

Lower Susquehanna Synod, ELCA  
 Stewardship Education & Mission Support Table  
 Recommendation to Synod Council  
 October 1, 2013

Stewardship Strategy Action Plan

Mission Support

**Strategy 1. Congregations will be asked annually to consider prayerfully and to indicate to the synod the amount of money the Congregation intends to give for Mission Support of the Lower Susquehanna Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The basis for Mission Support is to be a percentage of the congregation's regular giving. The Intention of Mission Support can include other committed benevolence offerings of the congregation.**

Action Item	Target Date	Assignment
1. Draft personalized annual letter to congregations to include among other things: a. request submission of Mission Support Plan for following year b. a challenge goal for the congregation c. how contributions will be used for Mission Support (3-5 bullets of major initiatives) d. include past history of congregation's support e. check-off box: willingness to invite Mission Interpreter to address congregation	July/August	Stewardship Committee/Director of Evangelical Mission
2. Finalize/distribute annual mission support letter to congregations	September	Bishop/VP of Synod Council Dir. of Evangelical Mission
3. Review mission support giving by congregation	Bi-monthly	Stewardship Committee
4. Contact congregations that have not submitted a Mission Support Plan	March 1 - March 31	Synod Council/Stewardship Committee
5. Thank congregations that have submitted plan.	Spring Conferences	Conference Deans

**Strategy 2. Consultations will be held with congregational leaders to assist the leaders in planning their Intention of Mission Support.**

Action Item	Target Date	Assignment
1. Conduct kick-off campaign <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. invitation from Bishop</li> <li>b. each congregation asked to send at least one representative</li> <li>c. topics to include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. theme for coming year</li> <li>ii. goals/initiatives</li> <li>iii. resources available for congregations</li> <li>iv. think piece for congregation councils</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Date to accommodate Bishop's schedule Sept - Nov	Bishop/Dir. of Evangelical Mission/Planning Support by Stewardship Committee
2. Personal appeal (one-on-one) consultations to targeted congregations (10 to 20 congregations selected by Stewardship Committee)	September to December	Synod Council
3. Follow-up communication with those congregations unable to attend.	September	Stewardship Committee

**Strategy 3. Conference deans and secretaries will be included in correspondence from the Synod office concerning Mission Support from congregations.**

Action Item	Target Date	Assignment
1. Conference deans/secretaries asked to reinforce messaging from kick-off meeting at Conference Assemblies	Spring Assemblies	Deans/Secretaries

**Education**

***Strategy 1. Educational resources will be provided to congregations, conferences of the Synod, and Synod-wide. Partnerships between congregations are encouraged to address specific stewardship educational needs (peer to peer assistance).***

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
1. Recruit and train 2-3 Steward Leader Coach Trainers (refer to schedule for "Journey Into Gratitude" Project)	2013 - 2014	Journey Into Gratitude Team/ Stewardship Committee
2. Conference liaisons to apprise pastors and congregational leaders of developments and upcoming events (refer to Journey Into Gratitude Project)	2013 - 2014	Conference Liaisons
3. Offer training program for Congregational Council Presidents and Stewardship Chairs on Stewardship Basics	Jan/Feb	Stewardship Committee
4. Offer breakout sessions at Synod Assembly on Stewardship Topics	June	Stewardship Committee

***Strategy 2. Lay and clergy practicum will be provided on a regular basis. Other stewardship educational opportunities will be provided at Synod-wide forums, such as Congregations Together in Mission and the annual Synod Assembly.***

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
1. Recruit and train Stewardship Cohorts using the Ventures in Growing Stewards program (refer to Journey Into Gratitude Project)	2013 - 2014	Journey Into Gratitude Team Synod Council to help with recruitment

**Strategy 3. Print and internet resources will be made available, such as the printed stewardship resources from the ECLS, Stewardship of Life Institute and Synodical website.**

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
1. Create a "tool box" on the website for Pastors and Congregational Stewardship Committees of available print and electronic resources (include link to "Stewardship of Life" material)	2016	Communications Task Force & Stewardship Committee
2. Create and print a "bookmark" of resource material and links for distribution at Synod Assembly	2015	Stewardship Committee

**Mission Interpretation and Communication**

***Strategy 1. Create and use "categories" that will summarize and describe what the Lower Susquehanna Synod does in a language that connects with the "average" Evangelical Lutheran Church in America member so that the member can affirm "Yes, that's a good thing to be doing as the church."***

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
<p>Create a "Stewardship Communications Task Force" commissioned with the following tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Congregations will be asked to disseminate, periodically, information regarding ministries and/or activities that have occurred around the Synod, since the last Synod Assembly</li> <li>2. Every pastor and secretary of each congregation would be registered to receive "Carings and Sharings"</li> <li>3. The Synod website will include a link to view the "Mission Minutes" videos presented at Synod Assembly</li> <li>4. The Synod website will include a link to each congregation's website (listed by town, conference, or congregation name)</li> <li>5. Provide talking points for anytime a Synod representative (staff, synod council, committee member) meets with or addresses a congregation</li> <li>6. Establish a Stewardship "Face book" page. Post information at least bi-weekly on stewardship issues with suggested links to resources (goal: 100 people to like us in first year)</li> <li>7. Encourage the distribution of ELCA material (produced for Synod Assembly) to every member of every congregation.</li> </ol>	<p>2016</p>	<p>Synod Council to appoint Task Force Members and submit plan by 2016 Synod Assembly</p>

8. Create a video "Narrative Budget" for presentation at 2016 (and future) Synod Assembly.		
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**Strategy 2. The Lower Susquehanna Synod Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission, along with the Synod Stewardship Education and Mission Support Table, will communicate quarterly with synod leaders (Synod Council Members, Conference Deans and Secretaries) about Mission Support challenges and with Mission Interpretation stories. There will also be quarterly communication with congregation treasurers, pastors, and Congregation Councils that includes interpretation material along with the quarterly giving report.**

Action Item	Target Date	Assignment
1. A quarterly submission will be included in "Carings and Sharings."	2014	Stewardship Committee

**Strategy 3. The Bishop, Synod Council Members, the Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission, and conference deans and secretaries will meet annually with Congregation Councils and Assembly voting members for consultation and mission interpretation.**

Action Item	Target Date	Assignment
1. Refer this task to Synod Council with coordination by the Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission for affirmation of support and active participation in implementation of this action plan.	2013	

**Strategy 4. Conference teams of Mission Interpreters will be created. The Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission, the Synod Communicator, and/or volunteer Mission Interpretation Coordinator will use primarily electronic technology to provide resources for Mission Interpreters.**

Action Item	Target Date	Assignment
1. Recruit/Train Mission Interpreters and Coordinators	Feb/Mar 2013	Journey Into Gratitude Project Team

2. Mission Interpreters visit congregations	Apr/June 2013 Sep/Nov 2013 Apr/June 2014 Sep/Nov 2014	Mission Interpreters
3. Review Mission Interpreters Ministry	Jun/Jul 2013	Journey Into Gratitude

**Planned Giving**

***Strategy 1. Provide resources for a wills emphasis in congregations and conferences.***

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
1. Financial management seminars	To begin Fall 2013	Thrivent
2. Facilitate a Legacy Open House in each Synod conference at least every 3 years. Include such topics as: what happens when you die; organ donation; funeral planning; writing a Christian will.	2015	Stewardship Committee
3. Promote use of Thrivent's Financial Estate Planning Workshop and other Legacy Planning Resources of the ECLS	2016	Communications Task Force - include as part of "Tool Box"

**Strategy 2. Encourage the establishment of a Mission Endowment Fund in each congregation that has a clear purpose and boundaries.**

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
1. Conduct workshops, using available resources, for establishing an Endowment Fund	2016	Stewardship Committee
2. For congregations where an endowment fund exists, develop a suggested plan outline to meeting mission needs using endowments and memorial gifts.	2016	Stewardship Committee

***Strategy 3. Develop a family of Synod mission endowment funds to which individuals and congregational planned gifts will be invited and encouraged by the regional gift planner of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Foundation and Synod leaders. Planned giving opportunities for ELCA-related mission agencies and institutions will also be communicated and encouraged.***

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
1. Form a task force of mission planners and advocates to identify those Synod initiatives which are good candidates for endowment funding (including investment in the Mission Investment Fund), and develop material to tell the story in a way that encourages individuals and congregations to endow them.	2016	Task Force appointed by Synod Council