

NEIA Synod Assembly Presentation

SLIDE 1

Introduce self – two vocations, primary one being family. **SLIDE 2**

One you are more familiar with - Gathering Director. **SLIDE 3** People said I was crazy, like to think of it more as a high and holy calling.

NOLA 1997 Gathering story – experienced a BIG church. Solidified my call to youth ministry and especially to ym in the wider church. YM, the ELCA Youth Gathering transforms lives and I am humbled to lead it.

Firm believer in being church together – as a synod, as a churchwide expression. Do more together than we can alone.

Introduce the churchwide expression

- **SLIDE 4** The ELCA is one church body organized in three expressions – congregations, synods and the churchwide organization.
- Each expression has its own particular function, but all three share a common mission of doing God’s work in the world and proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ.
- I’d like to thank and acknowledge a couple of leaders in your synod who serve in special leadership capacities – thank you to Kathryn Kleinhans for serving on the entrance rite discernment working group, to Daniel Gerrietts for working on the Future Directions Table and to Bishop Ullestad for serving on the Conference of Bishops Leadership Committee.
- The **churchwide organization** acts on behalf of this church’s members, congregations and synods to unite our ministry on a scale and scope we could never do alone.
 - Together, we are implementing a large-scale response to human need and suffering. We are responding to social issues and working for justice and peace. We are nurturing relationships with ecumenical and interfaith partners. And we are providing resources to equip members to worship, learn, serve and witness in their daily ministry.

Introduce the 2016 ELCA synod assembly video: “We are Church for the Sake of the World”

- **SLIDE 5** Bishop Eaton shares four emphases: We are church, we are Lutheran, we are church together, and ***we are church for the sake of the world***. This year, her message to synod assembly attendees and ELCA members everywhere focuses on that last emphases. So now hear these words from our Presiding Bishop...

SLIDE 6 VIDEO

- Our ELCA churchwide ministries do this church’s work of addressing issues on a scale and scope we never could alone. Together, we are addressing hunger and poverty, responding to disasters, developing leaders for the church, planting and renewing congregations, and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in some of the fastest growing Lutheran churches around the world.

Mission Support

One way that we share in this important work is through Mission Support, the weekly financial offering that's shared with your synod and the churchwide organization.

- **SLIDE 7** In 2015, ELCA members gave about **\$1.8 billion** in regular offerings to support ELCA ministries. **SLIDE 8** Of the **\$1.8 billion** total, the churchwide organization received **\$47 million**, or about **2.7 percent**. This represents the largest portion of the ELCA churchwide organization's current operating budget of **\$69 million**. (This does not include designated offerings to ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response and other ministries of *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*.)
- **SLIDE 9** The Northeastern Iowa Synod gave approximately \$535,000 in mission support last year which is about 40% of the gifts the synod received. I want you to hear a huge thank you for these gifts and to know that these dollars are doing amazing ministry here in the United States and in places all over the world.
 - **SLIDE 10** We are starting lots of new congregations and ministries in the United States. Our total of new congregations currently under development is 379.
 - 58 percent are among people of color
 - 27 percent are among people experiencing poverty
 - **SLIDE 11** The ELCA walks with more than 80 companion churches in other countries; including accompanying new Lutheran churches, expanding ministries, and training leaders and evangelists.
 - There are big and important things, happening in Jesus' name for the sake of the world and all because of generous and happy givers in the Upstate New York and other synods. Thank you!

Called Forward Together in Christ: A process to decide the ELCA's future directions

- **SLIDE 12** We want to create a vision for the future ELCA – as a church with solid foundations sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and making a difference in the world locally and globally. And as a church that we can be proud to pass on to our children.
- **Called Forward Together in Christ** aims to explore and find answers to some big questions. It is not about reinventing the ELCA – but rather looking to the future and asking whether we are clear about who are and what is most important as we journey together as a church in today's world. **SLIDE 13** We are asking big questions like:
 1. What kind of church do we believe God is calling us to become?
 2. How do we become an inclusive, diverse church that is inspiring and relevant in different communities?
 3. If we had to decide that some things were more important than others in the next 5-10 years, what are your top three things?

We want you to be involved in the conversation so I encourage you to attend the Called Forward Together in Christ workshops happening today in the Saemann Student Center, Lyceum 226.

- We'll talk through those questions and then I will share your responses with Bishop Eaton and the coordinating committee when I return to Chicago. If you can't make it to the workshop, you can find more information and contribute to the conversation at ELCA.org/future. Responses are being collected for another week, so do not delay!

SLIDE 14 I have also been asked to provide an update on *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*

- The ELCA is two years into its five-year *Campaign for the ELCA*. Through this campaign – the first of its size and scope in the history of this church – we can expand ability to respond to the needs of the world with a living, daring confidence in God's grace.
- This campaign seeks to raise \$198 million in support of *new and expanded* churchwide ministries above and *beyond* those supported by your regular weekly offerings. This goal of nearly \$200 million represents a **64 percent increase** in designated funding for these ministries in the years 2014 through 2018.
- Here is a snapshot of our fundraising progress, to-date:

SLIDE 15

- \$80 million received in current gifts and multi-year commitments. Gifts from congregations and individuals in NE IA total more than \$575,000. So great!
- 40% of the campaign total has been raised to-date
- 159,000 gifts to campaign ministries were received in 2015

Your generous, faithful support is already changing lives. I will share just a few of the ways your gifts have made a difference in 2015.

- **SLIDE 16** We planted **62 new congregations** last year alone.
- **SLIDE 17** We supported **235 students** at eight ELCA seminaries through the ELCA Fund for Leaders including Tawanda Murinda and Nathan Wicks who are students at Wartburg Seminary.
- **SLIDE 18** We sent **73 young adults** into global service through the Young Adults in Global Mission program. You, Northeastern IA, have supported eight young adults during their YAGM year across the globe. Through the campaign we have continued support of at least **220 missionaries in more than 40 countries** around the world including the additional eight missionaries supported by your synod.
- In 2016, the campaign is focusing on **ELCA World Hunger**. ELCA World Hunger creatively and courageously works toward a just world where all are fed. As a long-standing presence in communities, we walk alongside our companion churches and partners to identify the unique needs of each community and tailor solutions that can put an end to hunger for good.
 - **SLIDE 19** We support **creative solutions to hunger and poverty in nearly 60 countries** around the world, including **347 programs in the United States** through ELCA World Hunger. **SLIDE 20** One of those programs in right here in your synod – Almost Home at St. John's in Dubuque assists men and women seeking to enter or re-enter the workforce. The Open Closet program provides career counseling, mock

job interviews and help in choosing appropriate work attire with the end goal of improving household income. Children of work-seeking parents can participate in the computer activities, time with local role models and sports activities to encourage goal-setting. In the words of a member, “While we may be known as the ‘little Lutheran church downtown’ we have garnered the respect of the community and are a go to place for people seeking help.

- **In 2015, gifts given to ELCA World Hunger totaled almost \$22 million** – more than in any single year. Gifts to World Hunger from your congregations and individuals totaled almost \$358,000 last year! These are gifts that will provide immediate food and shelter, as well as support lasting systemic change.
 - **SLIDE 21** This amount includes more than \$800,000 raised by youth in support of ELCA World Hunger’s Walk for Water. These gifts to ELCA World Hunger help support projects in nearly 60 countries around the world, including the United States.
 - As the water crisis escalates right here in the United States, especially in places like Flint, Mich., these gifts are helping local congregations stock bottled water in their food pantries and address the long-term needs of the community.
 - **SLIDE 22** This year, the goal is to raise \$24 million dollars for ELCA World Hunger – an all-time high – to reach even more people in more communities, and we need your help. Expansion of work is happening in some of the most challenging places and situations around the world and in inspired new initiatives right here in the United States as well. Please take a look at your congregation’s plans for 2016 and consider incorporating special offerings, fundraisers and activities to raise awareness and funds for this important, shared ministry of our church. Free resources and activities for all ages can be found at ELCA.org/hunger.

Share exciting updates about ministries and ways to be involved

- **SLIDE 23 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly and Grace Gathering (Aug. 8-13)**
 - Once every three years, voting members gather to make decisions about how to go about God’s work as a church. **The 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will be held in New Orleans, Aug. 8-13.** The assembly will observe the 500th anniversary of the Reformation under the theme, “Freed and Renewed in Christ: 500 years of God’s Grace in Action.” Any CWA voting members here? See you in New Orleans!
 - Not a voting member? Not a problem. For the first time in the ELCA’s history, all ELCA members – not just voting members – are invited to New Orleans to join the fun.
 - The **Grace Gathering** is a concurrent event with the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, created for all members to observe the assembly and participate in workshops and worship.

- Featured speakers include our presiding bishop and Leymah Gbowee (pronounced: **Lay**-mah, **Bow**-way), Nobel Peace Prize winner. Registration for the gathering is now open – visit ELCA.org/GraceGathering for information.
- **SLIDE 24 “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday (Sept. 11)**
 - Ask for a show of hands of people who have participated in “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday in a previous year.
 - On Sept. 8, 2015, more than 4,000 congregations took part in this dedicated day of service. Wearing yellow T-shirts and volunteering in their community, this day is an opportunity to show the world that we are a church that boldly does God’s work in the world. How many of your congregation’s participated in last year’s God’s Work Our Hands Day?
 - **In 2016, the ELCA’s dedicated day of service is Sept. 11.** If your congregation cannot participate Sept. 11, please consider another time. This year’s dedicated day of service will also mark the 15-year anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States.
 - **SLIDE 25** Visit ELCA.org/dayofservice and get started on your planning today! Download resources such as a toolkit, bulletin insert and more; register your congregation; and purchase T-shirts that can be personalized to feature the name of your congregation. Orders for T-shirts can be made until Aug. 19.
- **#ELCAVotes**
 - **SLIDE 26** We are called to conversation and prayer around our role as U.S. residents and as people of faith. And in this election year, we have an opportunity to expand that role.
 - In 2013, the ELCA adopted a social policy resolution titled “Voting Rights to All Citizens.” In this policy, this church is encouraged to “promote public life worthy of the name,” by speaking out as an advocate and engaging in local efforts such as voter registration and supporting legislation to guarantee the right to vote to all citizens.
 - **SLIDE 27** You can take action in your community by:
 - Holding discussions and Bible studies in your congregation, synod or campus
 - Encouraging members of your community to register and vote
 - Advocating for a just electoral system
 - Learn more by following #ELCAVotes on social media and visiting ELCA.org/advocacy.

Share ways for leaders to stay connected

- Make sure that you have the latest stories and information about the work we're doing in the world by staying in touch with us.
- **SLIDE 28** Here are a few ways to follow along:
 - Follow us on social media
 - [Facebook.com/Lutherans](https://www.facebook.com/Lutherans)
 - [Twitter.com/ELCA](https://twitter.com/ELCA)
 - Bookmark [LivingLutheran.org](https://www.livinglutheran.org)
 - This is a new site, which combines the great content and stories of two former publications, including The Lutheran magazine. It's a one-stop-shop for news and stories about what God's up to in the world.

SLIDE 29 Gathering social media

SLIDE 30 Invitation to Gathering, MYLE, the tAble, application for planning teams

Conclude