

Better Together

Strategic Plan 2.0 Summary
2019-2022



Rocky Mountain Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



This graphic visualizing our Rocky Mountain Synod Strategic Plan 2.0 builds on our original four-fold emphasis by adding a fifth area of focus: Growing in Gratitude and Generosity.

Our commitment to Claiming Our Gifts has intentionally been moved to the center, recognizing that our ELCA identity within Christ's Church is foundational, informing and connecting everything else we do together.

Living from our distinctive gifts, we then seek
**to proclaim and embody God's unconditional love
for the sake of the world.**



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As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. Colossians 2:6-7

What we get to do together!

Not long ago someone asked the question: So what does the “synod” do for us anyway? We were reminded of how Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton addressed that inquiry some years ago when she said: That’s the wrong question. The real question is, “What do we get to do together as the church?”

Naming what we get to do together as Christ’s Church here in the ELCA Rocky Mountain Synod is what our strategic planning process is all about. In 2016 your Synod Council approved our first three year plan, with four major areas of emphasis and numerous goals and objectives related to each. In this booklet you’ll see a sampling of the ministry and witness we have accomplished together during this period of time. It’s exciting to see how the Spirit has been at work among us!

Our Strategic Plan 2.0 will continue the momentum of our shared ministry as the ELCA Rocky Mountain Synod by expanding our focus to five key areas for the next three years. Under each emphasis you will find examples of Next Faithful Steps we are planning to take in our calling to be Christ’s Church, Better Together, for the life of God’s beloved world.

We invite you to actively support and participate in the exciting ministry we get to do together as the ELCA Rocky Mountain Synod. There has never been a more important time for our shared witness to God’s unconditional love in Jesus. Thank you for the part you will continue to play in proclaiming and embodying that good news!

Bishop Jim Gonia

Vice President Earline Bohling

Claiming our Gifts

Teach, proclaim and share the significance of our ELCA way of being part of Christ's Church with a clear and contagious vision from abundance

WHAT WE HAVE DONE **TOGETHER**

Together, we commemorated the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation through a series of synod events: Re•Formation: Then. Now. Always.

Together, we learned about our unique ELCA witness through Bishop Gonia's "Claiming our Gifts" teaching.

Together, we committed to ecumenical relationships through seven Lutheran-Catholic Prayer Services across our synod.

Together, we proclaimed our witness of our local ministries, telling our stories through *RMS in the Neighborhood*.



NEXT FAITHFUL STEPS

Expand our understanding of our distinct ELCA identity and witness through **Claiming our Gifts**

Explore opportunities for new **ecumenical partnerships**

Deepen our **glocal engagement** by connecting our local witness with our global relationships

Continue our **public witness** through our commitment to advocacy, integrating our ELCA theology into our engagement with current issues and contextual realities

Connecting in Ministry & Witness

**Foster a Spirit of active
collaboration and intentional
connection across our Synod**

WHAT WE HAVE DONE **TOGETHER**

Together, we convened ministry cohorts for conversation and support focusing on Part-time ministers and Ministers of Word and Service.

Together, we gathered as the Church Together: Theological Conferences, Synod Assemblies, and Better Together Summits.

Together, we strengthened our life together through new communication channels and increased video conferencing.

Together, we explored deeper ecumenical partnerships with the Ecumenical Catholic Communion and many of our full-communion partners.



NEXT FAITHFUL STEPS

Continue an effective **ministry of presence** on the part of the Office of the Bishop and the Synod Council

Explore new, creative, and sustainable ways to **gather as Church Together** in our synod

Strengthen current and emerging **networks for connection and collaboration**: conferences, lay leadership, ministry cohorts

Prioritize our growing partnership with **ELCA Region 2** and **California Lutheran University/Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary**.

Equipping all Leaders

Build healthy and vibrant faith communities by equipping lay leaders, pastors, and deacons for excellence in leadership

WHAT WE HAVE DONE **TOGETHER**

Together, we used our experience with the Church Development Institute of the Episcopal Church to develop a leadership development initiative.

Together, over 60 congregations have participated in Stewardship for All Seasons.

Together, we supported the financial wellness of our rostered ministers through grants from Educate, Equip, Enact (3E)

Together, we equipped pastors and deacons through coaching and CLU's Executive Skills for Church Workers.



NEXT FAITHFUL STEPS

Launch ***Excellence in Leadership*** to form leaders and communities of faith that are courageous, resilient, and faithful amid changing times

Support continuing **leadership initiatives** such as coaching, RMS Youth Council, and ministry networks

Prioritize new **strategies for equipping** pastors, deacons, and other church leaders in their local contexts

Accompanying One Another into God's Future

Seek and promote new ways of being Christ's Church together in the world

WHAT WE HAVE DONE **TOGETHER**

Together, we have revised our synod constitution and reviewed synodical teams to ensure our structure supports our mission.

Together, we launched three new campus ministries and accompanied current ministries through redevelopment.

Together, we have increased the number of candidates discerning rostered ministry, with over 40 candidates currently being accompanied.

Together, we engaged in collaborative, neighborhood ministry through the Aurora Church Together Strategy.



NEXT FAITHFUL STEPS

Align and streamline **synod structures** for effectiveness, efficiency and innovation

Explore **new and creative** congregational, campus, and outdoor ministries

Accompany congregations and ministries to increase their capacity to be **adaptive, right-sized, and vital**

Raise up and support **new public leaders** for the church's ministry

Growing in Gratitude & Generosity

Strengthen our financial capacity for ministry and witness relying on a spirituality of gratitude and generosity

WHAT WE HAVE DONE **TOGETHER**

Together, we have welcomed Tina Kvitek, our ELCA Foundation Regional Gift Planner.

Together, we gathered for 11 Better Together Summits to talk about our relationship to money for the life of the world.

Together, we established a synod finance team to review and strengthen the financial life of our synod.

Together, we committed to supporting our Churchwide ministries, increasing our mission support from 46% to 47%.



NEXT FAITHFUL STEPS

Implement a second **3-year Lilly Grant (3E)** that focuses on congregations and rostered ministers in order to transform our church's culture related to money

Equip synod leadership in building a culture of **gratitude**

Support the ministry of our **ELCA Gift Planner** and strengthen our capacity for generous investment in ministry