

Report of the Mission Advancement Unit



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

Statement of Purpose

The Mission Advancement unit is responsible for coordinating this church's communication, marketing, public relations, mission funding, major gifts, planned gifts, and constituent data management. The governing description of this unit appears in continuing resolution 17.11.A10., printed in Section X of this volume.

Report of Work 2009–2011

Constituent Support

The new Constituent Support team was formed in the redesign of the churchwide organization to support the communication and fundraising efforts of the organization through effective use of constituent data. Responsibilities include the management of the new ELCA Constituent Information System, the ELCA Contact Center, and mail services, as well as the coordination of ELCA Resource Centers.

The Constituent Support team seeks to ensure that internal and external requests for constituent services support are completed in a professional and timely manner; policies, procedures, and processes are maintained in order to maximize efficiencies and the accuracy of constituent information; mission funding efforts are enhanced through effective use of the constituent data and ELCA members receive an informed, helpful response to requests for information and resources whether they come to the ELCA via phone, U.S. mail, electronic mail, or website.

ELCA Resource Centers accompany congregations for evangelical mission by highlighting best resources and practices for witness and service. For example, the ELCA Resource Center of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin connects online with publishing partners, and helps edit unpublished resources from leaders across the ELCA at www.elca.feautor.org and www.synodresourcecenter.org. It averaged more than 28,000 downloads per month in 2010.

ELCA Foundation

The ELCA Foundation assists people around this church in living out their lifelong stewardship and supporting the ministries their faith inspires.

In response to a 2009 Churchwide Assembly action to provide a wills and living trust initiative, the ELCA Foundation established *Kalos: The ELCA Legacy Society*. A one-year period

of charter membership was successfully completed in April 2011; the initiative was favorably received by ELCA members.

The ELCA Foundation has developed new planned giving resources for use by individuals, congregations, synods, agencies, and institutions. Many of these resources are available for download from the ELCA website. In addition there are new print versions of: "What Does Your Faith Inspire?" (a planning resource); "Will and Estate Workbook"; and "Notes on Your Estate" (sharing your plans with family and others).

The results of the Foundation's efforts during 2009–2010 are as follows: 159 new charitable gift annuities (\$4.6 million); 32 donor-advised-funds gifts (\$1.4 million); 8 trusts (\$1.7 million); 65 bequests (\$5.4 million) in addition to major outright gifts.

Through the hands and dedicated efforts of 15 regional gift planners, six national staff, and numerous volunteers, God's work is done, as they share the message of lifelong stewardship and how planning one's legacy assists family, friends and the ministries that have nurtured our faith and inspired our generosity.

Marketing and Public Relations

The Marketing and Public Relations team supports Mission Advancement's work in strengthening the identity and mission of the ELCA through focused, strategic, and integrated communication with members and the wider society.

From 2009 to 2011, the Marketing and Public Relations team (and former Communication Services unit) produced high-quality communications while exploring new ways to connect with ELCA members. It launched initiatives to expand the ELCA's reach, evaluated and enhanced existing communication channels through a publications audit, realigned the team to integrate with churchwide fundraising programs, and increased awareness of the ELCA through media outreach and online town hall forums with Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson.

The first-ever online town hall forum with Bishop Hanson was hosted in December 2009 to allow for open dialogue after the meeting of the Churchwide Assembly. Over 3,100 video players were launched with 2,205 unique visitors tuning in for the event. Bishop Hanson answered questions from the live audience and online viewers. Three similar town hall meetings were hosted in 2010.

In the spring of 2010, Lipman Hearne, a nonprofit marketing communications agency, was hired to develop five key messages for the ELCA. These messages were developed in collaboration with congregational, synodical, and churchwide leaders, and they continue to be integrated across ELCA communication channels.

LivingLutheran.com was launched to the public in December 2010 after it had been tested with synodical and congregational leaders throughout the fall. The multi-author blogging site daily features fresh stories and opinions from ELCA members and leaders. LivingLutheran.com will help the ELCA reach more members with thoughtful and inspirational stories about the ministries of this church.

Social media provide another avenue for connecting with ELCA members. Since 2010, the ELCA *Facebook* fan page grew from 12,430 fans to more than 23,000. Scriptural passages and stories are posted daily.

Sections of ELCA.org were redesigned, and fresh content was added. This includes the redevelopment of areas like the first-call process, HIV and AIDS, justice ministries, and event pages for the Women of the ELCA, the ELCA Youth Gathering, and the 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. New sections featuring content on topics like bound conscience, caring for creation, the ELCA Malaria Campaign, and justice for women were developed. In January 2011, work began on refreshing the ELCA.org homepage to reflect the ELCA's two strategic priorities and five key messages. This work will be completed by September 2011.

The Marketing and Public Relations team reached out to media in new ways to tell this church's story. They worked with the presiding bishop to produce an anti-bullying video message which has been viewed over 36,000 times and was prominently featured on www.ItGetsBetter.org and in the recently published book by the same title. Staff also secured placement for Bishop Hanson's statements on civility and his reflections on Easter in media outlets like *The Washington Post* and www.HuffingtonPost.com.

In late 2010, team members worked with theological discernment staff to develop a genetics social statement communication plan and launched www.ELCAfactchecker.com to address misinformation about this church's proposed social statement and other matters. This work also includes interviews with Orion Samuelson for his program "This Week in Agribusiness."

In March 2011, a media tour with Bishop Hanson in Washington, D.C., built new relationships with journalists in national media outlets like *USA Today*, the Associated Press, and *The Washington Post*. Another media tour with contacts from *The New York Times* and *Newsweek* is planned for late June 2011.

Additional work by the team includes video production, email campaigns, direct mail fundraising campaigns, collateral production, news release distribution, marketing strategy development, and the production of more than 600 print projects like *Seeds for the Parish*, ELCA Good Gifts catalog, and *Stories of Faith in Action* magazine.

The Lutheran

The Lutheran is the monthly magazine of the ELCA, which nurtures an understanding of the faith, mission, and ministries of this church, and providing informed editorial content about relevant concerns.

The magazine finished its 18-month commitment to the Book of Faith initiative in June 2010 with the conclusion of the "Our faith" columns. The Rev. Peter W. Marty launched a replacement column, "A Lutheran Christian life for today." His efforts met with critical acclaim. Sadly, the last months of 2009 marked the retirement of one editor of *The Lutheran* while budget considerations prompted the elimination of another position held by a long-term editor. After starting to level off in 2007–2008, circulation losses surged, with 2009 seeing a record percentage loss of 12.69 percent, followed in 2010 with a 15.07 percent loss. As of June 2011, paid circulation stood at 193,355. Advertising declined as well over the two years, down 13.8 percent in 2009 and 13.2 percent in 2010. *The Lutheran* and its two children's magazines posted an operating loss of \$20,327 in 2009 and an operating surplus of \$145,228 in 2010.

Mission Funding

ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeals

The greatest participation of members, congregations, and synods in any specifically funded program of the church is through ELCA World Hunger. During the past two years, over 7,096 congregations collected or remitted gifts to address hunger through the ELCA. In addition, the ELCA directly received nearly 80,000 gifts from individuals and groups for the work of ELCA World Hunger.

Gifts sent directly or through congregations for ELCA World Hunger, bequest and trust income, and earnings on endowments held for the benefit of ELCA World Hunger totaled \$17,945,470 in fiscal year 2009 and about \$19,500,000 in fiscal year 2010.

Over the two-year period, approximately 92 percent of expenditures were used for hunger-related program and activities, and 8 percent for administration and fundraising. Approximately 71 percent was directed internationally and 29 percent domestically.

The ELCA's ministry to address hunger is carried out under assembly-approved guidelines. The emphasis is upon helping communities that experience periodic or chronic need for food relief in a way that helps them lift themselves from poverty. The focus is to address the root causes of hunger and help communities take action toward long-term solutions. Hunger education, volunteer and leadership networks, and fundraising related to hunger is facilitated in the Mission Advancement unit. Domestic relief, development, organizing, and advocacy are facilitated and reported by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit; international hunger relief and development efforts are handled by the Global Mission unit.

A full array of educational material and congregational resources related to hunger continue to be available at ELCA.org.

The previous two Churchwide Assemblies, have focused on the ELCA's domestic and global strategy in the face of HIV and AIDS. A commitment of \$10 million over ten years beginning in 2010 has been made to this work, building upon the experience of the "Stand with Africa" campaign, the vital work of global companion churches (through community health effort, maternal

and child care, and economic development), and ministry partners in the United States.

The networking, education, and fundraising staff and volunteers for ELCA World Hunger are guiding the start-up of the ELCA Malaria Campaign. The 2011 Churchwide Assembly will consider an action to raise \$15 million toward this need.

Because of the ELCA presence through our congregations and related Lutheran organizations, as well as the ongoing work of ELCA World Hunger, we are able and compelled to respond when a disaster happens. Thanks to the generosity of ELCA members, the ELCA responded to disasters in more than a dozen countries in 2009 and even more in 2010. The greatest response internationally has been to earthquakes in Haiti, Chile, and Japan. While 2009 and 2010 were relatively calm years for major disasters in the United States, 2011 has already brought severe storms.

Fund for Leaders

The Fund for Leaders, established by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly, continues to provide significant support for students preparing for rostered ministries at the eight ELCA seminaries. Gifts to the Fund in this biennium totaled \$4.3 million. The Fund endowment balance was \$24.5 million at the end of 2010. The first scholarships were awarded in 2000, and to date, approximately 700 full or partial scholarships have been awarded. Thirty-four synods have entered into partnership with the Fund for Leaders and have established named synod endowments. The Fund will now embark on a major thrust of matching a challenge grant of \$1.5 million from the ELCA Mission Investment Fund in support of those preparing for full-time ministry as “mission developers.”

Mission Support and the Blue Ribbon Report on Mission Funding

The governing documents of the ELCA provide the framework for the interdependent relationship between congregations, synods and the churchwide organization related to the financial support for synodical and churchwide ministries. An important key to this shared relationship is the understanding that mission support income is the portion of offerings that congregations share with synods and the churchwide organization for God’s mission beyond the local congregation. Mission support provides 80 percent of the total churchwide budget. In 2010, there were 12 synods sharing mission support with the churchwide organization at 55 percent or greater; 26 synods sharing at 50 percent or greater; and 27 synods sharing below 50 percent.

“Since congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization are partners that share in God’s mission, all share in the responsibility to develop, implement, and strengthen the financial support program of this church” (*Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*, provision 8.15.).

Mission support consultations are an important aspect of the interdependent relationship among the 65 synods of the ELCA and the churchwide organization. The consultations provide an opportunity for interpretation of the shared mission and

churchwide ministries of the ELCA. In the biennium since the 2009 Churchwide Assembly, there have been 59 synodical mission support consultations and 15 regional mission support consultations. The design of the Mission Advancement unit provides an opportunity for greater collaboration between mission support and the areas of designated giving, including ELCA World Hunger, Disaster Response, Missionary Sponsorship, and the ELCA Malaria Campaign.

The Blue Ribbon Report on Mission Funding (2007) continues to guide the churchwide organization’s development and stewardship of efforts.

Missionary Sponsorship and Global Appeals

The ELCA Missionary Sponsorship program is the primary program through which the ELCA’s nearly 250 missionaries are funded. It is also an important way in which ELCA constituents—congregations, Women of the ELCA groups, and synods—receive the gifts of companion churches.

This program has made electronic media one of its central tenets in facilitating relationships between supporters and missionaries. Missionary blogs, alongside the “Hand in Hand Blog Digest,” have augmented new print media in sharing important work of ELCA missionaries.

In addition to this programmatic endeavor, the Missionary Sponsorship and Global Appeals team has made intentional efforts to identify and nurture individual supporters of ELCA missionaries. These efforts combined have enabled supporters to provide approximately \$3.7 million in ELCA Missionary Sponsorship alongside an additional \$2.5 million in other global gifts.

Vision for Mission

The Vision for Mission appeal provides an opportunity for members who desire to give an extra gift for the wider ministries of the ELCA. The Vision for Mission appeal achieved record results in 2010. In 2011, we will strive to build on this support and find new ways to highlight the ministries made possible through Vision for Mission.

Major Directions for 2011–2013

ELCA Resource Centers

For 2011, ELCA Resource Centers will continue to build online visibility while taking advantage of existing events to gather face-to-face.

In late 2011 and throughout 2012, a priority will be developing resources that assist synods and congregations to educate, motivate, and invite all ELCA members to create or update a will that includes one or more ministries of this church in their planning.

ELCA Foundation

In moving from 2011 into 2012–2013, the Foundation will continue to fulfill its mission of creating an efficient and effective

national gift planning program that cultivates and solicits legacy gifts, both outright and deferred.

The Lutheran

The Lutheran magazine remains open to new relationships in the churchwide organization through its placement in the Mission Advancement unit. Significant dollars have been allocated for promotion of *The Lutheran* to stabilize circulation. Encouragingly, 86 congregations started subscription plans with the magazine in the first few months of 2011. The mix of editorial material remains under constant review for relevance. Preview copies of a possible lifestyle magazine were tested at synod assemblies in 2011. Editors are working with other church leaders for possible publication of a “Welcome to the ELCA” issue for new and prospective members.

ELCA World Hunger Appeal

Income goals for 2011 and 2012 are \$18.5 million per year.

During the next two-year period, increased opportunities are being explored to expand strategic partners’ efforts in hunger education, focused upon transformative action based in congregations.

Mission Support

In 2011–2013, synodical-churchwide consultations on mission support and mission funding will remain a key element in providing for the financial support of God’s mission through the ELCA.

ELCA Missionary Sponsorship program

Future initiatives for the ELCA Missionary Sponsorship program include: working with a growing volunteer base to strengthen individual supporters in their stewardship of this program; identifying new and creative ways to bring the new Global Mission and Mission Advancement units together to fund missionaries and important global ministries; augmenting both individual donor strategies and direct mail efforts in supporting missionaries; and strengthening communications and the sharing of missionary stories with supporters.

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