

2015 Synod Assembly
Update from the
ELCA Churchwide Organization

 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's Work. Our Home.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.

It is a pleasure and a blessing for me to be here with you this year as you come together as God's people in the Northeastern Iowa Synod, to celebrate where God's mission has taken you in the past year and to look forward with joyous expectation to where God is leading you in 2015 and beyond as Christ's people

I am Pastor Barbara Berry-Bailey and I serve as Manager for Relationships in East and Southern Africa. I work mostly with ELCA synods that have international companion churches in East and Southern Africa, that work includes this synod's partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Namibia and

I bring you greetings from our Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, the Reverend Rafael Malpica-Padilla, executive director for Global Mission, My faith journey began as a fifth-generation baptized member of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, which is why I always says it is my blessing to be with you as an ordained pastor and ELCA Churchwide representative to your synod assembly.

I would like to begin with a reading from the gospel according to Mark:

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi, and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?"

And they answered him, "John the Baptist, and others, Elijah, and still others, one of the prophets. Then he asked them, "But who do YOU say that I am."

Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him." (The word of the Lord.)

He sternly ordered them not to tell but obviously what happened in Caesarea Philippi did not stay in Caesarea Philippi. SOMEBODY TOLD AND WROTE IT DOWN.

A very creative study resource I have been using in my congregation, invites us to imagine that Jesus himself greeted us as we walked into this assembly.

Think about it, what if Jesus were at the registration table. (Now some might wonder, "How would we know that it was Jesus?" It would be by his name tag, of course.)

But in the process of meeting and greeting us, what if Jesus flipped that question he asked of his disciples of some 2000 years ago and asked us as a church, "Who do **people** say that YOU are?"

And in light of the changes and challenges that we have experienced in the past, when we consider other people who do not know of or understand God's grace the way we do, some of us might stammer before we answer that question.

I once served an historic 150 year-old congregation and while walking the neighborhood I was asked if Lutherans were Christians. Some people don't know who we are.

However, if Jesus were then to ask, "But who do YOU say that you are?" that should be the point at which our eyes would light up as stammer no more we respond

We are church

We are Lutheran

We are church together

We are church for the sake of the world.

Bishop Easton writes and talks about these statements and what they mean extensively. These states are also incorporating into the Churchwide organization's Operational Plan.



Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's
four strategic statements of emphasis:

- We are church
- We are Lutheran
- We are church together
- We are church for the sake of the world



Before we do God’s work in the world in Jesus’ name, we must know that our lives first belong to God, and through God’s grace, we are found by and abide in Christ. At the heart of being church is worship, and at the heart of worship is the crucified and risen Christ. Spiritual and faith practices that nourish this life-giving relationship with God include prayer, silence, giving, service, immersion in Scripture and proclaiming Jesus to others with enthusiasm and joy.

When one congregation engages in service and ministry in its local community, those members are the church in that place, taking care of that part of God’s vineyard. They serve and minister on behalf of all of us. When one congregation works to feed people who are hungry, that also is the entire church coming together. The work of the church –God’s work— is work that we all do together. Are you in agreement with that? Good!

On behalf of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and of our whole church, I want to express words of deep appreciation to you the people of the Northeastern Iowa Synod. Thank you for sharing your gifts and talents with the whole Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. First among those gifts are the people resources.

Thank you!

Through your generous Mission Support and other giving, together we are able to:

- Make vital, life-changing ministries happen across this country and overseas
- Train leaders who’ve become missionaries, advocates and pastors
- Break the systems that foster hunger and poverty
- Join with partners and companions worldwide to pray and work for peace

We have a wonderful bishop in this synod (you notice I said “we”? That’s because in addition to serving their synods, our 65 synodical bishops are called as bishops of the whole church).

Bishop Ullestad serves on the Committee for Theological and Ethical Concerns of the Conference of Bishops and his faithfulness, and wise counsel is greatly valued by bishop colleagues and other colleagues throughout the church. Thank you, Bishop Ullestad, for the many ways that you selflessly lead in this church. *Applaud.*

To the NEIA Synod Council, I say thank you. And to the many others who serve on committees, boards or task forces , such as Kathryn Kleinhans who serves on the Women and Justice Task Force and all those who serve on external boards on behalf of the synod and to those who serve in your congregations, we say thank you for sharing your time and talents to do God’s Work.

Stories of Faith in Action

- Connects Mission Support generosity with examples of life-changing ministries carried out by members and congregations
- Free copies can be ordered through the Resources section of www.ELCA.org.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's Word, Our Mission

The current issue of Stories of Faith in action offers stories about individual ELCA members and congregations and their life-changing ministries made possible by the generosity of the church – you. To order your congregation's free copy with a \$1 handling fee visit the ELCA's website: ELCA.org



Intro to and set-up for the video:

“We are church” is one of our key statements of emphasis for the ELCA developed by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. The other statements are “we are Lutheran,” “we are church together” and “we are church for the sake of the world.” Bishop Eaton has invited all of us in the ELCA to discuss what these statements mean for who we are as a church and where we are headed. In late 2014 and early 2015, Bishop Eaton met with ELCA members from around the country and joined them in conversation on the meaning of “We are church.” **In the video you will see now, she and people like you and me explore this theme together.**



The third annual “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday takes place September 13th, this year.

This is our annual opportunity to gather and celebrate who we are as the ELCA – one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor

To guide your planning for this year and to register your congregation, visit ELCA.org/dayofservice.

There you can also order T-shirts and find a toolkit and discussion resources about why we serve.

If September 13 does not work for your congregation, please, please consider another day.



Through *Always Being Made New: the Campaign for the ELCA* we can invest in the future of this church, expand our mission capacity and achieve things on a scale and scope that we could never do alone. Together we can do more. We are called to respond. Together we can grow, evangelize, educate women, serve globally, end hunger, overcome malaria, send missionaries and form new leaders.

The five year comprehensive *Campaign* was launched last year in February and campaign director, Rev. Ron Glusenkamp is working with individual donors, congregations and synods to match up ministries supported by the campaign with their passions and interests. Year 1 results: \$45 million in gifts received, which is 23 percent of the overall goal. 1 down, 4 to go.

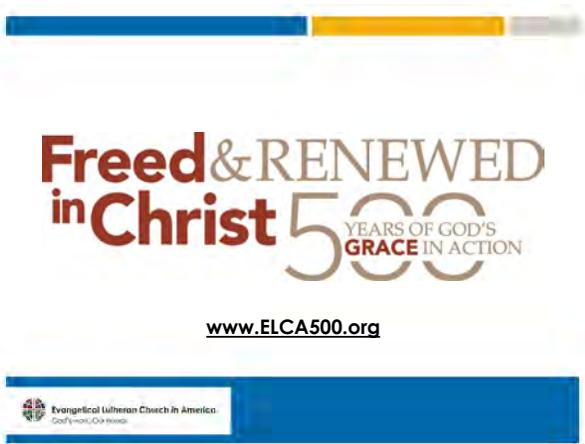
Gifts from this synod by congregations and individuals to The Campaign totaled \$430,436 in 2014.

Thank you!



In case you haven't heard the ELCA National Youth Gathering takes place July 15-19 in Detroit, Michigan.

Nearly 29K have registered so far and there is still time and space for registration. Go to elca.org/youthgathering



ELCA Observance of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation

Theme is "Freed and Renewed in Christ"

Resources on website www.ELCA500.org

Facebook page is "ELCA Reformation 500"

Grace Gathering (a gathering of non-voting members running concurrent to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly). The gathering will help congregations and synods to prepare for their observance of the Reformation anniversary in 2017.



We as church together planted **53 new congregations**, with more than 56 percent of them in multicultural settings and 27 percent among people experiencing poverty. **352 new ministries** are currently under development.

New starts in this synod are New Hope Lutheran Church and • Peace Lutheran Fellowship

Renewal efforts in
160 congregations



We as church together launched congregational **renewal efforts in 160 congregations.**



Scholarships for **241 students**
at eight ELCA seminaries

We as church together supported **241 students** at eight ELCA seminaries through the ELCA Fund for Leaders.

• **63 Young Adults** in Global Mission
• **246 missionaries** in more than
46 countries



Together we sent 63 gifted and faithful young adults into global service through the Young Adults in Global Mission program, known by the acronym YAGM. The program continues to grow. This year we will send 78 young adults into service to be formed and transformed in some amazing ways. Currently there are eight country programs. A new program in Cambodia begins in August 2015, to be followed by new programs in Senegal and Australia in 2016.

Rev. Austin and Tanya Propst	Madagascar
Rev. Bradn Buerkle	Russia
Dr. Steven and Bethany Friberg	Tanzania
ELCA Global Church Sponsorship-	
Rev. Jeff Von Wald and Julie Rossate	Jerusalem/West Bank
Mary Beth and Bayo Oyebade	Nigeria
Chelsea Paulsen	YAGM Central Europe (Hungary)
Susan Smith, Ph.D	Central African Republic (CAR)
Young Adults in Global Mission	



71 scholarships to promising young international leaders

You awarded **71 scholarships** to promising young international leaders from our global companion churches.



ELCA World Hunger
• Programs in nearly **60 countries**
• More than **300 program** in the U.S.

In addition to your local congregational efforts to alleviate poverty and hunger, 14 ELCA World Hunger Domestic Hunger Grants were awarded in Iowa for a total of \$28,000. Right here in your synod, St. Paul Lutheran Church in Postville is one of those programs. The “Barnabas Uplift” program at St. Paul recruits participants, particularly women, some with children, to become more self-sufficient by acquiring training which leads to more self-sustaining employment opportunities. Many of these women and their families are in need of more skills to lift themselves up and out of poverty. The program helps clients identify obstacles and barriers to more gainful employment and helps by paying class registration costs, and state testing fees. The program is designed to address root causes of hunger by ending under- and unemployment.

Thank you for your generous support of our work together to eradicate poverty and hunger through ELCA World Hunger. In 2014, gifts to ELCA World Hunger totaled over \$19.3 million
(Change slide)



and \$6.1 million to Lutheran Disaster Response for both U.S. and international disaster.

Gifts from this synod by individuals and congregations, totaled over \$308,000 to ELCA World Hunger and over \$59,000 for Lutheran Disaster Response.

Together, our gifts to ELCA World Hunger, the ELCA Malaria Campaign and Lutheran Disaster Response reach communities most in need throughout the world and right here at home—thank you.

ELCA Malaria Campaign
• Reducing the impact of
malaria in **13 African countries**



The ELCA Malaria Campaign is also making a difference. Although malaria is preventable and treatable, it still claims the lives of 584,000 people each year.

Working through Lutheran partners in Africa, your gifts to the ELCA Malaria Campaign help provide mosquito nets, insecticides, medication, health care, education and more to eliminate deaths from this disease—for good. Response has been generous in the ELCA!

At this time we can report that over \$13.9 million in cash has been raised to support these anti-malaria efforts, which brings us over 90% of the way to our 2015 goal. Since the beginning of the Malaria Campaign, your synod has given over \$470,000. Together, we are making malaria history. Thank you!

Thanks to the generous support of synods, congregations and individuals, we are confident that we will meet and exceed our goal. Though the focused fundraising of the ELCA Malaria Campaign will conclude this year, our commitment to walking together with our companions and supporting their health-care ministries will not end. Our global Lutheran partners who choose to prioritize malaria programming after 2015 will seek funding through ELCA World Hunger, which has a long history of supporting health-related programming.

Together, our gifts to ELCA World Hunger, the ELCA Malaria Campaign and Lutheran Disaster Response reach communities most in need throughout the world **and** right here at home—thank you.



You, the saints of the Northeastern Iowa Synod have truly stepped up to the baptismal imperative to let your light shine before others. Your love and support indeed glorify God.

Thank you for your faithfulness and commitment.

If you would like to confer, converse and otherwise hob knob with me during the course of this assembly, I will be facilitating a forum in Classroom 200 of the Technology Center.

Thank you and May the peace of Christ be with you always.

