



## Report of Research and Evaluation

The primary responsibility of the staff of Research and Evaluation is to provide this church's decision-makers with relevant and useful information through high quality empirical research. Research and Evaluation does this work with three main emphases:

- General research in support of churchwide and synodical initiatives.
- Evaluation research in support of churchwide ministries.
- Demographic research in support of congregational, synodical and churchwide ministries.

Staff members conduct regular research projects, initiated by Research and Evaluation and upon request, in support of churchwide and synodical initiatives. These projects collect and analyze data for the churchwide staff, synodical staff and Church Council committees. The projects focus on this church's members, leaders, congregations and synods. Significant projects over the past three years, and available from Research and Evaluation, include:

- The development and deployment of a self-administrated congregational vitality assessment tool that was also incorporated, with the cooperation of the Office of the Secretary, into the annual report of congregations for 2015. This data will provide a baseline for future assessments.
- The development of a comparative profile (cross-denomination and over time) of ELCA congregations in cooperation with the inter-denominational, interfaith group Faith Communities Today.
- An evaluation of new ministry development in the ELCA.
- An evaluation of the churchwide Macedonia Stewardship program designed to assist synods.
- Data profiles on all synods with particular emphasis on those with bishop elections.
- Numerous custom demographic profiles in support of the synodical directors for evangelical mission.
- An assessment of the financial history and sustainability of the churchwide organization, including congregational and synodical issues that impact sustainability.
- An assessment of the supply and demand for clergy in the ELCA.
- An analysis, funded by the Lilly Endowment, of seminary debt and programs designed to impact that debt.
- A project, in cooperation with Domestic Mission, Mission Advancement, the Mission Investment Fund and Portico Benefit Services, to develop and evaluate programs to remediate clergy debt, also funded by the Lilly Endowment.

Mr. Kenneth W. Inskeep, *executive*