



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

# 2017 SYNOD ASSEMBLIES

Churchwide report in detail

CALLED FORWARD

**Together  
in Christ**



## Table of Contents

*Editor's Note:* Contained within this document is detailed report for ELCA ministries and programs, from which the Synod Assembly talking points were drawn.

This document is organized in alphabetical order for ease of use, with the exception of *Called Forward Together in Christ Strategic Directions 2025*. It is listed first as it serves as the basis for our future direction together as a church.

Called Forward Together in Christ

500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation

Advocacy

*Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*

AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities)

Bishop Eaton's Leadership Initiative

Book of Faith

Congregational vitality

Ecumenical and inter-religious relations

ELCA Federal Credit Union

ELCA Foundation – partnerships and gift planners

ELCA Fund for Leaders

ELCA World Hunger

Entrance rite discernment

Global church

Global church sponsorship

"God's work. Our hands." Sunday

Human rights social message

Leadership development

Lutheran Disaster Response

Mission Investment Fund

New congregations

Office of the Secretary

Office of the Treasurer

Refugees and migrants (see also AMMPARO)

Rostered Ministers Gathering

South Sudan outreach

Women and Justice

## Called Forward Together in Christ

Propelled by a commitment to Lutheran traditions and to being a community of faith that is always forming and being renewed, the ELCA's presiding bishop, Church Council and Conference of Bishops initiated Called Forward Together in Christ Strategic Directions 2025 for this church. The process sought to engage all ELCA members and partners in conversation about future directions so that this church can journey faithfully and effectively together in the years ahead. Many of you participated – THANK YOU!

CALLLED FORWARD  
**Together  
in Christ**

Five goals came out of the of Called Forward Together in Christ process. These are the priorities that were shaped by the voices across this church:

1. A thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all people Priority areas for action.
2. A church equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world and this church.
3. An inviting and welcoming church that reflects and embraces the diversity of our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings.
4. A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world.
5. A well-governed, connected and sustainable church.

The Conference of Bishops, Church Council and Churchwide Organization have all affirmed two main focus areas for the next few years:

- Congregational Vitality
- Leadership

You can learn more about all of this at [ELCA.org/future](https://elca.org/future).

We invite you to continue to engage with Called Forward Together in Christ as we live into God's call for the future of this church.



## 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation

2017 is well underway, which means we're quickly approaching the Reformation anniversary date of Oct. 31. Here are a few things to keep in mind as your congregation and community plan for the year.



### Reformation anniversary resources

There are three ways to stay up-to-date on Reformation anniversary activities. These are: **ELCA500.org**, ELCA500 Facebook page and ELCA500 Twitter. Please take a moment to check them out, “Like” or “Follow” and use the resources to engage your congregation or participate in an event.

Now on the **ELCA500.org** site are two new resources to help congregations (and synods) plan and promote Reformation anniversary activities. Located under “Resources,” the how-to-guide for Reformation anniversary planning and promotion provides tips and tools for planning and promoting your activities. The Reformation Ideas list provides four categories of activities to consider or use as a brainstorming launch pad for events from now through October.

This January, travel expert Rick Steves provided a copy of his new Reformation documentary to every ELCA congregation.

### Reformation storytelling projects

Several storytelling projects are underway to help tell our collective Lutheran experience. Each is unique in its purpose, but all provide opportunities to share and learn from each other. You can read, watch or listen to the stories at **livinglutheran.org/Reformation** and find submission information at **ELCA500.org/more**. Consider submitting your story today.

## Advocacy

The ELCA advocates for fair and just public policies that overcome poverty, promote peace and dignity, and defend God's creation.

During the past year, this church encouraged faithful and nonpartisan voter participation by providing faith-based resources around voting.

## Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA

We are now in the fourth year of the ELCA's first comprehensive five-year campaign, *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*. As of Jan. 31, we have collectively raised more than **\$113.4 million** in cash and multi-year commitments for churchwide ministries and are so grateful for the continued support and partnership of ELCA synods and congregations.

Since the campaign's launch in 2014, we have accomplished amazing things with the help of ELCA members, congregations and synods.



## Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA (cont'd)

More than 300 domestic hunger grants support sustainable solutions that get at the root causes of hunger and poverty across the U.S. In addition, nearly 60 countries around the world have ELCA World Hunger supported programs.

The ELCA Fund for Leaders provided 250 students with more than \$2 million in seminary scholarships during the 2016-2017 academic year.

With \$759,000 in support from the campaign, Renewing Congregations grants are being implemented across the ELCA, including 13 Synodical Renewing Congregations Strategies, four Area Ministry Strategies and four Fast Growth Congregations initiatives.

Funding from the campaign for the ELCA has expanded the work of ELCA congregational new starts by funding ten additional new ministries in a variety of contexts and with creative strategies.

The International Women Leaders initiative has reached 100 international Lutheran women with access to academic scholarships, training and networking opportunities.

Thirteen new global ministry evangelism projects were initiated by companion churches in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Latin America.

Twenty-one new or enhanced youth and young adult ministries have received a grant to grow existing programs or start new ones.

Young Adults in Global Mission launched four new country programs – Rwanda, Cambodia, Australia and Senegal, with 84 young adults sent into service during the 2016/2017 year. This represents a 45% growth in the first 3 years.

The 2017 campaign theme, Global Church, includes a focus on Missionaries and Young Adults in Global Mission, International Women Leaders and Global Ministries. Through a variety of learning and giving opportunities around three days – International Women's Day, Pentecost Sunday and Global Church Sunday – we are lifting up this important work. Congregations and synods received a kickoff packet in early January with materials and ideas to get involved in the 2017 theme. A Pentecost Sunday packet will arrive in mid-April.

For additional resources, including the campaign case statement, videos and more, visit the campaign resources website at [ELCA.org/Campaign-for-the-ELCA/Resources](http://ELCA.org/Campaign-for-the-ELCA/Resources). For more information as you plan your involvement in the campaign, please contact us at 800-638-3522 or email us at [campaignforELCA@elca.org](mailto:campaignforELCA@elca.org).

## AMMPARO

The AMMPARO Strategy was overwhelmingly adopted by the Churchwide Assembly last August. This strategy is unique among U.S. churches and provides a holistic, whole church response to Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO). This initiative encompasses accompaniment, awareness-building and advocacy at



## AMMPARO (cont'd)

every moment of the migrant journey, from working with companions to providing protection and opportunities to potential migrants in their countries of origin, to migrants along their journey from Central America through Mexico, and to arriving migrants as they transition to a new phase of life in the U.S. It also includes accompaniment of companions who work with those migrants who have been deported to their countries of origin. As a whole church response, all ELCA expressions, strategic allies and ecumenical partners are included.

AMMPARO is a movement of people that is supported and facilitated by communication, funding and systems to organize the work.

The ELCA is accompanying international companions in Central America and Mexico who address the root causes of this migration -- principally violence, poverty and climate change.

In the spirit of AMMPARO's guiding principles, synods and congregations are invited to accompany migrant children and families through synod AMMPARO or immigration task forces, as Welcoming Congregations, through the creation of Guardian Angel programs and through prayer. All ELCA members are encouraged to continue awareness-building and advocacy for the protection of these vulnerable children and families.

## Bishop Eaton's Leadership Initiative

Created in November 2016, the Leadership Initiative encourages all of us to seek out and inspire gifted people in our congregations, communities and networks to consider a call to the ministry of the gospel, supported by growing levels of scholarships for seminary tuition.

At the same time, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton announced a generous \$3 million gift to the ELCA Fund for Leaders, which provides seminary scholarships for 60 additional students over the next three years.



If you know someone who shows a gift for ministry, help mentor and foster them. Together - pastors, deacons, lay people – we can bring the word of God to the world.

For more information, visit [ELCA.org/leaders](https://www.elca.org/leaders) to find resources to guide discussions and offer inspiration for conversations and individual reflection on becoming a leader within the ELCA.



# Book of Faith

## Getting the *word* out

We give thanks to God for all of the individuals, congregations, synods, and churchwide ministries and institutions for their deep and abiding commitment to God's transforming word in Christ, in proclamation and in Scripture!

The Book of Faith Initiative is a continuing priority of the ELCA, dedicated to encouraging all ministries and people of the church to continually renew and enrich our broad and deep engagement with Scripture for our own sakes and for the sake of the world.

The Book of Faith Initiative has operated using a decentralized, grass-roots approach centered on our common vision in which all are invited to *open Scripture* and *join the conversation*. We invite leaders to continue and boldly further this effort in their places of involvement.

From the beginning, the goal of the initiative has been two-fold:

1. to meet the continuing challenge of widespread biblical illiteracy; and
2. to renew the teaching of our rich theological heritage of scriptural understanding, interpretation and engagement.

To help realize the above goals and address the challenges listed below, we want to further encourage engagement of Scripture, especially using the “multiple lenses” approach. We seek your help and support as partners in this effort, in addressing the challenges that are currently serving to shape our calling. Some of the larger challenges are:

- the growing number of people in society claiming to be “spiritual but not religious;”
- the need to address and learn from the great variety of cultures that make up this church and world;
- the role of the Bible in mission outreach;
- the importance of family and home as centers of faith development;
- the need for creative use of social media;
- continued biblical illiteracy.

Despite the challenges, Christ is present as we engage Scripture, and this promise calls us forward together. Please join us in getting the word out and in encouraging all to *open Scripture* and *join the conversation*!

Learn more at [bookoffaith.org](http://bookoffaith.org). Find us on Facebook @bookoffaith and Twitter #bookoffaith.

## Four lenses for engaging Scripture.

Open Scripture. Join the conversation.

The initiative has emphasized that biblical engagement is greatly enriched by the use of multiple lenses in conversation with Scripture and other people. This suggested method is centered on four ways of reading the Bible and asking questions: devotional, historical, literary and theological reading.



## Book of Faith (cont'd)

**DEVOTIONAL**

AT CHURCH    IN THE COMMUNITY    AT THE OFFICE    AT HOME WITH FAMILY

Where are you today?    Our Devotional    book of faith

We begin. We read, ask questions, reflect on the meaning of the Bible from wherever we are – in place, time or state of mind. No matter where we are, our Book of Faith meets us there.

**LITERARY**

EPIC JOURNEYS    LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT    TALES OF TRAGEDY    BOOKS OF POETRY

The library that's always open    Our Literary    book of faith

We pay close attention to how the passage is written. We notice what kind of literature it is. We notice all the details, themes, characters, storyline, poetry and logic. We compare and contrast these with our understanding and experience of life. In this process we discover meaning.

**HISTORICAL**

THE TEMPLE    THE ROMANS    THE EGYPTIANS    KING DAVID

Meet yesterday's story today    Our Historical    book of faith

We seek to understand the world of the Bible. We explore the world of the writers and the original readers, the rulers, slaves, women, men and children. All the people in our Book of Faith. How do we understand their social and cultural contexts? How were their lives different from or the same as ours today?

**THEOLOGICAL**

HOW DO I FIND HOPE?    WHO IS GOD?    WHY IS THERE SUFFERING?    WHAT IS LOVE?

What are the God questions?    Our Theological    book of faith

As we open Scripture and join the conversation, we ask our deepest questions and listen for God's voice. We hear God's demands as well as God's words of comfort and promise. We see Christ alive yesterday and today. We feel the movement of the Spirit and are moved to respond. God is present in the word.



## Congregational vitality

The church is working with more than 35 synods on intentional strategies for improving congregational vitality. In addition, the unit has partnered with synods to start 124 new congregations and communities of Jesus over the past two years. The Directors for Evangelical Mission continue to engage synodical leaders, structures and strategies and coordinate and staff the education of all evangelical mission, mission support, and stewardship ministries in each synod.

*Point out the Director for Evangelical Mission – a colleague who works with the synod to enhance collaboration and work together to grow the church.*

## Ecumenical & inter-religious relations

### Lutheran-Catholic relations/500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation

The 500th anniversary of the Reformation was launched by a joint ecumenical commemoration in Sweden on October 31, 2016, that was led by the president and general secretary of Lutheran World Federation and The Pope. It included a service of Common Prayer at the Cathedral in Lund and a public stadium event lifting up areas of common service and public witness. (See [lutheranworld.org/lund2016](http://lutheranworld.org/lund2016))

The service of Common Prayer was adapted for a service that took place on March 2 at the Lutheran Center between the ELCA Conference of Bishops and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs Committee.



The co-chairs and members of the *Declaration on the Way* Task Force have been active in providing leadership for many synodical events to discover, explore and deepen understanding about Lutheran-Catholic relations and to consider the ecumenical dimensions of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary – with focus on the “*Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, From Conflict to Communion,*” and “*Declaration on the Way*”. We welcome these invitations as opportunities for partnership.

We are grateful to 1517 Media for creating an online study guide for “*Declaration on the Way*”. This is a resource for deepening our reception of the agreements, and strengthening local Lutheran-Catholic relations. Available from the 1517 Media website and [ELCA.org/ecumenical](http://ELCA.org/ecumenical).

### Other resources:

- Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton’s webcast, “Ecumenical Witness and the Reformation:” [ELCA.org/webcast](http://ELCA.org/webcast)
- Joint Ecumenical Commemoration of the Reformation in Sweden: [lutheranworld.org/lund2016](http://lutheranworld.org/lund2016)
- Press conference: <https://vimeo.com/189685569>



## Ecumenical & inter-religious relations (cont'd)

### Lutheran-Orthodox relations

On Nov.15, the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago ceremoniously returned a rare 9<sup>th</sup> century Greek manuscript of the complete New Testament to the Greek Orthodox Church. His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GOA), Bishop Demetrios of the Chicago Diocese, and members of the staff of the GOA were also present. Conversations have led to the possibility of renewed dialogue between the ELCA and the GOA, possibly on the topic of care of creation.



### Lutheran-Muslim relations

Our Lutheran-Muslim relations have taken two forms in recent months: rapid response to anti-Muslim bigotry and continued engagement in long-term relationship-building, education, dialogue, and cooperation for the common good.



We are working in partnership with the Islamic Society of North America on church-mosque pilot projects in three synods: Southeastern Pennsylvania, Southwestern Washington, and Southeast Michigan. Thanks to Bishop Donald Kreiss, Bishop Rick Jaech, and Bishop Clarie Burkat for leading. The hope is that by taking these steps and expanding out to include other existing and new initiatives across this church, we will build out stronger local relations across the country.

We are also partnering with the Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign to respond to increased incidents of anti-Muslim bigotry over the past year and to concerns about anti-Muslim policies, including the recent and anticipated executive orders. We have participated in statements, press conference, events and strategic planning sessions. Bishop William Gafkjen, representing the ELCA as chair of the Conference of Bishops, gave a statement at the Nov. 18 press conference in Washington, D.C.: [youtu.be/ijoNgnI8Er8](https://youtu.be/ijoNgnI8Er8). Learn more at [shouldertoshouldercampaign.org](http://shouldertoshouldercampaign.org).

### Inter-Religious Task Force

Chaired by Bishop Patricia Lull, the Inter-Religious Task Force is developing an inter-religious policy statement that will complement the 1991 *ecumenism* vision statement. A first draft is expected to be completed by the end of summer 2017, at which time a consultative process for input and feedback will unfold across this church. Under proper governance, a proposed statement is intended for presentation at 2019 Churchwide Assembly.



Please consider how you might take up Presiding Bishop Eaton's invitation for conversation about our inter-religious calling and commitments in your synods. Apart from their own value, these events can be used to provide input into the work of the task force. EIR staff and Lutheran Ecumenical & Inter-Religious Representatives Network reps are available to offer leadership and support: [Kathryn.Lohre@elca.org](mailto:Kathryn.Lohre@elca.org). Information about



## Ecumenical & inter-religious relations (cont'd)

*“Engaging Others, Knowing Ourselves: A Lutheran Calling in a Multi-Religious World,”* including downloadable workshop templates is available: [ELCA.org/Faith/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations/Inter-Religious-Relations/Case-Studies](http://ELCA.org/Faith/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations/Inter-Religious-Relations/Case-Studies). The book is also now available for Kindle on Amazon.

### Historic Black Church relations

As we work on racial justice and reconciliation within the ELCA, we are also working in partnership with Historic Black Churches in coalitions and bi-laterally.



For a second year, the ELCA was a co-sponsor of the cross-racial dialogue convened by the Conference of National Black Churches (CNBC) in Charleston, S.C. Dec. 13-15, 2016. The CNBC is the annual conference of the Historic Black Churches in the United States. This continues to be an area of growing partnership between Racial Justice Ministries, the African and European Descent Lutheran Associations, and Ecumenical & Inter-Religious Relations.



A significant dimension of the Bishops' Academy was the presence of Bishop John White, president of the African Methodist Episcopal Council of Bishops. We are exploring possibilities for re-engaging our churches' dialogue, which took place in the 1990s. It will be important to consider fresh models that combine theological dialogue and common action for the sake of the gospel. The initiatives in your synods will continue to be critical for shaping this future together.

### Formula of Agreement 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary

On March 26 at 3 p.m., the United Church of Christ Center in Cleveland hosted a worship service in celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Formula of Agreement, the full communion agreement between the ELCA and three Reformed bodies the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ. Heads of communion, local judicatory leaders, ecumenical officers, and local clergy and lay leaders participated. This service was held in conjunction with a heads of communion meeting to explore the next chapter of our life together as full communion partners.

### Churches Uniting in Christ - UPCOMING

On the evening of June 4 in Dallas, heads of communion, local judicatory leaders, ecumenical officers, and local clergy and lay leaders will participate in a national worship service of recognition of ministries among the Churches Uniting in Christ. A public forum on race relations will be held on June 3, along with a pulpit exchange between local clergy and national Church Uniting in Christ leadership on the morning of June 4.



## ELCA Federal Credit Union

- Our credit union is approaching its one-year anniversary in June and is off to a great start
- Currently serves members in 43 states and in the Caribbean
- Offers a variety of consumer loan, credit card and deposit accounts
- To date, those who have refinanced or consolidated debt have saved an average of more than \$1,400 in finance charges

To learn more, visit [elcafcu.org](http://elcafcu.org)

## ELCA Foundation – partnerships and gift planners

**ELCA Foundation: Your life. Your faith. Your gift to the future.**

The ELCA Foundation works in partnerships to strengthen the financial capacities of our broader ELCA-related ministries through:

- lifelong stewardship including annual, major and deferred giving;
- financial education, resources and a variety of planned giving tools;
- investment management services for congregations, synods and related ministries.

The ELCA Foundation supports 20 regional gift Planners throughout the U.S. These gift planners provide a number of services:

- They help congregations, synods and other Lutheran ministries identify their financial needs and wants and develop a Ministry Funding Plan.
- They help members of the congregations align their passions with the ministry funding needs through planned giving.
  - Gift planners help donors make decisions about whom they want to help.
  - Gift planners make sure everything is in place to fulfill the donor's wishes.

In 2016, our regional gift planners secured \$56 million in planned gifts (this is up from \$39 million in 2015). Of these gifts, \$10.5 million will directly benefit ELCA congregations and \$2.8 million will benefit ELCA synods. Anyone who wants to help ministry in any way after they pass, should meet with a regional gift planner.

## ELCA Fund for Leaders

### 2016-2017 statistics

As of July 1, a new staff team is growing the ELCA Fund for Leaders. The endowment has reached \$48.7 million, allowing Fund for Leaders to provide more than \$2 million in scholarship assistance to 250 seminary students, approximately 25 percent of all seminary-enrolled candidates for rostered ministry in the ELCA in 2016-2017. Synodical scholarships represent nearly \$540,000 of the \$2 million distribution, disbursed in 147 different awards by 38 participating synods.



## ELCA Fund for Leaders (cont'd)

### Supporting diverse ministries

Among the funds awarded in 2016 are scholarships specifically geared toward students of color and/or first language other than English, scholarships for new mission developer candidates, and scholarships for seminarians pursuing chaplaincy ministry in military, prison, or VA hospital settings.

- One of these students is Elle Dowd, an M.Div. student at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, who says, “It is for freedom that Christ set us free. We use that freedom, not for our own benefit, but to help free others. None of us are free until all of us are free.” From current students and alumni, who serve as pastors, chaplains and rostered leaders in all areas of the church, we hear again and again that the freedom from crushing student debt has allowed them to serve in ministry more freely and proclaim the gospel.

### Fundraising and strategy

For the fiscal year 2016, Fund for Leaders reached a fundraising total of \$2.66 million as of Dec. 31, 2016. A \$3 million gift commitment in 2016 catalyzed the introduction of an expanded scholarships program, which will provide an additional 60 full-tuition scholarships over the next three years (in collaboration with Presiding Bishop Eaton’s Leadership Initiative). Fund for Leaders staff are working with students, seminaries, synods and our new grant-making software to restructure the application and the selection process to best support future ministers as they go and serve where the church needs and the Holy Spirit leads.

For 2017, Fund for Leaders will be concentrating on three primary goals: 1) continued development work with new and existing donors, toward the goal of raising \$4 million in the next two years (and \$15 million overall during *The Campaign for the ELCA*); 2) the implementation of new interim award process and planning for the transition to a direct application and award process for subsequent years; and 3) planning related to recognizing and highlighting the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fund for Leaders with its multiple constituencies, beginning in fall 2017.

## ELCA World Hunger

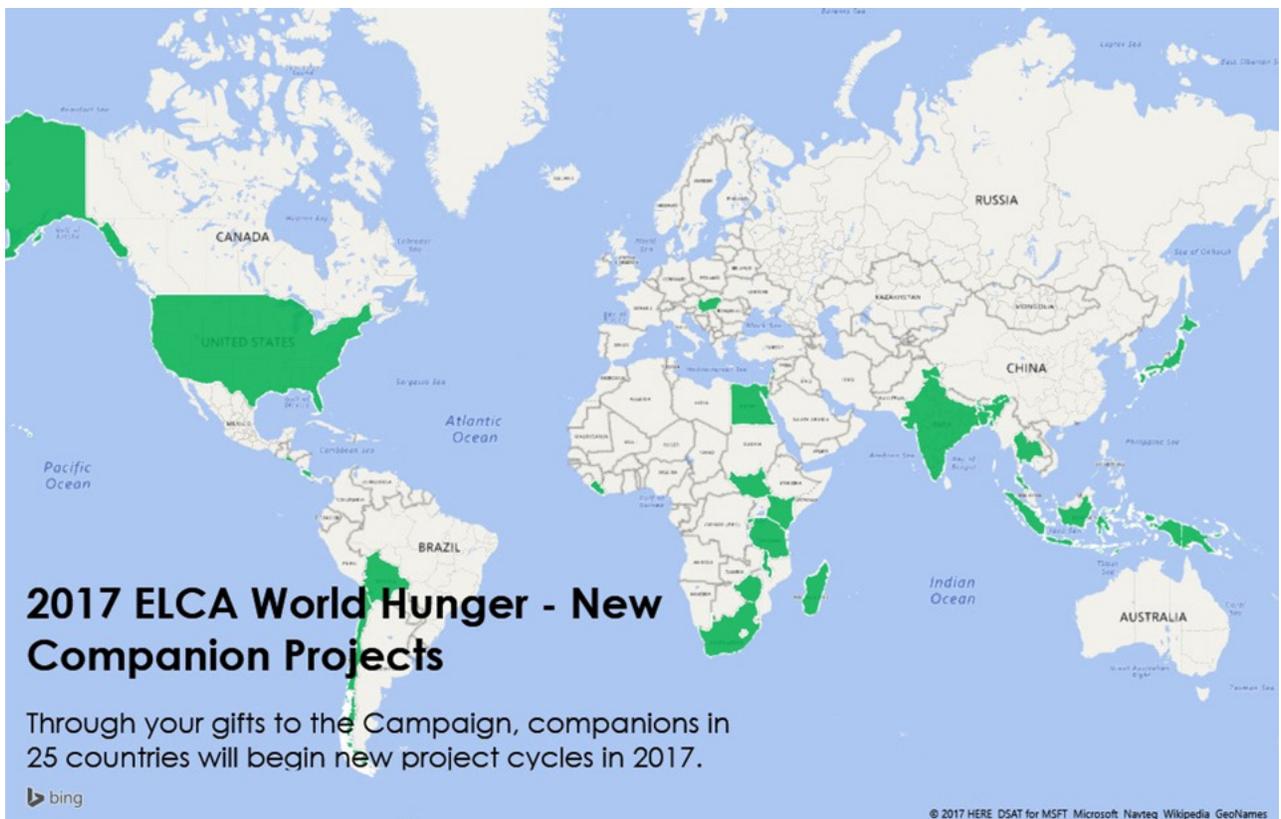
2016 was the Campaign focus year for ELCA World Hunger, and we are grateful to report that over \$21.9 million was given in support of our church’s ministry for projects in 60 countries including the U.S. - working for a world in which all are fed. Thank you!

From participation “ELCA World Hunger’s 40 Days of Giving” during Lent to special efforts in over 45 synod assemblies and gifts of goats, pigs and latrines during the Advent and Christmas season, thank you for being part of the growth in giving – especially the growth in giving from congregations and synods.

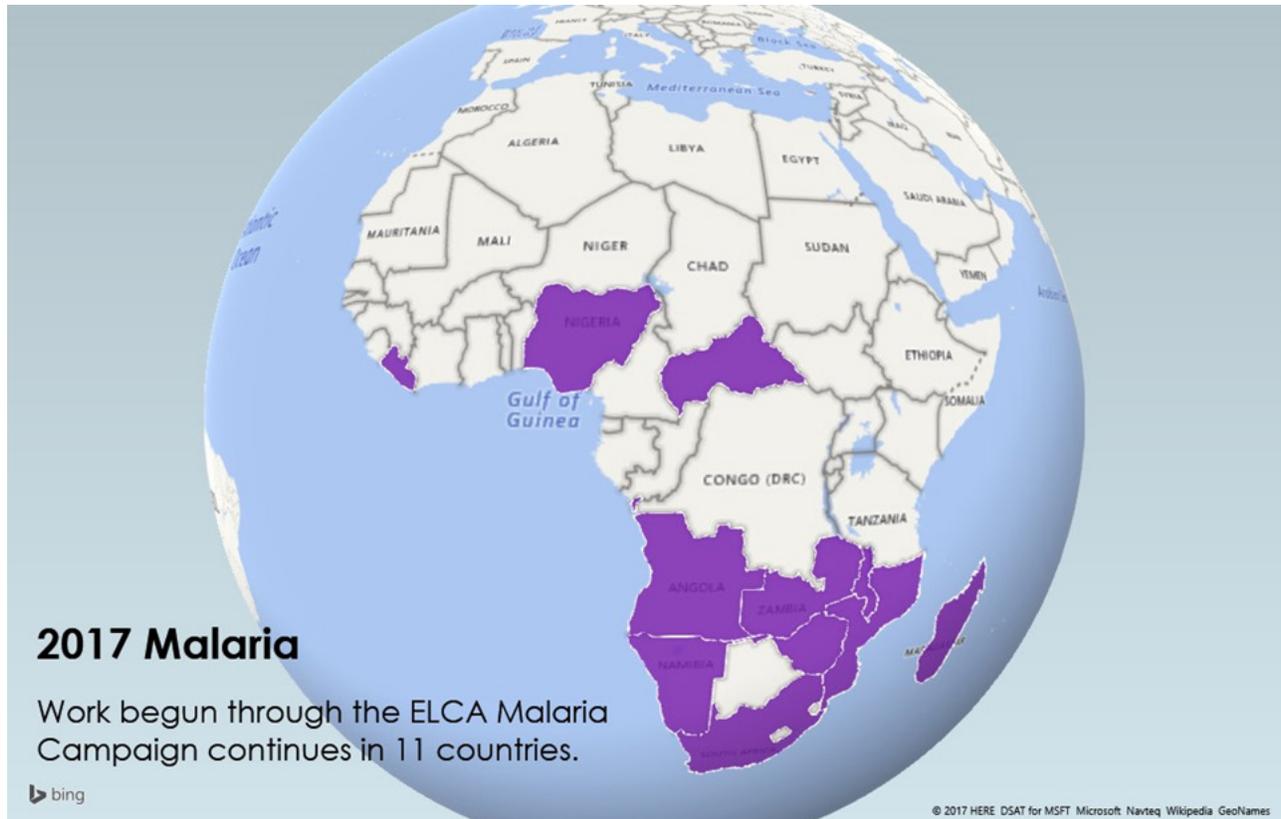
This church currently funds almost 350 domestic hunger and poverty programs across the church.



# ELCA World Hunger (cont'd)



## ELCA World Hunger (cont'd)



## Entrance rite discernment

The Entrance Rite Discernment Group continues the work of moving toward a recommendation for a final entrance rite for the new roster of Word and Service.

Word and Service resources on the ELCA website include:

- a new FAQ describing the work of the Entrance Rite Discernment Group; and
- a Bible study “Mission, Ministry, and Leadership” to encourage discussions across the church.

Worship resources on the website include:

- a liturgy of welcoming and;
- an adapted consecration rite to be used until the next churchwide assembly.



## Global church

**Evangelism and outreach:** Some of the youngest and fastest growing Lutheran churches are found in Asia in the countries of Indonesia, India, Nepal, Cambodia and Myanmar. It is long-time ELCA companion churches that are driving much of this growth, with strong support from ELCA Global Mission that builds on long-term relationships.

- The ELCA has joined with the Lutheran Church in Singapore to accompany the birth of the Lutheran Church in Cambodia. Because of the ELCA's work with and through others, evangelism in Cambodia is vibrant and is centered around young adults whose enthusiasm for proclaiming and living the gospel is catching.
- In Malaysia, with generous support from *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, we are helping the Lutheran church in this country reach the Orang Asli indigenous peoples who are now becoming faithful and gifted leaders in their own cultural context.
- In China, we are accompanying the Lisu ethnic minority in Yunnan Province with a particular focus on developing evangelists, Bible teachers and music leaders.
- In The Gambia in West Africa, ELCA Global Mission is coming alongside Lutherans in neighboring Senegal to help a new Lutheran church grow in a 90 percent Muslim context.

**ELCA missionaries:** “ELCA missionaries are ambassadors,” Malpica Padilla (ELCA Global Mission Executive Director, the Rev. Dr. Rafael Malpica Padilla) said. “Paul writes to one of the communities, ‘Receive one another.’ We send missionaries today because ‘sentness’ is a sign of being the church, of being part of the body of Christ.” 225 ELCA pastors, doctors, nurses, teachers, theological educators, communicators and community organizers are serving as missionaries in 44 countries on every continent of the world. For brief personal stories about the ways ELCA missionaries accompany companion churches around the globe, see the February Living Lutheran: [livinglutheran.org/2017/02/called-gathered-sent/](http://livinglutheran.org/2017/02/called-gathered-sent/).

**Sustainable development:** Global Mission supports projects and programs across a variety of sectors including water, agriculture, livelihoods, food security, and peace and reconciliation. In 2015, approximately \$5 million was provided to 78 projects with a water-work component (e.g. wells, boreholes, spring boxes, water for irrigation, sanitation and hygiene, etc.). Food security and its link to health and nutrition underscore many projects.

- For example, in Burure, Zimbabwe Global Mission supports not only a health clinic, but education, HIV and AIDS education, life-skills training, agriculture and food preservation and livelihoods. Together these foster a broad impact in the lives of people in the Burure.
- In Cambodia, people who had been landless have been able to acquire new land and grow new crops, leading to improved nutrition, increased incomes and the ability to send their children to school.
- Also in Zimbabwe, a peace and reconciliation program has helped participants heal from the trauma of conflict and is enabling the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the promotion of development.

**Health care:** ELCA engagement strengthens the life-saving and healing ministries of hospitals and clinics in countries such as Liberia, Madagascar and Zimbabwe. With support through the *The Campaign for the ELCA*, ground was broken in 2016 in Juba, South Sudan, for a new clinic focused on maternal-child health. A large and growing area of our work across the globe is



## Global church (cont'd)

disease prevention and health promotion through community-based, primary health projects. For example, in Chile, *Educacion Popular en Salud - EPES (Popular Education in Health)* receives World Hunger support for this grass-roots work and is accompanied by an ELCA long-term missionary. Moreover, the ELCA seeks to make the HIV and AIDS and malaria pandemics history by addressing underlying injustices with a focus on poverty.

The Global Mission unit receives the gifts of companions and channels them for the re-formation of global mission engagement narratives and practices in our own U.S. context. This work is done through approximately two dozen “glocal” events offered to synods and congregations each year. The events are a venue for trainings and experiential learning that increase participants’ understanding and build new capacities in the use of accompaniment as a narrative, lens and method for global and local mission engagement.

Women represent 70 percent of the world’s population living in poverty. Yes, in church and society, women often lack access to opportunities to realize their full potential because they lack access to educational opportunities. The ELCA’s International Women Leaders initiative is our church’s strong effort to create opportunities that support women leaders in church and society. With support from *The Campaign for the ELCA*, from winter 2014 to fall 2016, the International Women Leaders benefitted 91 women with study and leadership opportunities. Awards were granted to participants of five leadership seminars in Wittenberg, Germany, and to students studying at ELCA colleges, universities, seminaries and academic institutions closer to their homes.

## Global church sponsorship

- Missionaries and Young Adults in Global Mission
- Global Ministries
- International Women Leaders

In 2017, *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* is lifting up the Global Church as its theme. We invite every member and every congregation to join us in celebrating the ways in which our church lives into God’s mission of building bridges and living as one body of Christ in the world! We began 2017 with a celebration of International Women’s Day on March 8 and there are two additional celebrations coming up:

### Key 2017 dates for Global Church Sponsorship

#### June 4 – Pentecost Sunday

Pentecost Sunday is the opportunity to reflect on the global community of which we are a part—a community of people living out our faith, serving our neighbors and sharing God’s love with the world. This Pentecost Sunday we will lift up life-changing ministries with our global companions working to grow the global Lutheran church. *The Pentecost Sunday packet arrived at your congregation in mid-April.*



## Global church sponsorship (cont'd)

### Global Church Sunday – pick a Sunday in October!

Global Church Sunday is about celebrating our church's connections and common mission within Christ's global church. It is a day to rejoice in our relationships with companions around the world, to learn more about how the ELCA is connected globally and to support our church's missionaries who work in partnership with our companions in Christ. *The Global Church Sunday packet will arrive at your congregation in July.*

### Other resources (available at [ELCA.org/resources](http://ELCA.org/resources))

- Global Church Minutes: prayers to be incorporated in weekly worship in 2017
- Global Church Passport: educational activities for youth and young
- Global Church Story Series: 12 stories from our global companions

## “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday

“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the ELCA – one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. Since 2013, thousands of ELCA congregations have participated in this opportunity and dedicated one day to serve communities in ways that share the love of God with all people.

The date for 2017 is Sunday, Sept. 10. Mark your congregation’s calendar today! If your congregation cannot participate on Sept. 10, please consider another time that works best.

This year we observe the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. The ELCA’s anniversary theme, “Freed and Renewed in Christ,” reminds us of the gospel’s promise that we are freed in Christ to love and serve our neighbors. This is work that you do every day – serving your community in ways that share the love of God with all of God’s people. Visit [ELCA.org/dayofservice](http://ELCA.org/dayofservice) for more information.

## Human rights social message

The ELCA Church Council has initiated the development of a social message on human rights. This message will meet the long-recognized need for the ELCA to robustly address human rights in light of global complexities. For more information, go to [ELCA.org/socialmessages](http://ELCA.org/socialmessages).

## Leadership development

The churchwide organization partners with synods, seminaries, outdoor and campus ministries, and others to identify and prepare new Ministers of Word & Sacrament (pastors) and Ministers of Word & Service (deacons). During the past year, a new Candidacy Manual for Synod Candidacy Committees and a revised Candidacy Process was developed and is now being implemented. In addition, the unit helps to encourage and support lay leadership efforts in many synods.



## Lutheran Disaster Response

Lutheran Disaster Response brings God's hope, healing and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.

### Key areas of work

Lutheran Disaster Response strives to help the church continue to be church in the midst of disaster – following Christ's call to bring hope and healing to our neighbor in need. Some key areas of work include:

- providing emotional and spiritual care for people who have been affected by disasters and for leaders who respond to disasters;
- coordinating volunteers through local affiliates;
- assisting refugees in a holistic way that meets the varied needs of each community;
- promoting disaster preparedness and disaster-risk reduction;
- addressing unmet needs that could exist months, even years after a disaster and would help assist a family in their recovery. Unmet needs can include things such as furniture and appliances;
- supporting disaster case managers who work one-on-one with individuals or families as they navigate their recovery efforts, such as applying for FEMA assistance or filing insurance claims.

### International work

- Provided support for 47 disaster relief and recovery projects in 31 countries in FY2016.
  - These were initiated in response to a wide variety of disasters including the drought in Africa.
- Importantly, support for refugees and migrants has become even more critical in the current sociopolitical context; efforts are focused on AMMPARO as well as responding to the refugee crisis in the Middle East and Europe.
- Last fall, Hurricane Matthew hit in the Caribbean, and LDR's collective response spanned across international and domestic work.
  - Internationally, we responded by supporting emergency relief in Haiti and Cuba (the first time LDR responded to a disaster in Cuba).
- Support for recovery efforts after the earthquake in Nepal is ongoing, with completion of this phase of work planned for dedication in summer 2017.
- We have also worked with companion churches to build capacity for disaster preparedness through workshops in Malaysia (July) and Madagascar (October).

### Domestic work

- Provided support for 12 disaster relief and recovery projects in 10 states in FY2016.
- AMMPARO was affirmed at the Churchwide Assembly, and we continue to support programming such as Pro-Bono Lawyers and the Guardian Angel's program to support unaccompanied minors from Central America.



## Lutheran Disaster Response (cont'd)

- Continuing to coordinate with the four states affected by Hurricane Matthew.
  - Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia
    - We are coordinating with social ministry organizations and synods to work toward long-term recovery efforts.
- The West Virginia flooding
  - Coordinating with our affiliate for long-term recovery efforts. Several congregations, pastors and individuals supported the recovery efforts.
- South Dakota reservation flooding
  - We continue to work with Native American communities to accompany them through the recovery process from disasters that received little to no media attention.
- Louisiana flooding
  - Coordinating with affiliate Upbring, which is implementing a major disaster case management program for survivors. The disaster team is operating out of First Lutheran Church in Lafayette, La.
  - This flood started during the 2016 Churchwide Assembly in New Orleans and was declared one of the worst U.S. disasters since Hurricane Sandy.

## Mission Investment Fund

- **The Mission Investment Fund (MIF)** is the lending ministry of the ELCA. MIF makes low-interest loans to ELCA congregations and ELCA-related ministries for building and renovation projects. With MIF loans, congregations and ministries can purchase property, construct new buildings, build expansions and make renovations.
- MIF loans expand the capacity for ministry. MIF loans help create expanded worship spaces, updated space for education and youth ministry, new kitchens for community meals and soup kitchens, affordable housing units for the community and much more.
- At year-end 2016, MIF had 860 loans outstanding, totaling \$524 million.
- To fund these loans, MIF offers a portfolio of investments for congregations, their members, synods and ELCA-related ministries to purchase. At year-end 2016, MIF investments totaled \$474 million.

The MIF is a financially strong and stable organization, with a record of steady, controlled growth. With total assets of \$678 million and net assets of \$198 million at year-end 2016, MIF maintains a capital ratio of 29 percent—positioning MIF in the top tier of well-capitalized church extension funds.



# New congregations

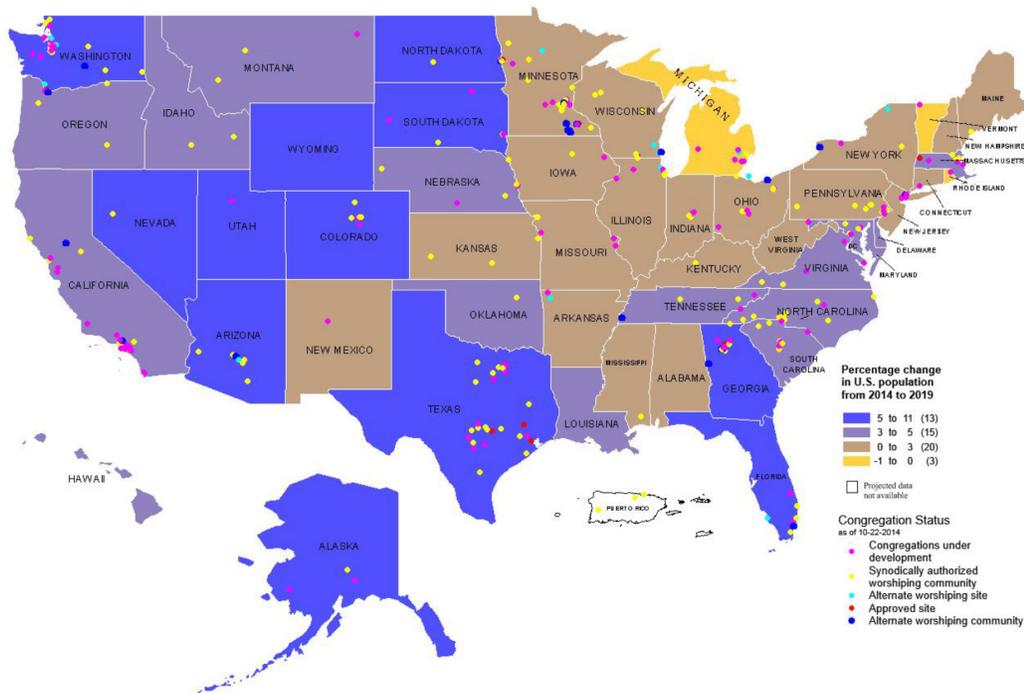
We share Christ's love by extending our welcome through new congregations and by supporting them as growing centers for evangelical mission.

As we seek to grow God's church and extend our welcome to all God's people, we are worshipping in pews, city parks, cafes and libraries; we are breaking bread in homes and in shelters, and we are equipping our neighbors with both spiritual and physical sustenance. With our hands, we are doing God's work of restoring and reconciling communities in God's name.

There are 372 ELCA new ministries currently under development in the United States and the Caribbean through the work of 65 synod mission tables made up of local leaders, directors for evangelical mission and bishops.

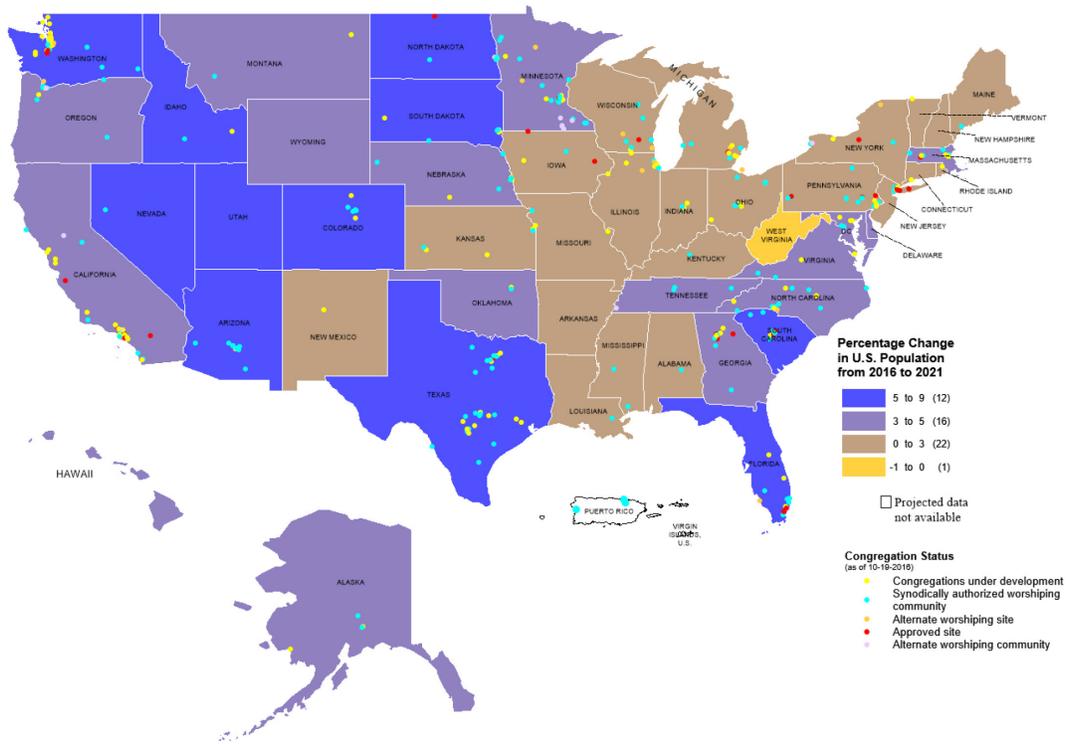
But there is more work to be done and communities to reach. In order to reflect the diversity in our country, we are actively engaged in God's mission with the goal of becoming an evangelizing, multicultural and multigenerational church.

Map of ELCA congregational development

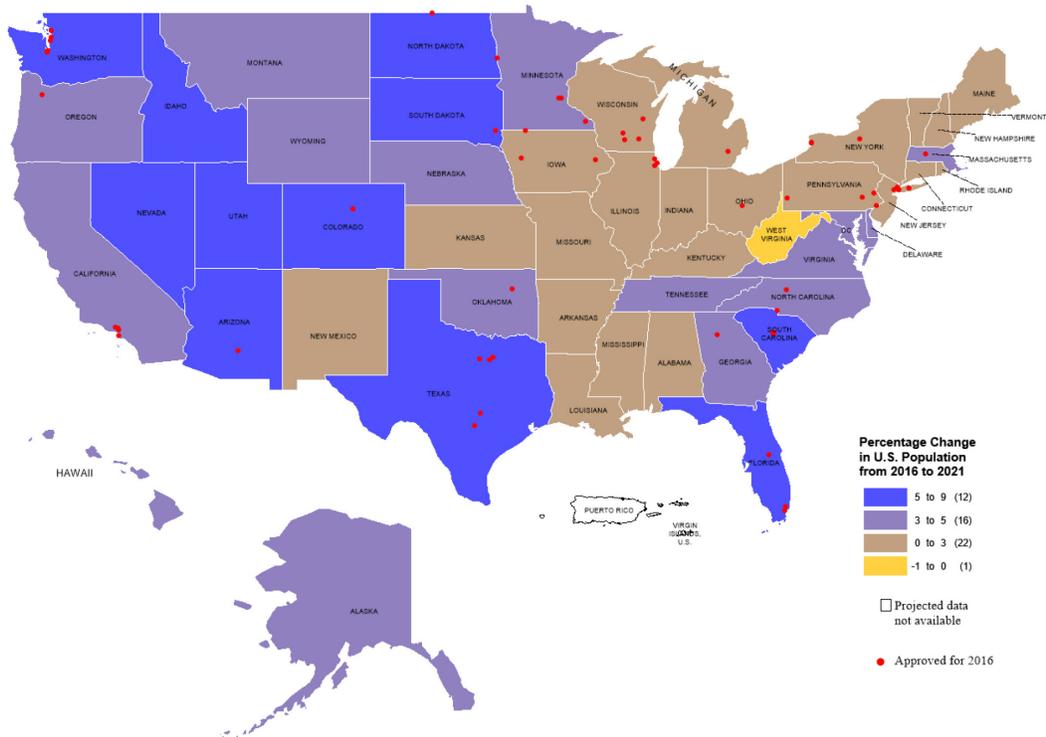


# New congregations (cont'd)

Map of ELCA congregational development



Map of ELCA congregational development - Approved for 2016



## New congregations (cont'd)

### ELCA new congregations key statistics:

- **384** new ministries are currently under development
- **62** new starts were approved in 2016
- **12** new starts were approved in 2017 as of March 2, 2017
- **136** total new starts total approved in last 26 months
- **514** new ministries have been organized as congregations since the birth of the ELCA in 1988
- **56 percent** of all new starts are among ethnic-multicultural communities
- **18 percent** of 2016 new starts are with ecumenical partners
- **21 percent** of 2016 new starts are young adult-millennial leaders and communities

### What YOU can do ...

**SHARE AN IDEA:** If you have an idea for a new church—contact your synod office. Ask for the director for evangelical mission or your bishop.

**PRAY:** Be a prayer partner for the new start and its mission developer.

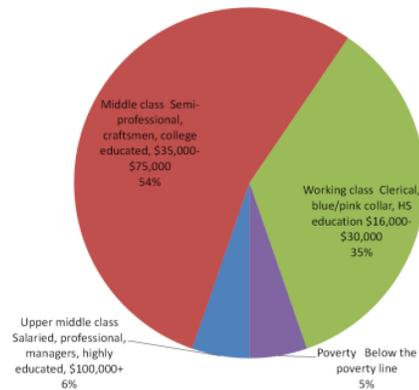
**GIVE:** Share your resources to propel a new congregation in its development. You can support ELCA new congregations today by making a gift online at: [ELCA.org/newcongregations/donate](http://ELCA.org/newcongregations/donate)

## Office of the Secretary

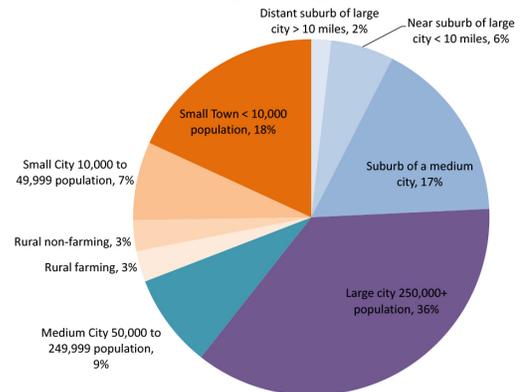
Congregations should amend their constitutions to incorporate the changes made to the Model Constitution for Congregations that were adopted by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. Amendments made in conformity to the model require action at one congregational meeting and require a majority vote for adoption.

Deacons are still counted as laypeople when looking at the representational principles of this church. This status is being addressed by the Entrance Rite Discernment Working Group and any change would come before the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

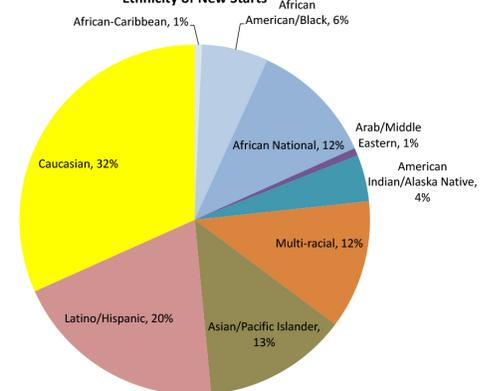
New Starts by Economic Group Type



Geographic Setting of New Starts



Ethnicity of New Starts



## Office of the Treasurer

- ELCA total operating revenue and support for 2016: **\$69,001,013**
- ELCA total expense and allocations for 2016: **\$67,370,338**
- ELCA World Hunger total income: **\$21,922,250**

### Campaign-to-date

- Congregations: \$2,276,568
- Leadership: \$12,259,243
- Global Church: \$14,049,115
- Hunger and Poverty: \$79,789,649
- “Where needed most”: \$4,989,452

Total revenue and commitments:  
**\$113,364,026, 57.3 percent of goal – on target**

## Refugees and migrants

ELCA Global Mission is responding to several critical refugee or migration crises in the global context. Through relationships with global companions and partners, we provide humanitarian assistance, extend a welcome to the stranger and encourage those in power to work for peace with justice. Here are some examples:

- Support has been provided to companions and partners in Hungary, Serbia, northern Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Jordan to assist people in transit and those living in refugee camps and host communities.
- With ELCA support, Asylum Protection Center in Serbia provides critical information, humanitarian supplies and psychosocial support to refugees from countries such as Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan.
- Also in Serbia, Lutheran Disaster Response provided \$100,000 in 2016 to build a temporary shelter and supply acute humanitarian needs of refugees during the winter months. The shelter is insulated and heated and can be used by approximately 200 single mothers with children, and/or families on a daily basis.
- In Sub-Saharan Africa, an ELCA missionary is accompanying Sudanese refugees in Gambella, while additional support is provided for refugee camps in Kakuma and Daabab.

### Global migration story: Safety net for refugee children in Cairo, Egypt

*Yohannes was 16 when he arrived in Cairo, Egypt, alone. He made his way to Egypt from Eritrea, in East Africa. He crossed the Sudan and with food hard to come by he found himself going without food for two days. Upon arriving in Cairo, Yohannes came to St. Andrew's Refugee Services (StARS) seeking help. StARS, a program supported by gifts to ELCA World Hunger, offers unaccompanied refugee children food, education and psychosocial support. First order of business for Yohannes: a warm, home-cooked meal.*



## Refugees and migrants (cont'd)

*Through your gifts to ELCA World Hunger, StARS feeds 350 refugee children two meals a day, four days a week. And, with the help of the program, Yohannes has learned about nutrition, budgeting, services available to him in Cairo, and how to get around this city of 7.7 million.*

*The program also offers him a safe space for playing sports and building friendships. "If StARS did not exist, I would go without food for the entire day," Yohannes said. "Nobody can study with an empty stomach."*

*"And here I get the chance to learn and to be with my friends."*

*Today Yohannes is attending school. He has a brighter future thanks to your support of ELCA World Hunger.*

## Rostered Ministers Gathering

The ELCA will host its first Rostered Ministers Gathering in Atlanta (Aug. 7-10, 2017). This is an opportunity for Word and Service and Word and Sacrament ministers to gather for continuing education, fellowship, fun, service and worship.

**Keynote speakers include:** Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, the Rev. Dr. James Forbes and Rachel Held Evans.



Our theme, "On the Way – Together," uses the Emmaus road story (Luke 24:13-35) to guide our time together. It's an opportunity to gather rostered ministers from around this church to remind one another that we are far better together than we are apart. We are on our way together as a church with our ecumenical partnerships, with our continued conversations around racism and reconciliation, and toward continued reformation.

We will gather in Atlanta in the name of Jesus, the crucified and risen Christ. We will center ourselves each day around Word and Sacrament in worship. We will have opportunities to be in fellowship and to dwell in God's Word. We will hear from keynote speakers. Then we will be sent forth into this world to love and serve the world in Christ's name.

There will be two event pre-gatherings: federal chaplains and young rostered ministers (20s and 30s).

For more information, please visit [ELCA.org/RMG](http://ELCA.org/RMG). Email questions to [2017MinistersGathering@elca.org](mailto:2017MinistersGathering@elca.org) or you can call 773-280-2552 or toll free at 800-635-3522. Registration closes on July 23.



## South Sudan outreach

In South Sudan, we find the youngest nation and the newest Lutheran Church – in the midst of extremely difficult circumstances.

The ELCA is committed to its ongoing work in South Sudan to help cultivate peace and a sustainable future for millions affected by civil war and famine. There are 3 focus areas for our work:

- We are working together with others to deliver immediate famine relief: Right now, more than seven million people need humanitarian assistance in South Sudan. The ELCA is poised to respond to this need. Through our long-standing relationships in the region, we are prepared to accompany communities through food distribution, water and sanitation, and psychosocial support. Your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response are critical to implementing this work. Together, we can provide life-saving aid to our brothers and sisters in South Sudan when they need it most.
- Sustainable food security: In efforts to build resilience of communities, we are working through the Lutheran World Federation to enhance food security and improve livelihoods of poor and vulnerable households. With support from ELCA World Hunger, community members are increasing food production through development of new agricultural practices and skills, and women and youth are increasing their economic capacity by initiating businesses through savings clubs and small loans.
- Sustained ministry: In November of 2016, we broke ground on a Lutheran center and clinic in Juba, in an area that lacks basic health and education services. The center will be a place for the community to find hope by providing classes, including computer training, and a health clinic – which will be the country's first and only place for fistula surgery for women and girls. For many South Sudanese adults, this will be their first educational experience.

There is a congregational toolkit online with resources to lift up this work in your communities. Go to [ELCA.org/SouthSudanNow](http://ELCA.org/SouthSudanNow).

## Women and Justice

### Join the conversation!

The ELCA Women and Justice Task Force is developing a social statement and wants to hear from you!

Participate with the *Faith, Sexism, Justice: Conversations toward a Social Statement* study with a group or on your own.

Divided into seven modules, topics include:

- Justice
- Sexism
- Economics
- Gender-based violence
- Words and images for God
- Scripture usage

Feedback on the study is accepted through Aug. 31, 2017. For more information, go to [ELCA.org/womenandjustice](http://ELCA.org/womenandjustice).

