

Connections Multiply Miracles

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Connections Multiply Miracles is a Guiding Principle of the Eastern-Washington Idaho Synod.

Can we be more intentional about making connections and equipping God's people for ministry?

With stewardship there are certain congregations where household giving is up but Mission Support to the synod is poor. Other congregations are proportionately generous to the synod but the giving within the congregation is low; household giving is less than their income would allow.

In other words, some churches need to feel more connected to the synod while others need more resources. Some generous and talented people need to know where their talents could be put to good use, while others need to be equipped or trained so they can be more skilled in leadership.

Working with ELCA Research and Evaluation data leads to this information about our synod:

- Giving per confirmed member has increased in each of the last three years - \$788, \$829, \$852. These levels of giving are above the ELCA national average.
- Congregational mission support percentage from congregations has been stable between 5.63% and 5.84% from 2011 to 2015. These values are very close to the national average of 5.6% for 2015.
- In 40 of the 90 congregations in the synod, mission support dollars for 2015 were above the 2014 value, and the average value for the previous three years.
- The percent of household income that congregation members in the synod contribute to their congregation has been consist at 2.64% for 2013 thru 2015. The value compares favorably to the ELCA national average of 1.8%.
- The value of All Other Benevolences sent by congregations directly to specific ministries has more than doubled from the \$150,000 level in 2011. This indicates people are giving generously to special, designated or specific causes.
- While revenues for the synod increased in 2015, expenses increased a greater amount. This led to a deficit of \$44,228 in 2015 compared with a deficit of \$25,562 in 2014.
- There are 11 congregations that have not given any Mission Support this year

As a synod we can pay attention to who feels disconnected and who needs help and be more intentional in our response. The Net-Working model is right on target. For some congregations where connections are needed we can find out do they have good communication with other churches in the synod? Do they have a Mission Interpreter? Does the pastor feel connected to the synod and could the congregation invite someone from the synod staff or Synod Council or even a cluster Dean to visit them?

It is also helpful to know which congregations would like to receive help and support because they are struggling and unsure what to do or try. The Net-Workers and I are listening to congregational leaders.

The meaning of the word Synod is to walk alongside one another. Connections bring people together and God can do miraculous things through us and between us. The support congregations give to each other matters. It is a joy to be in ministry together; we are better together. Thank you for your partnership!!

