



Planning, Research and Evaluation

The primary responsibility of the staff of Planning, Research and Evaluation (PRE) is to provide the church's decision-makers with relevant and useful information through high-quality empirical research so they can make informed decisions. PRE 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 PRE or upon request, in support of churchwide and synodical initiatives. These projects involve collecting and analyzing data and providing reports to inform decision-making by churchwide staff, synodical staff and Church Council committees. The projects focus on this church's members, leaders, congregations and synods, and the initiatives of churchwide staff. Significant projects over the past three years include:

"Resourceful Servants" initiative

PRE developed, implemented and evaluated the "Resourceful Servants" initiative in collaboration with partners from the churchwide organization, the Mission Investment Fund, Portico Benefit Services, the ELCA Federal Credit Union, and Lutheran Social Service Financial Counseling. Through its four programs, "Resourceful Servants" intends to encourage habits that strengthen and sustain financial wellness among seminarians, rostered ministers and congregations. The initiative was initially funded for three years by a \$1 million grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc. in November 2015. An additional \$1 million was awarded in November 2018 to expand the programs' scope across the ELCA for the next three years.

2018–2019 Churchwide operational plan evaluation

PRE conducted research to set baseline measures for tracking the ELCA churchwide staff's progress on the five goals of *Future Directions 2025* and to show progress on those goals for which baseline measures had been previously established. PRE also gathered data from churchwide staff and curated a report for the Church Council in April 2019.

Special surveys and reports

- 500th anniversary of the Reformation
- 50th anniversary of the ordination of women (in progress)
- Interest in worship resources
- Post-campaign survey of donors for discernment about funds development opportunities
- ELCA World Hunger network survey
- Global Mission gender justice survey

Participation in the development of social statements and policy statements

This work included surveys and reports made to the drafting teams to summarize feedback from the church.

- *Faith, Sexism, Justice: Conversations Toward a Social Statement*
- *Draft Social Statement on Women and Justice*
- *A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment*, a policy statement drafted by the Inter-Religious Task Force

Evaluation of programs, events and meetings conducted by churchwide staff

- 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering
- Women of the ELCA 10th Triennial Gathering
- Regular evaluations of the following:
 - Church Council meetings
 - Conference of Bishops meetings
 - Bishops' Academies
 - Domestic Mission all-staff gatherings

White papers

- “Rosters of the ELCA”
- “Models of Theological Education”

Detailed reviews and analyses

PRE conducted reviews of Multicultural Ministries, the status of synodically authorized worshipping communities and congregations under development in the ELCA 2016–2017, Domestic Mission grants distributed 2014–2016, Mission Support trends, ELCA personnel statistics by classification, statistical review of ethnic-specific ministries in the ELCA, and analysis of the five-synod mission support experiment.

Support for synods

Annual data profiles are provided to every synod. When a synod is holding a bishop election, PRE provides a detailed analysis of synod statistics, detailed demographic data about the communities located within the synod, and other information upon request. This sometimes includes a site visit with congregational visits and congregational surveys.

Other support for the work of the church

- Numerous custom demographic profiles in support of Mission Advancement and the directors for evangelical mission
- Preparation for and participation in the elections for secretary and presiding bishop at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly
- Responded to a multitude of requests for information (most require some sort of data analysis)
- Welcomed a new manager in early 2019 for tracking the impact of distributed grants and the coordination of data related to distributed grants
- Brought the congregational vitality survey in-house in early 2019 (formerly contracted out)

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