

# Work of the Synod Report 2019

Gary Gemar, VP

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In early 2018 in conversations with Churchwide, Bishop Kuempel asked if the EWAID Synod could reduce our Mission Support to Churchwide in order to better staff the Synod Office to serve our congregations. This was a “nervous ask” because we projected we needed to go from 35% to 25% Mission Support to Churchwide to accomplish the staffing needs of the Synod. Churchwide understood our request and in partnership graciously accepted our request.

In this new partnership with Churchwide, Victoria Flood led the Synod Council in a Mission Support Symposium: A time of Listening, Learning and Imaging TOGETHER in our September 14, 2018 meeting. In this symposium we learned what was going on with churches throughout the ELCA, listened to each other express our concerns, wishes and desires for the church and brainstormed on how this new partnership could lead to better engagement of the Synod with our congregations. Two areas were identified that needed immediate focus:

1. There is a lack of trust between congregations and the Synod Office
2. We have a quiet faith – it’s there, but it’s not talked about

Actions taken by the Synod Council and Office Staff to focus on these two areas are as follows:

- Activate our 12 clusters to meet at least 2 times a year so the congregations are in conversation with each other. Everyone is welcome to attend these gatherings. I am very encouraged by what I am now seeing with most clusters actively meeting.
- Implemented a new Synod website. Check it out. Your feedback is welcome on what improvements may be needed.
- With full time positions for the Bishop, Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, the Synod Office can provide more face time with the congregations.
- Congregation vitality is one of 5 goals in the ELCA’s Future Directions 2025. It is a major focus over the next two years along with leadership development of clergy and lay staff. A Synod Vitality Coalition has been formed with the Synod Office leaders and five pastors in the synod. The Coalition has attended 2 different workshops sponsored by Churchwide to learn and get the tools needed so they can be shared with congregations moving forward. The Synod Council has also established a “Vitality Fund” in the budget to support initiatives around the goal.
- Improve communication – Bi-weekly “E-Blasts” share information going on in the synod, congregations and the wider church. You can subscribe to these by going to [www.ewaidsynod.org](http://www.ewaidsynod.org) and click on subscribe at the bottom of the page. If you are like me, I can go through the day with all the activities at work and never think of going to the EWAID Website to see what is going on. Having the information pushed to my email alerts me to open up the message and read it.
- A pilot is being conducted with a few congregations on a book written by Dave Daubert call *The Invitational Christian*. I have had a chance to read the book and I think it is a great book that addresses how congregations can perform more vital ministry in the new times we live in. It is a short book of 75 pages covering 8 chapters. I would like to see every congregation in the synod spend time studying it together. It would be a great initiative for our synod and gives many

ideas on how we can be more confident in sharing our faith that we seem shy to share with our neighbors.

As voted and approved in the 2018 Synod Assembly we will conduct Gathering events in 2020 and 2022 and Assemblies in 2021 and 2023. In 2023 this new format will be assessed to determine if it should continue or change to another format. The Gatherings will be held on the following dates and locations:

- April 25, 2020 – Trinity Lutheran, Pullman, WA
- May 2, 2020 – 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian, Twin Falls, ID
- May 16, 2020 – Immanuel Lutheran, Moses Lake, WA

The goal is to allow many more members from congregations to attend the Gatherings to hear keynote speakers, participate in workshops and learn how the initiatives of the synod are working to stay better connected to the congregations. With one day Gatherings, the cost will be greatly reduced allowing this to happen.

At the end of 2019 we will conclude the My Synod Moving in Mission Together campaign. As of May 1, 2019, we have received the follow funds for the pledges made.

**Totals as of 4/30/2019**

<b>Fund Code</b>	<b>Fund</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Pledge Balance</b>	<b>Payment Received</b>	<b>Total</b>
4100	Wells Endowment	\$200,000	\$15,423.34	\$55,227.28	\$70,650.62
4200	ELCA Capital Campaign	\$100,000	\$1,583.33	\$2,714.47	\$4,297.80
4300	Fund for Leaders	\$200,000	\$4,443.33	\$16,493.46	\$20,936.79
4400	LCSNW	\$150,000	\$7,983.33	\$12,403.34	\$20,386.67
4500	SHARE FUND	\$200,000	\$2,863.33	\$30,781.21	\$33,644.54
4600	Tumaini School	\$250,000	\$19,983.34	\$70,917.04	\$90,900.38
4700	Undesignated (2016-2019)		\$72,618.00	\$207,674.83	\$280,292.83
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$1,100,000</b>	<b>\$124,898.00</b>	<b>\$396,211.63</b>	<b>\$521,109.63</b>

If you haven't pledged there is still time to donate to the campaign.

This will be my last report to the Assembly. I elected to not run again as VP because Kathy and I will be retiring in two years. Our plan for retirement is to move closer to our kids in the Seattle area, which will move us away from the Synod.

I want to thank all of you for your confidence in me leading the Synod as VP for the past 9 years. It has been a real pleasure meeting many of you, learning about the many ministries of all the congregations, getting to know more about how Churchwide supports the synods and congregations and leading the EWAID Synod through the many initiatives we developed to do ministry in our ever-changing church.

I leave you with a reading from **Matthew 5:14-16**

*You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.*

Let your light shine before others as you do God's work.