the monthly magazine of the ELCA which nurtures an understanding of the faith, mission, and ministries of this church and provides informed editorial content about relevant topics.

In 2011 the magazine launched the still-running series "Deeper understandings," written by teaching theologians of the ELCA to build comprehension of faith fundamentals. The Rev. Peter W. Marty worked through three column cycles ("A Lutheran Christian life for today," "10 Bible stories that breathe life," and "Elements of the Lord's day") over the past two years that drew widespread praise. His current effort is "Challenging conversations." The magazine

examined issues confronting the ELCA in cover articles ranging from Lutheran authors, new thinkers, and donations in hard times to domestic abuse, faith formation, the two kingdoms, and congregations reinventing themselves.

The advertising salesperson and the Web manager both left the magazine over the past two years and were not replaced, bringing staff size to seven. Significant circulation losses continued in 2011 with an 11.3 percent drop. However, 2012 slowed to a 6.25 percent decline with the numerical loss cut by more than half. As of April 2013, paid circulation stood at 175,827. Advertising declined as well over the two years, down 7.9 percent in 2011 and 14.2 percent in 2012. Despite the declining subscription and circulation figures, *The Lutheran* and its two children's magazines posted operating surpluses of \$104,096 in 2011 and \$122,964 in 2012.

Drawing upon a consultation conducted during 2012, *The Lutheran* looks to reevaluate and realign its editorial content and redesign the entire look of the magazine in time for the January 2014 issue. Further, the magazine will participate with other teams in the Mission Advancement unit in a communications audit of information currently disseminated by the churchwide organization. One anticipated outcome for *The Lutheran* is to see if there is a need for a new online product—one directed at people connected with and participating in the ELCA but who are not being reached through current communication efforts. The magazine's Advisory Committee affirmed that any new product should be aligned with the ELCA's other information, publication, and communication plans.

Constituent Support

The Constituent Support team responsibilities include the management of the ELCA Constituent Information System (ECIS), the ELCA Call Center, the online resource catalog, mail services, and coordination of ELCA Resource Centers. The team also supports the communication and fundraising efforts of the ELCA through effective use of constituent data.

ECIS is now being utilized as the only database of constituent records at the ELCA. Approximately 850,000 active constituent records are managed in ECIS and more than 15 databases have been integrated into the system in the past two years. Constituent Support is actively working to add more databases to the system. ECIS will be utilized as the main database for all the search functionalities in the new *ELCA.org* website.

Constituent Support is also working to make ECIS available to all ELCA synods for the purpose of managing their essential data. This will improve the quality of data for all users and provide synods with an advanced content management system in which to manage their roster and congregational data. The goals of partnering in this way are to eliminate duplicate entry, improve accuracy and timeliness of information sharing, and reduce the cost to synods of maintaining roster and congregational data.

In late 2011, the new online ELCA resource catalog was launched at <http://resources.ELCA.org/>. More than 8,800 orders were processed through the online catalog in 2012. This online catalog includes more than 280 resources available for ELCA constituents and congregations to order online.

Mission Funding

The Mission Funding team carries churchwide responsibility for Mission Support conversations and consultations and for developing and executing other specific fundraising strategies, as well as providing for world hunger education and constituency and network support. The focus is on the major funding appeals that have been requested by this church through assembly action, detailed below.

- ***Mission Support***

Mission Support is the undesignated financial support given by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries. It is based on the principle of interdependence among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. Synod-churchwide Mission Support consultations are held regularly and are opportunities to discuss the work of each synod in strengthening Mission Support in the congregations of the synod, as well as discussions on our shared responsibility to provide funding for domestic and global mission and ministry.

Since the beginning of the ELCA, the Mission Support shared by congregations for the work of synods and the churchwide organization has declined both as a percent of total giving and in actual dollars. In 1990, total Mission Support was \$119 million. In 2011, Mission Support was \$103 million. Over the years, an increasing percentage of Mission Support has remained in synods and, beginning with this biennium, synods now retain a higher percentage of Mission Support in total than is passed on for churchwide ministries. Adjusted for inflation, from 1990 to 2011, Mission Support declined 43 percent for synods and 56 percent for the churchwide organization. While Mission Support declined

in both 2011 and 2012, more synods have realized growth in Mission Support income over this biennium as compared with the previous two-year period.

Mission Advancement is collaborating with Congregational and Synodical Mission to provide for greater integration between stewardship resources and mission interpretation, and to incorporate the new messaging and identity language in key stewardship resources. A new “stewardship toolkit” for congregations is in production. The Stories of Faith in Action resource is a primary piece for interpreting the impact of Mission Support dollars and is used by many congregations as a complement to other stewardship activities.

- ***ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response***

During fiscal years 2011 and 2012, the ELCA churchwide organization directly received more than 117,000 gifts from individuals and congregations for ELCA World Hunger and an additional 67,000 gifts for Lutheran Disaster Response. These gifts came from members in more than 7,000 different ELCA congregations.

The principal responsibility for providing educational material about hunger and an invitation to a faithful response through the ELCA rests in the Mission Advancement unit. This includes resourcing a network of more than 300 volunteers who help to raise up the concerns for hunger in the life of synods and volunteer promoters in thousands of congregations. The impact that the ELCA is having upon hunger in the United States and internationally is documented in the reports from the Congregational and Synodical Mission and Global Mission units. Material designed for use by congregations and stories of the work of ELCA World Hunger are available online at www.ELCA.org/hunger, where resources for education and promotion of hunger-related work can also be ordered.

Together, congregations and individuals dedicated more than \$38 million to ELCA World Hunger in the past two years. Of this, approximately 71 percent was directed toward hunger solutions outside the United States, over 21 percent toward hunger in this country, and less than 8 percent for general administration and fundraising. Aligned with ELCA World Hunger is the work of Lutheran Disaster Response and the ELCA Malaria Campaign. Combined income to these three funds exceeded \$30 million per year for each of the past two years.

The ELCA’s ministry to address hunger is carried out under assembly-approved guidelines. The emphasis is upon helping communities that experience periodic or chronic need for food relief in a way that helps lift them from poverty. The focus is to address the root causes of hunger and help communities take action toward long-term solutions. Resources for intervention are shared with church-based programs, global companion churches, and partner organizations (such as The Lutheran World Federation, Lutheran World Relief, Church World Service, and Bread for the World).

At the last Churchwide Assembly it was reported that 2011–2013 would include an effort to explore expanding strategic efforts for growth of the hunger initiatives related to the ELCA. A full review of the program was conducted during the second half of 2012. It was found that the trust and confidence in ELCA World Hunger is strong, and there is opportunity for growing financial support and member awareness and engagement. In 2013, new initiatives to expand networking, financial support, and impact are being undertaken and are anticipated to build into the proposed 25th Anniversary Campaign.

One of the most successful efforts to lift up the concern for hunger and invite a faithful response was provided as part of the ELCA Youth Gathering. Known as the “100 Wells Challenge,” youth were provided experiential education about the need for clean and accessible water and invited to take action. Youth and their congregations met the challenge, providing close to \$800,000 for ELCA World Hunger related projects that supported access to safe and plentiful water.

The work and support of ELCA World Hunger is complemented and expanded by the specific objectives and support for the ELCA Malaria Campaign. The **ELCA Malaria Campaign** operates as part of the ELCA World Hunger and Disaster team. Results for this work are provided in a separate report. (See Section VI of the *Pre-Assembly Report*.)

In times of disaster, ELCA partners come together to provide members, congregations, synods, and other partners a reliable way to respond. In the past year, an intentional effort has been made to bring together the efforts known in different places as ELCA Disaster Response and Lutheran Disaster Response under one name: **Lutheran Disaster Response**. It has also been a priority to lift up both the domestic and international aspects of disaster response under this single name.

In the past two years, Lutheran Disaster Response has responded to more than 60 disasters in 21 states and 32 countries. Some of these disasters received significant attention and special gifts (Hurricane Sandy, the Japan earthquake, Droughts in Africa, the Syrian Refugee Crisis, Flooding and Storms in over a dozen states). Most responses depended upon the generosity of synods, congregations, and individuals to the general fund for Lutheran Disaster Response. These

general gifts have provided a degree of readiness for immediate response and an ability to continue the church's efforts until communities have recovered. These gifts have been extended in their impact by the generosity of thousands of volunteers in clean-up, rebuilding, and personal care in the United States.

- ***ELCA Fund for Leaders***

The ELCA Fund for Leaders is a merit-based scholarship program for the best and brightest ELCA candidates for ordained and rostered lay ministry and is also addressing the problem of seminarian debt. The program has realized excellent growth over the biennium. In the 2012 fiscal year, the total asset value of all ELCA Fund for Leaders endowment accounts increased by nearly \$9 million through a combination of outright gifts, realized bequests, and market growth. Since its inception in 2000, the ELCA Fund for Leaders has provided more than \$8.2 million in tuition scholarships to future pastors and lay leaders, and, in the coming year, it will expand its total number of awards to support more than 200 students in the 2013–2014 academic year. There are now past recipients of ELCA Fund for Leaders full-tuition scholarships serving in 42 of the 65 ELCA synods, and the opportunity for continued growth has been strengthened by meeting and exceeding a five-year campaign goal of raising \$15 million. Ms. Jessica Schenk, a first-year student at Luther Seminary and recipient of an ELCA Fund for Leaders full-tuition scholarship, verbalizes the sentiment expressed by many recipients: “This is something that really opened a door and affirmed my sense of call.”

- ***ELCA Global Church Sponsorship – Missionaries, International Leaders, Ministries***

The former Missionary Sponsorship program has been expanded into the ELCA Global Church Sponsorship program in order to better represent the scope and direction of the global mission work of the ELCA. This program refresh was authorized by the Church Council meeting in the spring of 2013. ELCA Global Church Sponsorship offers ELCA members and congregations the opportunity to support a wider range of the ongoing comprehensive ELCA global ministries carried out in collaboration with international companion churches, including the Young Adults in Global Mission program, scholarships offered through the International Leaders program, and Global Ministries grants for evangelism and leadership development.

In the past five years, gift income for ELCA Missionary Sponsorship declined from \$3.8 million in fiscal year 2007 to \$2.9 million in fiscal year 2012. The decline appears to be leveling off. It is hoped that the refreshed program and stronger communication and relationship building will help to address the decline and provide stability for this work that continues to be central to this church's global reach.

As part of the proposed campaign for the ELCA, special initiatives are being considered to help grow the Lutheran church around the world, including an expansion of the Young Adults in Global Mission program, new evangelism and ministry initiatives with global companion churches, and scholarships and educational opportunities for female global church leaders.

- ***ELCA New Congregations***

The ELCA New Congregations program operates with the following priorities:

1. Accompanying and resourcing synodical leaders in the process of birthing, growing, and maturing new ministries of Word and Sacrament. Currently there are 342 new ministries under development throughout the ELCA, averaging 40 to 45 new starts every year.
2. Assisting the ELCA in fulfilling its commitment to be in ministry among marginal communities. Of these new ministries, 55 percent or more are among people of color and those whose primary language is other than English. Also, 20 percent to 25 percent are among people who experience poverty and marginalization.
3. Sharing with leaders throughout the ELCA the learning and insights of these ministries through training and coaching initiatives.
4. Seeking to increase the funding base for launching and sustaining new ministries under development as they reach greater levels of strength, vitality, and self-reliance. This work is done in partnership with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. The following are key ways in which this goal is pursued:
 - a. Strategic consultations with local/synodical mission tables, directors for evangelical mission, and bishops; identifying area potential, envisioning the new ministry possibility, and enlisting local ownership.
 - b. Securing local funding sources for the new ministry. A tool to assist the directors for evangelical mission with this process is in its final stages. This tool is called “ELCA New Congregation: Planting the Seeds of Faith/One Ministry at a Time.” Donors will have the opportunity to support a local new ministry, as well

- as consider increasing our shared capacity for starting new congregations throughout the United States and the Caribbean. These gifts provide additional capacity beyond core commitments to ELCA Mission Support.
- c. Allocation decisions are made through a review table process that includes bishops and key leaders from around the country.
 5. Including in the proposed campaign for the ELCA is the raising of \$4 million to strengthen the ministry of the ELCA New Congregations program, in addition to funds that are raised through the campaign initiative and retained in synods for specific new ministry starts. Another \$8 million of the proposed campaign is for congregational renewal and will be given to synods for their allocation and distribution to congregations.

- ***Vision for Mission***

This funding program increases the ELCA's capacity to carry out its vital ministries in the United States and throughout the world as this church responds to opportunities for mission where most needed. In 2011, the \$1.2 million goal was surpassed. In 2012, the \$1.3 million goal was surpassed. In 2013 and 2014 the income goal is set at \$1.4 million. A generous challenge gift from a donor has been an effective component of the campaign in recent years. An opportunity to grow the Vision for Mission constituency through a special premium was offered in October 2012 and was well received by contributors.

- ***The proposed Campaign for the ELCA***

The Church Council-appointed Mission Funding Task Force recommended consideration of a 25th anniversary campaign for the ELCA that is focused on giving to mission and ministry and lifts up specific giving opportunities. A proposal for a comprehensive campaign was prepared and presented to the Conference of Bishops and synodical vice presidents in October 2012. In April 2013, the Church Council recommended the campaign to this Churchwide Assembly. The campaign is comprehensive and designed to support all expressions of the ELCA in telling the story of this church and raising support for its shared priorities in a way that can have a measurable impact on ministry both locally and globally.

ELCA Foundation

The ELCA Foundation supports members of the ELCA in living out lifelong stewardship and in supporting the ministries of the ELCA. Through a nationwide network of professional gift planners, in addition to the churchwide team, the ELCA Foundation supports and strengthens the ministry of congregations, synods, and related agencies through the development of current and deferred gifts.

The ELCA Foundation is working to expand the giving for all three expressions of the church by increasing its focus on major current gifts while maintaining programs to grow planned gifts. Building on previous efforts, the Foundation has taken additional steps to implement and execute a "moves management" program designed to help members and congregations create life-long giving habits that will support the ministries of the ELCA. In those areas where the Foundation supports gift planning consortiums, work has also begun to create strategic business plans designed to strengthen the Lutheran network and include partners in the development of gifts.

Since October 2012, five new regional gift planners have been placed to provide needed support to the Pacific Northwest, Iowa, Illinois, Western North Dakota, and the Florida-Bahamas Synod. They bring a diversified portfolio of gift development talents and have been enthusiastically welcomed by the synods they cover.

During 2011 and 2012, the ELCA Foundation wrote 241 charitable gift annuities, totaling \$8 million, 21 charitable remainder trusts totaling \$5.9 million, and received gifts from bequests totaling \$18 million for a grand total of \$31.9 million in dollars for ELCA ministries. The ELCA Foundation oversees more than \$200 million in the deferred gifts pool. As of March 31, 2013, there were 729 participants in the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust—Fund A, in addition to endowment funds held by the churchwide organization to benefit ministries across the ELCA. Total endowment assets under management are \$480 million.

Major Directions for 2013–2016

Initiatives and major projects planned for the upcoming triennium include:

- A communications audit to assess the reach, effectiveness, and coordinated articulation of all of our publications and channels/platforms, and the quantity and quality of our engagement with key audiences.

- Collaboration with the Research and Evaluation staff to develop a baseline survey measuring the awareness of the ELCA and the effectiveness of its communication efforts and to track growth.
- Refresh of *The Lutheran* magazine in 2013/2014 and development of a plan for its further growth, redevelopment, or integration into other communication channels.
- Development of a more fully integrated digital strategy for social media including adoption of a suitable platform for a broad-based, scalable online community to provide members and congregations with a vibrant virtual space in which to collaborate and share ideas and best practices.
- Promotion and celebration of the 25th anniversary of the ELCA, including the day of service.
- Development and implementation of a plan for supporting the commemoration of the 500-year anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation.
- Development of enhanced measurements of the impact of the ELCA World Hunger program in order to demonstrate the relative value of the way in which the church works to address hunger and the management of this work.
- Growth of ELCA World Hunger networks into a more coordinated effort, creating a community with passion that works toward fulfilling the goals of reducing poverty and eliminating hunger.
- Availability of ECIS for synods to use as a database to manage synod constituents. Use of ECIS throughout the churchwide organization as the only constituent relationship management system for all interactions with ELCA constituents.
- Strengthened processes for gift processing, acknowledgment, and donor care.
- Growth of good stewardship practices in collaboration with congregations and synods and through the provision of new stewardship interpretation and planning resources that incorporate strong Lutheran identity and theology.
- Significant progress toward accomplishing the goals of the proposed five-year campaign for the ELCA.
- Expansion of gift planning services through the ELCA Foundation to all ministries and expressions of the ELCA.

Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton, *executive director*