Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Synod Remittance Advice Manual

Office of the Treasurer

Version 2.0

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Introduction

The Office of the Treasurer has provided resources to synods to make their monthly remittances to the churchwide organization as simple and as streamlined as possible. These resources included the *Synod Remittance Advice System (SRAS)*, this manual, synod gift data export tools, an new electronic ACH/Direct Debit Withdrawal Form, and online resources.

The SRAS is an Excel-based system that streamlines and automates the Synod's process of submitting monthly synod remittance advices to the ELCA churchwide organization.

The benefits of using the SRAS include:

- Eliminating the need for duplicate data entry by the synod.
- Eliminating the synod's need for sending paper copies of remittance details by mail or fax.
- Eliminating the need for data entry at the churchwide organization. Electronic files are validated and automatically imported to our systems, reducing processing time by 90-95%.
- Automatically creating a dynamic synod remittance advice summary form (SRA- 1).
- Producing a standardized electronic report format across all synods.
- Providing up-to-date information about valid churchwide Fund/Designation Codes and congregation IDs.

The system is periodically updated and posted on the Office of the Treasurer's Synod Remittance page found at https://www.elca.org/SynodRemittance.

Requirements for Using SRAS

1. Microsoft Excel 2016 or Higher
2. Ability to run Excel VBA Macros (see Microsoft Office macro security for more details)
3. Ability to export the following contribution record information from your accounting system to an Excel spreadsheet:
   - Congregation ID: Column A
   - Fund ID: Column B
   - Gift Date: Column C
   - Gift Amount: Column D

Following an example of an acceptable Excel file format:

07571	WHS0038	8/5/2023	50.00
07571	DDG0026	8/5/2023	275.00
05721	DDG0010	8/5/2023	25.00
05589	MSG0168	8/5/2023	750.00

Note: The export file should not contain any headers, footers, groups, or subtotals

If you need assistance in this area, please contact the Churchwide organization at the number provided at the end of this document.

Contribution System Utilities

ACS and Revelations Software Utilities

The churchwide organization collaborated with ACS Technologies and Icon Systems Network (Revelations software) and developed a custom utility that easily extracts data from ACS or Revelations to an electronic Excel file that meets SRAS specifications mentioned above. You may download these utilities from the Synod Remittance webpage found at https://www.elca.org/SynodRemittance.

Revelations Utility Requirements:

- Download and installation of "Revelations Synods Gift Export Tool".

ACS Utility Requirements:

- Download and installation of "ACS Synods Gift Export Tool".
- Synod using ACS have two options for mapping the ELCA Funds IDs to ACS 'Fund Codes'
  - Use the exact seven-character ELCA Fund ID as the 'Fund Code' in ACS (i.e. WHS0038, DDG0073, etc.), **or**
  - Add the ELCA Fund ID at the end of the 'Fund Code Description' in ACS, separated by a dash " - " for all Fund IDs that are used by SRAS (i.e. World Hunger - WHS0038).

Other Software

QuickBooks, Realm, or other Software Requirements:

If your synod is using *QuickBooks*, *Realm*, or other financial or contributions software, you should be able to export a report and format it to meet the requirements listed in the "Requirements for Using SRAS" above. You may also copy and paste the requested data into an Excel spreadsheet in the format provided above and import into SRAS.

Processing Synod Remittance Data

The Synod remittance Advice System (SRAS) application is updated periodically. It is recommended that synods download the latest version from https://www.elca.org/SynodRemittance periodically and when notified of an update by the Office of the Treasurer. Please save the "SynodRemittance.xls" file on your computer then open it and follow the following steps. If the Excel application prompts you with a security message regarding macros, click on "Enable Macro".

1. When prompted, enter the Synod Contact Information as shown in shown in figure 1 below. If you do not see this screen, you may have selected the default security "Disable Macro" or your Macro Security level is set very high. (please see Microsoft office macro security for more details).

a. Enter your Synod Code (i.e., 5E).
b. From the dropdown list, select the accounting software used at your synod.
c. Enter Your Name, Email, Phone Number, and Extension (if applicable , no hyphens or brackets).
d. Click on the OK button.

You will notice that the program is processing information in the background. Once it's done processing, the spreadsheet will be automatically saved, and the main menu will appear (see Figure 2 on the following page).

You will be asked to provide this information each time a new SRAS program is released or downloaded from our website.

Updated Fund IDs

Each time you open the SRAS program, the system will ask you if you wish to get the most recent ELCA Fund IDs from the ELCA website.
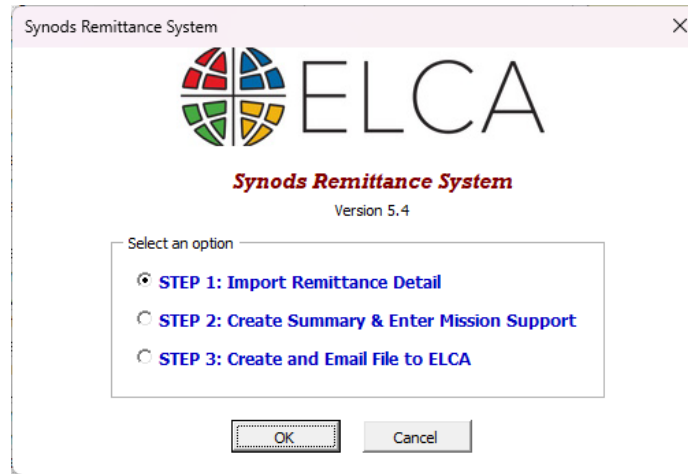

Fund IDs are updated and posted on the ELCA website on a daily basis. It is advised that you choose "Yes" in order to have the most recent ELCA Fund IDs for validation purposes.

Importing Synod Data into System

In order to import your synod data file into SRAS, follow these steps:

1. Select Import Remittance Detail option from the list and click OK.

2. When prompted with the Windows "Open" screen, locate the exported data file on your system and click OPEN (see Figure below)
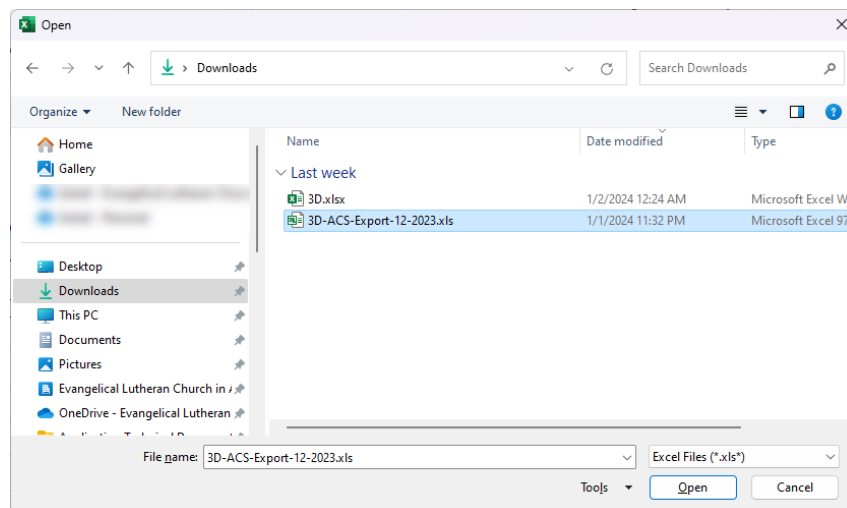

Figure 3

The system will now read the download file and put the information into the "Details" sheet in the Excel file. The system will also sum, validate, and print the congregation's name and project description for all valid congregation IDs and Fund IDs. See figure 4.

Figure 4

Notice that an error log is printed in red at the bottom of the sheet. If no errors are detected, then all congregation IDs and Fund IDs are valid, and you may proceed to step 2.

If errors are detected, the system will highlight them in red.

> Note: In order to enhance the validation logic, fields identified with an asterisk * are read only. You may only change the congregation ID, Fund ID, Gift Date, and gift amount on this spreadsheet. However, you will be able to change any field once step 3 (create ELCA Remittance file) is complete.

If you are sure your records are correct, or a fund ID isn't working but have been advised that it should be, add an explanation next to each record. The churchwide remittance staff will identify the issue and will be able to process the record correctly. This will ensure that you can submit your data on time.

Creating Details Summary and Mission Support

The next step following the import of your synod remittance detail is supplying mission support information for the period and creating a summary for each project (SRA-1 form). To do this, please follow these steps:

1. Click on the ELCA emblem found on the top of the page or click on the Step 2 by click on the ELCA brandmark (logo).

2. Select the Create Details Summary option from the list and click OK.
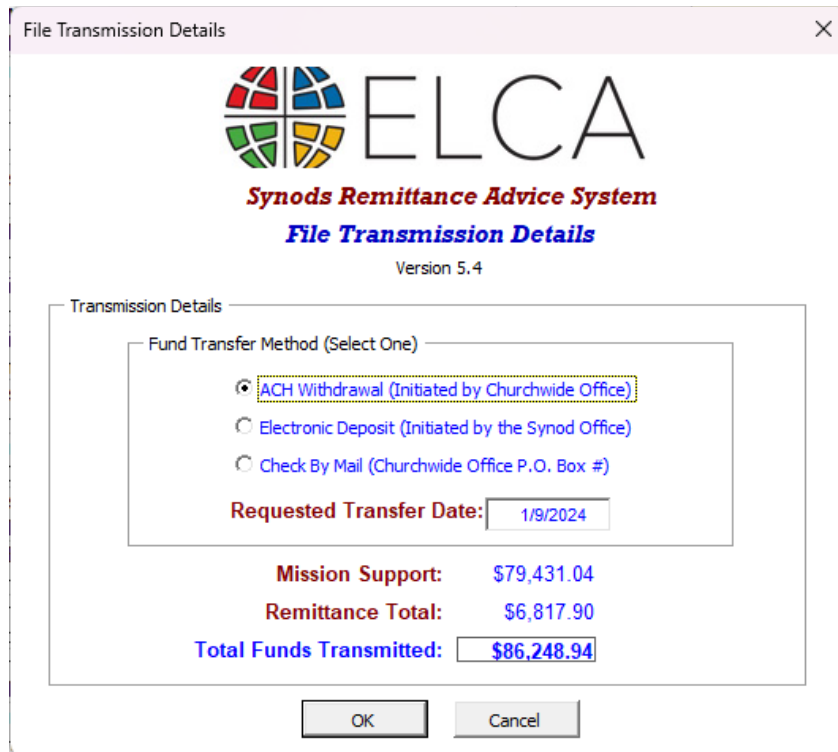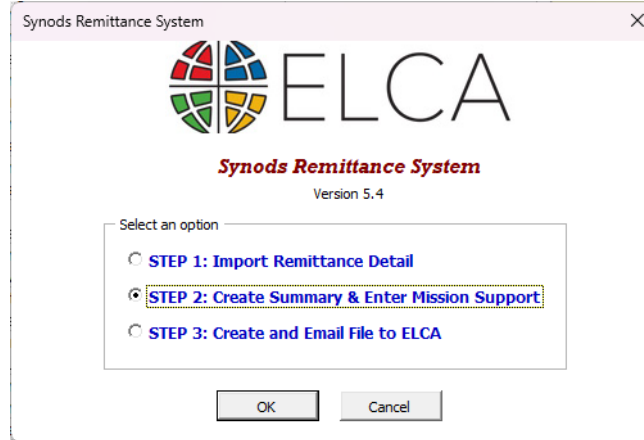
3. In the pop-up screen, select the month for which you are entering mission support.
4. Enter your Total Congregational Mission Support in the defined field.
5. Enter the mission support percentage (%) and press "Tab" (the system will calculate the dollar amount) or enter Synod Mission Support directly.
6. Enter your Synod additional gifts (if applicable) and click OK

By now, the system has automatically totaled each project and created a summary of your details in the "Summary" Sheet, completely replacing the current SRA-2 form (see figure 5).

	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	SYNOD REMITTANCE ADVICE	P.O. Box 71256 Chicago, IL 60694 (773) 380-2929

		Prepared By:	Your name
		Email:	Yourname@synod.org
	For the Month of December, 2023	Phone Number:	(123) 456-7890
		Software used:	ACS

	DESIGNATION	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
I.	MISSION SUPPORT For the Month Ending: 12/2023 Congregational Mission Support: $152,752.00 Synod Mission Support %: 52.00%	Mission Support is the share of unrestricted giving from congregations for the support of churchwide ministries. Additional Synod Gifts are in addition to Mission Support.	$79,431.04
II.	GENERAL WORLD HUNGER	Support for World Hunger including Malaria.	2,082.28
III.	INTERNATIONAL DISASTER	Support international disaster response programs directly or through international partners.	-
IV.	DOMESTIC DISASTER	Immediate relief and long-term recovery for disasters in the US and Caribbean.	-
V.	GENERAL LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE	Disaster response support available for use for domesitic and international disasters.	538.90
VI.	MINISTRY WITH GLOBAL PARTNERS	Sponsorship of specific mission work around the world such as Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGMs), International Women Leaders (IWL), etc.	3,300.25
VII.	WHERE NEEDED MOST	Gifts in support of Churchwide ministry where most needed.	-
VIII.	OTHER	Includes all other categories not listed above.	896.47

TOTAL MISSION SUPPORT:	$	79,431.04
TOTAL FROM DETAIL REMITTANCE:	$	6,817.90
TOTAL REMITTANCE:	$	86,248.94

Figure 5

Creating and Sending Remittance File to the ELCA

The final step in the process is creating the ELCA file that needs to be submitted electronically to the churchwide organization. To do this, please follow these steps:

1. Click on the on the ELCA brandmark (logo) and select STEP 3.
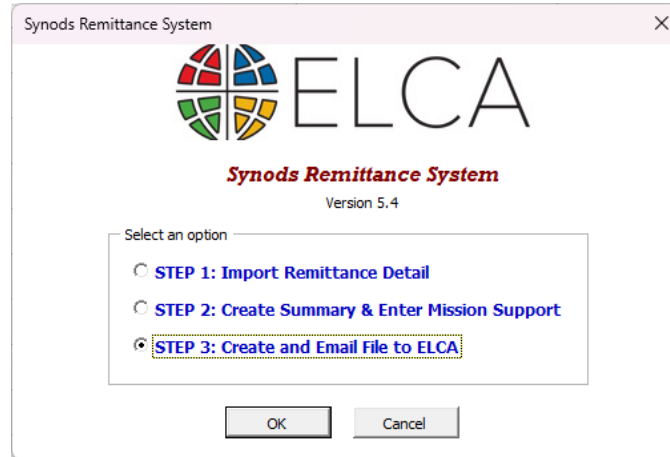
2. Select the "Create and Email File to ELCA" option from the list and click "OK"

3. When prompted with the "File Transmission Details" screen, select the fund transfer method, enter the desired transfer date if different than the current date, verify the dollar amount, and then press OK.
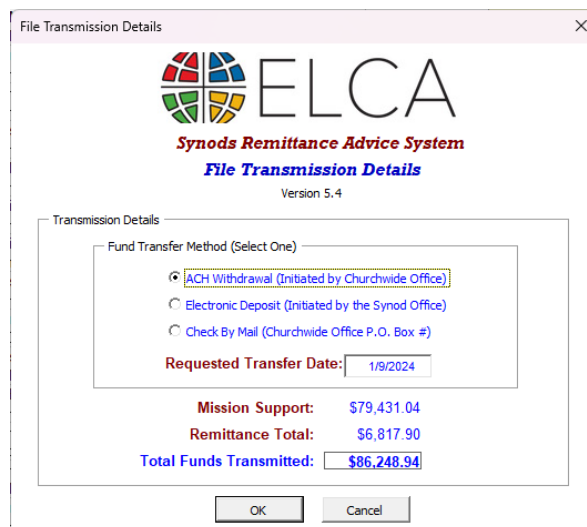

Figure 5

The system will now prompt you to save the file onto your system. The system will use your Synod Code, month number, and year to name the file, please keep the same naming convention. Now locate the folder on your computer where you wish to save this file and click on SAVE (see Figure below).

Once the file is saved, the system will clear the "Synod Remittance.xls" master file and prepare it for another fresh import file.
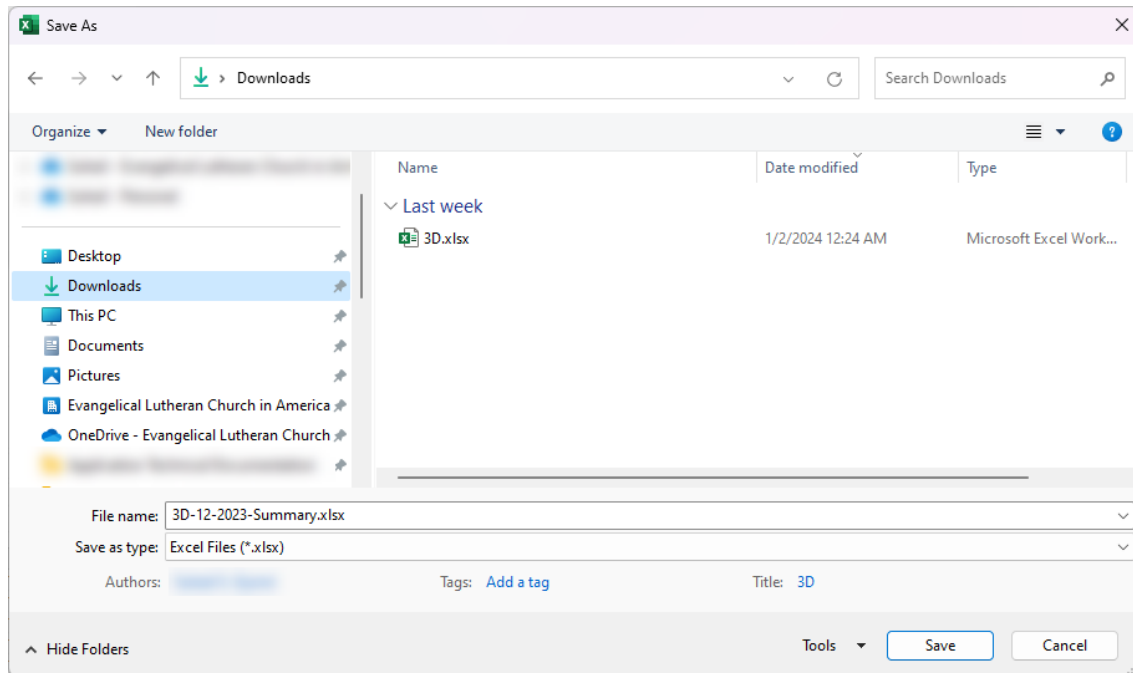
Your synod remittance advice details file is now ready to be sent to the churchwide organization. Please refer to the following section for more details.

Sending Remittance Details to the Churchwide Organization

Once STEP 3 is completed, you will be asked if you wish to email the synod remittance file to the ELCA.
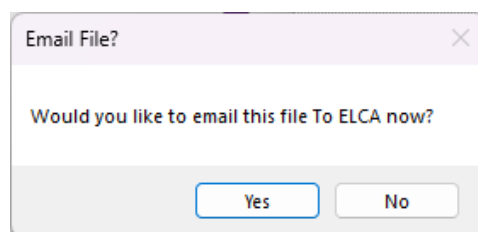
If you have errors that need to be fixed in you file, select "No," correct the errors or add your notes to the spreadsheet and email your file as you would with any email attachment.

If you have no errors to fix in your file, you may select "Yes." This system will automatically open a new email message and attach the synod remittance file to it.

Please use the following email address and instructions to submit your remittance:

Synod.Remittance@elca.org

In the subject of the email, please type the Synod Code and the month you are submitting detail for.

We ask for quicker processing, in the body of the message, please note the amount and method in which you are sending the funds in a format such as:

ACH Transfer for $90,000.00, withdraw on MM/DD/YY
Check in the Mail for $90,000.00 (please ensure you still email the file; we still need the data to load)

You will receive an automatic acknowledgement email as soon as we receive your file.

If you wish to sign up for automatic withdrawal (ACH), please fill out the form found online at https://www.elca.org/synodRemittance as indicated in the instructions. As noted, these funds are pulled only when you have provided the instructions and request.

Churchwide Assistance

For questions or assistance concerning the forms and software, please contact the Office of the Treasurer at (773) 380-2900 or by email at: Synod.Remittance@elca.org

Appendix: Excel Macro Security

Add, remove, or change a trusted location in Microsoft Office

A trusted location in Microsoft Office is a folder that contains files you trust to be safe.

You should use a trusted location to store a file when you don't want that file to be checked by the Trust Center, or if you don't want it to open in Protected View. Especially files with macros, data connections, or ActiveX controls (what we call active content).

If you think the active content in a file is from a reliable source, the best practice is to move the file to a trusted location.

Caution: Any files you store in a trusted location are considered safe by the system and will bypass some of the security checks. Be certain that you trust the source of any files you put there.

Add a trusted location

1. In your Office app, click **File** > **Options**.
2. Click **Trust Center** > **Trust Center Settings** > **Trusted Locations**.
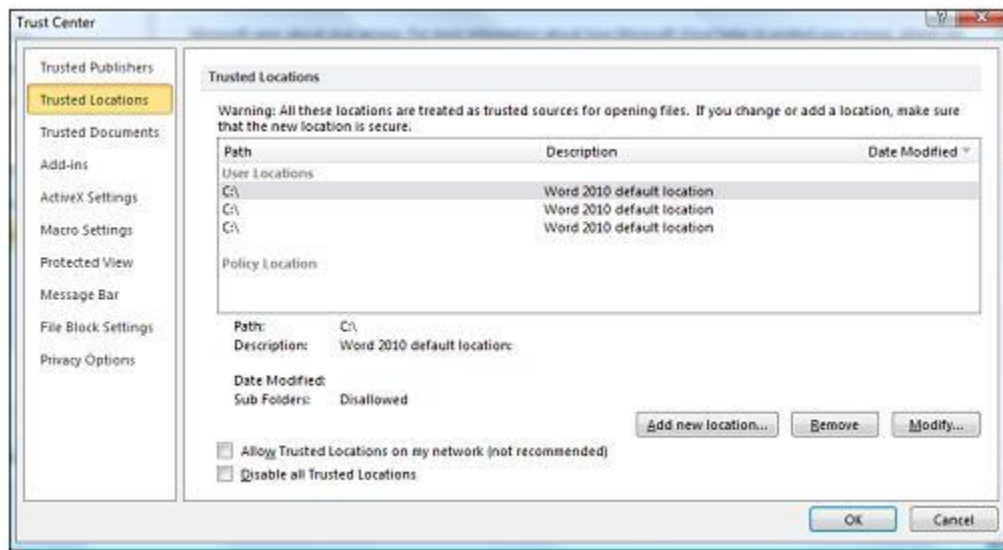
3. Click **Add new location**.
4. Click **Browse** to find the folder, select a folder, and then click **OK**.

Remove a trusted location

1. In your Office app, click **File** > **Options**.

2. Click **Trust Center** > **Trust Center Settings** > **Trusted Locations**.
3. Select the location to be removed, and then click **Remove**, and then click **OK**.

Change a trusted location

1. In your Office app, click **File** > **Options**.
2. Click **Trust Center** > **Trust Center Settings** > **Trusted Locations**.
3. In the **Trusted Locations** list, select a location, and then click **Modify**.
4. Make the modifications you want, and then click **OK**.

Please check Microsoft Support site for the latest configuration information on enabled Excel Macros and adding a trusted location in Microsoft Office.