



Mission Advancement

The work of the Mission Advancement unit covers several core areas: strategic communications, financial resource development, advancement services and data management.

Report of work for 2016–2019

Unit re-organization

Effective Feb. 1, 2019, the Mission Advancement unit is operating under a new staffing structure that:

- Incorporates the work and staff of the campaign team into the rest of the unit.
- Reorganizes the major-gift staff to be comprehensive instead of program-specific, and assigns designated territories.
- Moves communications and marketing work out of programs to Strategic Communications team.
- Moves donor research to the Advancement Services team with the Data Management and Analytics staff.
- Creates a position for event planning to work alongside prospect development and donor strategy.
- Moves program operations (Fund for Leaders, Global Church) into a single team with donor stewardship.
- Creates a position to lead a comprehensive process of donor discovery, cultivation, solicitation, stewardship process that includes all components of giving – annual, major and deferred or planned.
- Moves World Hunger program functions (networks, education, engagement, strategy and Domestic Hunger Grants) to its own team and World Hunger fundraising staff to the mission funding group that is part of the Development team.

Development team

The Development team is responsible for funding programs determined by this church as needing coordinated, shared emphasis and designated support. The foundation upon which these designated appeals build is Mission Support. The director and associate director for Mission Support are part of the Development team and link to synods and across churchwide units to provide coordination of efforts around stewardship and Mission Support interpretation.

Mission Support

Rooted in relationships and faith, congregations share with the wider church a portion of undesignated offerings received. This giving is known as Mission Support. Synods receive, on average, about 5.5% of congregations' undesignated offerings. Some congregations share 10% or more to support ministries of the wider church that no individual, congregation or synod can do alone. In 2017, this resulted in nearly \$97 million shared in Mission Support from over \$1.75 billion received by congregations in undesignated offerings.

In synods, Mission Support typically comprises over 90% of the operating budget to nurture and equip ELCA congregations and rostered ministers. Synods support area ministry partners (camps, colleges, seminaries and more) as well as build relationships with companion churches around the world. Mission Support shared from synods with the churchwide expression comprises about 65% of the churchwide organization operating budget to lead and support ministry on behalf of the whole church. This includes accompanying ELCA congregations as growing centers for evangelical mission, equipping leaders and building the capacity of this church for witness and service in the world.

The director and associate director for Mission Support are responsible for engaging in conversations with key synod leaders to determine their commitments to Mission Support and developing strategies for addressing future Mission Support sharing. Mission Support continues to be a vital and tangible way for the ELCA to demonstrate connectedness and commitment across the three expressions of the ELCA, making a difference as church together for the sake of the world. In 2018, the ELCA Church Council approved a new pattern for determining synod-specific Mission Support goals, replacing the prior methodology that set a standard percentage sharing goal for all synods.

ELCA World Hunger

ELCA World Hunger creatively and courageously works toward a just world where all are fed. As this church's ministry to address poverty and hunger, ELCA World Hunger truly accomplishes more working together with many others than it could do alone.

Through *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, ELCA World Hunger grew in both momentum and ministry. Its 2018 income was more than 20% higher than its income in 2013, the year preceding the campaign. This growth is due to a rise in individual gifts of \$5,000 or more, combined with income from estate gifts and a growing endowment. However, the key to ELCA World Hunger's financial stability continues to be the wide participation of and support from congregations and synods across the church.

In 2018, ELCA World Hunger engaged with youth and their congregations through the Global Farm Challenge at the ELCA Youth Gathering. About 80% of the world's food is produced by smallholder farmers, yet half of the people experiencing hunger in the world live or work on those farms. In support of this initiative, nine ELCA families contributed a total of \$515,000 in matching funds; these elicited nearly \$860,000 in individual donations, for a total impact of \$1.375 million to support global farm families around the world. More than 4,000 participants experienced the ELCA's first-ever 360-degree virtual-reality video, created through gifts to ELCA World Hunger, centering on a farm family in Malawi.

Mission Advancement is also responsible for ELCA World Hunger's educational materials, networking and engagement throughout the ELCA. This includes engaging and providing resources to a network of 2,000 leaders who help raise support and awareness in congregations and synods. Visit [ELCA.org/hunger](https://elca.org/hunger) to see all of this ministry's educational and promotional resources, from vacation Bible school to practical food ministry guides and worship resources, many of which are downloadable at no cost.

ELCA World Hunger works through Lutheran churches and their partners in more than 60 countries, including the United States. On average, more than 20% of donated funds go to projects in the United States and Puerto Rico. ELCA World Hunger is one year into a renewal and refocusing of its domestic strategy and program; for the first time, three different granting opportunities are available to best accompany the various anti-hunger ministries operating throughout the ELCA.

In 2019, 77 ministries across 63 synods received ELCA World Hunger Domestic Hunger Grants, for a total three-year (2019–2021) investment of nearly \$1.2 million. An estimated 382,000 people will be directly impacted by these ministries. More information can be found at [ELCA.org/domestic hunger grants](https://elca.org/domestic hunger grants).

In 2018, five "Big Dream Grants" were awarded, for a total investment of \$200,000. From Ferguson, Missouri, where youth attend a camp geared toward farming, to Charlottesville, Virginia, where congregations are organizing to address senior-housing issues, God creates abundantly and everywhere throughout this church leaders are answering the call to serve with courage by dreaming big dreams.

Approximately 70% of funds received each year are put to work internationally. For more on the impact of ELCA World Hunger's international ministry, see the report from Global Mission in Section III.

Thank you for all the ways you serve your local and global neighbors, and especially for your support of ELCA World Hunger. Through it, ELCA World Hunger is making progress toward a just world where all are fed.

Lutheran Disaster Response

Like ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) is an essential building block in the ELCA's continuum of care, helping to support and stabilize communities, especially when disaster strikes. In 2017 and 2018, LDR responded to disasters in 40 countries and 23 states, bolstered by the greatest outpouring of donor gifts in over a decade (\$34.4 million in over a hundred thousand gifts or grants).

The largest response in the last two years was for major disasters in the United States, primarily hurricanes and wildfires, though donors have also responded generously to ongoing refugee and migration crises here and around the world. An increase in general disaster giving, in addition to giving for specific disasters, has enabled LDR to respond to a wide range of issues.

ELCA Fund for Leaders

The ELCA Fund for Leaders is a merit-based scholarship program for ELCA candidates for Word and Service ministry and Word and Sacrament ministry. It also addresses the problem of seminarian debt.

At the end of 2018, the total asset value of all ELCA Fund for Leaders endowment accounts was \$52.5 million. In the last academic year, 254 seminary students received \$2.1 million in support; an additional 141 synod-partner scholarships, representing 41 synods, brought the total amount of scholarship funding across the church to \$2.6 million.

A \$3 million gift commitment in 2016 catalyzed the expansion of the full-tuition scholarship program through Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's Leadership Initiative, providing an additional 60 full-tuition scholarships over three years.

In 2018, Fund for Leaders staff worked with students, seminaries, synods and the new ELCA GrantMaker software to implement a direct, online application process for all full-tuition scholarships; this allows all eligible students entering ELCA seminaries to apply directly to Fund for Leaders for scholarship consideration.

ELCA Global Church Sponsorship

ELCA Global Church Sponsorship, which is currently being rebranded as Global Mission Support, incorporates long-term missionaries, Young Adults in Global Mission, Global Ministries and the International Women Leaders initiative.

These ministries made up \$33 million of the \$198 million goal for *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*. Through the campaign, the program saw exciting growth.

Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) opened four new country programs — in Rwanda, Cambodia, Australia and Senegal — with 76 young adults sent into service across 14 countries during the 2018-2019 year. An additional 315 young adults have served in the program since the campaign began. In 2016, YAGMs were equipped with a new online fundraising tool — a peer-to-peer platform allowing them to create their own pages. Since the launch, the platform has led to impressive income growth.

A new program initiated by the campaign, International Women Leaders, has drawn the interest and support of ELCA members, especially women leaders throughout the church. With their support, more than 180 established and emerging women leaders from the ELCA's global companions accessed educational opportunities designed specifically for them, including four-year scholarships to ELCA colleges and universities. The partnership with ELCA colleges and universities has been outstanding.

Through the campaign's global ministry evangelism projects, the ELCA responded to requests from its companion church bodies around the world for financial support to expand their ministries — to start new congregations, extend outreach in urban areas and train pastors and evangelists. The largest project, "South Sudan: A New Church for a New Nation," inspired over \$1 million in giving, included the establishment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Africa Mission in South Sudan and the subsequent construction of a new Lutheran center and health clinic in Juba. Two ELCA missionaries, both from South Sudan, helped lead the project to success.

Stewardship Strategy and Operations

The new Stewardship Strategy and Operations team is responsible for the scholarship operations of the ELCA Fund for Leaders; the fundraising operations of Global Mission (particularly missionary sponsorship, Young Adults in Global Mission and International Women Leaders programs); the overall strategy for cultivation, solicitation and stewardship of midlevel donors; and the unit-wide strategy for stewardship and recognition of donors at all levels.

Working as a single, integrated team since February 2019, Stewardship Strategy and Operations is applying best practices from across the unit to create efficient internal processes that support excellent external relationships.

Strategic Communications

Strategic Communications is responsible for the communications, publications, marketing, digital media, video and public relations work of the churchwide organization. The team is charged with strengthening the identity and mission of the ELCA through multichannel communication strategies that reach ELCA members and others both nationally and globally.

In 2017, strategic marketing and communications efforts amplified the grassroots commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation programs across the church, including the Oct. 31 national event in Washington, D.C., which drew 300 attendees and reached more than 6,000 viewers. The engagement surveys conducted in February and November 2017 revealed that, over nine months, respondents' knowledge of the commemoration increased 11% and their interest in it increased 6%, with 91% of the November survey respondents stating that they had participated in one or more activities, a 40% increase from February. In conjunction with this work, *Living Lutheran* produced a 10-part print-and-web series from January to October 2017, featuring 50 Reformation-themed highlights every month, for a total of 500.

The team continues to provide congregations and synods with resources and toolkits to participate in "God's work. Our hands." Sunday, the ELCA's dedicated day of service held annually in September. Approximately one-third of ELCA congregations now participate in this event, which was launched in 2013. This year's day of service will take place Sunday, Sept. 8.

In 2017–2018, the communications and marketing team completed nearly 500 mailed and emailed communications to promote ministries and share information with ELCA members, congregations and leaders. As a result of this work, ELCA ministries received:

- \$14.5 million through direct-mail efforts.
- \$12 million through ELCA Good Gifts (catalog and online).
- \$13.4 million through online gifts.
- \$1.7 million through Monthly Partners, the ELCA's monthly-giving program.
- 327,000 resource orders via resources.elca.org.

Peer-to-peer giving is a significant area of growth as well, showing an 82% increase between 2017 and 2018. This growth is due in part to the expanded platform of the Young Adults in Global Mission program, which now allows volunteers to create personalized pages and raise funds online.

A redesigned ELCA Good Gifts catalog and website were launched in August 2017 with new features and functions, allowing donors to personalize and send cards and e-cards to friends and family. Donors have sent more than 23,000 cards since the site was launched.

Since 2016, the ELCA's social media following has grown to 125,000 people on Facebook (a 32% increase), 23,600 people on Twitter (a 31% increase) and 9,500 people on Instagram (launched in 2017).

From 2017 to 2018, the video team produced more than 230 professional videos for use in social media, congregations, synods and other ELCA events. Over the last two years, ELCA videos were viewed some 870,000 times on YouTube.

From 2017 to 2018, ELCA.org had 4.3 million site visits, including nearly 600,000 to the "Find a Congregation" page. Improvements to ELCA.org continue; a recent update highlighted monthly giving and made the general donation pages easier to use and more mobile-friendly.

[*Living Lutheran magazine*](#) has a monthly print circulation of 134,144 copies, 100,771 of these going to congregations, 12,808 to individual subscribers, 1,128 to synods and other institutions, and 19,437 serving as gratis copies. Individual subscriptions are at their highest level since April 2015, although bulk congregational subscriptions continue to decline.

The "[*Three Sides*](#)" podcast, launched in July 2018, is available on the web, from all podcast platforms and on social media. The current three episodes have a combined total of 6,777 unique downloads. This figure puts "Three Sides" in the top 20% of 30-day averages, according to Libsyn, the largest producer of podcasts.

In 2017 and 2018, Strategic Communications sent out 73 news releases to prompt TV, radio, print and digital coverage of the ELCA. In 2018 alone, more than 1 billion potential viewers were exposed to the ELCA's media coverage.

Advancement Services

The Advancement Services team is responsible for prospect research, gift processing, the ELCA contact center and the ELCA Constituent Information System (ECIS).

ECIS manages the ELCA's constituent relationships, providing the churchwide organization with a 360-degree view of constituents. The system is used for all communication with members, donors, rostered ministers and lay leaders, synods and congregations. Approximately 1.1 million active constituents and organizations are managed by ECIS. Currently, 10 synods use ECIS to maintain data about rostered ministers, candidates, lay leaders, ELCA congregations and worship centers, and friends and supporters.

Prospect research and management is now part of the Advancement Services team, which will use ECIS and the established data management processes to streamline and simplify prospect research and provide more timely and relevant data to the Development team.

In 2018, Advancement Services launched the new ELCA online directory, which replaced the ELCA Yearbook. All the data in the new online directory is being managed in ECIS. Updates to that data are now reflected in the online directory within 24 hours.

The Gift Processing team handles about 150,000 gifts per year. More than 25% of these are received online. The staff works with Merkle, a gift processing vendor, to ensure that almost all gifts are processed and acknowledged within five business days.

The staff in the call center completed more than 16,000 calls in 2018. These calls included resource orders, donations and other general inquiries. The staff helped in fulfilling more than 4,600 resource orders from the ELCA resource center.

ELCA Foundation

Find an in-depth look at the ELCA Foundation's work in Section IV of the *Pre-Assembly Report*.

Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA

Find an in-depth look at the campaign's financial results and impact on programs in Section III

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