



Eastern Washington Idaho Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

Rev. Martin Wells, Bishop  
Rev. Helga Jansons, Director for Evangelical Mission

October 17, 2016

Dear Pastor

At the last Synod Council meeting in September, we reflected on how good it feels to be part of the church together. The story was shared about Sharon, at Trinity Lutheran in Nampa ID, who at the end of every worship service calls out "I love this Church!" I am working up the courage to yell out "I love this Synod!" when I visit a congregation. As Director for Evangelical Mission, I see the connection between churches across the synod and it feels like one big parish. I love how, even when I worship with you for the first time, we worship the same God, I can follow the liturgy and trust the theology. I see faithful ministry, and many of the same challenges as well.

I also coordinate stewardship education. Stewardship is about seeing how God has blessed us, learning to manage what is entrusted to us and sharing in God's generosity. It is to recognize our connectedness and challenge ourselves to increase our giving in every way; in our hospitality and listening for example.

The word Synod means to "accompany" or "walk alongside" each other as we live out our faith in God. The purpose of the EWAID Synod is to "equip God's people for ministry" with support and resources. As a synod we are impacting our communities in big and small ways all across this gorgeous landscape. Working together, we are like one diverse, steadfast and vibrant Synod-wide congregation.

We are a "first fruits" synod who give first in Mission Support to the ministries of the whole ELCA and to other ministries beyond our own synod. This requires trust in God who loves and cares about our ministries and the synod as a whole, and faith in God's provision. At our Synod Assembly this past spring we voted that we wanted to continue to be generous.

I am writing to thank you for your congregation's generosity! Your leadership has a lot to do with it. It is noticed and appreciated. Most churches have stayed constant or increased their Mission Support just a little. If our Synod is to thrive and grow, and to be a place where God can work through us in new ways - supporting every church more effectively and also funding new ministry initiatives - a significant increase in giving is needed by every congregation. The Synod Mission Plan is that we function as a "Net-Work" where every church feels more connected, encouraged, equipped and resourced. Every congregation and ministry - campus, chaplains, outdoor ministries - is inter-connected. We are learning and serving together. We are networking for a purpose, so that God's work will be enhanced. This includes synod staff, Net-Workers, living in local areas.

ELCA Research and Evaluation has found that when a church that has never asked for pledges before, asks members to make Estimate of Giving commitments as part of an Annual Response program, the giving is doubled over the following 3 years. The process of deciding how much of a percentage to give, doing the math, considering whether to give a little more, writing it down and sending it in as a pledge, is a spiritual practice of commitment to God and the body of Christ.

Please consider increasing your congregation's *Mission Support* for our ongoing ability to work together as a Synod. A printed version of this letter, the *Synod Narrative Budget* and the *Statement of Intent* will arrive at your church by post. It is addressed to your Church Council president so it is not all on your shoulders to bring it to your Church Council meeting for their consideration.

Thank you for your partnership, commitment to the vitality of the whole church, and your generosity,

*Helga*

Pastor Helga Jansons,  
Director for Evangelical Mission

*You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us. 2 Corinthians 9:11*

314 S. Spruce Street, Suite A • Spokane, WA 99201 • 509.838.9871 • FAX 509.838.0941 • [www.ewaidsynod.org](http://www.ewaidsynod.org)