ROCKY MOUNTAIN SYNOD
STRATEGIC PLANNING 2016-2018

OUR MISSION: Together we proclaim and embody God's unconditional love for the sake of the world by CLAIMING our Gifts, CONNECTING in ministry and witness, EQUIPPING all leaders, ACCOMPANYING one another into God’s future
Core Values

The leadership of the RMS will boldly lead by affirming these values:

1. **Participating in God’s mission of**
   - Serving the world locally, globally (glocal)
   - Partner with all people (inclusive)
   - Commitment to engaging with the Vulnerable/Marginalized

2. **Live from our ELCA identity, always proclaiming and sharing the Gospel through**
   - Word and Sacrament
   - Faith Formation throughout life
   - Theology of Grace
   - Theology of Paradox (both/and)
   - Theology of the Cross

3. **Embodying Hope – to be a beacon of hope for the world**
   - We embody Christ’s hope as the Body of Christ, witnessing to unity in diversity
   - We offer hope in an invitation to Table and Font where all are welcome, with Word and Presence where all meet as sinner and saint
   - We offer hope as public church – through our actions (social ministry, disaster response) and our advocacy (locally, nationally, internationally)
   - We offer hope through our commitment to communion as a global church in a fractured world
   - We offer hope through the power of forgiveness and reconciliation
   - We offer hope by always seeking connections ecumenically and across faiths

4. **Journeying together in mutual relationship with**
   - Leaders
   - Congregations
   - Individuals
   - Whole church
   - Ecumenical partners
   - Synodical Ministries
   - Ministry partners

5. **Acting with Grace**
   - Love
   - Acceptance
   - Inclusion
   - Accountability
   - Flexibility
Ministry Result Areas:

**MRA 1: IDENTITY**
Teach, proclaim and share the significance of our ELCA way of being part of Christ’s Church with a clear contagious vision from abundance.

**MRA 2: CONNECT**
Foster new and increased collaboration and connection across our Synod.

**MRA 3: EQUIP**
Leaders and Congregations to strengthen healthy and vibrant faith communities.

**MRA 4: ACCOMPANY**
Insuring that Synod leadership is engaged in the life of the congregations and ministries.
MRA 1: 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.

GOAL 1: Boldly voice to the world God’s unconditional love, rooted in our unique ELCA theological perspective and way of being part of Christ’s Church.

Objective 1A  Provide support for 2017 Re•Formation experiences.
Objective 1B  Use the 2016-2017 Re•Formation events to “go public.” Invite those outside the ELCA to better understand our ELCA witness to the gospel.
Objective 1C  Encourage rostered ministers and congregational leaders to write, teach, and share about what makes our ELCA way of being church both unique and relevant.

GOAL 2: Increase training and education around our ELCA (Lutheran) way of being in Christ’s Church.

Objective 2A  Help the people find language to understand and articulate to others the value of the ELCA perspective.
Objective 2B  Ask congregations intentionally to promote ELCA theology and values as we live out of our particular way of being in the Church.
Objective 2C  Produce key resources around our ELCA theology, witness, and values in a sharable format that can be utilized for a joint “Witness Sunday” and other times as scheduled by congregations.
Objective 2D  Promote a yearly Sunday that specifically focuses on our ELCA theology, witness, and values (Sunday during Advent: Witness Sunday). Provide worship resources.
Objective 2E  Intentionally intergrate synodical ELCA consciousness-raising with the four hallmarks of our life as the ELCA according to Bishop Elizabeth Eaton: We are church; we are Lutheran; we are church together; we are church for the sake of the world.

GOAL 3: Increase our mission interpretation to improve how and where we are telling our story, both as a wider church and through our congregations.

Objective 3A  Tell the story of our wider ELCA ministries and interweave the theological rationale for those ministries.
Objective 3B  Share the stories of what RMS congregations and ministries are doing and why (theological rationale). Identify where you are gaining traction.
Objective 3C  Identify where our ELCA life and witness intersects with our ecumenical and ministry partners.
Objective 3D  Tell the story of why our mission support matters and what it helps us accomplish. Use Better Together Sunday (Easter season) as a tool.
Objective 3E  Create digital space for sharing with and between congregations.
**MRA 2: Connecting in Ministry and Witness - Foster new and increased collaboration and connection across our Synod.**

**GOAL 1:** Continue to strengthen communication across the Synod with the intent to meet everyone where they are: intergenerationally, inclusively, and contextually.

- **Objective 1A** Increase the participation through existing communication tools.
- **Objective 1B** Increase the use of video/digital resources as a tool for teaching, interpretation, and storytelling.
- **Objective 1C** Continue strategic visits by Office of the Bishop staff and Synod Council.

**GOAL 2:** Harness the power of today’s communication technology and content access.

- **Objective 2A** Increase our ability to be multi-generational and multi-modal in our communication.
- **Objective 2B** Search out new national partners to help develop new delivery/communications tools.

**GOAL 3:** Optimize the role of conferences and deans to increase the support of leaders across the synod.

- **Objective 3A** Invite conferences to form teams to assist their deans.
- **Objective 3B** Continue dean WebEx meetings monthly and retreats yearly with focus on building capacity of deans to serve effectively.
- **Objective 3C** Re-evaluate the role and responsibilities of the dean in assisting the Office of the Bishop and Synod Council.

**GOAL 4:** Increase lay leadership connectivity at Synod Council and conference levels.

- **Objective 4A** Create a Facebook page for the Synod Council to share conference visits, activities, and happenings.
- **Objective 4B** Encourage or sponsor conference gatherings at least once a year with a focus on lay leadership development, connectivity, and/or congregational development.

**GOAL 5:** Use the capacity of the Office of the Bishop to facilitate networking and sharing models.

- **Objective 5A** Build on existing structures.
- **Objective 5B** Develop companion congregation relationships within conferences and then across conferences.
- **Objective 5C** Gather large congregations for conversation around their role in our life together and how they can be a catalyst for connectivity and collaboration.
- **Objective 5D** Create cohorts of congregations for support, exchange of ideas, and growth.
- **Objective 5E** Connect those serving specialized ministries to one another.
- **Objective 5F** Identify, convene, and promote Area Ministry Strategies, both formal and informal.
- **Objective 5G** Connect the Office of the Bishop to retired rostered ministers.

**GOAL 6:** Engage with ecumenical judicatory leaders.

- **Objective 6A** Identify the current realities.
- **Objective 6B** Connect with judicatory leaders, especially full communion partners.
- **Objective 6C** Build connectivity with Roman Catholic Dioceses.

**GOAL 7:** Shepherd rostered ministers new to the Synod, and candidates awaiting call.

- **Objective 7A** Provide each person assigned to RMS and awaiting call a contact person who will regularly check in with them.
- **Objective 7B** Provide those new to the synod a contact person who checks in with them regularly for the first year of service.
- **Objective 7C** Provide rostered ministers in their first call a mentor/coach to support them and process ministry with them.
- **Objective 7D** Create opportunities for retired pastors to use their gifts in supporting fellow rostered ministers and the ministries of the synod.
MRA 3: Equipping all Leaders - Equip leaders and congregations to strengthen vibrant, healthy faith communities.

**GOAL 1: Create a vision for comprehensive leadership development in the RMS.**

**Objective 1A** Develop a guide to leadership development for RMS congregations including all necessary resources for implementation.

**Objective 1B** Evaluate and improve the transition processes.

**Objective 1C** Provide transition/discernment resource for rostered ministers.

**Objective 1D** Encourage all rostered ministers to have a coach, mentor, or spiritual director.

**Objective 1E** Promote Interim/Redevelopment training for pastors.

**Objective 1F** Integrate the self-awareness components of the Church Development Institute model into intentional leadership development.

**Objective 1G** Explore and evaluate models for conflict resolution that can be used in the Synod.

**Objective 1H** Maximize effectiveness of Office of the Bishops staff and increase collaboration between staff members.

**Objective 1I** Develop a training program for lay leaders to preach and preside in congregations without pastors or when pastors are temporarily away.

**GOAL 2: Develop a spirituality of generosity and abundance.**

**Objective 2A** Communicate clearly with congregations about synodical finances and increase expressions of thankfulness for congregational financial support and participation.

**Objective 2B** Provide training for congregational stewardship/resource development.

**Objective 2C** Develop a synod finance team to review all aspects of the financial life of the synod and to propose long term plans for generating ongoing support for synod ministries.

**GOAL 3: Use the resources of the Lilly Endowment Grant—Educate, Equip, Enact (3E)—to address economic challenges faced by rostered ministers.**

**Objective 3A** Develop Fiscal Wellness Teams within congregations.

**Objective 3B** Implement fiscal counseling and/or education programs within the 3E program.

**Objective 3C** Use Synod Assemblies and Theological Conferences as venues for training on fiscal management and wellness, as well as stewardship education.

**Objective 3D** Develop cadres of Fiscal Wellness Coaches for each conference.

**Objective 3E** Utilize Stewardship for All Seasons as a catalyst for fiscal wellness among rostered ministers and congregations.

**Objective 3F** Introduce and maximize effectiveness of existing resources for fiscal wellness available through Portico, Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota, and Resourceful Servants.

**Objective 3G** Introduce intentional fiscal wellness into the Candidacy program and First Call Theological Education.
**MRA 4: Accompanying One Another Into God’s Future** - Ensure that Synod leadership is engaged in the life of our congregations and ministries.

**GOAL 1: Evaluate and provide clarity about the functions of the Office of the Bishop to ensure mission focus and efficacy.**

- **Objective 1A** Revise the Synod constitution as necessary to accomplish new structures.
- **Objective 1B** Ensure the staffing of the Office of the Bishop aligns with the needs of the strategic plan.
- **Objective 1C** Ensure that annual staff goals promote progress in the strategic plan.
- **Objective 1D** Develop strategies for effective collaboration between the staff of the Office of the Bishop and other synodical leaders.

**GOAL 2: Acknowledge and support existing ministries.**

- **Objective 2A** Develop an intentional ministry visitation strategy for Office of the Bishop staff and Synod Leadership.
- **Objective 2B** Facilitate congregational networks that support ministries in particular contexts, ie. rural, resort.

**GOAL 3: Evaluate our committee and team structures to ensure they facilitate accomplishing the Synod’s mission.**

- **Objective 3A** Convene a team to review synodical committees and teams.

**GOAL 4: Acknowledge, support, and create new viable models of ministry.**

- **Objective 4A** Convene a “mission imagination table” to network with current ministries and leaders to explore and affirm new models of ministry.

**GOAL 5: Improve our organizational categories and structures to improve ministry and mission.**

- **Objective 5A** Explore new and more effective categories and structures of ministry to propose to our Churchwide colleagues.

**GOAL 6: Develop an organizational structure that promotes creativity and intentional experimentation to foster mission and ministry.**

- **Objective 6A** Ensure evaluation models are relevant to current context.
- **Objective 6B** Develop clear rationales for new models of mission and ministry.
- **Objective 6C** Assist in the creation of new stewardship models and earned income ventures.

**GOAL 7: Support new missional opportunities across the synod.**

- **Objective 7A** Secure funding sources that allow for new RMS ministries.
- **Objective 7B** Create an endowment fund that support the mission of the synod.

**GOAL 8: Increase the number of rostered ministers arising from the RMS and entering candidacy.**

- **Objective 8A** Create a strategy for identifying and accompanying candidates for rostered ministry.