

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and Your Congregation

Our Mission Continues Together!

As Lutherans, we have a strong tradition of joining hands to do God's work in ways that none of us individually, as a congregation, as a single synod, or as a denomination can do alone.

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." 1 Corinthians 12:12

Every day, the impact of this joint ministry that we do together, as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, and your congregation is felt in our communities, across the church and around the globe. Through this body, united in Christ, we do God's work – for the sake of the world.

What we do together as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Through our offerings as members of the ELCA, we participate in God's mission in the world through our shared ministries:

- Envision, plan, and support the planting of new congregations
- Assist established congregations seeking transformation and renewal
- Send missionaries to engage in global mission (260 missionaries in 50 countries)
- Gather the youth of this church together to share, grow and serve their neighbors (37,000 youth and adults gathered in New Orleans in July 2009)
- Provide financial support to global companion churches in evangelism and outreach, development of church leaders, sustainable community and agricultural development, primary health care, and basic education.
- Educate and prepare pastors through support for 8 ELCA seminaries
- Support and sustain 28 ELCA colleges
- Respond to hunger in the world and work toward sustainable, long-term solutions (\$20 million given annually through ELCA World Hunger appeal)
- Provide relief when disaster strikes in our communities or across the globe
- Welcome and provide resettlement support to individuals who have fled persecution in other countries through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services
- Serve one in every 50 people across the United States and the Caribbean, every year, through Lutheran social ministry organizations. Lutheran Services in America is the largest social service organization in the world, serving more people than any other organization, including Red Cross and the Salvation Army.
- Reach out to young adults through Lutheran schools, outdoor ministries, and campus ministries at colleges and universities
- Engage as a global, Christian community, including global relief and development through the Lutheran World Federation, World Council of Churches, and National Council of Churches in Christ

Member congregations of the ELCA have unique access to many opportunities, resources and support

- Synod bishop and staff that provide care for pastors and rostered lay leaders, resources and guidance during pastoral transitions and the calling of new pastors, resources in planning, congregational development, and congregational conflict
- The ability to call a pastor from the roster of well-educated and prepared ELCA pastors who commit to meeting defined expectations
- Access to grants for congregational development, hunger-related ministries, and ethnic-specific ministries
- National identity as a member congregation of the largest Lutheran church body in the United States and the Caribbean
- Investment opportunities and financial services, including building loans, through the ELCA Mission Investment Fund and the Endowment Fund of the ELCA
- Guidance in planned giving, congregational endowment planning and management, and major gift programs through the ELCA Foundation
- Stewardship guidance, resources and support
- Access to research data, including demographic data for any given area
- Compensation guidelines for ELCA clergy
- Participation in the ELCA pension and benefit program that meets the unique retirement and medical needs of pastors and rostered lay leaders, and allows for smooth transitions from one congregational call to the next
- Educational resources that are developed from a theological perspective based on the Lutheran confessions

What we do together as the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

What are the unintended consequences of redirecting or withholding mission support? At the synod Level, less mission support would impact:

- the focus of mission and ministry in our synod, particularly campus ministries at UW-EC, UW-Stout, UW-River Falls; Fall Ministry Retreat and Winter Theological Event for rostered leaders; mission consultations and cluster events; the Synod Resource Center; synod-wide efforts to address hunger and malaria; and Congregation Council Leadership events.
- the ability for staff to visit congregations and leaders throughout the synod.
- building relationships within the synod that help fund salaries for the bishop and staff, staff who oversee and coordinate interim ministry, congregational call processes, clergy mobility, conflict, mission development, congregational realignments, education events for rostered leadership, retired pastor's support, stewardship and evangelism support, synodical youth events and gatherings, mission communication, data and financial management, leadership development, the Bishop's Initiative, and more.
- funding seminaries, church colleges, regional mobility conferences for pastors, emergency assistance for rostered leaders, and many other opportunities to support congregations, specialized ministries, and rostered and lay leadership.
- congregational assistance for mission planning, visioning, and ecumenical alliances.
- support for our global companions in Malawi and Brazil.
- support of Soul Support for executive assistants and secretaries, Candidacy Committee work on behalf of seminarians, Youth Worker's Network, First Call Debt Reduction, Fund for Leaders to assist with seminarian tuition, etc.

Our Mission Together Continues

When we work together as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, and your congregation, we are doing God's work in ways that no individual, no congregation, nor synod can do alone.

It is God's work. Our hands.

Is Your Congregation Considering Redirecting or Withdrawing Mission Support?

If your congregation is considering redirecting or withdrawing mission support as a result of CWA actions, ask the following questions:

- Who will be helped and who will be hurt by this decision?
- Does this likely outcome line up with your intention?
- Describe the principles of stewardship and the understanding of church that provide the basis for this decision?
- If the people of your congregation imitate the example of your decision in their own personal stewardship to the congregation, what do you see as the long term implications of this vision of church and stewardship for your own local congregational mission?
- With this in mind, who is will be helped and who will be hurt by this decision?
- Is there a better way to accomplish what you are feeling called to do in this situation?