

# Mission Support: our partnership in God's Mission!

*+Pr. Larry Strenge, Director for Evangelical Mission*

January is typically the time our congregations create their "missional plans" through passing a budget at a January council meeting and congregational annual meeting. That "missional plan" includes our remembering, "We are Church Together," our remembering that through the tithes and offerings shared in a congregation, ministry happens. It happens both locally and beyond our local setting. Locally offerings and tithes support the work of a pastor or pastors who serve the congregation or parish. Those same financial gifts support other people who serve the congregation in a variety of roles. And those financial gifts support the facilities needed to do ministry in this local place. When those tithes/offerings go beyond our local setting, shared as a percentage of what is given locally, and sent to do ministry in other places those same dollars are called "Mission Support." Those shared ministry dollars (mission support) are the way we can say, "We are Church Together."

I am grateful for that partnership. As I have the opportunity to hear the stories of what God's Spirit is doing through these "shared dollars" I want to say "thanks" and then encourage you to reflect on how "We are Church Together." Take a look at attached documents, the Statement of Intent and the "reporting form" for Mission Intent. After your congregation has met please make sure someone reports this information about our partnership through above form. Or simply visit our Synod's form [Mission Support Intent reporting form for 2016](#). If you want to learn more about the ELCA's ministries visit the ELCA website, [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org) There you'll find great "resources" including [Stories of Faith in Action](#).

We are in partnership! Together we can say, "Thanks be to God" for the blessings we can share in offerings and tithes to support God's Mission in the world through these ministries. Again, check out these resources. They help us realize, "We are Church Together." As I like to say in my "greeting and gratitude" connection with congregations, that time spent sharing when I visit congregations on behalf of our Synod and ELCA Churchwide, these words are true: You were there! "You were there" when your pastor pays a visit to someone in the hospital or a nursing home. "You were there" when your local congregation packs food for hungry people. "You were there" when someone is baptized or a person realizes, "I am a child of God!" All of these are examples of the "mission work" God's Spirit accomplishes. But that doesn't stop in the local setting! It goes EVERYWHERE your Mission Support dollars reach. So, thanks be to God for you, a partner in God's Mission!  
Living in the Love of Jesus...