



SOUTHERN OHIO SYNOD ASSEMBLY
JUNE 4-5, 2021

PRE-ASSEMBLY REPORTS

VIRTUAL ASSEMBLY VIA ZOOM



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

WELCOME TO SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2021

We are so happy to be together

- Don't forget to download the Vevox app on your phone or access via the Vevox website. You will need Vevox in order to vote.
- Let's go into assembly with grace, humor, and patience.
- See you online!

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Southern Ohio Reports

Report of the Synod Council Vice President Submitted by Marjorie Ellis

Brothers & sisters in Christ, we would like to thank you for allowing us to serve in Christ's mission for our church. You are all members of multiple communities –

- The community of your family;
- The community of your congregation;
- The community of your Synod, all 184 established and 4 developing congregations with 57,429 members, 347 pastors and 26 deacons;
- The community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, all 65 Synods, 8,900 congregations, 3.3 million members and 17,000 rostered leaders; and,
- The community of the Lutheran World Federation with 148 member churches.

We all work together toward two common goals, living our lives in fellowship and bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to all. We live by example, following the teachings of Jesus and helping those in need to make the world a better place. As council members, we would like to thank all of you for your dedication and service to the Lord's work.

2020 was a tough year for most of us. We all made sacrifices to keep ourselves and others safe. Our patience and hard work have been worth the wait. 2021 brings new hope for the future. Coronavirus cases are decreasing in Ohio, schools are open and people are returning to work. Our congregations are in various stages of opening and we can see the light at the end of the tunnel as life begins to return to normal.

The business of the Synod council continues through Zoom meetings. Your Synod council continues to perform our regular duties as the interim legislative authority of the Synod. We look forward to our first virtual Synod Assembly and pray for the time we can meet in person again. We thank God for the Synod staff during these trying times. They remain available to congregations for support and guidance through Zoom meetings or in person as County Alert Levels permit.

We appreciate your continued support of your congregation, the Southern Ohio Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We thank God every day for his many blessings and welcome you to join us as we strive to be ***"stronger and better together, joining Jesus in the restoration of the world"***.

2020 - 2021 SOUTHERN OHIO SYNOD COUNCIL

Pr. Matthew Byrd
Pr. Mark Combs
Bp. Suzanne Darcy Dillahunt
Dave Drumm
Marjorie Ellis
Holly Fischer
Steve Goff
Jeni Gray
Roy Hart
Pr. Steve Kimm
Pr. Laura Leach-Shreffler
Immanuel Lyatuu
Abbie McCandlish
Kevin Pyle
Michelle Riesbeck
Laura Schmidt
Steven Schnittke
Cindy Schrader
Pr. Cheryl Siegenthaler
Kathie Skamfer
Morgan Walker
Doug Ware
Pr. Kenneth Witt
Pr. Ralph Wolfe
Susan Wyckoff

Synod Secretary Statistical Report
June 2019-June 2021
Submitted by Holly Fischer

New/Transfer to Synod

Rev. Gary Greiger
Rev. Steve Edmiston
Rev. William Funk
Rev. Julianne Smeck
Rev. Alan Swartz
Rev. David Eidson
Rev. Lynn Nakamura
Rev. John Hitzeroth
Rev. Benjamin Prill
Rev. David Sanders
Rev. Rachel Patterson
Rev. G. Renee Ahern
Rev. Robert Bresemann
Rev. Corey Wagonfeild
Rev. Richard Freudenberger
Rev. Alvin McCay
Rev. Dan Hille
Rev. Ali Rode (United Methodist)
Rev. Thomas Pairan
Rev. Anne Pairan
Rev. David Kamphuis
Rev. Chad Huebner
Rev. Scott Nellis
Rev. Joel Ritcher
Rev. Rita Bair
Rev. Robert Ohrstedt
Rev. Ann Marie Winters
Rev. Nancy DeStefano
Rev. Joan Armstrong
Rev. Warren Huestis (Episcopal)
Rev. Steve Rice

Deaths

Rev. John Pollock
Rev. William Rush
Rev. Dr. Ralph Doermann
Rev. Isabelle Steele
Rev. Milo Strozensky
Rev. Richard Walston
Rev. Carol Hertler
Rev. Theodore Menter
Rev. Daryl Adams
Rev. Harold "Hap" Hasenauer
Rev. Allen Dietz

New Congregations

Trinity Lutheran Church, Lancaster, Ohio

New Synod Authorized Worshipping Community

Tikkun Farm (Synod Authorized Worship Community)

Consolidated Congregations

Trinity, Englewood merged with North Riverdale, Dayton (Jan. 2020)
Good Shepherd, Washington Court House merged with St. Andrew Episcopal joining as
All Saints Church – A Lutheran-Episcopal Community (July 7, 2019)

Closed Congregations

St. Paul, Pleasant City, OH
St. Mark, Fairborn, OH
First, Portsmouth, OH
Shiloh, Lewisburg, OH

Disaffiliated Congregations

Trinity, Lewisburg



Southern Ohio Synod 2021 Assembly *Thrive!* Campaign Manager Report

Background

“Stronger and Better Together: Joining Jesus in the Restoration of the World.” This is the vision of the Southern Ohio Synod adopted at the 2016 Assembly. It envisions congregations and leaders of our synod being provided new training and programs designed to help them more effectively share the good news of Jesus.

The new vision evoked energy and direction, and much was accomplished because of it. Yet, it became clear that achieving many of the vision’s goals could only be accomplished with additional funding. Consequently, in 2018, Bishop Dillahunt initiated a study led by ten synod pastors, known as the Pastors Advisory Cabinet (PAC), and conducted in partnership with Pastor Mike Ward of GSB Fundraising. Their year long, grass roots effort, which garnered input from hundreds of lay and rostered leaders of the synod, ultimately led to the *Thrive!* Mission Campaign.

Thrive! is a 3-year campaign aiming to raise a Base Goal of \$1,200,000 up to a Challenge Goal of \$2,000,000 or more, allowing us to work on vital initiatives we could not otherwise pursue. Every synod congregation is invited to offer its members an opportunity to donate and help achieve the five goals that grew out of the PAC study. Donations to *Thrive!* are above and beyond regular mission support and accounted for separately.

“The Holy Spirit continues to guide us through things we had never accomplished before! I have grown so much in my faith journey...”

Patti Eaton
Thrive! Campaign Leader
Zion, Hamilton

Here is a review of the five main goals of the campaign, including examples of initiatives within each, several of which, indicated by an asterisk (*), are already underway.

Goal 1: Equipping Lay Leaders

- Training of congregation councils*
- Stewardship for All Seasons programs*

Goal 2: Raising Up Leaders for Smaller Congregations

- TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Leaders)
- SAM (Synod Authorized Ministers)*

Goal 3: Strengthening Rostered Leaders

- Coaches for pastors and deacons*
- Seminarian grants
- Debt reduction grants for first call rostered leaders
- Expanded convocations*

Goal 4: Launching New Congregations

- Partner with larger congregations to launch satellite congregations
- Training in launching "Fresh Expressions" style congregations

Goal 5: Enhancing Worship Practice

- Hire part-time Worship Coordinator*
- Establish mentoring networks for congregations*
- Provide stipends for up to 5 resource musicians

A full color campaign brochure with further details is available [here](#).

Campaign Launch

Three congregations graciously offered to be "Early Adopters" that would run campaigns prior to the official launch of the campaign, giving us the opportunity to test the process and gain helpful experience. Those congregation are:

- St. Luke's, Marietta
- The Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Cincinnati
- Emmanuel, Germantown

The dedication of leaders and the generosity of church members in these early adopter congregations resulted in an amazing, combined commitment of over \$54,000, setting the stage for the rest of the campaign.

Fifty-two other congregations were trained in how to run Thrive campaigns during the fall and early winter of 2019 in preparation for the official campaign launch on January 1, 2020.

Campaigns were run early in 2020 by:

- St. Jacob's, Anna
- Trinity, Brookville
- Lutheran Church of Our Savior, Dayton

Their excellent planning and leadership resulted in an awesome \$147,000 of commitments! Clearly, people in our congregations were excited about what they were already experiencing through *Thrive!* initiatives and potential for the future.

Pandemic Pause

Eleven other congregations began their campaigns early in 2020. Many of the other 52 trained congregations were preparing to start when, in mid-March of 2020, COVID-19 brought about a shutdown of all gatherings in Ohio. We immediately put *Thrive!* on hold so rostered leaders and congregations could focus on dealing with the pandemic and caring for their people.

The uncertainties of the pandemic put a great strain on our congregations. Yet thanks to the generosity of those first six congregations mentioned above, plus special early gifts from other churches and numerous individuals, *Thrive!* received over \$300,000 by April of 2020. That money allowed us to offer support to numerous people, helping them during uncertain times, as well as proceed with several of the *Thrive!* initiatives. For example:

- 20 congregations enrolled in Stewardship for All Seasons
- Over 150 leaders received Effective Congregation Council training
- Over 150 people took part in Building Generosity in Challenging Times workshops
- More than 10 rostered leaders in the Coaching program

Thinking "Outside the Box"

The lockdown quickly made clear every congregation needed to embrace some form of digital ministry to remain connected with its members and community. Online worship became the "new normal" for most churches and it did not take long to realize that the "Digital Church" would not be going away even after the pandemic. Few congregations, however, had the material or human resources necessary to deal with the challenges of the digital world. Fortunately, *Thrive!* provided guidance and support as part of Goal 5: Enhancing Worship Practice.

Bishop Dillahunt called together the Outside the Box Team (OTB) consisting of several lay and rostered leaders with technical skills and experience and who are enthusiastic about helping congregations grow their digital presence. By late 2020, the OTB Team began a new program for mentoring congregations in doing online worship. To date, twenty-two congregations have received mentoring, and more are on the way. Additionally, money from the ELCA allowed us to award needs-based grants up to \$500 to many of the mentored congregations, aiding them in achieving their digital strategies.

"We left the church last night feeling excited and hopeful that we will now be able to reach more people in our community and enlarge our digital footprint."

Pastor Karen Torrez,
Galilee, Russells Point

This is one more example of how our synod is positively impacting our congregations and their leaders through *Thrive!*

Thrive! Renewed

By November 2020, many congregations had become rather adept at doing online church and some were even returning to in-person services. It seemed time, therefore, to get *Thrive!* running once again. We wanted to make it easier for congregations that had been forced to stop their campaigns mid-stream due to COVID-19 to get started once again. So, we created "*Thrive! Renewed.*" Its 3-week format allows those congregations to pick up about where they left off before the pandemic rather than start from scratch. New digital resources were also created for use in online worship. Synod congregations were then once again invited to participate in *Thrive!*

Four congregations accepted the invitation and completed very successful campaigns in either December 2020 or April 2021:

- Zion, Hamilton
- First, Bellefontaine
- St. Paul, Reading
- Trinity, Marysville

Their combined commitments so far come to a whopping \$73,855, with more anticipated as the campaigns held in April complete their follow-up process!

Thank You!

In addition to members of the gracious congregations mentioned above, we thank the following for making generous special gifts to *Thrive!* outside of campaigns that added so much to our ability to move forward on *Thrive!* initiatives:

- Over 60 individuals, both lay and rostered
- Faith, Mount Vernon
- First, Cincinnati
- First, Xenia
- Holy Trinity, New Lexington
- Lancaster Lutherans Together
- Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Cincinnati
- Lutheran Men in Mission
- Peace, Beavercreek
- Prince of Peace, Loveland
- SOS Synod Council
- St. John, Vandalia
- St. Paul, Lancaster WELCA
- Trinity, Marysville
- Women of the ELCA
- Zion, Dayton

Forward Looking Excitement

The response to *Thrive!* and the initiatives it has sponsored has been nothing short of exciting! Congregations are experiencing the benefits as they take part in programs to help them navigate through the pandemic, improve their leadership capabilities, or grow their ministries through better stewardship and visioning.

Total commitments to *Thrive!* from all sources now comes to over \$650,000 – over half of the Base Goal! More than \$443,000 of that amount has already been received, giving us the ability to move ahead on even more initiatives. Considering the results so far, reaching the Base Goal, if not the Challenge Goal, seems within our grasp.

Congregations doing *Thrive!* campaigns find the experience transformative. Working together toward a goal beyond one's self-interest often has that result, especially when the goal is about growing the kingdom of God. I expect you and your congregation would find similar results.

Our goal is to complete *Thrive!* by May 31, 2022. Any congregation that has not yet completed a campaign is invited and encouraged to do so this year or early in 2022.

Running a campaign is rather simple process. All it involves is sharing information about *Thrive!* and then giving everyone in your congregation an opportunity to say yes or no. Training and all the resources you need for a successful campaign will be provided.

Contact me! I will help you run a campaign and make our synod's vision become reality.

Respectfully,

Pastor Larry Donner
Thrive! Campaign Manager
Thrive@SouthernOhioSynod.org
513-314-0287

We are called.



We are called to act with justice
We are called to love tenderly
We are called to serve one another
To walk humbly with God

"We are called" David Hass, ELW 720



Called to Cultivate.

In the Southern Ohio Synod we aim to cultivate Faith Communities for a changing culture, primarily for people who are not yet members of any church, either because they have never had any contact with a church or because they left the church long ago. We are convinced that such communities are most effective at reaching and including these new people when they are birthed through intentional practices of listening, service, mission to the communities where they are planted, and making disciples.

Our Vision.

We believe that the best worshipping communities are not powered by programs or models, but rather draw their strength from a strong community spirit drawn from shared contextual experience and common values among members as they align themselves with—and are aligned by—the Holy Spirit.

Why Now?

Only 48% of Americans describe themselves as a “member” of a church. 21% of Americans say they do not identify with any religion. 31% of millennials and 33% of Generation Z say they don’t affiliate with any religion. (1) 23% of Americans that don’t attend church say it’s because “They haven’t found a faith community they like.”

Of those who describe themselves as members, but don’t attend a church regularly 37% say it’s because they choose to practice their faith in “other ways”. Of those who don’t attend church regularly 7 in 10 still identify with a particular tradition, including 6 in 10 who say they are Christian. 54% of people that don’t attend church regularly say it’s because they don’t feel welcome. (2)

42% of those attending new faith communities have never attended church before or hadn’t in many years. (3)

(1) 2020 Gallup Poll, US Church Membership Falls Below Majority for First Time. (2) PEW Research Poll, Why Americans Go (and Don’t Go) to Religious Services (3) Lifeway Research: New Churches Outpace Dying Ones

Contact:

Rev. Katie Kerrigan
Director of Evangelical Mission
kkerrigan@southernohiosynod.org



What is an Emerging Lutheran Community (ELC)?

Emerging: Distinct and different from existing churches and institutions, Emerging Lutheran Communities (ELC) have entrepreneurial leadership, a pioneering and creative spirit and seek to bring into being a ministry that was not there before.

Lutheran: Grounded in faith, doctrine, and disciplines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ELCs are clearly and overtly Christian in character, approach, and identity. They can be small ministries or regional mission development areas or anything in between! While not all will have a worshipping aspect, ELCs operate out of and give opportunities to know Jesus’ love.

Community: Designed to be a place of encouragement, care, and accountability, ELCs commit themselves to love one another in relationships of mutual care and accountability. Patterned after the life and teachings of Jesus, ELCs seek to help people grow in faith and life.



Cultivate is supported by your contributions to the Thrive campaign!
Join us as - together - we answer this call.



SOUTHERN OHIO SYNOD CANDIDACY COMMITTEE

The Southern Ohio Synod Candidacy Committee had a very busy 2020. Our last in-person meeting was in February. Since then, we have met approximately every month (sometimes more, sometimes less) on ZOOM. Although it would be preferable for us to be able to see our candidates in person, this has worked well.

The ELCA candidacy process is meant to be a welcoming and joyful time for people discerning how to serve through the church. It is a formalized – yet personally and relationally focused – journey that assists people in discernment for church leadership, whether they ultimately become rostered or serve in other lay roles within the church. Discernment, which is a lifelong process, continually assesses how God may be calling a person into a unique ministry. It is a means to determine who might serve as a rostered minister in a Word and Sacrament or Word and Service ministry, as well as who might serve in a variety of lay leadership roles in the church or the world. A mission-oriented leader can be defined as someone who: 1) is rooted in the Gospel; 2) is knowledgeable, passionate, and able to articulate the faith and the confessional teachings of the ELCA; and 3) through the church, participates in God's mission of love, redemption, justice, and reconciliation. Through formation in the candidacy process, candidates will develop an understanding of four basic principles: 1) We are church; 2) We are Lutheran; 3) We are church together; and 4) We are church for the sake of the world. (ELCA Candidacy Manual, pp. 8-9)

We have three main steps in Candidacy: Entrance, Endorsement, and Approval. A candidate meets with a panel at each of these three steps, and the panel renders its recommendation to the full committee, which then votes on the recommendation. Since the last report to the assembly, 7 candidates have received and accepted calls (1 TEEM, 6 Word and Sacrament); 3 candidates have been approved and are awaiting call (2 Word and Sacrament and 1 Word and Service); 3 candidates are awaiting approved (3 Word and Sacrament); 5 candidates have been endorsed (1 TEEM, 4 Word and Sacrament); 5 candidates are awaiting endorsement (4 Word and Sacrament, 1 Word and Service); and 3 Word and Sacrament candidates are on hold. We have 26 candidates total with 7 applicants and 12 inquirers. We look forward to holding several entrance panels over the summer.

Candidacy also is a partnership between candidate, congregation, synod, committee, and the ELCA. Our current committee consists of: Bishop Suzanne Darcy Dillahunt; The Rev. C. Lynn Nakamura, Director of Candidacy and Leadership Development; The Rev. Cherlyne Beck, Regional Candidacy Coordinator; The Rev. Kevin Dudley, Seminary Faculty Representative; and Southern Ohio Synod members Josselyn Bennett (secretary), Matthew Hazzard, The Rev. Lorne Hlad, The Rev. Carey Hovland, The Rev. Chad Huebner, The Rev. Laura Leach-Shreffler (chair), the Rev. Kristin Santiago, and Linda Schnittke. In the past year, two members, Tom Haugsby and The Rev. Stephen Kimm, departed the committee. We give thanks to both for their dedication and faithfulness to the work of the church, and particularly for Pastor Kimm's 25+ years of service in candidacy, in the Multisynodical Ohio Candidacy Committee and the Northeastern Ohio Synod Candidacy Committee as well as the Southern Ohio Candidacy Committee. Please continue to keep this committee and its candidates in prayer.

In Christ,
The Rev. Laura Leach-Shreffler, Chair

Southern Ohio Synod Assembly

Lutheran Men in Mission

June 4-5, 2021 Report

We are the Lutheran Men in Mission of the Southern Ohio Synod and our vision for the synod is to see that all congregations have a men's ministry.

We will be an outlet for information, support and leadership and intend to assist you in developing an effective men's ministry.

This is done by building relationships, holding events, service projects and fall retreats. We will supply a Master Builders Bible to each new men's ministry which includes the Men's Ministry Leadership Guide.

In our new virtual world, we continue to reach out through Constant Contact messages, our quarterly Foundation Newsletter, weekly book studies, our weekly Bible study and a special prayer time each Wednesday. We are looking forward to expanding our virtual Bold Gathering. We are telling to story of Jesus's love and caring for our brothers and sisters across the entire United States.

We invite all of you to join us in these ministries. Each of us can reflect on how we continue to be blessed and give thanks to God, because in this time, when we can't meet in person. He guides us in different ways to be fruitful in ministry for others.

Your brother in Christ,

David Drumm, President, Lutheran men in Mission

dadrumm@yahoo.com

Report to Southern Ohio Synod Assembly
June 4th & 5th, 2021



"As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world."

Despite quarantine measures which limited our ability to meet in-person, the Women of the ELCA remained steadfast in their mission. Many units continued meeting virtually, carrying out their ministry to their communities. Women attended Bible studies via zoom or other methods. Thankoffering services were held in congregations either in-person or virtually. Thankofferings provide needed support for the work of our organization nationally. Women continued their quilt ministries working in their homes and, as in past years, the in-gathering locations took place collecting the quilts and kits much to the appreciation of Lutheran World Relief.

The Eleventh Triennial Convention, which was postponed from July 2020 is currently scheduled for August 3-5, 2021, to be held virtually (or digitally) on those same dates. During this virtual convention the business of WELCA will take place; electing executive board members, making needed changes to the Constitution and setting forth initiatives for the next triennium. It is not how we would like to "meet" however, we will look forward to when we can once again meet face-to-face in fellowship.

The Twelfth Triennial Convention and Gathering will now take place in September 2023 in Phoenix, Arizona.

The Women of the ELCA nationally held a letter-writing campaign with women from across the nation. It was a way, during this time of seclusion and isolation, that women connected with one another, sharing comfort and support. It proved to be so popular that it was extended for a few more months. Something as simple as a hand-written note can be a lifeline in these trying times.

The national WELCA organization held a virtual Leadership Conference in February, inviting Synodical Presidents and other members of each synodical board to participate. Four women from SOS "attended" this virtual conference participating in Bible study, conversation, and hearing of the work of the national organization and how we at our synodical level can be a part of it. We learned to "Pivot, Don't Panic" by being steadfast in our Purpose, remaining in Prayer, continuing to Praise and staying rooted in our faith as we Plan.

Going forward we, as the Southern Ohio Women of the ELCA, eagerly await gathering together in our mission. Some conferences are beginning to take baby steps in organizing a gathering in future months. As our comfort level grows, we hope to hold a Biennial Convention in 2022.

RESOURCES:

Further information about the Women of the ELCA and the Southern Ohio Women of the ELCA can be found at: www.womenoftheelca.org and www.southernohiosynod.org, (hit the Collaborate button then a tab appears SOS Women).

Our newsletter, The Breeze, can be accessed via SOS Women.

We also have two facebook pages where much information is shared: Southern Ohio Synod Women of the ELCA and Women of the ELCA

Gather, the magazine of Women of the ELCA, offers a mix of articles, theological reflections, devotions and stories of comfort and challenge that help readers grow in faith and engage in ministry and action.

Café, an on-line magazine, shares stories written by bold young women who write about faith, relationships, advocacy and more. Readers and writers of *Café* include pastors, seminary and college students, and other young adult women who use *Café* as a Bible study resource individually or with a group.

Daily Grace is an on-the-go companion for your journey, offering a faith reflection every day. Encounter God's extravagant, boundless and often surprising grace by signing up for a daily email message.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Wyckoff, President
Women of the ELCA of the Southern Ohio Synod

Stewardship Team Report 2021

"To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

1 Corinthians 12:7

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Last March, just as our stewardship team met to decide on the theme of "common good" for the stewardship campaign, the governor extended spring break for three weeks. Even then, we had no idea how drastically our lives would be rearranged. We could not know the ways that verse would take on new meaning in the months ahead.

Our Synod focused on the common good, reimagining how we worship and serve and stay in community. We adapted and created. We held each other's burdens and celebrated where we could find joy. We glorified God, together.

So thank you, thank you, thank you, for the many ways you used your gifts for the common good this past year. Thank you for your continued mission support. Your mission support dollars allowed the Bishop's office to provide critical training and resources to our congregations as we learned how to be the Church during a pandemic, including a meeting about stewardship in a crisis. Your mission dollars helped fund ministries locally and globally, to make sure that everyone hears to Good News of Jesus Christ. Your support dollars changed lives. God truly does make us stronger and better together.

As the Stewardship Team looks forward to what 2021 and beyond will hold, we recognize that God is making everything new in a very literal way right now. We hold tight to God's promises for new life and hope in the midst of so much change. In the coming months, we will lift up just a few of the many stories about how God's bring new life in our Synod.

In Christ,

The Southern Ohio Synod Stewardship Team

Rev. Mick Althaus
Ms. Josselyn Bennett
Rev. Katie Kerrigan, DEM
Mr. Nick Kiser

Rev. Aaron Layne
Rev. Michelle Terry, Chair
Rev. Corey Wagonfield
Mr. Doug Ward

**Southern Ohio Synod
Hunger Task Force Report
2021**

The Southern Ohio Synod Hunger Task Force is inspired by the ways in which Synod congregations have continued to serve their communities over this last year when so many were adversely impacted by the pandemic and accompanying economic dislocation.

We are also grateful for the ways in which ELCA has worked to support congregational feeding ministries during this time, particularly with the early roll-out of **Daily Bread Hunger Grants**, a funding program especially for ELCA congregations which also helped them to learn how to leverage the power of social media in fundraising, giving those ministries a new arrow for their fund-raising quivers. The Task Force has made itself available to congregations to help them learn how to succeed in this new fund-raising forum, but very few participating congregations needed help. **We are delighted to announce that, since our last report in May 2021, seven more congregations have blessed their communities with the aid of these grants: African International Lutheran Mission; First English Lutheran Church, Columbus; Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Kettering; Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, New Lexington; Intercessor Lutheran Mission, Columbus; Peace Lutheran Church, Beaver creek; and Resurrection Lutheran Church, Lebanon.** The application window for Spring 2021 Daily Bread Grants has just closed. The Task Force encourages congregations who have not yet received these awards to watch for an announcement for 2021 Fall grants.

The Southern Ohio Synod Hunger Task Force continues to support the ELCA World Hunger Domestic Grant Program on this mission territory, meeting with each applicant ministry in order to more thoughtfully serve as the first reviewing committee of the grant review process. The Task Force strives to remain in continuing relationship with each applicant ministry throughout the grant process. **We are delighted to announce that Zion Lutheran Church, Hamilton has been awarded a Domestic Hunger Grants for 2021-23.**

If you are passionate about hunger ministries, the Task Force invites you to join us! Simply reach out to Pastor Katie Kerrigan, our Synod Staff liaison, to be added to the Task Force mailing list, and join us at any meeting.

The Southern Ohio Synod Hunger Task Force

Deacon Nick Bates
Pastor Glen Bengson
Brad Draper
Dave Drumm
Adele Hanson
Pastor Joel Richter
Michelle Riesbeck
Pastor Katie Kerrigan, Synod Staff Liaison

ELCA Reports



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

We’ve learned over the past year how resilient we are as church and as people of God. It’s been a time of pain, loss, injustice and uncertainty. It has also been a time of learning, listening and trying new things — stepping out of our comfort zones and into a more digital world. This church persevered in so many ways.

The churchwide organization has been working alongside all expressions and ministries of the ELCA and our partners to provide resources, share stories, engage members and keep our programs alive as we’ve shifted our focus to responding to the pandemic.

For the generosity of this church through its COVID-19 Response Fund, for the remarkable ways in which we connected to one another, and for the innovative approaches so many of you took to engaging your communities in the gospel, I want to say thank you. Thank you for your ingenuity, and for knowing that God has a plan for us and it’s one filled with hope.

As we look to the future, I invite you to dream with me for a moment.

Imagine more people knowing Jesus. Imagine creating communities of love and justice online and in real life. Imagine our online communities and pews filled with new, young and diverse members. Imagine spending more of your time collaborating with others to have a bigger impact in our neighborhoods and in the world.

That is the future I want to build with you. We’ve all experienced God’s ability to see us through challenging times and through new seasons of life. This is an invitation to be part of something that God is doing with and through us. There’s never been a better moment to share the way of Jesus and introduce more people to community, justice and love.

In peace,

Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

“Porque yo sé muy bien los planes que tengo para ustedes —afirma el Señor—, planes de bienestar y no de calamidad, a fin de darles un futuro y una esperanza” (Jeremías 29:11).

En el último año hemos aprendido lo resistentes que somos como iglesia y como pueblo de Dios. Ha sido un tiempo de dolor, pérdida, injusticia e incertidumbre. También ha sido un tiempo para aprender, escuchar y probar cosas nuevas que nos hizo salir de nuestras zonas de comodidad y hacia un mundo más digital. Esta iglesia perseveró de tantas maneras.

La organización nacional ha estado trabajando junto a todas las expresiones y ministerios de la ELCA y nuestros socios para proporcionar recursos, compartir historias, involucrar a los miembros y mantener vivos nuestros programas a medida que hemos ido cambiando nuestra manera de responder a la pandemia.

Quiero dar gracias por la generosidad de esta iglesia a través de su Fondo de Respuesta al COVID-19, por las extraordinarias maneras de conectarnos unos con otros, y por los métodos innovadores que muchos de ustedes utilizaron para que sus comunidades pudieran participar en el Evangelio. Gracias por su ingenio, y por saber que Dios tiene un plan para nosotros, y que es un plan lleno de esperanza.

Mientras miramos hacia el futuro, los invito a soñar conmigo por un momento.

Imaginen que más personas conocen a Jesús. Imaginen que creamos comunidades de amor y justicia a través del internet y en la vida real. Imaginen que nuestras comunidades en línea y las bancas de la iglesia están llenas de miembros nuevos, jóvenes y diversos. Imaginen que pasamos más tiempo colaborando con otros para causar un mayor impacto en nuestros vecindarios y en el mundo.

Ese es el futuro que quiero construir con ustedes. Todos hemos experimentado la capacidad de Dios para guiarnos a través de tiempos difíciles y a través de nuevas estaciones de la vida. Esta es una invitación a ser parte de algo que Dios está haciendo con nosotros y a través de nosotros. Nunca ha habido un mejor momento para compartir el camino de Jesús e introducir a más personas a la comunidad, la justicia y el amor.

En paz,

Elizabeth A. Eaton
Obispa Presidente



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

Churchwide Organization 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

COVID-19 RESPONSE IN THE UNITED STATES



Teams from across the organization worked together to launch the COVID-19 Response Fund, which supports the ministries of this church that are most in need and best positioned to make an impact. To date, the fund has received more than \$1.8 million from generous ELCA members, which has been granted to 63 synods and has provided additional support for ELCA World Hunger's Daily Bread Grants.

- 452 vulnerable congregations considered best strategically positioned to respond in particular ministry contexts received grants.
- Priorities include pastors' salaries, children/youth ministry, virtual-technological skills and concern over the future of the local church.

As congregational feeding ministries faced increased and urgent need in their communities due to COVID-19 and its economic fallout, ELCA World Hunger responded with the launch of two emergency rounds of Daily Bread Matching Grants this past spring and fall. **Three hundred sixty grants equipped congregations across 60 synods and 41 states**, plus Puerto Rico and Washington, to fundraise online toward their ministries. Through these efforts, participating congregations **raised**

more than \$355,000 to add to the \$180,000 of support through Daily Bread Matching Grants, nearly tripling the impact of the grants and resulting in more than \$535,000 going directly toward local, congregation-led initiatives addressing urgent needs brought on by the pandemic. ELCA World Hunger also responded by releasing new and adapted resources, including [guides for finding community assistance resources by state](#) and an at-home adaptation for the “[On Earth As in Heaven](#)” vacation Bible school curriculum. Constituents connected with [ELCA Advocacy Alerts](#) for opportunities to raise their voices in support of COVID-19 relief legislation, aiming to ensure that efforts focus on the people and communities hit hardest by the crisis. The [ELCA World Hunger blog](#) also provides opportunities to learn about and act on the relationship between the pandemic and hunger in communities.

Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) identifies those who have been affected by disaster as “disaster survivors.” With COVID-19, we are all survivors in some way. Domestically, LDR responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by **supporting 32 synods and three Lutheran social service agencies in 40 states with grants totaling over \$900,000**. The grants supported ministries in their efforts to reach out and serve their communities with food, daily necessities and other forms of assistance.



Churchwide Organization – Technology

- IT was able to transition staff to work from home over a single weekend at start of pandemic with minimal technical issues
- Launched COVID-19 chatbot on elca.org to assist with pandemic response information and prayer requests
- Digitized expense reporting in new Workday System launched during COVID-19
- Improved collaboration using Microsoft Teams during pandemic

GLOBAL PANDEMIC RESPONSE

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered worldwide turmoil and caused major setbacks in progress around food security, nutrition, health, education, gender justice and livelihood, especially in the most affected communities. LDR made a bold commitment internationally to support companion churches and ecumenical partners not only in providing immediate relief but also in continuing support for recovery, disaster preparedness, trauma counseling, implementing innovative programs to adapt to what could be the new normal, and focusing on populations pushed into vulnerable situations such as those affected by gender-based violence, people with disabilities, older adults, migrants and refugees. In 2020, LDR awarded over **\$4.79 million in 125 grants to 49 countries; 84 of the grants (\$2.45 million)** were in response to COVID-19, reaching nearly **800,000 people** around the world.

For example, we provided assistance to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania's Education for the Deaf schools in Mwanza where hearing impaired students learned through sign language, images and videos about COVID-19 in order to prevent the spread of the virus. In Lebanon, we contributed toward relief efforts led by the Contact and Resource Center for people with disabilities who are unable to leave home due to the government lockdown. Cash vouchers were provided to help pay for utilities, phone bills and drinking water. For migrants at the border of Mexico and the United States, we provided assistance to Casa del Migrante de Saltillo that provided food, hygiene kits and temporary shelter for people seeking asylum in the United States. In India, people living with HIV and AIDS



Syrian women learn how to stay safe from Covid-19 and receive education materials for their children. Photo: StARS

and transgender people are highly vulnerable to COVID-19. We supported the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India in providing food and hygiene kits, in addition to information about COVID-19 prevention, to members of these communities in Chennai. In Egypt, refugees are particularly susceptible to pervasive xenophobia and being intentionally excluded from necessary services. We supported St. Andrew's Refugee Services as it increased distribution of cash assistance, switched education programs from in-person to online, offered wellness and mental health checks, and provided COVID-19 information. And in Madagascar, we contributed to the work of the Malagasy Lutheran Health Department (SALFA) in helping patients with disabilities obtain treatment and pastoral care. Pastors, volunteers and doctors were provided sanitation supplies, masks and essential medicine for the patients. In their visits, pastors report sharing from Matthew 25:40, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

In March 2020, mission personnel were asked to return to the United States, including participants in the YAGM program. By the end of 2020, it was also decided to cancel YAGM for the upcoming 2021-22 year. A travel ban was also established for staff, who have continued engagement with companion churches and organizations online.

ECUMENICAL & INTER-RELIGIOUS & THEOLOGICAL DISCERNMENT

Bilateral Dialogue with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

The ELCA and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) resumed bilateral dialogue on Wednesday, March 10. The ELCA dialogue team includes Bishop Bill Gafkjen, co-chair, Pastor Bridget Piggue (Southeastern Synod), Prof. Carl Hughes (Southwestern Texas Synod), and Prof. Kris Kvam (Central States Synod). Bishop Don Kreiss (chair, EIR Committee) and Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will serve ex-officio. For details, click [here](#).

ELCA Pastoral Guidelines for Ministry in a Multi-Religious World

Thank you to all who participated in the survey related to the development of pastoral guidelines for ministry in a multi-religious world, as part of the implementation of “A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment.” The survey was open from September 12-October 12, with over 2,600 responses collected – a remarkable response rate of 27%. The ad-hoc committee is actively working with the results. The first set of guidelines to be developed will focus on prayer services, as that was the primary area of need according to the survey.

THEOLOGICAL DISCERNMENT: JUSTICE FOR WOMEN

Quality of Call initiative

Two Justice for Women staff members are serving as director and team member on this multi-partner

initiative. The first phase focuses on responding to ways sexism affects women in calls to Word and Sacrament ministry. The strategic efforts this year are on relationships and policy.

Study Guide for *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*

About a dozen ministry sites tested the draft study guide until the end of February. The guide will help readers to engage the social statement and to act on it through group and individual activities, videos, and links to resources. It will be available in 2021.

50/40/10 ordination anniversaries

The commemoration of the anniversaries of the ordination of women

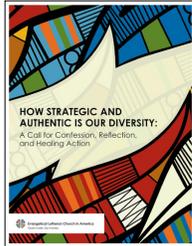
(50th and 40th) is concluding this year with a story collection featuring submissions from pastors who are women from across the ELCA. Resources from the anniversary year will remain up at [ELCA.org/50yearsofordainedwomen](https://elca.org/50yearsofordainedwomen).



Lutheran Women’s Works in Religion (LWWR)

This database is online at <https://learn.elca.org/lwvr/> and includes references to monographs, chapters, articles, and reviews; works from popular literature; sermons; Bible study guides; and more. It further connects Lutheran women in religion and serves to diversify and enrich Lutheran scholarship and teaching. Submission forms for entries are found on the website.

THEOLOGICAL DISCERNMENT: RACIAL JUSTICE



Strategic Authentic Diversity Implementation

In 2019 the ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted "[How Strategic and Authentic is our Diversity?: A Call for Confession, Reflection, and Healing Action.](#)"

Lead staff across the churchwide organization are working to implement these actions in the areas of: Theological Framing and Equipping, Healing Action, Structural Accountability, Theological Education and Leadership Development, and Partnerships with Full Communion, Ecumenical and Interreligious Partners, and Related Organizations.

Diversity Goal Reporting Tool for Synods

The churchwide organization continues to work with synods as they assist congregations in achieving those goals. The action requires annual reports to the Church Council and reports every three years to the Churchwide Assembly.

Anti-Racism and Condemning White Supremacy

The ELCA recognized June 17 as a day to commemorate the Mother Emanuel 9 and to repent of racism and white supremacy. Planning is underway for the second annual commemoration. Additional events focused on combatting white supremacy are under development.

THEOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND ENGAGEMENT

Theological Roundtable

The Theological Roundtable, a gathering of all of the official theological networks of the ELCA, met

in March, focusing on how Covid has affected our various communities and how the networks are responding. We will also have a conversation with the CWO executives about the role of theology in the Future Church redesign.

Freedom of a Christian

We are finishing the Spanish version of the Study Guide for the Freedom of a Christian, which will be available with the English one at www.elca500.org.

Combatting White Supremacy

We are conducting research on how to proceed to develop a theological Statement on Combatting White Supremacy and a process for racial healing across the ELCA.

THEOLOGICAL ETHICS

Social Statement Task Force

In November 2020, the ELCA Task Force on Church, State, and Civic Participation began a series of intensive meetings during the listening and study phase of the social statement process. Meeting topics through March have included close attention to the social message "Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy," Lutheran theology and Confessions, as well as sessions with ELCA bishops and other ELCA staff whose work is closely tied to ELCA social teaching. Members of the task force are beginning to host listening events in order to garner input from across our church while ELCA staff are developing a network of process builders who are volunteers within synods trained to build awareness, conversation, and engagement with this process. Biographies of the 18-member task force, social statement timeline, and additional information are available [here](#).

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES & RELATIONSHIPS

2020 New Starts and Mission Developers



Synod leaders started **30 new ministries in 2020** and **13 in 2021**, in diverse settings.

Unique partnership: Neighborhood Church, a new start in the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod, is training all leaders in the Milwaukee Area Synod on virtual church and partnering to train mission developer leaders across the country.

Online Congregational Vitality **training events** were held for more than **1,000 leaders**.

Children, Youth and Young Adult Ministry



ELCA Children's Ministry updated elcafaithformation.org and created resources related to ministry during the pandemic and also addressing Black Lives Matter.

Growing Young: Over **250 leaders** from across the ELCA participated in online trainings through a two-day intensive course, monthly gatherings with the ELCA Coaching Network, and the ELCA Youth Ministry Network Book Club.

ELCA Youth Ministry pivoted leadership training virtually, with the Youth Core Leadership Team meeting monthly, creating "Candletime," a weekly online gathering and resource for youth. The ELCA Youth Leadership Summit was held virtually in November, and "Passage," a small group, was created for graduating seniors. The ELCA Youth Ministry Network annual training event, the Extravaganza, had **1,750 leaders participate**, the highest number ever.

Abide: More than **1,000 young adults** across the country gathered for the first time in over 100 small groups, with content entirely created by young people. Young leaders led groups, created liturgies, held online graduation parties for each other, and formed a nimble, innovative community — significantly bolstering their spiritual and mental health.

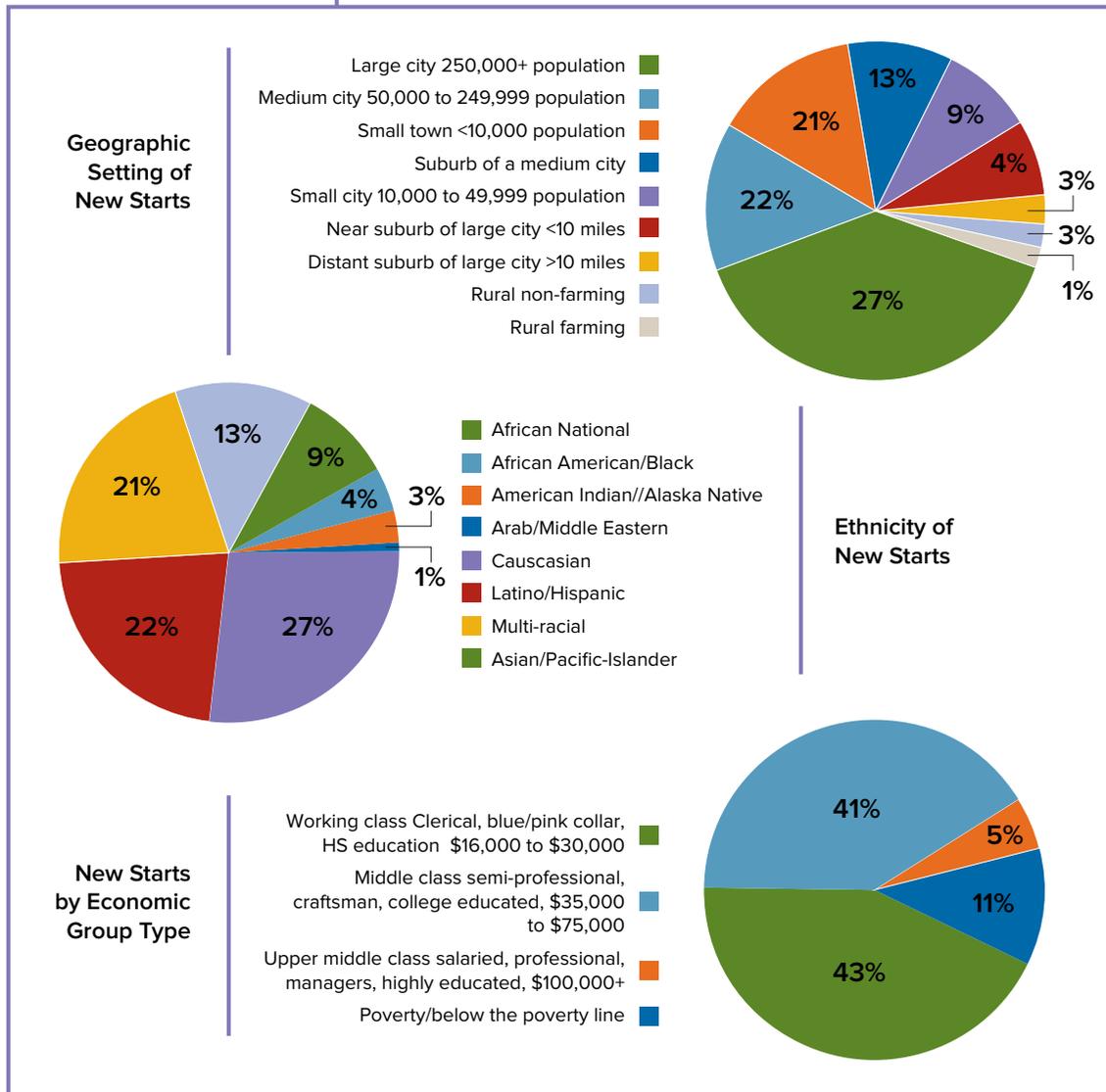
#NoPlasticsforLent 2020: This initiative on creation care and intersecting issues, **created by young people and reached more than 100,000 followers** and was featured in the New Yorker magazine.

Holy Innovations



Thanks to the Campaign for the ELCA, the ELCA Congregational Vitality Team **partnered with synods** to continue **creating 21 collaborative Holy Innovation projects** that will share their learnings across the ELCA.

For one of these, “The Grief and Transitions Project”, ten leaders from around the country came together to share strategy and resources. This website is the culmination of the Holy Innovations project and offers a resource for all synods and leaders walking with congregations through significant change. <https://elcaresources.org/help/>



Latinx L3 Initiative



The Latinx Lutheran Leadership Initiative (L3) is a project to identify, equip and accompany Latinx leadership in the ELCA. The initiative has a goal to **create a network of 300 Latinx leaders** to feed the three expressions of our church within two years. It has three focus areas: leadership, formation and development. The preliminary launching date for this initiative is Pentecost Sunday, May 23, 2021.

Lutheran Theological Center of Atlanta (LTCA)



In order to help the ELCA reach a more diverse population, this ELCA-sponsored center will identify, support and guide lay leaders and candidates for rostered and congregational ministry, with an intentional focus on African descent leaders. It will give leaders an experience in historically black seminaries at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) in Atlanta.

Digital Resources for Congregations



An additional **650 congregations signed up for services** from our preferred partners who offer digital church management and giving options.

[ELCA.org/publichealth](https://elca.org/publichealth) was created in response to the pandemic as a resource hub for congregations and members. To date, we have **nearly 80,000 page views**.

Social Media Engagement



Over the last year, ELCA social media platforms collectively saw a **20% increase** in impressions and a 30% increase in engagements from the previous year.

Twitter engagements **increased by 90%** and **Instagram** increased **by 150%**.

ELCA social media platforms have seen continued growth in audience size. **Facebook** has **140,000 followers**, **Twitter** has **26,000 followers**, and **Instagram** has **17,000 followers**.

In 2020, **ELCA social media accounts** had more than **55 million impressions**.

2020 Media Coverage

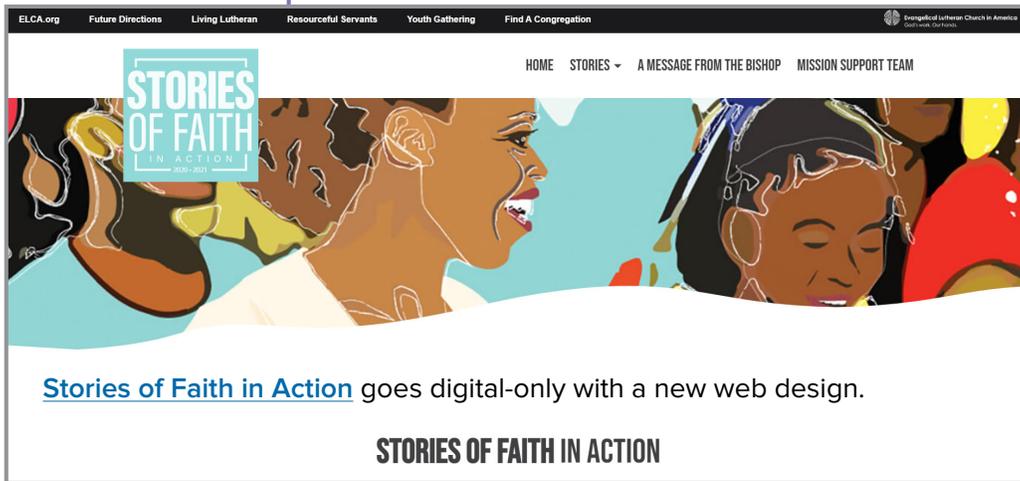


Bishop Eaton appeared on CNN to discuss navigating worship during the pandemic.

The ELCA was **mentioned in 6,570 articles**.

This is an **increase of 116%** compared to 2019 media coverage.

This media exposure resulted in **10.1 billion potential viewers** exposed to the ELCA.



Stories of Faith in Action goes digital-only with a new web design.

STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION

Living Lutheran magazine got a fresh new look to start 2021, the year it turns five years old.



CANDIDACY AND FIRST CALL

There are currently **1,852 active candidates** in the candidacy process.

Of the nearly 300 candidates entranced into candidacy in 2020, 14% self-identified as non-white and 86% as white.

There are **107 active TEEM candidates**. They have self-identified as:



254 candidates were approved and assigned so they could begin interviewing for first calls. **232** of those candidates were candidates for **Ministry of Word** and Sacrament. **22** were candidates for **Ministry of Word and Service**.

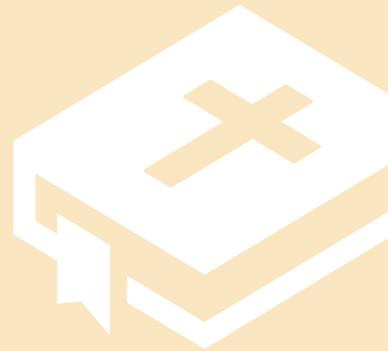
The Candidacy Team partnered with COB and other assignment partners to redesign the Assignment Process. In Fall of 2020, the COB approved the proposed First Call Process. Following that decision, a new system of assignment was strategically implemented, the Roster Manual, Candidacy Manual and First Call documents were updated and training resources were provided to synods, seminaries and candidates to provide education about the new process.

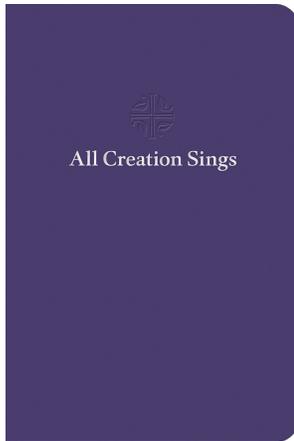
The Horizon Apprenticeship Program, which provides summer internship opportunities for young people of color or whose primary language is that other than English, quickly pivoted to offer completely online education and community building and helped congregations identify remote internship opportunities.

14 congregations and **29 apprentices were accepted** into the summer program in 2020; three of the participating congregations were new to the program.

Visions & Expectations

Visions & Expectations was repealed in 2020. Once Definitions and Guidelines is updated by Church Council, The Conference of Bishops will be asked again if a new document of any kind is needed and for what purpose. An update will be provided to the Church Council in the fall.





All Creation Sings is a new curated set of worship resources in the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* family, developed as part of the ELCA's commitment to the ongoing renewal of worship by supporting congregations' mission in these changing times. This supplement was released at the end of 2020 by Augsburg Fortress / 1517 Media after a nearly three-year process of research, development, editing, and a broad liturgical and theological review. Over 50 people from throughout the ELCA had direct involvement in the development, not including the gifts of the many contributors of prayers, hymn texts, and music.

All Creation Sings includes a fully bilingual Spanish-English setting of Holy Communion, a setting of Holy communion especially appropriate for evening, a service of word and prayer adaptable for many occasions, and a section of topical prayers, thanksgivings, and laments. The supplement also includes 200 hymns and songs, offering

a fresh and diverse selection to enliven worship and the people's song in a new day. Learn more at augsburgfortress.org/AllCreationSings.



GENEROSITY



Members of this church were incredibly generous in their support of ELCA ministries in 2020. Overall giving to fundraising priorities in 2020 finished the year at nearly 99% compared to 2019 totals. We saw an increase of nearly 25% in numbers of individual donors in 2020 (163,931 donors in 2019 vs. 188,735 donors in 2020). While some programs saw an understandable decrease in support due to programmatic disruption (Young Adults in Global Mission and International Women Leaders specifically), other programs saw increased support. Support for “Where Needed Most” saw an increase of nearly 23% compared to 2019 support (\$2.8 million in 2019 vs. \$3.4 million in 2020). ELCA World Hunger, due to an intentional focus mid-year as a feared decrease in support loomed, was able to not only keep pace but also surpass support levels seen in 2019. ELCA Fund

for Leaders also saw increased support compared to 2019 numbers, finishing the year with nearly \$3.7 million in donations to the program. The two most significant stories for 2020 have been the COVID-19 Response Fund and Mission Support. Despite fears that Mission Support would see a dramatic decrease due to congregations meeting virtually, the final numbers tell a different story. At year-end, total Mission Support hovers at 98% of the anticipated 2020 goal (a goal set prior to COVID-19 realities). Around \$41 million in Mission Support was shared with the churchwide organization to be used to support the ministries we do together as a church. This number is an incredible testament to the generosity of our members and the commitment we have to being church together. God is good, and our members are generous.

Development Events Go Virtual

Each year, we hold more than 10 donor events, including leadership tables and immersion trips, but in 2020, the pandemic caused us to pivot to create online events where donors could still interact with programs and other donors. Here are the stats from 2020:

[**7** Virtual Events and **4** Virtual Leadership Tables]

Total Event Reach:

172,787
constituents

Total Event Participation:

4,800
constituents

Total Event Generosity:

\$673,810

Giving

The ELCA had its best single day of fundraising on Giving Tuesday (Dec. 1) in 2020, raising more than

\$600,000!

ELCA INNOVATION LAB

Launched by Presiding Bishop Eaton in January 2020, the ELCA Innovation Lab is a space for the church to generate ideas, unleash creativity and create positive change in the world God so loves. In 2020, the ELCA Innovation Lab has provided innovation-related support, facilitation, and leadership of projects throughout the church and churchwide organization. Here are some highlights:

2020 ELCA Innovation Lab Goals

1. Develop the willingness and culture (i.e., purpose, values, rules of engagement) and ability (i.e., abrasion, resolution and agility) for innovation throughout the church.
2. Champion and drive innovation denomination: connected leaders who inspire and drive co-creation and make new and useful things.
3. Prove and encourage that a good idea can come from anywhere, take shape and be tested by co-creators at velocity.

2020 Engagement Snapshot



What did the Lab learn in 2020?

Sharing our stories is an important part of generating ideas and problem solving.

The Church has always been a place for storytellers. At the Lab, we have found that telling the story of a new idea or can help us explore important questions. One activity to help shape these stories is to create your own [“origin story.”](#)

We are not always sure if we are exploring the right problem or question.

The Lab is a space to explore the biggest questions the church is facing, both today and tomorrow. Often, it can be hard to know if we are asking the right questions. At the Lab we always ask questions using the [“how might we”](#) method and if the question being asked doesn't seem quite right, then an [abstraction ladder](#) can help to reframe the problem!

The ideas we support should take us closer to the future we want to see.

A good idea can come from anywhere! The Lab is a space for the church to co-create positive change in the world God so loves and is guided by the priorities of the [ELCA's Future Church priorities](#).

A new chapter.

Building on the learnings from year one, the ELCA Innovation Lab is now part of the Innovation home area of the churchwide organization. Stay tuned for more!

FUTURE CHURCH

Purpose

Activate each of us so more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love.

Vision

A world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.

Priority 1

**A Welcoming Church:
Engaging new, young
and diverse people**

"Your young ... shall see
visions, and your old ...
shall dream dreams."

Acts 2:17

Priority 2

**A Thriving Church:
Rooted in tradition and
radically relevant**

"You are the salt of the
earth; but if salt has lost
its taste, how can its
saltiness be restored? ...
You are the light of the
world."

Matthew 5:13-14

Priority 3

**A Connected,
Sustainable Church:
Raising the bar
together**

"I am the vine, you are
the branches. Those who
abide in me and I in them
bear much fruit, because
apart from me you can do
nothing."

John 15:5

Goal

Share the story of Jesus and the ELCA by engaging with one million new people as we grow the church together.



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

Partnering in faith

The Mission Investment Fund, a financial services ministry of the ELCA, provides a strong, stable, faith-based way for individuals, congregations and ministries to achieve their financial goals.

MIF provides a range of investments for individuals, congregations and ministries. We put those investments to work to fund building and renovation loans for congregations and ministries.

The result? Impact investments, with a transformative impact on our communities: Expanded worship spaces ... new space for education and youth ministry ... much-needed day care centers for working families ... industrial-grade kitchens and fellowship halls for community meals.



During the year-long pandemic, MIF provided assistance to investors who needed immediate access to their funds and to borrowers who needed flexibility with their loan payments. We collaborated with our ministry partner, the ELCA Federal Credit Union, to offer expedited loans for congregations, ministries and individuals, as well as Paycheck Protection Program loans for congregations and ministries to keep employees on the payroll and continue operations.

Our capabilities and capacity have never been stronger. At year-end 2020, MIF had 883 loans outstanding, totaling \$596.4 million. Investment obligations totaled \$543.1 million. With total assets of \$773.8 million and net assets of \$218.2 million at year-end 2020, MIF maintains a capital ratio of 28.20 percent—positioning MIF in the top tier of well-capitalized church extension funds.

Our steadfast support continues for the members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA and the many ways you care for a world in need. We are honored and humbled to walk alongside you as a trusted partner.

For more information about MIF capabilities, please visit our website, mif.elca.org.



MIF at work in the Southern Ohio Synod (as of December 31, 2020):

- 10 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of \$9,432,159
- \$6,708,913 in Mission Investment Fund investment obligations

MIF representative The Rev. Kent Peterson, Regional Manager, Tel: 276-698-7970; email: kent.peterson@elca.org



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

THE ELCA FOUNDATION

It is important to begin this report by thanking our synod bishops, congregations and partners for their incredible leadership during a year of upheaval and challenges. When everything seemed to go wrong, your ability to direct the work of the church was one of the things that was right in 2020. Through it all, this church supported the work of ministering to the world with the love of Jesus Christ. We are grateful to be church together with you.

As of Dec. 31, 2020, the Foundation has crossed a major milestone — \$1 billion in assets managed in gifts and endowments for the ministry of the greater church. This achievement reflects being the church together in ways that equip congregations, organizations and individuals to live out their vocation. This landmark accomplishment was achieved through the work of the ELCA Foundation staff regularly engaging with donors, congregations and organizations along with your trust in the ELCA Foundation to manage gifts and assets for ministry. Throughout the year, despite limited travel and in-person meetings, gift planners engaged with nearly 900 congregations, synods and ELCA-related organizations. They spent time with over 1,500 individuals working on gift plans, logged over 5,500 interactions and continued to maintain partnership relationships with over 150 ELCA-related entities, including 54 synods.

Fund A distributed over \$30 million to ministry in 2020 while also growing the underlying investment to ensure that distribution is there for years to come. Fund A has neither missed nor reduced a distribution amount once it was established – including the volatile year of 2020. We know these distributions are vital to ministry and often used to support service in local communities.

- As of Dec. 31, 2020, the value of participant accounts invested in Fund A was \$904.2 million, compared to \$817.6 million on Dec. 31, 2019. There are 1,155 investing participants in Fund A, including 938 congregations and 54 synods.
- Throughout the year, 53 new endowment accounts were opened, totaling \$7.1 million, and 14 accounts were closed, totaling \$3.0 million. Investments made to new and existing Fund A accounts totaled \$31.1 million; withdrawals totaled \$18.6 million.

In addition, gift levels remained high throughout 2020: Due to the generosity of our members and donors distributions to ministry totaled \$59 million for the year.

- The gift-planning network, including affiliates, posted solid results throughout 2020, with \$118.2 million in total gifts and endowment assets. Of that, \$78.5 million was written in future planned gifts, \$20.3 million in current gifts (including funded trusts, gift annuities and individual endowments) and \$19.4 million in new assets invested in Fund A.
- New gift plans written during the year totaled 249. In addition, gift planners stewarded over \$60.2 million in previously written plans, in some cases increasing the estimated gift to ministry.

The Foundation exists as a separately incorporated ministry, with a network of 23 regional gift planners, working in 21 partnerships, across the United States. Critical to their work and ministry funding outcomes are the Gift Administration and Financial Services (accounting and investment administration) teams. These teams are the bench strength of the deployed gift planners, providing continuous assistance to donors, beneficiaries and Fund A investors — all this despite limited access to the building due to the pandemic.

The Foundation staff continues to work with donors and beneficiaries to create individual gift plans, administer life income and endowment gifts, distribute terminated gifts and facilitate the sale of marketable assets such as land, homes, commodities and other assets.

- Regional gift planners remain available to:
 - Guide individuals in discerning how to be faithful stewards of their estates and invite them to support ministries, congregations and synods through charitable estate gifts.
 - Assist synods, congregations and related entities in investing endowment funds and other assets in the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust — Fund A, which is structured to provide distributions to support ministry today and into the future, utilizing investments that adhere to the ELCA's social purpose guidelines.
 - Advise church leaders in the development of gift acceptance policies for congregations, which often include gifts to synods.

Thank you for your continued work with the ELCA Foundation.

Patricia Hartig, J.D.
Regional Gift Planner
Region 6
patricia.hartig@elca.org
734-558-7495



ELCA Federal Credit Union
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Celebrating our fifth anniversary as a financial ministry of the ELCA

The ELCA Federal Credit Union was founded in 2016 to provide a fuller suite of financial products and services to the members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA. The Credit Union offers a rich variety of products—from savings and checking accounts and CDs ... to loans, lines of credit and credit cards. The Credit Union is the first of the ELCA's financial ministries to offer loans to individuals. Because we exist solely to serve our members, we can offer better rates and lower fees than many traditional banks, and we have demonstrated success in providing significant savings to our borrowers. Our strong online presence allows members to access their funds anytime, anywhere—as consumers expect today.

In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, as congregations and ministries closed their doors, the Credit Union responded swiftly to growing needs for financial assistance. We took the step to become certified by the Small Business Administration to provide loans through the Paycheck Protection Program, a federal program of the CARES Act. These PPP loans—continuing compensation for pastors and staff and covering other operating expenses during the pandemic—have proved to be a lifeline for congregations and ministries experiencing diminished revenue during this unprecedented time. Cooperating with our financial partner, the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA, we have already provided more than 350 PPP loans totaling almost \$14 million to congregations and ministries across the church. We continue working together to help PPP loan recipients file applications for loan forgiveness.

In 2021, we ushered in the third cohort of participants in the ELCA's Resourceful Servants program, designed to improve financial wellness and assist rostered leaders in building emergency savings funds. In this matching program, ELCA rostered leaders make ongoing deposits to their Credit Union emergency savings accounts, and our partner MIF matches those funds up to an established amount. Together, we already have served more than 400 rostered ministers who, collectively, have made emergency savings deposits of more than \$1 million.

Membership is open to every ELCA member, synod, congregation and ministry—and their employees.

elcafcu.org

Partner & Affiliate Reports



Report to 2021 Synod Assemblies

Greetings in the name of our Triune God!

For us, as for so many, 2020 will be remembered as “the year of COVID-19.” Just as Jacob wrestled with God at the river Jabbok until he received a blessing (Genesis 32:22-32), we have wrestled to identify the blessings Trinity Lutheran Seminary has received through these challenging times.

As part of Capital University, we have access to a wealth of technology-related resources that made the pivot to remote instruction much easier than it would otherwise have been. Both our teaching and our worship life have benefited from new tools and training. As part of a university with graduate programs in nursing, we have benefited from the wisdom of our nursing faculty and their connections with public health leaders in Ohio as we have adopted safety protocols, regular on-campus testing for COVID-19, and now vaccination clinics.

We have also wrestled to turn the challenges of ministry during a pandemic into blessings. The M.Div. students who graduate in May 2021 will have spent the majority of their internship under pandemic conditions. The students who go out on internship this fall will have spent the majority of their Learning in Context (field experience) placements under pandemic conditions. Instead of focusing on a lost sense of “normal,” we have named the importance of ministry lived out in particular places at particular times. Whether rostered or lay, we all experienced challenges and changes in how we do ministry and live together as church in 2020. Our students haven’t missed out on the preparation they need. They’ve had the opportunity to be prepared differently, for the realities of today and tomorrow rather than the realities of yesterday.

We are grateful for our many faithful donors, our congregational partners, and this synod! Thanks to your generosity, we finished fiscal year 2020 (our second full fiscal year as part of Capital University) with direct operating expenses “in the black.” Also, during the 2020-21 academic year, we were able to increase financial aid to the point that almost all Trinity students received full tuition scholarships.

Each time I report to you on behalf of the seminary, I ask these three things:

- Encourage potential candidates for ministry to explore Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University.
- As you are able, consider making a financial contribution to support the work of the seminary.
- Keep us in your prayers!

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. (Philippians 1:3-5)

In Christ,

The Rev. Kathryn A. Kleinhans, Ph.D.
Dean of the Seminary

Forming Leaders for Christ’s Church at Work in the World

Supporting Those Who Serve Now More Than Ever

PORTICO®
Benefit Services | A Ministry of the ELCA

Portico Benefit Services is a holistic benefits ministry serving those who serve — from rostered ministers and their families to staff at social ministry organizations. We strive to help our members grow their overall well-being.

We could not have predicted this pandemic. But the virtual benefits we've introduced before and after its arrival, the benefit adjustments we've made since, our successful navigation of volatile financial markets, and the consistency of our customer service have made a powerful difference.

During this pandemic, ELCA benefits are helping to lower stress levels, create safer access to health care, and increase financial flexibility — all to strengthen the resilience of those who serve and, by extension, the resilience of this church.



The Rev. Jeff Thiemann
President & CEO

Building Resilience in 2020

26%

More Calls to Our Financial Planners

During last year's market volatility and our introduction of target date funds.

559

Took a Penalty-Free Distribution

Thanks to quick modification of our retirement plan rules for 2020.

49

Sought Student Loan Help

Through no-cost counseling via our partner, LSS of Minnesota Financial Counseling.

3,230

Medical Visits Via Text

Through 98point6, our new virtual 24/7 primary health care service — with \$0 copay.

98%

Satisfaction With New Mental Health Option

Our self-directed online program, Learn to Live.

10%

Of Members Streamed a Course

On topics like resilience, mindfulness, and beating burnout via Being, our new wellness video platform.

90%

Very Satisfied

With our Customer Care service — delivered by Portico employees working remotely.

22

Target Date Funds Introduced

To help members maintain an age-appropriate asset mix over time — and better weather volatility.

3.1%

Annuity Payment Increase

Received, in these difficult times, by ELCA annuitants during 2021.

Data as of Dec. 31, 2020; sources available upon request. Availability of and eligibility for benefits will vary.

60-302 (2/2021)



Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Greetings siblings in Christ of the Southern Ohio Synod,

It has been a difficult year for all of us. Despite restrictive policy changes and the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, LIRS has remained committed to our biblical mandate to welcome the stranger.

In the last year:

- 2,782 refugees were welcomed through LIRS affiliates in 23 states.
- 440 unaccompanied migrant children were served through our foster care services and placed in loving homes during and after legal proceedings.
- 9,500 asylum seekers received Safe Release and Post Release services at our Southern border.

Even in these darkest of days, thousands of people from across the country partnered with LIRS to express their support for migrants and refugees through our annual programs and advocacy efforts. The compassion of our neighbors gives us hope, and we are proud to report that in the last year:

- 16,000 holiday cards and 500 gifts were sent to migrant children and families in detention through our annual Hope for the Holidays program.
- More than 600 ELCA clergy and lay leaders signed a letter drafted by the ELCA and LIRS urging Congress to work collaboratively to advance comprehensive immigration legislation.
- LIRS' work was featured on national platforms like *NPR*, the *Washington Post*, *Center for American Progress*, *Religion News Service*, *The Christian Century*, and *Sojourners*.

We are especially grateful for the congregations and communities in the Southern Ohio Synod who have continued their generous and prayerful support. We could not do this work without you.

Now, that work is expanding. In the coming year, the U.S. expects to welcome 125,000 refugees to our shores. LIRS is actively looking to congregations and faith leaders to partner with us in ways big and small, including donations, volunteer work, and participation in our annual programming. **Emmaus:**

Congregational Discernment Network launches this spring for congregations to discern how they can best walk alongside refugees and migrants in their community, and **Stand Up Speak Up**, coming in Pentecost, is a new interfaith prayer vigil focused on advocacy. We encourage you to stay up to date on opportunities for individual and congregational engagement at the **LIRS Action Center**, found at www.lirsconnect.org/get_involved

With your support, we will continue to live our mission: witnessing to God's love for all people, standing with and advocating for migrants and refugees, and transforming communities through ministries of service and justice. Thank you for accompanying LIRS and our migrant and refugee siblings through 2021 and beyond. God bless you.

In peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristin Witte".

Dr. Kristin Witte
Director for Outreach



our services

social services

LSS FAITH MISSION
Homeless Shelter & Services

LSS FOOD PANTRIES
Hunger Relief & Family Services

LSS CHOICES
For Victims of Domestic Violence

LSS FAITH MISSION OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY
Homeless Shelter & Services

LSS AFFORDABLE HOUSING
Independent Senior Living

LSS 211 CENTRAL OHIO
Information & Referral Services

economic engines

LSS KENSINGTON PLACE
Senior Living Community

LSS THE GOOD SHEPHERD
Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation

LSS LUTHERAN VILLAGE
Assisted Living

LSS HOME HEALTH CARE
Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation

transitional job training



our mission

TO CREATE A BETTER WORLD BY SERVING PEOPLE IN NEED.

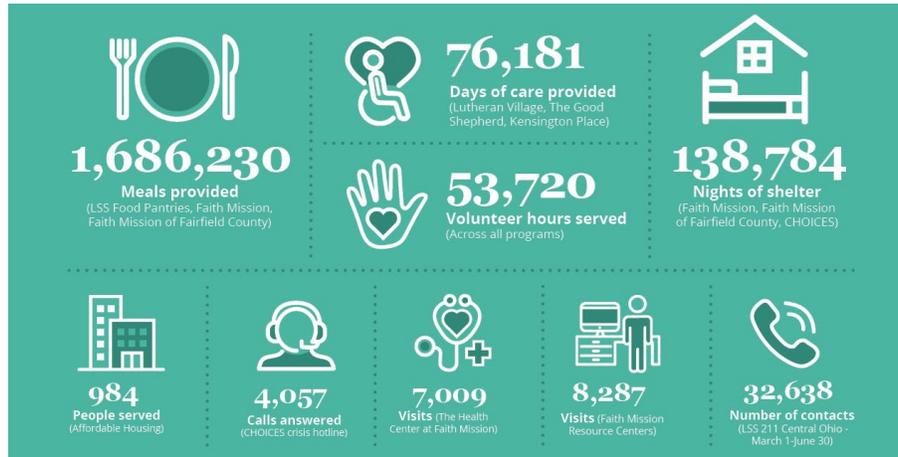
our ministry

As a faith-based provider, we follow the scriptural command to **“love our neighbor.”** We strive to live into this calling by ensuring that each person we serve is treated with unconditional **kindness, respect and dignity**, and we do this regardless of their personal faith or situation.

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES 500 W. Wilson Bridge Rd, Ste. 245 Worthington, OH 43085
(614) 228-5200 | www.lssnetworkofhope.org



2020 service measures



2020 in review

LSS Faith Mission

- Beds were creatively spread out across dorms and common areas to achieve social distancing.
- Meals are being brought to residents to avoid congregating in the dining room, and the Community Kitchen remains temporarily closed to the public to avoid any spread.
- The Health Center started utilizing telehealth appointments.

LSS CHOICES

- There was an increase in the need for services as victims were trapped at home with their abusers.
- Our hotline received an increase in the number of high danger calls from police responding to domestic violence incidences.
- Due to distance learning, we ramped up our technology support, staffing, programming and activities to better accommodate the children in our shelter.

LSS Food Pantries

- From March - June, 46% of families served have never visited our pantries before, compared to 25% the previous year.
- To minimize contact, we pre-packed food for safe, quick distribution and held food distributions outside.

LSS 211 Central Ohio

- As families struggled and became financially at risk, LSS 211 worked with the City of Columbus to develop the new Financial Navigator Program to help people learn budgeting skills.

LSS Senior Living

- To contain spread, visitation was restricted or limited at different points throughout the pandemic.
- Staff shifted strategies on how to provide creative entertainment and programming to our seniors as they shelter in place.
- We began the process of ongoing COVID testing of residents and staff.

Dear siblings in Christ,

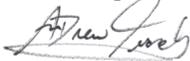
Greetings from Capital University! As we conclude the 2020-2021 academic year, I'm grateful to share with you a report on religious and spiritual life here at Capital. Please feel free to use my contact information, shared at the end of this report, if you have questions or would like to better connect with Capital.

In July 2020, we welcomed Interim President Dave Kaufman, a lifelong Lutheran and member of All Saints in Worthington, OH. Dave came to us after retiring as CEO of Encova Insurance and has capably led us through the struggles of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on enrollment, residency, and economic challenges. We experienced real pain due to budget cuts and position reductions. We also persevered in ways that revealed the resilience of students, faculty, and staff alike. Our pandemic response team, led by Reneé Dunnington, our Dean of Nursing, showed incredible flexibility in keeping our community safe as we continued Capital's core mission of transforming lives.

We continue to expand internship offerings through our Center for Faith and Learning. Donor-funded positions allow graduate students to act as mentors to undergraduates and project leaders for major CFL initiatives like our speaker series and Hinges Conference. Undergraduate internships included students focused on Electronic Media and Film, Music Industry, Religion, and Contemporary Worship majors or minors. As they earn academic credit and put their gifts to work in developing our ministries, we coach them through our core practices of vocational exploration: discovery, discernment, development, and decisions. Like many of you, we've stretched ourselves to offer remote and hybrid connections for our community in worship, fellowship, and education. I so appreciate the ways many of you have connected with us through worship and special events throughout the year, and invite you to do so through our YouTube Channel and Facebook Page.

As of this writing, we're hopeful for a more interpersonal, embodied year in 2021-2022, and I hope that you're able to experience that as well. That's in no small part due to the sacrifices made throughout the last eighteen months and the resilience we've all shown to pause beloved worship practices, to reshape habits, to transform expectations. That's good training for the church as we continue to face a new era of ministry in the 21st century. We'd love to explore that process with you, whether through a site visit, a consultation, or a time together to vision about who God is calling us to be and what God is calling us to do. As I say every year, we are grateful for our partner synods and for the ways that you support us with finances, with relationships, and with prayer. We pray for you, too, and rejoice that we're church together for the sake of the world!

Grace and peace,



The Rev. Drew Tucker
University Pastor
dtucker@capital.edu
614-236-7737



SYNOCDICAL REPORT - SPRING 2021

Office of the University Pastors

With the whole church, we are mindful of the cost of this pandemic and continue to pray for all who have lost loved ones or have faced other hardships. The pandemic has impacted all colleges and universities, but through the ongoing challenges, Wittenberg found creative, profound ways to shine its unique light this past year through in-person learning, service, storytelling, music, art, and more.

Understanding that residential in-person learning is a cornerstone of the Wittenberg experience, we welcomed our students back to campus in August 2020 with extensive health and safety measures in place. Our COVID Response Team, which includes three alumni physicians, played a crucial role in providing guidance and recommendations to ensure a safe living-learning experience for our students. To date, we have remained in-person and are planning for in-person Commencement exercises on May 15.

As a University that challenges students to become responsible global citizens, to discover their callings, and to lead personal, professional, and civic lives of creativity, service, compassion, and integrity, we were also blessed again this year by the presence of two scholarship recipients of the ELCA's International Women Leaders initiative. Satta Sheriff, class of 2023, from Kakata City, Margibi County, Liberia, is currently double majoring in English and sociology with a concentration in criminology, while Evelina Chandran, class of 2022, from Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, is pursuing math. Together, they are sharing their special light on campus as they pass on their knowledge, passion for learning, and global perspectives with our community.

In pre-pandemic years, we would have gathered for large community events such as our annual Lessons and Carols for Advent and Christmas. While this was not possible in 2020, we were grateful for campus partners who helped to create a special virtual experience complete with choir performances stemming as far back as the 1960s. Faith-based, socially distanced demonstrations, devotions, and activities, all with digital components, helped to connect our community throughout the year.

Additionally, issues surrounding food scarcity saw a marked increase this year nationally and on our campus, and we responded. Our student food pantry, Campus Cupboard, expanded its physical footprint in October. We also received more than \$1,000 in donations from alumni, faculty, and staff to support the pantry's mission. Such generosity has allowed us to distribute more than 1,000 meals this academic year, plus many other health and household items.

Lastly, we joined together virtually on March 11, our Founder's Day, for the annual Commit to Witt 24-hour day of giving, which resulted in a record \$567,858 in contributions. During the event, we also officially launched our \$100-million *Having Light: The Campaign for Wittenberg University*. The campaign looks to support all that defines the institution, especially the people, who inquire, create, inspire, and compete here; the place, where we come together as a community and welcome others to learn and grow; and the present, when the next generation of Wittenberg graduates learns to pass on its light.

Hunger Network in Ohio



Faith
Advocacy
Network

2020 Report Hunger Network in Ohio

An ELCA State Public Policy Office

2020 was not the year anyone planned. Originally planned for 2020 activities were put on hold, including our voter registration plans and our coalition work with others on raising Ohio's minimum wage by ballot measure. The killing of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor put racial justice on the minds of our congregations and we were able to step in and provide support for congregations that wanted to grow in their understanding of racial justice.

My takeaway from 2020 is this: Investments into advocacy organizations matter to be a foundation to address crisis in the world. When the pandemic began, the Hunger Network was already in relationship with service providers, congregations, families, and lawmakers. We were well positioned to help lawmakers understand the needs of the world. As the racial justice movement began, we were already well positioned to help people build relationships and have difficult conversations.

The investments into relationship building are immeasurable. We do not know what the rest of 2021 and the future will bring, but with an eviction crisis looming, a broken unemployment compensation system, and nearly 20% of Ohioans struggling with hunger - the crisis situation continues for those struggling to make ends meet.

Pandemic Response:

In the days immediately after the pandemic, we surveyed more than 100 social ministry organizations in Ohio to identify how need was shifting in our congregational food pantries and social ministry organizations. This survey gave us the stories to share with legislators and the data on growing need early on. We were able to share this information with legislators, press, and coalition partners to help influence administrative priorities.

HNO also joined with others to advocate for state and federal relief for the pandemic through direct legislative contacts and through 2 press events.

We advocated specifically for pandemic-EBT cards, pandemic unemployment, food bank investments, and rental assistance. Many of these items were passed either through administrative action or a part of the COVID relief bills in Congress. Through our coalition work, we were able to impact administrative decisions on pandemic relief efforts in Ohio.

In 2021, we will increase collaboration with the Ohio Council of Churches to host a joint virtual advocacy day in March around the state budget to make sure we are being good stewards of the shared resources of Ohio. We will offer multiple budget related trainings through zoom and other virtual means.

Voting Rights:

While we did not directly register people to vote (as planned), HNO continued forward in an advocacy role on voting access. HNO has been able to offer testimony and work in coalition with many others to advance the cause of voting access to protect Ohioans right to vote and ensure a fair execution of the democratic process.

Post-election conference:

HNO hosted a post-election conference with more than 50 people joining the zoom as well as additional views on Facebook live. This conference focused on what happened in the election and allowed faith leaders to discuss their personal reaction as well as begin to plan for the future.

This conference will likely become a bi-annual event that HNO will host in future years.

Racial Justice Work:

HNO continued to partner with the Southern Ohio Synod's race relations taskforce. We offered in-person training for 32 individuals before the pandemic in the Dayton area. After the pandemic, HNO hosted training on how to be a white ally through zoom. This training had 57 people log in. The evaluation responses highlighted many positives. The most notable was on a scale of 1-5 how uncomfortable were you with this content (5- it was too much, 1- I didn't challenge me at all.) We averaged a 3, which is the goal of moving people forward as white allies. In addition, HNO contributed to 6 additional congregations book studies (including Dear Church, and the recent Kendi book *How to be an ant-racist*).

In Ohio, many clergy acknowledged their own racial bias and internalized racism as they witnessed the protests of the summer of 2020. HNO's director conducted more than a dozen 1-1's with white Lutheran faith leaders in the months of summer of protest. These 1-1's are emotionally exhausting, and for too long this emotional work of processing white guilt is left to our colleagues of color. As allies in the fight for justice, we need to identify more ways to carry this emotional load.

In Conclusion: We do this work in coalition, not alone. Through advocacy coalitions and through faith coalitions and networks we can bring people together. Our goal is never to find some arbitrary ground between left and right, but to elevate our social conversations to a position where we seek the beloved community. Addressing inequality, discrimination, economic hardships, and much more are not easy conversations. But these are the conversations that God has called us to engage in as the Body of Christ.

In Service,

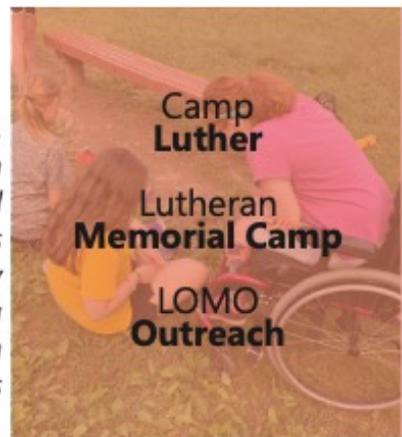
Deacon Nick Bates
Nick@hungernetohio.com
Hungernetohio.com



We are so excited to welcome ALL people back to Camp Luther, Lutheran Memorial Camp and LOMO Outreach after a COVID-19 hiatus!

LOMO's vision is to connect all people to faith and nature. This past year we have adopted a welcoming statement –

Striving for unity in Christ, your whole person is recognized, welcomed, and affirmed by Lutheran Outdoor Ministries in Ohio. People of all abilities, friends within the LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC communities, and neighbors of varying faith expressions represent the wideness of God's creation. You are invited to fully experience nature and engage in programming that allows you to find comfort and confidence in the ways that you have been wonderfully made by our Creator. Your joy and pain, your highs and lows, your life and your life story are welcome here.



Lutheran Memorial Camp
2790 State Route 61
Marengo, OH 43334-9766
419.864.8030 ~ Fax: 614.890.8210
lmc@lomocamps.org

LOMO Central Office & LOMO Outreach
863 Eastwind Drive
Westerville, OH 43081-3309
614.890.2267 ~ Fax: 614.890.8210
800.431.5666 ~ info@lomocamps.org

Camp Luther
3901 Lake Road
Conneaut, OH 44030-3137
440.224.2196 ~ Fax: 614.890.8210
luther@lomocamps.org

www.lomocamps.org



**Oesterlen Services For Youth, Inc.
2021 Southern Ohio Synod Annual Report**

Oesterlen Services For Youth, Inc. has a new look! Oesterlen introduced a new logo in January 2020, to better represent the work we do. In the shape of a Guiding Light, this mark radiates the potential of all people and seeks to present Oesterlen as a guiding light for individuals in need of mental, social, physical, or spiritual guidance. The many hands joined together convey the strength of Oesterlen's support system, and communicate perseverance, confidence, and guidance, which are at the heart of all that Oesterlen pursues. A cross is also visible in the design, representing the compassionate and spiritual resources that have been at the core of this Lutheran agency in Springfield, OH since 1903.

Oesterlen continues to evolve its diverse programs as it lives out its mission to address mental, emotional and behavioral health needs of nearly 1,000 children, families, and adults yearly. A new outpatient program to treat a range of substance abuse history in youth combines peer- to-peer support and individualized treatment through group and individual counseling. In addition, before the pandemic, Oesterlen expanded the services provided through the Life Skills Center to children in the community, through the Treatment Foster Care program and the Counseling Center. While this outreach is on hold, the Life Skills Center still assists residential youth in recovering from trauma, incorporating elements of everyday tasks, such as woodshop skills, tending plants in the greenhouse, or expressing self in art therapy. Meanwhile, the Life Skills Center will be renovated in the coming year for an improved therapeutic and learning environment. During this time of pandemic, Oesterlen's Counseling Center has been providing care through telehealth. Oesterlen also became the home of Lutheran Disaster Response of Ohio (LDR-Ohio) as they partner with the Miami Valley Long Term Recovery Group (MVLTRG) to provide repair and rebuilding of homes damaged in the 19 tornadoes in May 2019 in the Miami Valley.

Oesterlen has been busy during the pandemic with events to raise awareness of its life-giving ministries, with an online plant sale, a virtual 5K, an art show featuring residents' work in downtown Springfield, and a drive-through Festival of Lights bringing cheer at Christmas. Thanks to a grant from the Ohio Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, Oesterlen provided packets to each ELCA congregation in Ohio with resources to observe mental health awareness month in May, October, or other times during the year. Oesterlen also coordinated 4 workshops on mental health topics to train faith leaders throughout Ohio.

Oesterlen cannot exist without the prayers and support of congregations and donors, who provide much needed school and hygiene supplies, quilts, gift cards, volunteer assistance, and financial support. Congregations can also spread the word of Oesterlen's programs and the need for Treatment Foster Parents. Though Oesterlen currently has limited visits due to COVID-19, please let us know if you would like to learn more about Oesterlen's life-giving mission by contacting Pastor Rachel Tune in Church Relations at rtune@oesterlen.org, or visit www.oesterlen.org.

We extend a heartfelt THANKS to the following Oesterlen Board members from the Southern Ohio Synod territory: Pr. David Buchenroth, Huntsville; Mr. John Buchenroth, Westerville; Mr. Thom Goodfellow, Springfield; Pr. Ron Green, Springfield; Ms. Kay Labosky, Worthington; Ms. Stephanie McCuiston, Springfield; Ms. Kathy Murphy, Springfield; Mr. John Saraga, Xenia; Pr. Ralph Wolfe, Columbus; Dr. Mary Jo Zembar, Springfield. Oesterlen is seeking to fill 3 Board Member positions— in addition to a NE Ohio Female vacancy, we seek to fill two Female, At-Large vacancies (any Ohio Synodical territory). If interested please reach out to Pr. Tune or Mr. Warner.

Yours in service to the Lord, **Donald L. Warner**, LISW-S, ACSW, Executive Director, Toll Free (800) 404-5437 / 937.399.6101 X 111 or Direct (937) 398-0211 or dwarner@oesterlen.org.



2020 Report to the Southern Ohio Synod

The Graceworks Lutheran Services 2019 Annual Report shares every day stories of building community. For the senior and disabled clients that we serve, nothing is more impactful than having a sense of community.

Several clients of our Dayton Day Program, sponsored by Graceworks Enhanced Living, volunteered side-by-side with members of Stillwater Church to build a Habitat for Humanity home. The program's staff flexed their schedules and operations to support a weekend volunteer initiative and to expand upon their client's desire to help neighbors.

At Bethany Village, Pastor Bob Swanson provides daily devotional messages to residents, both in person and on the campus television channel known as BTV. These messages are also available to employees, connecting them to the wider community and the Graceworks mission of Faithful Caring.

At Graceworks Lutheran Services, we are doing more than caring for our clients who are facing changing and challenging circumstances; we are building community. This story and others that explain our vision are available in our digital annual report at www.graceworksannualreport.org.

Bethany Village – More than 700 older adults call Bethany Village home. Over 400 enjoyed maintenance-free lifestyles and wellness programming in the residential areas, and over 300 residents received full-time skilled nursing, assisted living or memory supportive care. Bethany Village is a large driver of the economy in Centerville and surrounding southern Ohio areas. In fact, nearly 700 individuals work directly for Bethany Village. In total, Graceworks employs just over 1,200 individuals across all service lines. Crescent Crossing Assisted Living opened officially in early 2019, featuring 73 suites. The building reached full occupancy by summer. To support the new residents and full complement of Life Enrichment programming, Bethany Village increased employment by 9%. In Q4, Bethany launched Pavilion Assisted Living Memory Care. This saw the reimagining of Pavilion, an older, existing assisted living unit. The new space features bright, open concept living with 35 residences for older adults with memory impairment with intergenerational programming, fitness classes and music therapy.

Bethany Rehabilitation Center – 687 older adults experienced short-term skilled nursing care and individualized rehabilitation programs as they recovered from surgery or hospitalization.

Graceworks Enhanced Living – 290 adults living with intellectual and developmental disabilities enjoyed safe, caring environments in 43 homes in Butler, Greene, Hamilton, and Montgomery Counties. They also enjoyed opportunities and activities provided by day programs in Cincinnati and Dayton.

Graceworks at Home – Once again, Graceworks at Home was recognized as a Top Agency of the 2019 HomeCare Elite, a recognition of the top-performing home health agencies in the United States.

HomeCare Elite agencies are determined by an analysis of performance measures in quality outcomes, best practices implementation, patient experience, quality improvement and financial health. During 2019, 1,034 older adults received personal care services, including 54,810 hours of personal care and household assistance with tasks such as laundry, light housekeeping, meals, bathing, dressing, medication reminders, transportation, and companionship for older adults or respite for family caregivers. Graceworks at Home provided Medicare-certified health and therapy services for 649 individuals in their homes and attended to 1,028 episodes of skilled home care.

Graceworks Housing Services – Housing Services communities provide safe and affordable housing for low-income seniors and disabled adults. Service Coordinators create special partnerships in each individual community to benefit all residents. Some examples include collaborating with local skilled care facilities to create entertainment activities like concerts and craft fairs, partnerships with other nonprofit organizations to develop food pantries to help Graceworks residents stretch food budgets and teaming up with local school systems to create intergenerational programming to benefit both residents and students. For 2019, 757 income-eligible elderly or disabled residents benefited from affordable housing in 18 Graceworks apartment communities in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky. Employees worked to establish caring, stable environments in well-maintained buildings and helped residents find and obtain needed services.

Volunteers – In 2019, 727 volunteers provided 49,399 recorded hours of service with an estimated value of \$1.15 million.

During 2019, Graceworks delivered more than \$5.2 million of charity care that was not reimbursed by user fees or government funding. This includes a \$3.5 million Medicaid provider deficit for our long-term nursing facility at Bethany Village.

We are blessed with the support of many faithful congregations of the Southern Ohio Synod and other judicatories, as well as donors, volunteers, staff, and friends.

In Christ's service,



Judy A. Budi
President & CEO