



*For as in one body we have many members,  
and not all the members have the same function,  
so we, who are many, are one body in Christ,  
and individually we are members one of another.  
Romans 12:4-5*

YOUR CONGREGATION'S PLAN FOR  
**MISSION SUPPORT**



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDING BISHOP

Dear friend in Christ,

Each Sunday as God gathers us for worship, we are connecting with nearly 10,000 other ELCA congregations across the country. We gather to be nourished by word and sacrament, to remember and celebrate God's love for us and to respond with our lives and our offerings. The generosity of our offerings is a reflection of our gratitude for God's blessings, and our offerings then become a blessing to others. Our gifts first enable God's work to be done through our congregations. The portion we call Mission Support moves beyond your congregation's local community to support the ministries of the synod and the churchwide organization in the United States and around the world.

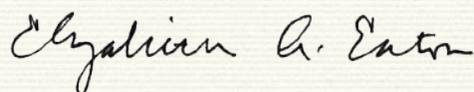
The Mission Support offering your congregation sends to your synod is undesignated, meaning it will always be spent when and where funds are needed most. These dollars enable the ELCA to share the good news of Jesus Christ by starting new ministries, renewing congregations, developing leaders, alleviating poverty, working toward justice and peace and partnering with churches around the world. The following pages provide information about how your congregation's Mission Support dollars are used to support ELCA ministries.

Our church is engaged in a five-year, \$198 million campaign to deepen relationships and expand ministry opportunities that serve our neighbors. *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* is another way that we can do more. Through the campaign, individuals, congregations and synods can make designated gifts that will expand the ELCA's growth and mission capacity. Learn how your congregation can participate at [www.ELCA.org/campaign](http://www.ELCA.org/campaign).

I am deeply grateful for your generous Mission Support in 2014. As you begin planning for your congregation's ministry and giving for 2015, I ask that you continue and grow in your generosity so that the entire church can benefit from your offerings.

As I travel across this church, each week I see the many ways you are stewarding your gifts to love and serve your neighbors. This has shown me how together we can achieve things on a scale and a scope that we could never do alone. Indeed "we, who are many, are one body in Christ." We are church together!

Faithfully,



Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Photo by Michael Watson

## WHY WE GIVE

Our financial generosity is an expression of our love for God and for our neighbor. A critical component of what we do together is the offering made by you and your congregation that is shared for synod and churchwide ministries. We call this Mission Support, which makes it possible for ELCA members from Alaska to the Caribbean to be responsive as one church to exciting new opportunities for ministry.

## FUNDING OUR MISSION

Mission Support is an important percentage of your weekly offering. Many congregations set a goal of 10 percent or greater for Mission Support through their synod and do additional giving beyond their congregation. In this way congregations are making a difference in their giving both in and through their church. Your congregation shares its Mission Support offering with the other two expressions of this church.

## WHERE YOUR OFFERING GOES

Mission Support is the lifeblood of the work that God does through the ELCA.

### YOUR REGULAR OFFERING



Your regular offering supports the mission and ministry of the entire ELCA – doing God's work throughout the world.

### YOUR CONGREGATION



Your congregation shares a portion of your offering – called Mission Support – with your synod and the ELCA church-wide organization.

### YOUR SYNOD



Your synod supports congregations and rostered leaders as they work in their communities and throughout the world.

### YOUR CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION



Your churchwide organization responds to local and worldwide ministry opportunities. Together we do God's work in ways that no individual, congregation or synod can do alone.

In 2014, ELCA members gave **\$1.7 billion in regular offerings** to support God's mission and ministry through the three expressions of the ELCA.



### CONGREGATIONS

\$1.6 billion remained in congregations



### SYNODS

\$51.4 million was shared to support ministries through synods



### CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

\$48.8 million was sent through synods to support the churchwide organization

# FAQ

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Q: What is Mission Support?

**A:** Mission Support is your congregation's financial weekly offering that is shared with your synod and the churchwide organization. It is an undesignated gift to ELCA ministries that goes beyond your congregation. These gifts are used where the need is the greatest, and they also make it possible for the ELCA's 65 synods and the churchwide organization to keep ongoing commitments to ministry partners.

### Q: What guides the churchwide organization in its decisions regarding Mission Support?

**A:** Churchwide assemblies – this church's highest legislative authority – guides and directs the work of the churchwide organization. The ELCA Church Council functions as the interim legislative authority between assemblies. The churchwide organization's two strategic priorities are to accompany the nearly 10,000 congregations as growing centers for evangelical mission and to build the capacity of this church for evangelical witness and service in the world to alleviate poverty and to work for justice and peace. We are a church that believes God is calling us into the world – together.

### Q: How does my congregation benefit from Mission Support?

**A:** Every congregation benefits as an active partner in the ELCA's mission to share God's love with the world. Stories of Faith in Action is filled with powerful examples of how lives have been changed because of the generosity of ELCA members and congregations through Mission Support. This money funds the work of synods, and some of the portion of Mission Support that is shared with the churchwide organization returns back to your congregation and synod in the form of services, programs, resources or grants. Typically, more than 90 percent of a congregation's offering remains in the congregation to help pay for local ministries, outreach, salaries, utilities and the building, ensuring your congregation's vital presence in your community.

*For more details, watch a video from Rev. Margaret Payne, ELCA Director for Mission Support, available at [www.ELCA.org/missionsupport](http://www.ELCA.org/missionsupport).*

# STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION



This year's issue of Stories of Faith in Action features the images and stories of people whose lives have been touched by ELCA ministries, all made possible with support from your congregational offering. Together we do God's work in the world in ways that no individual, congregation or synod can do alone.

Learn more about how your offering is put to work throughout the United States and in the world. Order your free copy of Stories of Faith in Action today!

#### To order free copies

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ask for ELCAMA1198

#### Or order online

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