



The Eastern Synod Lutheran Leaders' Edition

November 2016

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A Church in Mission for Others

Our vision:

- * We will practice Spirit-ed Discipleship.
- * We will pursue Com-
passionate Justice.
- * We will strive to be a
Healthy Synod.
- * We will build Effective
Partnerships.

Inside this issue:

That Would be a Shame	2
Missing Out? ELFEC Can Help	3
Useful links	4
Reformation Chal- lenge Update	4

Grateful Hearts

The synod hosted two large gatherings this year: the Synod Assembly in June and Generous Giving Practicum in October. Feedback from both of them was overwhelmingly positive.

It takes a village to raise a child and it takes an army to raise the Synod Assembly. Thanks doesn't seem big

enough a word to express our gratitude to everyone who had a part in pulling together this year's assembly.

Minutes, speeches and worship materials are available for download on our website.

Thanks to Jeff Pym and Liz Zehr for planning and organizing the Generous

Giving Practicum. Watch for the Canada Lutheran December issue for a fuller story.

Thanks to all of you for providing feedback on these events. Your feedback helps and encourages us in our daily efforts.

Riitta Hepomaki

The Apple Tree Workshop

The Apple Tree is one of the programs that the synod office offers to congregational leaders. It is a one day workshop tailored for congregations who are interested in enhancing their mission. Workshop facilitators are Jeff Pym and Riitta Hepomaki.

The purpose is:

- To raise mission consciousness
- To help congregational leaders to develop a mission-focused congregation where members are engaged with the world around them

- To help congregations implement new mission activities.

Each workshop starts with a brief bible teaching or bible exercise.

Afternoon hours are dedicated for Asset Mapping exercise.

Because of the limited resources the Apple Tree workshops are done in Ministry Areas where a cluster of congregations are invited to participate. After the workshop participants can lead the similar workshop in their congregations.

If you are interested please contact either your own Area Dean or Riitta Hepomaki at rhepomaki@elcic.ca



That Would Be a Shame

by Jeff Pym

A pained expression crossed his face and he said, “The property would be sold to some developer, and that would be a shame”.

Not long ago I was having coffee with a friend who is a faithful, long-time member of the Baptist church around the corner from me. We were discussing the problems facing his congregation: aging parishioners; ongoing loss of membership; relentless budget pressures – the usual list that is all-too-familiar to many Lutherans as well.

I asked him if there had been a conversation about what would happen if the decline continued and the congregation were forced to close. A pained expression crossed his face and he said, “The property would be sold to some developer, and that would be a shame”.

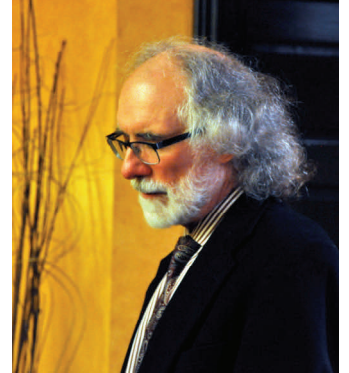
He didn’t elaborate and I didn’t press him, but I was left wondering why it would be a shame.

It’s not hard to understand from a church member’s perspective. We have fond memories of our church, and for some of us

those memories go back 6, 7, or 8 decades. We’ve put a lot of work into the property, building and programs over the years. We’ve fought to ensure that our vision of what a church should be is not abandoned, corrupted or watered down.

But would anyone in the community who is not a member of our church think it’s a shame? Most places have more churches than are needed to serve the people who attend, so why mourn a reduction in excess inventory? Do our neighbours even know what our church does? Would anyone in the community miss our congregation if it ceased to exist?

Don’t misunderstand me; I think that many congregations **do** play a vital role in their community. But some have trouble articulating what that is, and making that the top priority when it comes time to making plans and setting budgets.



It strikes me that my friend’s comment points to some good questions for congregations to address, especially if they’re having trouble defining their purpose, stating their mission or setting priorities. If we went out of business, what would be lost to the community? Who would miss us, and why? Would folks really think it’s a shame that we’re gone?

It’s high time we started seeing ourselves as others see us. If we did, perhaps we could focus our energy on the things that really matter.



Missing out? ELFEC can help

Is your congregation missing out on a type of charitable giving that produces large amounts of revenue for other charities?

In the past 20 years ELFEC has helped dozens of donors and congregations by processing gifts of securities (shares and mutual funds) and transferring the cash proceeds to designated beneficiaries. Over that period, we have handled more than 130 transactions with a total value of almost \$4 million. Congregations have received more than \$700,000 of that total.

Donors choose this way of making a gift because it offers significant savings in income taxes payable. The hitch is that the receiving charity must have an

investment account into which the securities can be deposited directly. Most Eastern Synod congregations don't have that kind of account.

ELFEC charges a flat administrative fee of \$125 per transfer, plus \$25 for each additional cheque we have to write in the case of multiple charitable beneficiaries. That fee comes out of the amount congregations receive. No matter how large the value of the securities donated, our fee remains the same. After all, the cost of producing a cheque is the same regardless of how large the amount payable.

Today there are several other organizations willing to offer the same service

as ELFEC. I checked two of the most popular, and discovered that they charge an administrative fee ranging from 1-3% of the value of the securities transferred, with a minimum fee for smaller transactions. On a gift of \$10,000, for example, these two organizations would charge \$275 and \$300 respectively, compared to ELFEC's \$125.

To learn more about the advantages of donating gifts of securities, you can find a descriptive article on ELFEC's website at <http://elfec.ca/content/planned-giving-resources>. To learn how congregations can promote these gifts, contact Jeff Pym at jpym@elfec.ca or 1-888-308-9461.



Useful links:

CRA Approval and the Clergy Residence Deduction

Keith Myra's article on Leaders' Edition, September 2015 can be found at www.easternsynod.org

Link to: [Leaders' Edition September 2015](#)

Compensation Schedule for [2017 Salary and Housing](#) (Eastern Synod website)

Compensation Schedule for [2017 Pension and Benefits](#) (GSI website)

Accessibility And the Church

Linda Grainger wrote an article about the accessibility standards in Ontario in Leaders' Edition April 2016 issue. Please, read the article here: [Leaders' Edition April 2016](#)

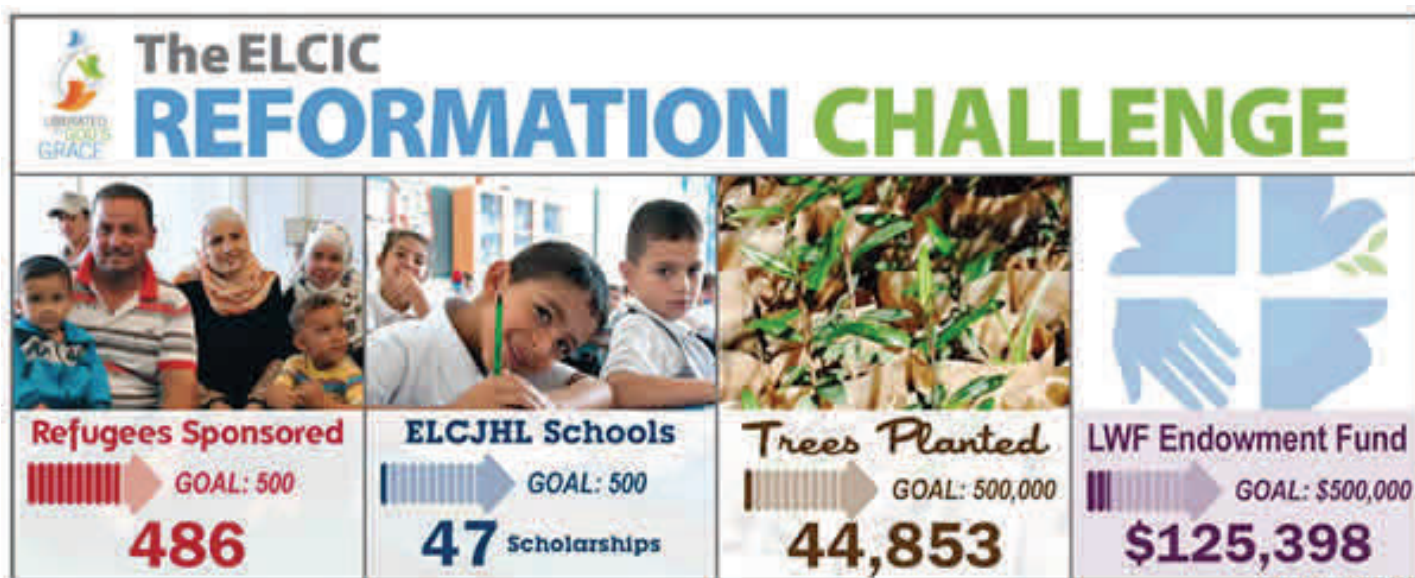
Synod Assembly 2016

Session minutes, speeches and worship material can be found at the [Eastern Synod website](#).

Financial

[Notification from CRA](#) Retention Period For Church Offering Envelopes

[Report of the Treasurer](#)



As of October 27, 2016