



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Congregational Vitality, Domestic Mission



WHAT IS AN ANCHOR CHURCH?

Around the country, creative ministries are developing that seek to serve God's mission in new ways. Many of these ministries involve new collaborations. Congregations, with significant ministry capacity (resources of people and/or finances, vision, vitality), are finding opportunities to partner with surrounding congregations with fewer known resources. Collaborations take various forms, from formal associations to looser partnerships, from new mission initiatives to congregational revitalization. All of these initiatives seek to share resources in better ways, to create new ministry partnerships to serve the Gospel and to revitalize congregations.

We have begun to talk about these congregations — who steward their significant resources in supportive and collaborative ways — as **Anchor Churches**. These congregations give thanks for their ministry blessings and seek to share them in new ways with surrounding congregations. It is critical to form relationships and perhaps a learning community among the pastoral leadership of **Anchor Churches** for the sake of more vital ministry and more faithful service of God's mission.

The Congregational Vitality Team of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is gathering pastoral leadership from present or potential **Anchor Churches** to share experiences and learnings and develop relationships that will support this vital work. We will explore various ways **Anchor Churches** can connect with other congregations, how resources can be shared and how all ministries can be renewed and revitalized. These **Anchor Churches** will work in partnership with their directors for evangelical mission and synod leadership.

In November 2018 we held two 'intro' events for those interested in exploring the idea of being an Anchor Church. These events were led by Pastor Doug Hill, Abiding Hope Church in Littleton, CO and Pastor Scott Suskovic, Christ Lutheran Church in Charlotte, NC. Recognizing that each context is unique, four different possible models of Anchor Church Ministry were presented. Now we are holding an event for those ready to go deeper as **Anchor Churches**. This 1.5 day gathering will go deeper in: theological foundation, cross-cultural understanding, organizational intelligence and understanding our strengths. The event will be followed up by an opportunity to be in a year of video conferencing and coaching with Pastors Scott and Doug and other **Anchor Church** leaders around the county.

More "Intro" Events are to come in 2019, more information will be available soon.

If you are ready to go deeper and want to attend this next event in Fort Worth, TX Feb. 25-26th, see the registration info here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9bsvtj2>

Questions: Contact Rev. Rob James, ELCA Congregational Vitality Program Director for Learning and Evaluation: rob.james@elca.org, (773) 380-2999, (815)721-0079 (cell) or Rev. Ruben Duran ELCA Director of Congregational Vitality, ruben.duran@elca.org, (630)440-8591 (cell).