



ELCIC

*In Mission
for Others*



ANNUAL REPORT 2016



ON THE COVER

Top: The Lutheran World Federation President Bishop Younan and Pope Francis at the Catholic-Lutheran joint commemoration of the Reformation, in Lund, Sweden; Rev. Riitta Hepomaki and Virginia MacDonald at the Ash Wednesday service at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. Bottom: participants at the Eastern Synod Assembly; students at the Evangelical Lutheran School in Beit Sahour.






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Bishop Susan Johnson
 Vice-President,
 The Lutheran World Federation

Message from the

National Bishop

Dear members of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada,

This year marks the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. For the past three years we have been lifting up the theme The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has adopted for the commemoration, *Liberated by God's Grace*, along with the three sub-themes, *Salvation—Not for Sale; Human Beings—Not for Sale; Creation—Not for Sale*.

You may have seen these themes used at the many gatherings that took place across our church last year: Synod conventions, the Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth (CLAY) gathering, the National Worship Conference, and more.

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 that you are doing!

I have said it before and I will say it again and again, I love our church and I'm proud of the ministry we do. It is an honour to be called to be your National Bishop. I know first-hand from my visits to Synod Council meetings and Synod conventions, and participation at the youth and worship gatherings across our church—there is a new and exciting spirit in our church. We are becoming a mission-focused church that is spiritually grounded and vibrant, uniting in common vision and aims.

How else can you explain a church undertaking something as bold and exciting as the ELCIC Reformation Challenge? I'm so grateful for how you have embraced this initiative and the support it has received from



National Bishop Susan C. Johnson

across the church. We may not have reached all our goals, but this has been an incredibly transformative initiative.

As we read in Romans 5:5, *...and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us*.

Through your faithfulness, witness, creativity and hopefulness, I have learned that hope does not disappoint. We are *Liberated by God's Grace*. We are blessed with a hope in Jesus Christ that will not disappoint us.

Yours in Christ,

From top, l to r: With ecumenical leaders from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Anglican Church of Canada and The Episcopal Church; planting a tree in Wittenburg, Germany at Luthergarten; with Saskatchewan Synod Bishop Sid Haugen; with Bishop Younan and Eastern Synod Bishop Michael Pryse at the Eastern Synod Convention; visiting with Capt. (Rev.) Stephan Wagner, military chaplain, Valcartier, Que.; releasing a bird from the Environmental Education Centre in Palestine; participating in the joint Lutheran/Catholic service to commemorate the Reformation in Lund, Sweden.

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



The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) is a church *In Mission for Others*. At a 2013 meeting of the ELCIC's National Church Council, members discussed the question, "where is God calling the national expression of our church?"

In response to this question—through prayer, discernment and discussion—the following four areas of focus were determined: Spirited Discipleship, Healthy Church, Compassionate Justice and Effective Partnerships.

These four areas of focus guide the work and ministry of the National Church. You may be surprised to learn how these areas support ministry at your local expression!

Left: Synod of Alberta and the Territories (ABT) Convention; CLAY 2016. Right, l to r: table discussion at the 2016 ABT Synod Convention; group activity highlighting water injustice at CLAY 2016; elementary school students at Dar al-Kalima in Palestine.



Spirited DISCIPLESHIP

- Develop and grow the Call to Spiritual Renewal
- Speak publicly and witness for the gospel as a National Church
- Undertake corporate leadership by encouraging energy for Spiritual Renewal for communities



HEALTHY Church

- Articulating a common vision for the church
- Develop and promote a culture of mutual trust and accountability
- Improve the financial health of the church
- Improve communications concerning the National Church



COMPASSIONATE Justice

- Challenge the causes and respond to the consequences of injustice through effective partnership with Canadian Lutheran World Relief • Continue to pursue right relationships with Indigenous peoples • Promote climate justice through right relationships with the land • Support and work for justice and peace in the Holy Land • Address issues of homelessness and affordable housing •

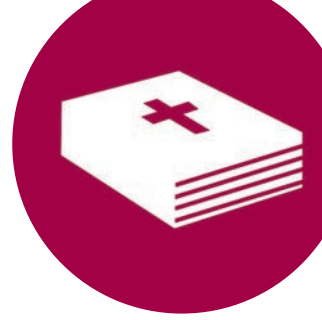


Effective PARTNERSHIPS

- Enhance the church's ability to be *In Mission for Others* internationally, in the North American Region of The Lutheran World Federation, in Canada and through partnerships •

Pictures taken from Rev. Susan Horton's driveway on May 3, 2016 when she first left home for "a temporary evacuation" of the neighbourhood. The fire had jumped the Athabasca River and the west side of the next neighbourhood was already burning.





Tend and befriend

When the Alberta wildfires broke out in Fort McMurray last May, the community and, indeed, ELCIC members from across Canada came together to offer support.

“It spread like wildfire.” All too often we loosely toss that deeply frightening phrase around. Maybe it’s used in reference to an illness, or some troubling news coming from a political figure. But what it usually isn’t referring to is fire itself.

In early May of 2016, members of Christ the King Lutheran Church, and the surrounding community of Fort McMurray, Alta., were forced to experience the living nightmare surrounding a fast-spreading forest fire, a city-wide evacuation and the devastating effects that the severe wildfire had on their community.

Rev. Susan Horton—Pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church during the time of the forest fire and evacuation—



Looking up the hill from Hospital Street, which crosses the highway through town. At the top of the burned-out hill is the Abasand neighbourhood, which suffered heavy losses.

vividly remembers how quickly the forest fire became a threat to her city.

“I was in my home office at the time, and the office faced east, so I didn’t even see the fire building at all,” she said. “My

husband actually phoned me from work warning me to look outside and pack up some things. When I stepped out, one of the neighbourhoods near us was already in flames! Here I was thinking that we would still be

Here I was thinking that we would still be having our weekly Bible study that evening.... —Rev. Susan Horton



This photo was taken in late June or early July, in the former green space/trail area that was the buffer between neighbourhoods. This part of the fire came up behind the houses across the street from Rev. Horton's.

In crisis they used to say it was “fight, flight, or freeze.” But over this past year we have definitely seen the phrase “tend and befriend” as a response to disaster.

—Rev. Susan Horton

having our weekly Bible study that evening....”

Much like Horton indicated, the Tuesday night Bible study—along with almost every other event in town—was put on hold on May 3, 2016, as the growing fire rapidly spread throughout Fort McMurray, aided heavily by the hot, dry and windy weather conditions.

“On Tuesday morning as the fire developed, it did the absolutely unthinkable, and jumped the Athabasca River,” Horton said. “Never before in anyone’s memory had a fire jumped that river. As the river provided a shelter of sorts, the local golf course seemed to be on the safe side of things earlier in the day.

A lot of people were actually stopping in to take pictures and pop by for a drink before the course actually started sending people home once the fire jumped.”

After the growing excitement of the fire turned to panic, the one road in and out of Fort McMurray became utter gridlock, as the entire city’s population attempted to pull itself from its burning home. Although no lives were lost in the blaze, significant damage was done to the area, including that of many Christ the King members’ houses. In all, the wildfire destroyed more than 2,400 buildings and forced over 80,000 residents from their homes. The insured

We are very pleased with the response from donors and very satisfied with the plan we have developed and projects to be supported going forward.”

—CLWR Executive Director Robert Granke

losses are estimated at roughly four billion dollars.

But as so often happens in times of extreme difficulty and disaster, countless organizations, churches, communities, towns, cities and countries teamed up in an effort to help support the people of Fort McMurray struggling with food, shelter and clothing, as well as providing help as the Albertan city prepared for a mass rebuild.

On May 4, 2016, the ELCIC—in partnership with Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR)—launched a special wildfire relief appeal in which donors provided financial support through

the city’s Lutheran churches to those suffering loss.

“CLWR received more than \$500,000 from all sources,” CLWR executive director Robert Granke said. “We engaged with the local and regional church leadership and issued calls for proposals. The funds will be used for rebuilding and especially for helping those directly affected with trauma counseling. We are very pleased with the response from donors and very satisfied with the plan we have developed and projects to be supported going forward.”

Horton has since retired from Christ the King and moved



Heat from the fires melted vinyl siding on some of the homes in Fort McMurray.

to Edmonton, but in October 2016 she returned to Fort McMurray along with Granke. While there, they met with the community oversight directors to determine which areas they would be able to support. It was a very moving trip for Granke—one that certainly “confirmed the needs of CLWR.”

Now over a year removed from the largest wildfire evacuation in Alberta’s history, there are signs of hope rising from the ashes.

“Along with countless prayer services, one of the good things that came of this is the recent contract renewal of our traveling grief counsellor,” Horton said. “She is now locked in for another year to provide the people of Fort McMurray access to her counselling. In crisis they used to say it was ‘fight, flight, or freeze’. But over this past year we have definitely seen the phrase ‘tend and befriend’ as a response to disaster. That was so clearly what happened here.”



Land cleared and ready for construction of new homes.



Some of the Ash Wednesday Lenten-themed art display put on by Peace Lutheran Church in Innisfail, Alta.





Creativity calls

New ways of engaging in ministry and participating in God's mission in the world today.

Perhaps they seem unlikely to be connected, but a fellowship café, a community chalkboard, and a Lenten art display all have at least one thing in common—they were created with the hopes of engaging their surrounding community in conversation and providing services, which were lacking in their neighbourhoods.

Rev. Chun Zhang, St. John's Lutheran Church, Hamilton, is a part-time pastor serving in the Eastern Synod. In just a little over a year, he has helped lead his congregation and community forward with many exciting projects. He implemented the "Little Library"—a green place of fellowship within Hamilton's downtown corridor, the "English Conversation Café"—a volunteer-led community program for those hoping to learn the English language in a conversa-

tional manner, and the "Community Chalkboard"—a public question board outside the church giving passersby the opportunity to answer weekly questions.

"The In Mission for Others"

theme really got us thinking about what mission really does mean to the local congregation, and the gaps that we have with our local community," Zhang said. "In Canada, the mission is shifting as many people are com-

In Canada, the mission is shifting as many people are coming from all over the world to live with us. — Rev. Chun Zhang



A meeting of the Conversation Café at St. John's, Hamilton.

Synod Mission Initiative Funding

The ELCIC's Church Extension and Capital Fund (CECF) has provided a total of \$300,000 to each synod for Synod Mission initiatives. Over a five-year timespan (2015–20), funds will be used for activities that are experimental in spirit and genuinely seek to explore what it means to participate in God's mission in the world today.

The intent of the project is for the ELCIC to journey with synods, encouraging them to discern experiments in participating in God's mission in our current context, and by reflecting with synods on these experiments in order to learn how to steward the use of future CECF funds.

Each of the ELCIC's five synods are allocating the funds in different and creative ways. This funding has generated significant excitement and imagination.

2015-2020

ing from all over the world to live with us. So I feel that we don't always need to go long distances to do the mission; that makes it much easier for the locals and our everyday members to do mission by connecting with those in our neighbourhood."

Zhang's projects have gone over quite well with his nearby community, often bringing in groups of people who may have otherwise never considered engaging in church activities.

"We have Living Rock [a ministry for street involved youth] stationed right across the street," he said. "Lately they have been able to occupy our space and sit down to chat and read some books. Although we have been supporting them financially for years, some of their youth still do not feel comfortable in a church building. But

now they have made significant strides in gathering here and generating conversation throughout our local community."

Over in the town of Innisfail, Alta., Rev. Kathy Calkins and Peace Lutheran Church held a Lenten-themed art display in the local Co-op Mall on Ash Wednesday. Although the mall restricted the public use of scripture and prayer, the magnificent display of local art was able to serve its viewers in a very spiritual way.

"Our congregation has a little bit of a history with artists and people who are connected with the art community in various ways," Calkins said. "With our congregation aging and the members sometimes unable to attend evening services, we thought of hosting a mid-day Lenten art display as a way



Volunteers from St. John's, Hamilton, helped Rev. Chun Zhang establish the Little Library—a green place of fellowship within Hamilton's downtown corridor.

of engaging some of the Lenten aspects throughout our community. There was great traffic and a good size to the display—we ended up with over 50 pieces of artwork from local artists.”

As Peace Lutheran was unable to use words to convey the Lenten message in the public

setting, Calkins and her fellow volunteers let the artwork do all of the talking.

“We invited people to present their art in themes of creation, pollution, discrimination, poverty and the relationships with diverse peoples,” Calkins said. “We wanted to engage those themes as areas in which

we may have fallen short. Some of the artwork also featured Lenten displays, such as crosses. Those themes really generated a lot of conversation with many of the individuals in our community; the interaction was great. It was a perfect way to speak the faith without physically speaking it.” 📖

HEALTHY CHURCH



Right: Quite literally “healthy church”—a group stretch during the ELCIC Group Services Inc. presentation at the Synod of Alberta and the Territories Convention.

Below: Rev. Kathy Martin, BC Synod Bishop Greg Mohr and National Bishop Susan Johnson joyfully exit worship at the BC Synod Convention.



Following the Canada Day run/walk, l to r: Dirk Lange, Paul Gehrs, Murray Still, Florence Lange, Keesha Beardy and Peter Kitchekeesik. The school hosted the event to promote health, physical activity, community and fun. Walking together was a simple expression of solidarity and supporting youth was important to the leaders who hosted us.





Learning to pray from the heart

First you have to know the story, only then can you take steps towards reconciliation.

It was on a mid-summer justice and reconciliation tour to Split Lake, Man. where Rev. Paul Gehrs was asked on the spot to offer healing prayers for the northern community of Tataskweyak Cree Nation, at the Community Hall during the local Gospel Jamboree.

"So there we were, frantically searching in our phones for what exact words to say in that

healing prayer, when one of the locals turned around to me and said, 'just pray from your heart,'" said Gehrs. "Forget the structure and the technicalities of it all.

Just let your hearts listen clearly to what people needed, and then pray from the heart. Pray for what we were moved by —what the Holy Spirit would

Forget the structure and the technicalities of it all. Just let your hearts listen clearly to what people needed, and then pray from the heart. — Split Lake resident



Following Sunday worship at St. John the Baptist Anglican Church, where members of the tour participated in the service. Back row l to r: Rev. Dr. Larry Beardy, Rev. Paul Gehrs, the Venerable Kenneth Kitchekeesik, Rev. Martha Spence, Peter Keechikesik, Rev. Katharine Bergbusch. Front row l to r: Bishop Elaine Sauer, Rev. Ted Chell, Rev. Canon Dr. Murray Still, Rev. Dr. Dirk Lange, Rev. Tyler Gingrich.

have us say at that moment.”

Anglican Archdeacon Larry Beardy, Split Lake, invited Gehrs and a group of 10 other rostered/lay people from the Manitoba/Northwestern Ontario Synod to travel roughly 900 kilometers to the northern community in hope of building and re-establishing relationships, while participating in local events and proceedings. This coming together and rap-

prochement of two separate communities will long be remembered.

Beardy, who serves in his northern community with the diocese of Mishamikowdesh, also doubles as a high school woodworking teacher within the Industrial and Native Arts program in Split Lake. He spoke of how he initiated the invitation.

When Jesus calls us somewhere, he says, “come and see.” So if you want to know about northern Manitoba, you come and see. I believe that is one of the first steps in reconciliation. First you have to know the story. — Archdeacon Larry Beardy

“The trip was very successful—it was a beautiful eye-opening time for everyone,” he said.

“When Jesus calls us somewhere, he says, “come and see.” So if you want to know about northern Manitoba, you come and see. I believe that is one of the first steps in reconciliation. First you have to know the story.”

For Gehrs—assistant to the National Bishop, justice and leadership—a highlight of the experience in northern Manitoba was the daily reflective group circle discussions. One of the most touching and meaningful experiences was the moment at the Gospel Jamboree where he was able to

COMPASSIONATE JUSTICE

El Salvadoran artist Christian Armando Chavarria Ayala visited Canada and the ABT Synod, supported by a grant from the Lutheran Triune Educational and Benevolent Society of Calgary. Surviving a traumatic childhood of violence, loss and civil war, Christian is now a gifted artist who makes and paints crosses and other items in the El Salvadoran tradition. He makes a living from his art to support his theological studies at the Salvadoran Lutheran University. Christian’s crosses have been gifts in recent years to Pope Francis, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Orthodox Church of Lebanon. His work is now recognized and on display in churches and homes across the world.



let go of his trained formalities as a pastor, and focus his attention and prayers on the needs of the people on hand.

"One of the families that I met as we were walking around the town offered me water on our walk. I stopped for a drink and talked with them for a while," he said. "At a healing service later that day, that same family came up for prayers and healing. They were extremely honest about the work they needed to do on their relationship and within their family."

"It was truly a moving experience for me," he said, noting that it's a moment he keeps returning to when he's drawn into prayer. "Even when I'm writing prayers... formal prayers at that, if I'm praying from my heart, for the group that's needing it, then it's going to be okay."

Beardy was quick to point out that after time, praying from the heart should come naturally. And for his community, it has always been that way.

"Much like the Hebrew people, my people are of oral tradition," Beardy said. "When you pray, your communication with God should be from the heart. So that is how we communicate with our Creator. And we ask our Creator to heal the people and also to bring reconciliation to all peoples."

Building relationships within one's own community is important, but as Gehrs says, taking



Outside St. John the Baptist Anglican Church. L to r: Luther Chell, Rev. Dr. Dirk Lange, Bishop Elaine Sauer, Rev. Ted Chell, Florence Lange, Rev. Katharine Bergbusch, Rev. Canon Dr. Murray Still, Rev. Tyler Gingrich, Caitlin Gingrich; front: Rev. Paul Gehrs.

After time, praying from the heart should come naturally. "Much like the Hebrew people, my people are of oral tradition. When you pray, your communication with God should be from the heart. So that is how we communicate with our Creator." — Archdeacon Larry Beardy

on extended invitations from those in other circumstances—or entirely different communities—is where the theme of justice and reconciliation can come into play.

"Fundamentally, this is about building relationships in your neighbourhood with Indigenous people, but it's also about just

befriending people in general," Gehrs said. "It's not a 'what's wrong in this context—how can I fix it—what can I bring?' type of thing, but more along the lines of 'how can we build relationships and mutual respect together?' In pursuing these things, we will discover the ways we can help one another." 📖

Receiving treatment at Augusta Victoria Hospital.





Advocacy, prayer and partnership

A sharing of mission, faith, resources and worship.

What is an effective partnership? What are the essential elements to make a partnership thrive? Can a partnership thrive under long-distance circumstances?

For the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and their partner, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL)—both member churches of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF)—the answers to these questions have become extremely evident. With 10,000 kilometres and the Atlantic ocean separating them, the ELCIC and the ELCJHL have demonstrated success between the two churches despite the very long-distance relationship.

In 1999, the ELCIC began its companionship relationship with the ELCJHL. Through this, the sharing of mission, faith, resources, worship and prayer has

become evident. The ELCJHL places major importance on building peace in the region, and in its struggle to be a witness for peace and justice, the ELCJHL provides educational, ecumenical, diaconal and interfaith initiatives.

The ELCIC supports the goal of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. It communicates this position to the Government of Canada when needed and commends religious leaders in the region

for their peace building efforts. ELCIC members are reminded to pray regularly for peace for all people in the Holy Land, especially the ELCJHL. They are also encouraged to study the history and the current events in the Holy Land.

Although only having approximately 3,000 members in six congregations, the ELCJHL covers a lot of ground, geographically. With churches located in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahour,



Elementary students in the Evangelical Lutheran School in Beit Sahour.



National Bishop Susan Johnson visits with high school students in Beit Sahour.

Religious leaders
have a responsibility.
Peace and dignity
will come with how
we educate and
how we dialogue
and we can reflect
this to the politicians.

— ELCJHL Bishop
Rev. Dr. Munib Younan

Ramallah, and Jordan, ELCJHL Bishop, Rev. Dr. Munib Younan is able to maintain many connections both at home and in partnership within the ELCIC.

"I come to the table of dialogue with different religious leaders from the three faiths," Younan said in February upon receiving the Niwano Peace Award for his work in the Middle East. "I come with the suffering of my people under my skin. I come to speak on the future of the people who are living in this land. Religious leaders have a responsibility. Peace and dignity will come with how we educate and how we dialogue and we can reflect this to the politicians."

The ELCIC's Eastern Synod

is also in a Global Mission Companion relationship with the ELCJHL. When the agreement was signed in 2013 at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem, Younan said, "No church is so big that it cannot learn from other churches and no church is so small that it doesn't have spiritual talents."

The ELCIC's partner agency, Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR), has also partnered for many decades with the LWF, in co-operation with the ELCJHL. CLWR helps support vocational training and health care through the Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH).

"The needs are as acute as ever and growing as Palestine

seeks to address the needs of its citizens and grow its economy,” says CLWR’s executive director, Robert Granke. Recently, CLWR assisted a program that helps patients and their caregivers make secure passage between Gaza and the West Bank for critical services.

Although attention is often drawn to the physical outreach between the ELCIC and ELCJHL, another significant area of partnership is around prayer.

On the seventh Sunday of Easter, the ELCIC and Anglican Church of Canada join in a day of prayer to pray for peace for Jerusalem and the Holy Land. This practice is part of a response

We are blessed by our companion relationship with the ELCJHL.

— ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson

to a call by delegates at the 2009 National Convention calling for a designated Sunday each year.

In addition, on the 24th day of each month, ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson invites ELCIC members to join in a global ecumenical prayer vigil for the Christian communities in Palestine and Israel, and for all those who are suffering in the Holy Land, for Palestinians and Israelis, and for peace in the Middle East and the world.

“Praying on the 24th of each month reminds us to remember the people who live in the Holy Land today and their deep yearning for peace,” Bishop Johnson said. “We are blessed by our companion relationship with the ELCJHL. The ELCIC is supported by the ELCJHL through prayer, through the witness of Bishop Younan, and through a deeper understanding of the challenges in the region and in our country.” 📖



National Bishop Susan Johnson with Anton Nassar, principal, Dar al-Kalima Evangelical Lutheran School in Bethlehem; students working with pottery at the Vocational Training Centre, Jerusalem.



The ELCIC REFORMATION CHALLENGE

Together in Hope:

Lutherans across the country are joining hands to fulfil the four areas of the Reformation Challenge.

The Reformation Challenge has engaged members and congregations across the ELCIC and enabled them to develop community-based and world-wide connections throughout the Lutheran communion.

Together we have been called to be *In Mission for Others*

and respond to the ELCIC's Reformation Challenge to:

- Sponsor 500 refugees to Canada.
- Provide 500 scholarships for students in schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.
- Plant 500,000 trees in Can-

ada, Ethiopia and Palestine.

- Give \$500,000 to The Lutheran World Federation Endowment Fund.

What amazing generosity and spirited discipleship we have seen in response to this initiative!

ELCIC members and congre-



Inshallah Choir of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary



The Sunday school class of Messiah Lutheran Church in Winnipeg generously focused their efforts on raising funds for a scholarship.



The year 2017 marks the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

Churches in the Lutheran tradition take October 31, 1517 as the starting point of the Reformation.

It was on that date that Martin Luther is said to have nailed his Ninety-five Theses on the door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg, Germany.

Today, Lutheran churches can be found in all corners of the globe. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), a worldwide communion of 144 churches, represents over 70 million Lutherans in 79 countries.



A tree-planting crew from Ascension Lutheran Church in Edmonton.



Rev. Marc Jerry and daughter Carmen from Red Deer, AB, plant a tree as part of the ELCIC Reformation Challenge.

gations have come together in creative and spirit-led ways to host worship fundraising services. One refugee team created a 'Fund-O-Meter to help provide a visual towards their end goal of sponsoring a refugee family. Another pastor gave a moving pictorial sermon, challenging his congregation to strive towards covering all four areas of the reformation appeal.

The Sunday school class of Messiah Lutheran Church in Winnipeg generously decided to change their goals for the year and switched their focus over to raising funds for a scholarship. As the children continued to bring money for offering, one scholarship quickly became two, and the children are still going strong!

Inshallah Choir of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary was founded following a study trip to Palestine and Israel ten years ago. Through the many lessons learned overseas (both musically and worldly) the choir was able to put on a

How has *your* congregation got involved in the ELCIC Reformation Challenge?

fundraising performance where money was raised for ELCJHL scholarships, and new song books were prepared for delivery to the people of Palestine and Israel.

Although many have set out far and wide to plant trees and raise funds in honour of the Reformation Challenge, the Lutheran Church of the Good

Shepherd in Red Deer, Alta. made it a missional priority to help commemorate the historic anniversary throughout their congregation. The confirmation class already held a servant auction, while the youth have

also participated in an annual cookie walk. Further down the road, the church hopes to hold a life-giving service, including the planting of up to 1000 new trees.

How has your congregation engaged in the ELCIC Reformation Challenge? We'd love to hear from you. Let us know at elcic.ca/ReformationChallenge.



Congregations have been creative in their fundraising efforts for the Reformation Challenge's four areas of focus.

Your offering, *In Mission for Others*

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 2015, ELCIC members gave over **\$66.3 million in regular offerings** to support the call to be *In Mission for Others* through these **three expressions** of the ELCIC:

CONGREGATIONS

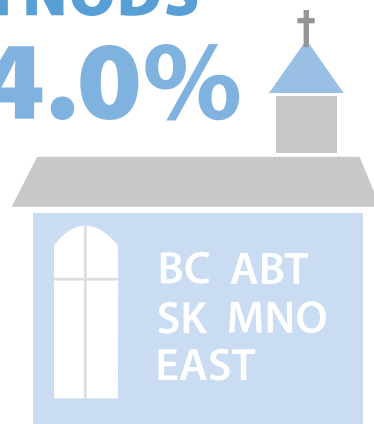


94.7%

\$62,806,005 was used by congregations to fund **local ministries**. Your weekly offering supports the work of **your congregation and its ministry**.

SYNODS

4.0%



\$2,671,169 was shared to support the **ministry done through ELCIC synods**. This includes supporting **congregations and leaders** within your synod.

NATIONAL CHURCH

1.3%

\$849,205 was sent through the synods to the **National Church** to support the **wider mission of the ELCIC**.

ELCIC Praise Appeal

By supporting the ELCIC Praise Appeal, you help us carry out the national ministries of the wider church.

The ELCIC Praise Appeal first started back in 2011. While themes and the original focus of the Praise Appeal may have changed over the years, the original intent of the Praise Appeal still remains.

“By supporting the ELCIC Praise Appeal, our members are in partnership to help enable the ministry of the national expression of the church,” says ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson.

A few of the ministries supported by the ELCIC Praise Appeal include:

Our partnerships with Kairos and the Anglican Church of

Canada as we work in the areas of homelessness and affordable housing, and responsible resource extraction;

Our partnership with The Lutheran World Federation and Canadian Lutheran World Relief as we work to support refugees around the world;

Our partnerships with churches in Argentina and Peru through our Global Mission work;

Continuing the Call to Spiritual Renewal and working to deepen the discipleship of all our members and learning new ways to reach out in faith to those around us; and

Building better relationships with other denominations and faiths here in Canada through

the Canadian Council of Churches, and around the world through the World Council of Churches.

Help us to continue this work by holding an ELCIC Praise Appeal service.

While an offering designated to the Praise Appeal is certainly a key focus of a Praise Appeal Service, it also allows the opportunity to share stories, lift up and pray for these wider ministries of the church.

ELCIC congregations are asked to designate one Sunday a year to highlight this appeal at a time that works best for your local circumstances.

Visit elcic.ca/PraiseAppeal for more information and for resources.



#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!





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