

Be Transformed... For the Life of the World...



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

In 2018 we began an exploration of how we are called to be Christ's Church for the life of the world. It was a year filled with opportunities for shared witness and mission - in our congregations, across our synod, in partnership with our Churchwide ministries. We wrestled with hard issues, from our society's polarization to the complexity of immigration, from the role of money to the continuing impact of the Doctrine of Discovery.



Together we accompanied congregations and leaders through transition even as we imagined new ministry opportunities. Each step of the way we were challenged to let WHO we are as Christ's Church inform WHY our life as Church matters.

Our Synod's strategic plan has continued to inform and guide us in together proclaiming and embodying God's unconditional love for all neighbors, from Wyoming to the Borderlands and far beyond.

This next year we will move into the Spirit's future by crafting a 2.0 Strategic Plan to help guide our witness and ministry for the next several years.

I am proud of the fact that we continue to take risks and explore innovation within the Rocky Mountain Synod. It reminds us that our engagement in this complex world ultimately relies on an inner transformation that only God's abundant grace and Christ's persistent love make possible.

Thank you for your investment in our life together and for your commitment to grow and thrive as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America here in the Rocky Mountain Synod. It is an honor to serve with you as we seek to be Christ's Church, Better Together!

Yours in Faith,

Bishop Jim Gonia

2018 by the numbers

Claiming our Gifts

\$166,000 was shared to support our 7 campus ministries. Over **\$36,000** was shared in response to refugee ministry on the Border. **\$10,000** supported the education of new pastors and women theologians in Madagascar. Mission support was increased from **46%** to **47%**, with **\$826,670** shared with our Churchwide ministries.

Connecting in Ministry & Witness

25 Leaders participated in a Part-Time ministry summit; **23** Deacons gathered for a Region 2 Deacon Retreat and **25** Leaders from **8** congregations convened for a conversation around ELCA/Ecumenical Catholic Communion partnerships. **500** youth and adult leaders participated in the RMS Youth Gathering

Equipping All Leaders

Through Educate, Equip, Enact: **14** congregations participated in Stewardship for all Seasons and **56** rostered ministers received grants to address financial challenges. Over **210** Advocates were equipped through both Colorado and New Mexico Advocacy Events and over **158** leaders participated in our Theological Conference focused on justice, prayer, and the Doctrine of Discovery.

Accompanying one another into God's Future

We celebrated **6** ordinations of RMS candidates, accompanied **42** active candidates for rostered ministry, and held **2** discernment retreats. **28** leaders were installed into new calls and **1** congregation began formal redevelopment. We welcomed **10** new advocating congregations and **22** pieces of legislation were advocated on in support of a more just future for all.

What we did, together, in 2018

Claiming our Gifts

Gathering as Church Together, the first joint middle school/high school youth gathering was held

Connecting in Ministry & Witness

Seeking to equip all of God's children to act for justice, we hosted Advocacy action and education events

Living as a global church, we welcomed Rev. Albert Ranaivomanana, director of Betela Seminary in Madagascar.

To more deeply claim our identity, Bishop Gonia offered a "Claiming our Gifts" teaching to congregations and conferences.

Embodying accompaniment, Guardian Angels were trained to walk with migrant minors in immigration court.

Creating space for honest conversation, 11 Better Together Summits were held focusing on our values and relationship towards money.

Equipping All Leaders

Working toward justice, we launched an anti-racism task force, ACT 4 RMS

Accompanying one another into God's Future

Strengthening our life together, we welcomed a Regional Gift Planner to the Rocky Mountain Synod.

Seeking to strengthen our leaders, 3E launched a new initiative to create a culture of coaching.

Valuing shared leadership, 38 leaders were elected to boards, committees, and Churchwide assembly

Committed to conciliation, we continued work on repudiating of the Doctrine of Discovery through conversation and new Toolkit.

Building on a strong foundation, office technology was updated and a Finance Task Force formed to strengthen current practices.

looking ahead to 2019

Claiming our Gifts

- Continuing work on 3rd outdoor ministry site
- Expanding Claiming our Gifts teaching
- Developing **RMS Strategic Plan 2.0** to guide our next 3 years

Equipping All Leaders

- Launching Excellence in Leadership learning communities
- Supporting third cohort of Stewardship for all Seasons congregations
- Organizing Youth Leadership Council

Connecting in Ministry and Witness

- Convening Immigration Ministry Task Force
- Hosting Part-time Ministry Summit in partnership with 3E
- Joining Region 2 and Churchwide colleagues for a Word and Service Summit at PLTS

Accompanying one another into God's future

- Participating in 2019 Churchwide Assembly, including election of Presiding Bishop
- Increasing churchwide mission support from 47% to 48%
- Launching new focus area: **Growing in Generosity**