



In Mission for Others



2017 ANNUAL REPORT



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Message from the *National Bishop*



National Bishop Susan C. Johnson

Dear members of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada,

As I think back on 2017, the first thing that comes to mind is the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation and the lasting impact it will have on the ELCIC. The commemoration of the Reformation may be officially over but the way it has strengthened our Lutheran identity, the way it brought us together in common witness and service through the Reformation Challenge and its core message of being *Liberated by God's Grace* will continue to shape our life together as a church in Canada.

Thank you for your participation in the ELCIC Reformation Challenge. I was overwhelmed and proud of the contributions—large and small—that individuals, congregations and synods made to help us meet our goals. We may not have met all of our challenge goals but together we raised the equivalent of about four million dollars for ministry in Canada and around the world. How amazing is that!

As you look through this year's *Annual Report*, I would invite you to reflect on various ways we live out our call to be a church *In Mission for Others*. This is the work you are doing.

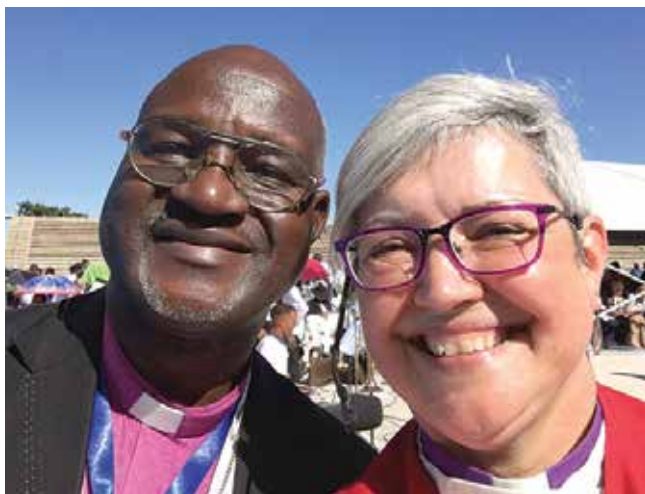
This year's report focuses on the new areas of emphasis identified by the ELCIC's National Church Council at its fall 2017 meeting. I'm excited and energized by these four new areas which will be realized through the lens of clear theological identity: Courageous Innovation, Reconciled Relationships, One Body Working Together, and Empowered Disciples. I would invite you to look at these four areas and consider how you, your congregation and your community might be engaged in one or more of these priorities.

In his 2018 New Year's message to The Lutheran World Federation, General Secretary Martin Junge declared that despite the many challenges we face, there is no better time than now to be the church. By acknowledging our challenges, it reminds us to stay focused on what has been given to us without cost. "It is a good year to be the church. We have our hands filled with gifts to share," says Martin! And I agree.

Friends, it is a good year to be the church. We, too, have our hands filled with gifts to share.

Yours in Christ,







ELCIC Mission Statement

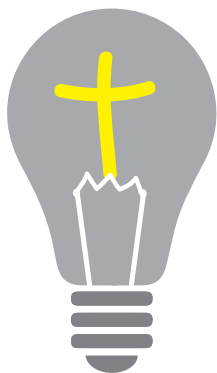
The mission of this church, as an expression of the universal Church and as an instrument of the Holy Spirit, is to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to people in Canada and around the world through the proclamation of the Word, the administration of the sacraments and through service in Christ's name.



Our Vision Priorities

In September 2017, the ELCIC's National Church Council began the work of developing a new *Strategic Plan* for the work of the National Church. This five-year plan helps us to focus our work at the National Office.

For each goal, a Bible verse has been identified to assist us in how we hear God's call to live out ministry in this area. For each of these goals, this mission and ministry needs to be realized through the lens of clear theological identity.



COURAGEOUS INNOVATION

We are called to not be afraid.

(Luke 12:32)

- Addressing systemic change
- Innovative interaction with the community
- Encourage experimentation
- Accompaniment
- Acknowledge our anxiety
- Flexibility in sharing and deploying financial resources
- On-going evaluation of mission priorities
- On-going evaluation of barriers to innovation



RECONCILED RELATIONSHIPS

We are given the ministry to reconciliation.

(2 Corinthians 5:18)

- Vision of an inclusive church
- Indigenous justice and reconciliation
- Ecumenical and interfaith partnerships
- Challengers of racism and privilege
- Work with diverse allies
- Healthy relationship with the earth
- Striving for peace



ONE BODY WORKING TOGETHER

We are one body in Christ.

(Romans 12:5)

- Shared vision across all expressions of the church
- Mutual credibility, trust and transparency
- Sharing of necessary resources
- National and international partnerships
- Connectedness to local ministries
- Support CLWR's mission
- Mutual support between synods and National Church
- Focused priorities
- Good communication



EMPOWERED DISCIPLES

We are to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

(Ephesians 4:12)

- Faithful gospel witnesses
- Baptismal vocation
- Leadership development for a changing world
- Engaged and empowered youth and young adults
- Worship that nurtures disciples

Taking risks and “doing church differently”

BIG, BOLD STEPS ACROSS THE CHURCH OPEN UP
NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

Providing an opportunity to access lay education has been top of mind within the leadership of the Manitoba/Northwestern Ontario (MNO) Synod for many years. Through leading and participating in lay education courses multiple times a year within her synod, MNO Synod Bishop Elaine Sauer wondered what more could be done.

“Through conversation with some of the other synod bishops we talked about the fact that this occasional lay education was happening once in a while in every synod,” Sauer says.

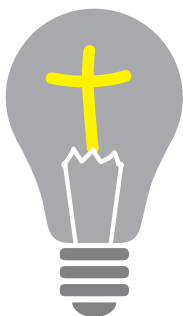
“So that prompted us to start wondering why we were doing this as multiple separate initiatives. We invited Lutheran Theological Seminary Saskatoon to have a conversation about how we might do this experiment together.”

“It took us about two years of conversation until we were able to agree that we could get enough money through the Church Extension and Capital Fund (CECF), and through our own synod funding programs to create a position of a coordinator,” the bishop says.

Sauer notes the changing context of the church and the desire to grow in our faith as two primary reasons for a more intentional focus on lay education.

“This is a faith building opportunity for lay people to access the theological learning that we have really only had for our pastors and deacons,” she says. As well, “we simply cannot afford to have a pastor at every congregation anymore. We need to have lay leaders who can take on that leadership when they have very little pastoral support. As the church leadership resources are diminishing, we are creating opportunities for lay people to step into that role of teaching and preaching and learning.”

“I am extremely proud of the



COURAGEOUS INNOVATION

There is a **new way of imagining** what **our church** can be, and what **our community of faith** can be in the larger community.

church for being able to see that we do need to experiment and take some risks,” says Sauer on having CECF funds available for this initiative. “We need to see how we can ‘do church better’ and do it differently. It has been an extremely big step in the right direction for the church to be experimental in that way.”

In the Eastern Synod, three ELCIC congregations in the Kitchener-Waterloo area (St. Mark’s, Kitchener; St. John’s, Waterloo; Reformation, Kitchener), have been taking bold new steps together during their two-year process of amalgamation.

According to congregation pastors, Rev. Annette Smith (St. Mark’s) and Rev. Fred Ludolph (St. John’s), this process has certainly been an exciting endeavour, involving imagination and an extremely positive outlook.

“Our conversations have focused on being innovative and creative,” Smith says. “We are not doing this just for ourselves, but for our community. When there is something exciting like this, there are always those little butterflies in your stomach—and I think everyone in our three congregations has been experiencing those butterflies lately.”



Over 45 participants from across the four western provinces joined BC Synod Bishop Greg Mohr, ABT Synod Bishop Larry Kochendorfer, MNO Synod Bishop Elaine Sauer and SK Synod Bishop Sid Haugen as they explored the Readings of Advent as part of the Lay Academy.



There are many ways of “doing church.” Urban missions exist all across Canada, in places like Surrey, B.C., Edmonton, Winnipeg, Kitchener, Ont. and in many more. They are places where, as Rev. Rick Chapman of Edmonton’s Inner City Pastoral Ministry says, “We meet people where they are.” Urban missions offer far more than just food. In cities where many are struggling—whether economically, physically, emotionally or spiritually—urban missions are a place where people come together. Above: mealtime at Surrey Urban Mission Society (SUMS), in Surrey, B.C.



Trinity, Edmonton, unveiled the Trinity Community Mural at a ceremony on Sunday, Oct. 30, 2016, a culmination of a two-year journey in planning and community building. The vision was for a mural that was a mosaic of pieces made by many hands and for a project that embraced the community. It was not only about beautification but about the power of art to improve the well-being of individuals and transform neighbourhoods.

Community members from all ages, walks of life and cultural backgrounds were invited to draw pictures or write words on the tiles that were meaningful to them. The completed mural features images in threes, paying homage to the Holy Trinity. The tiles symbolize individual prayers of the people and a theme of reformation, renewal and a focus on relationships. The mural is a testimony to the fact that everyone in a community has something to contribute to the mosaic of life.



Attendees at the mural unveiling.

“There is a new way of imagining what church can be, and what our community of faith can be in the larger community,” Smith continues. “I think the excitement overtakes the anxiety as to what the possibilities are. It really is a leap of faith—stepping out into something that evolves as we go, and I think that it’s a real reminder of who we are as faithful people in doing this. It’s not just about paying the bills anymore, it’s about being courageously innovative.”

Although unsure what this three-becoming-one congregation will exactly look like, or where it will even be worshipping, Ludolph knows the remaining land currently occupied by the churches will be used in an uplifting manner, no matter the decision on where worship will be held.


The initiative of the Eastern Synod and Lutheran Homes Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont. (LHKW) is inviting conversation about ministry and the appropriate use of resources and church property.

“There has been a solid convergence of thinking,” Smith says, noting this has occurred both congregationally and through community organizations. “Learning how to think collectively and in partnership with each other is one of the

There is always this **unbreakable** feeling of **hope** — a hope that **does not flicker**.

beautiful avenues that has only been made possible through the CECF and LHKW. We have been able to work together in a creative and sustainable way—not just for our own organization or for self-preservation, but working in a way that continues our mandate to be *In Mission for Others*, thus serving our neighbours.”

“I think that giving these funds really showed great foresight by the ELCIC and the synod,” Ludolph adds. “It was a great gift from the National Church, and an insightful decision by the Eastern Synod to take a chance and use some of this funding, knowing that with some support, we would deliver.”

“A couple weeks ago in our gospel reading, Paul was talking about Abraham and he was “as good as dead,” Rev. Ludolph reflected. “When you’re as good as dead it’s stupid to be afraid. It might be a strange way to look at it, but we—as three diminishing congregations—really had nothing to lose. None of this would have been possible without the funding and the assistance from the ELCIC and LHKW. When all three congregations are together worshipping on Sundays, there is always this unbreakable feeling of hope—a hope that does not flicker.” 



Another way of being church, an Ecumenical Shared Ministry (ESM) exists where two or more denominations co-operate to share resources. In the North Thompson Ecumenical Shared Ministry in the B.C. Interior, the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC), the United Church of Canada (UCC) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) worship together, are in mission and ministry together and are served by a single pastor. The North Thompson ESM consists of two churches, the Church of St. Paul, Barriere, and Trinity Shared Ministry, Clearwater. “We fashion a way of being the church that honours one another, takes the best from each one and encourages us to reach beyond ourselves to be more than we ever thought we could be or dared be,” says Rev. Brian Krushel. It has given us permission to think outside our denominational box and envision new ways of being the church. It has become much more than just a way to keep churches open when the numbers are against us. It is a new way forward into the future with a God who is always seeking new life.”



Top : Members from the North Thompson Ecumenical Shared Ministry working together to prepare breakfast for evacuees from the wildfires that burned in and around Williams Lake, B.C.

At right: Signing the shared ministry agreement—one congregation bringing together three denominations: ACC, UCC and ELCIC.

A recipe for building relationships

REFORMATION COMMEMORATIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY
SPARK NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO COME TOGETHER.

Influenced by events commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, Edmontonian Anna Kochendorfer and her friends decided to add a few more ingredients into the mixture.

She and her friends organized a meatball cook-off at their home church, Ascension Lutheran, inviting local Anglicans and Roman Catholics for the March 3 meal.

"We wanted to continue with the gathering and fellowship of the Catholics, Anglicans and Lutherans, plus many of us have been, and continue to be, a part of the national Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth (CLAY) gatherings and wanted to

keep that conversation going," explains Kochendorfer of the Saturday evening supper which attracted 60 people and raised more than \$300 for a local charity.

They modelled the event on previous church chili cook-offs, attracting seven teams to

compete, and inviting ecumenical officers from each denomination to judge the best recipe.

An event like this nourishes more than the actual participants through social media buzz and talk within the congregation, explains meatball judge and diaconal minister Dr. Faith Nostbakken, ecumenical officer of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories.

"One thing can breed another and sow seeds in people's mind to image what's possible," she explains.

With Canadian Lutherans holding hundreds of events in 2017 commemorating the 500th anniversary, there are numerous possibilities for reconciled relationships between Lutherans and other faith traditions, says Rev. André Lavergne, Assistant to the Bishop for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations.

He says the study document *Together in Christ*, developed jointly by the ELCIC and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, sparked many conversations between Lutherans and Catholics across the country, and led people to ask how they could



RECONCILED RELATIONSHIPS

work together in the future.

"This curriculum pushed Lutherans and Catholics to reach out and know each other," he says.

Those relationships prompted Lavergne's church in Waterloo, Ont. to reach out to the nearby Catholic parish after their priest died after a long illness. Last fall, choirs from André's congregation joined with the Catholic parish choir to perform Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem*.

The ELCIC's Eastern Synod planned 10 commemorative prayer events, based on the liturgy of the October 2016 service in Lund with Pope Francis and the president and general secretary of The Lutheran World Federation, but many more communities picked up the idea.

A national commemoration occurred in Winnipeg's newest Roman Catholic parish on July 7, 2017, during the ELCIC National Convention, with representatives from several denominations leading delegates in communion.

During the convention's business sessions, the same leaders also spoke at a panel discussion about the future of their denominations.

"We are moving beyond Lutherans and Catholics in conversations, and the community of Christians is larger than just us," says Lavergne.

"We (as Lutherans) tend to have a much more denominational purview, now we are hav-



Ecumenical meatball judges Dr. Julien Hammond (Roman Catholic), Dr. Faith Nostbakken (ELCIC), and Rev. Scott Sharman (Anglican).



Some of the seven entries; the winning team.



Enjoying fellowship at the meatball meal.



The national commemoration of the Lutheran Reformation was held at St. Gianna Beretta Molla Catholic Church, with representatives from several denominations leading in communion.



At the ELCIC's 16th Biennial National Convention, ecumenical leaders spoke at a panel discussion about the future of their denominations during the convention's business sessions.

ing a more ecumenical purview. The first rule of engagement isn't recite our theology together, but it is 'let's do something together.'"

For Trinity Evangelical Lutheran in Whitehorse, planning and holding a joint service with Catholics at the Sacred Heart Cathedral was just the latest in a long history of working together, says Rev. Barbara Groote of Ascension Lutheran in Edmonton. Groote is part of a four-member team of Lutheran pastors from the Synod of Alberta and Territories who rotate travelling to Whitehorse monthly.

She says that ecumenical events help congregants understand other faith traditions and the commonalities they share, and encourage more interaction.

"It opens us up as a community if we reach other to each other," explains Groot, whose congregation has processed with members of the nearby St. David's Anglican's Church for the last four Palm Sundays.

And that first meatball cook-off may roll into another, says Kochendorfer, who wanted to encourage youth and young adults to participate. She likes the idea of building relationships between the faith groups as well as raising money for a community cause.

"If we can gain even just a little bit more understanding with our neighbour, while helping our unseen neighbours, then I think this event would be more than a success," she says. 📖



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran in Whitehorse.



Rev. Barbara Groote, of Ascension Lutheran in Edmonton, with some of the youth from Trinity Evangelical Lutheran in Whitehorse.

Across the church

NATIONAL / SYNODICAL GATHERING OF OFFICERS OFFERS RARE OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT WITH PEERS.

Although his expertise runs to spreadsheets and budgets, Eastern Synod treasurer Keith Myra knows keeping the church afloat means much more than tracking donations and expenses.

It also includes communicating with each other across the different bodies of the church, says the Waterloo resident and retired IT manager, who attended the National/Synodical Consultation last December.

"It's one of those rare occasions where you can meet your peers in the synods and the National Church," says Myra, volunteer treasurer of Eastern Synod since 1990.

But to work together on these common issues, national and synodical staff and officers need to get to know each other.

"We need to keep working on relationships. That was a big part of the weekend," says Hamilton, who lives in Toronto.

With officers from various synods finishing up terms and new ones elected, there was little overlap of participants from the previous consultation held four years ago.

The December meeting was the first time Wayne Street, chair of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories could meet his peers from other synods.

"It offered a chance for all the council chairs to get together and the council treasurers to get together," explains Street, a retired school principal from Coaldale, AB.

Hamilton says the consultation dealt with three main issues: developing a covenant which outlines the relationship between the National Church and the synods, designing guidelines around budgeting, and considering a common benevolence ap-



ONE BODY WORKING TOGETHER

The three-day meeting in Winnipeg brought together officers from the National Church with bishops and officers from the five synods to discuss governance and financial concerns, explains Sheila Hamilton, vice-chair of the ELCIC.



Important and thoughtful work underway at the National/Synodical Consultation. The three-day meeting in Winnipeg brought together officers of the church with bishops and officers from the five synods to discuss governance and financial concerns.

proach though the Praise Appeal.

Hamilton says it is necessary to write a covenant document about the responsibilities of the synods and the National Church to reflect the current reality. The last document dates back to the 1995 convention.

"We made a list of what has changed and it was shockingly long. Obviously it was outdated," says Hamilton.

Consultation participants also discussed developing guidelines as to the percentage of benevolence dollars coming to the National Church from the synods to aid the budgeting process. Currently, there is no set percentage of donations synods forward to the National Office.



National Bishop Susan Johnson, Sheila Hamilton, ELCIC vice-chair and Linda Grainger, ELCIC secretary, take part in worship at the National/Synodical Consultation last December.



Eastern Synod treasurer Keith Myra.



ELCIC vice-chair Sheila Hamilton.

The role of the National Church is to provide a sense of identity for churches across Canada.

The Eastern Synod sends on a minimum of 25 per cent of donations to the ELCIC, and plans to increase that amount by one per cent each year, says Myra, reflecting the value the synod places on the work of the National Church.

"We believe we are giving a high priority to the National Church because that's the one part of our budget that is increasing. We have cut back in other areas," he says.

The consultation also underlined the importance of understanding the work and mission of


each church body, whether it is the congregations, synods, or the National Church, explains Bishop Sid Haugen of Saskatchewan Synod.

He says the congregation is the primary place where Christ is proclaimed in Word, Sacrament, and action, the synods support the congregations in their work and assist them in finding pastors, and the National Church speaks to common issues and represents Lutherans at the international level.

"The role of the National Church is to provide a sense of identity for churches across Canada," says Haugen.

The National Church also sets standards for theological education and ordination, manages group benefits for pastors, and maintains relationships with the Canadian Council of Churches, KAIROS Canada, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, The Lutheran World Federation, and the Anglican Church of Canada.

Myra says the consultation laid the groundwork for more co-operation within the ELCIC, with participants forming three working groups to move the issues forward.

"The true proof of its success will be how committed each synod and the National Church are to following up on and implementing the ideas that were generated," he says. 



Canadian Lutheran
World Relief



THE CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
LE CONSEIL CANADIEN DES ÉGLISES



The Anglican Church of Canada



World Council
of Churches



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION



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

The ELCIC maintains relationships with various national and international bodies and organizations.



"Ponder anew, what the Almighty can do." Inspired by this theme, the Synod of Alberta and the Territories invited synod members to dinners across Alberta to celebrate the synod's work in the past, present and future. At the dinners, attendees viewed a video about the work of the synod and its ministries. Bishop Larry Kochendorfer shared his vision of what could be possible in the future. Those inspired to do so were offered an opportunity to support the synod's work through legacy gifts and other means. Attendees here in Edmonton enjoy food and fellowship.



The work and mission of each church body includes local and international relationships. CLWR's past executive director Robert Granke, National Bishop Susan Johnson, Eastern Synod Bishop Michael Pryse and Bishop Emeritus of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land, Munib Younan, stop for a selfie.

Small but mighty

CONGREGATIONS AND COMMUNITIES COME TOGETHER WITH RENEWED ENERGY AROUND THE REFORMATION CHALLENGE INITIATIVE.

When the ELCIC's Reformation Challenge was first announced at the 2015 ELCIC National Convention, Lana Wilfur—former Chairperson and long-time member of Grace Lutheran, Dawson Creek, B.C. recalls how “it just seemed so far out of reach.”

Wilfur's congregation was one of many featured in a video highlighting cross-country initiatives that took place as a result of the Reformation Challenge. By coming together to support the initiative, the members of Grace went above and beyond their original Reformation Challenge goal, and completely rekindled and renewed their call

to be *In Mission for Others*.

It was Wilfur who came up with the idea to create a ‘thermometer style’ donation gauge, providing a visual reminder of the commitment to raising funds for the reformation appeal.

“I’ve always enjoyed art, and I have actually done a thermometer like that when we paid our mortgage off in our church building, some 25 years ago,” she says. “It was just so neat because people would come in to worship on Sunday and just see the red creeping up; it just gave everybody the encouragement that they needed. Our original goal was \$2,000, but we easily surpassed that.”

For some, \$2,000 may not be looked upon as a lot of money, but for others—such as the congregation of Grace Lutheran Church—it was an incredible offering.

“When we originally said that we were going to raise \$2,000, everybody looked at me like I was crazy,” Wilfur says with a laugh. “And you know what, we ended up sending in \$3,724 when all was said and done. I think that served as an eye-opener to the point that you can definitely do so much more than you would ever imagine.”

Reflecting back on how the initial goals seemed beyond



EMPOWERED DISCIPLES

reach, Wilfur notes how it is important to reach beyond your comfort level sometimes. “You will always do more than you originally think you can,” she says. “If the anticipated donation numbers would have been lower, we probably wouldn’t have been able to accomplish all we did.”

Kevin Gilbertson, also a member of Grace (which has only 15 active members and a total of 40 voting members) thoroughly enjoyed the community aspect to the ELCIC’s Reformation Challenge.

“We are a very tight knit community here, and we love to help each other out,” he says in the

It is so **important** to look outside of ourselves, and to **give of our love, our money** and **our talents** to others around the world.

ELCIC’s Reformation Challenge Video. “We are also very community focused as we like to try to help as many people in the community—whether they be of different denominations or not. We feel that is a big part of our mandate or mission.”

“It is so important to look outside of ourselves, and to give of

our love, our money and our talents to others around the world,” Wilfur shares. “There are so many people less fortunate than we are out in the world. I think it helps to open our eyes, as so many of us get focused on ourselves and our own issues, as opposed to going out and serving others. Not only does it open your eyes, but it also



Grace Lutheran's Lana Wilfur with her thermometer-style donation gauge.

opens your mind; quite often people end up receiving more than they ever give when they do that.”

St. James Lutheran in New Dundee, Ont., also felt inspired to reach out in new ways in the community through their in-

volvement in the Reformation Challenge.

“We held what we called a ‘Blessing of the Seed and Tree’ service that Sunday,” Rev. Bonnie Schelter-Brown explains of an early Sunday morning service in spring of 2017. “We invited people

to drive their tractors to church while we provided a short blessing of those tractors. We also blessed some marigold seeds and handed them out to everyone that came. We basically spent the whole day focusing on creation, by affirming and honouring that part of our community.”

Schelter-Brown and her congregation also then set out on foot to plant roughly 100 trees on the grounds of one of their parishioners.

“I would call New Dundee an incredible congregation with incredible people, who always seem to step up,” Schelter-Brown said. “I offered this Reformation Challenge idea to them, and they picked up the tree planting aspect and have already surpassed their goals. We are certainly not done with our challenge yet—we have even had a suggestion to look outside the box and consider planting some trees in Fort McMurray, Alta.”

Although the church of St. James only sees a weekly average attendance of approximately 50, the rural congregation has been able to deliver on its promises, while empowering others to continue what they began through the initiative. With the Reformation Challenge having now officially come to an end, Rev. Schelter-Brown and the members of her church are hoping to find other areas in which they can continue to support the work of the ELCIC in 2018. 🌿



Handing out marigold seeds with the bulletins at St. James in New Dundee, Ont.



Blessing the tractors on “Blessing of the Seed and Tree Sunday” in New Dundee, Ont.



Selina Hay, from Grace, Winnipeg, began a YouTube campaign to raise money for refugees after seeing photos of Syrian refugee child Alan Kurdi on a beach in Turkey. Her story was one of several included in a video featuring congregations across our church sharing how and why they were engaged in the ELCIC Reformation Challenge: youtu.be/hJm-pcSG674.



Spirit of Grace, Brooks, Alta., sponsored a refugee family of three from Syria. In 2017 they celebrated the first anniversary of their arrival in Canada.

Top left: Spirit of Grace members welcome the Alhaj family to Canada, father Raed, his wife Manal and their small son Tayeb. Right: Tayeb and a Canadian friend at a Canada Day event in Rosemary, Alta. Left: Grant and Kathleen Jensen, from Spirit of Grace, with the family on Family Day in Brooks.



The women's group of Messiah, Winnipeg, assembled 37 baby bundles for Canadian Lutheran World Relief.



The ELCIC REFORMATION CHALLENGE



Rev. Chris Bishopp earned the nickname "Mr. Slap A Zero On It" for proposing the idea to raise all Reformation Challenge target goals by one zero.

Over the past two years, the ELCIC Reformation Challenge has engaged and enabled members and congregations from across the ELCIC to develop both local and global connections with Lutherans near and far. As shown through the Reformation Challenge, living *In Mission for Others* can be demonstrated countless ways.

The ELCIC Reformation Challenge was originally a way for individuals, congregations, and communities of the ELCIC to donate funds to four different strategically positioned areas of mission work. The originally proposed plan of helping sponsor 50 refugees, plant 500,000 trees, donate 50 scholarships to students belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land, and donate \$50,000 to The Lutheran World Federation's Endowment Fund seemed like lofty, yet rather attainable goals at the time it was originally proposed to the ELCIC's National Church Council (NCC) in 2015.

As the motion was being dis-

cussed at council, NCC member Rev. Chris Bishopp proposed the idea to consider raising the target goals in each area by "one zero."

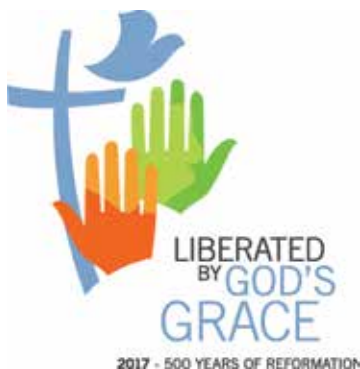
Bishopp's push for a higher goal certainly came with some risk, but it was a challenge that paid off immensely.

"My thought was that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity for us to engage in these commitments," Bishopp said. "The celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation only happens once. I felt as though we needed some big, audacious goals to really generate some excitement. I am just incredibly amazed and satisfied with the way that our members have reached out to accomplish these goals."

This 500th anniversary is happening once in our lifetime, and we needed something that would stretch us," said Bishopp. "The idea of adding a zero to these was the hope that it may end up being a stretch. I wasn't concerned with *if* could we meet the goals, but rather if they were lofty goals that we could reach



Faith, Winnipeg Sunday School Mission Project in March, 2017. Students decorated pots in which they later planted seeds. Rev. Tyler Gingrich (standing), former youth engagement co-ordinator with CLWR, visited that Sunday to talk about the work of CLWR. The Sunday school also held a cookie sale at which they raised \$361; the proceeds were designated towards the planting of 100 trees in Ethiopia and 20 olive trees in Beit Jala, through CLWR.



for. Obviously, as you see from the totals, we were able to exceed almost all of the original goals."

"Exceed" would certainly be an understatement, as 548 refugees were sponsored, 97,505 trees were planted, 206 scholarships were created, and \$159,050 was raised for the LWF Endow-

ment Fund. As 2017 came to a close, well over four million total dollars had been donated to this reformation appeal.

"It is absolutely amazing that we have been able to come up with this four million dollars, which appears to be new additional money," said Bishopp.

What could we as **members** of the **ELCIC** do **together** to **commemorate** the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in a **significant** and **meaningful** way?



548 Refugees sponsored



206 Scholarships for ELCJHL schools



97,505 Trees planted



\$159,050
Donated to the LWF
Endowment Fund

I am really **excited** and **proud** of **our church** for the response to the Reformation Challenge. I think we all **surprised ourselves** in terms of the capacity we showed for **mission** in our world.

~ National Bishop Susan Johnson

"I don't think anyone held back their regular giving while also contributing to the Reformation Challenge, and that's pretty amazing. It says to me that we have people who are really inspired and actively engaged in doing something that brought us together. I think that's the real story here; it made us think about how we care for others in the world in which we live."

The ELCIC Reformation Challenge successfully saw countless fundraising dinners, car washes, musical festivals, guest speakers, concerts, socials, and tree-planting ceremonies, amongst a conglomeration of other activities created to help raise awareness of the four main issues at hand.

"I am really excited and proud of our church for the response to the Reformation Challenge," ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson said. "I think we all

surprised ourselves in terms of the capacity we showed for mission in our world.

The fact that we went over one of the new challenges, in terms of sponsoring refugees is amazing. Other churches have given us such positive feedback for that," continued Johnson. "The effort we made in all the challenges was so incredibly satisfying; it proves to me that we have way more capacity than we sometimes acknowledge, and it gives me much hope for the future."

Whether it was by planting trees, donating money, welcoming in refugees, hosting fundraisers or by simply spreading the good news of the ELCIC Reformation Challenge by word of mouth, every single action has proven instrumental in the immense success of this two-year appeal. 🌱



Reformation Challenge projects ranged from refugee sponsorship to tree planting to music programs, and various other creative fundraising events in many congregations around the country, contributing to the enormous success of the appeal.

Your offering

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) functions through three major expressions: **NATIONALLY** as the ELCIC, **REGIONALLY** as synods, and **LOCALLY** as congregations. Each expression of the church has unique ministries as well as ministries which are shared with the other expressions. When you give to the ELCIC, you help support all the expressions of the church!

In 2016, ELCIC members gave over \$60.7 million in regular offerings to support the call to be *In Mission for Others* through these three expressions of the ELCIC:

CONGREGATIONS... 94.3%



\$57,242,102 was used by congregations to fund local ministries. Your weekly offering supports the work of your congregation and its ministry.

SYNODS... 4.3%

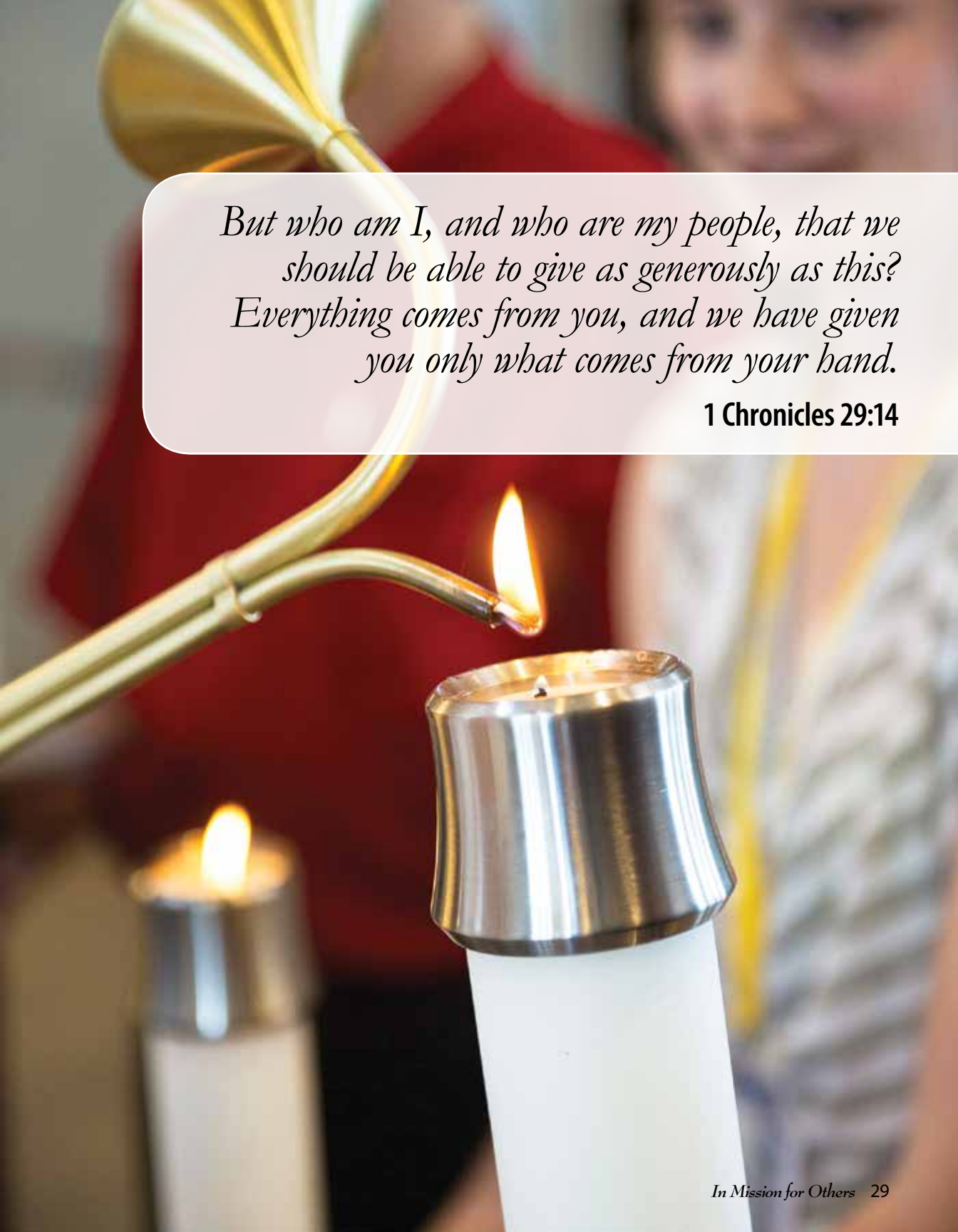


\$2,615,231 was shared to support the ministry done through ELCIC synods. This includes supporting congregations and leaders within your synod.

NATIONAL CHURCH... 1.3%



\$821,278 was sent through the synods to the National Church to support the wider mission of the ELCIC.



*But who am I, and who are my people, that we
should be able to give as generously as this?
Everything comes from you, and we have given
you only what comes from your hand.*

1 Chronicles 29:14

#myELCIC

Connect with others across the church and share your work *In Mission for Others* and what connects you to the ELCIC, being Lutheran and your faith!



WLS @wls_online Two-week old Oscar gets his first glimpse of #AshWednesday. Welcome Oscar! @ESynodELCIC @MichaelPryse @NationalBishop #myELCIC



JARamey @juliearamey #TI2017 #bwat, #stpaulsbwr and #Rivercross cookin' in the kitchen. Cookies and apple crisp ready for Community Cafe.



Larry Kochendorfer @abtbishoplarry #ABTSynod Candidacy Committee (CTEL) Retreat at Mulhurst Lutheran Camp, Pigeon Lake. Wonderful leadership! We are blessed! #myelcic



Pastor Jane Gingrich @PastorJaneG "Here I stand. I can do no other." #MartinLuther #Reformation500 #MyELCIC #October31 #IhaveMartininmynametoo



Courtenay Reedman @ReedmanParker Church conventions are sweet
 #myELCIC #nationalconvention
 #liberatedbygodsgrace #customcookies
 #sweetimpressionsbakery #eatlocal

Elina Salonen @Pastori_Elina StPeters #Neustadt #Thanksgiving dinner-good food, good friends, all God's gifts to us! #ESynodELCIC #myELCIC Hospitality at its best!



Larry Kochendorfer @abtbishoplarry 120th St. Peter's, Bashaw with Rev Julianna Wehrfritz-Hanson, Rev Larry Soveran & DM Monica Denk... wonderful celebration! #myelcic #abtsynod



RedeemerELCICLondon @RedeemerELCIC We can't remain silent. We must speak up for our Jewish and Muslim sisters and brothers. Love is stronger than hate #LondonisLove #myelcic

Share your selfies, photos and social media posts using the **#myELCIC** hashtag. Whether you're on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, make sure you click on the hashtag and see what



others are doing across the church!

National Office

There are six full time, eight part time and one casual staff working for the National Office for a staffing compliment of 10.5 equivalent full-time positions.



Your National Office staff:

(1) Rev. Susan C. Johnson, *National Bishop* (2) Carter Brooks, *Communications Specialist* (3) Norman Coull, *Proofreader, Canada Lutheran* (4) Catherine Crivici, *Graphic Designer* (5) Trina Gallop Blank, *Assistant to the Bishop for Communications and Resource Generation* (6) Rev. Paul Gehrs, *Assistant to the Bishop, Justice and Leadership* (7) Kyle Giesbrecht, *Director, Finance and Administration* (8) Rev. André Lavergne, *Assistant to the Bishop, Ecumenical and Interfaith* (9) Rev. Lyle McKenzie, *Assistant to the Bishop, Worship* (10) Desiree Mendoza, *Meetings and Communications Co-ordinator* (11) Rick Natividad, *Information Technology Co-ordinator* (12) Deacon Gretchen Peterson, *Assistant to the Bishop, Youth* (13) Rev. Kenn Ward, *Editor, Canada Lutheran* (14) Barb Wiebe, *Office Assistant and Canada Lutheran Circulation* (15) Dennis Wolochatiuk, *Accountant*.

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We thank all those who contributed to this annual report.

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Flat Luther at the Luther Village Bike-A-Thon.



There was time for informal conversations as leaders prepared for the National Reformation Commemoration at the ELCIC's 16th Biennial Convention. Such interaction is as important in fostering ecumenical relations as was the celebration of the service itself.



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