

The Eastern Synod Lutheran Leaders' Edition

November 2015

A Church in Mission for Others

Our vision:

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



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Who Are You?

One summer when I was in Finland, we had a family reunion. I realized - to my surprise - that I had to introduce myself, not to all of my relatives but to my older aunts and uncles. They thought I was my sister Eila. So I introduced myself "I'm not Eila". I did what John the Baptist did. He said "I'm not Elijah", "I'm not the prophet", "I'm not the Messiah".

There are times in our lives when we ask ourselves "who am I?" One way to figure out our identity is to ask "who am I **not**?" or "what am I **not**?" These are good questions to ask as a congregation, too, when you are defining your mission and your identity as a congregation.

How does your congregation differentiate from other congregations or organizations? Who are you not? For example you may say: We are not a cultural club, we are not Red Cross, we are not a business etc. This is not a rank order. We are not saying that we are superior to other organizations. John didn't say that Elijah was bad and he was good. I didn't think that I was better than Eila.

Secondly, John the Baptist talked about who he was. He said "The voice crying in the wilderness". He didn't say "Hi I am John, nice to meet you". He introduced himself by telling about his mission. "I am preparing the way for Christ", he said.

It doesn't say much to people if we just say we are This and This Lutheran Church. It would witness more, if we told what we are doing. "We feed the hungry", "we welcome the stranger", "we visit the lonely", "we learn about God" etc.

Every congregation should be clear about who they are, what their core values are, and what they do. How do you answer these questions: "Who are we?" "Why are we doing what we are doing? What are our strategies for witnessing to the world?"

Peace!

Spread the Word

Once in awhile we get feedback that the Synod communication does not reach individual members. Please, make sure that the monthly newsletter **The Eastern Synod Lutheran** is distributed either electronically or in hard copy form to your members. People are interested in what is happening outside their territory.

Canada Lutheran is another great way to keep in touch with the wider

Lutheran community. Does your congregation have a Canada Lutheran Representative in your congregation? Please, check out this [link](#) and learn how to subscribe the magazine.

We are also on **Facebook** and **Twitter**. Our Bishop Michael and the National Bishop Susan as well as many of our pastors are active in Twitter spreading local and global news that might interest you as church leaders.

Tweets can also be seen on our website www.easternsynod.org.

We are always happy to hear from you. Please, send your stories and/or articles to Liz Zehr ezehr@elcic.ca

Feedback and questions regarding this issue to Pastor Riitta rhepomaki@elcic.ca



I still remember it clearly. I was nearing the end of my first year of pastoral ministry. We were talking about the budget for the coming year. "Pastor, would you please leave the room?" And so I did. The request, it wasn't really a question, caught me completely off guard and so I meekly left the room to go up to the sanctuary. Not to pray or even reflect. But to brood.

What were they talking about and why were they taking so long to do it? Of course, they were talking about me and they were deciding what my salary should be for the coming year. That was, for all intent and purposes, my first ministry review. While they were having their conversation, I made the decision that this practice would never happen again. If they wanted to review my performance, my work, whether I was fulfilling my responsibilities or not, wasn't it best to tell me directly. My call to ministry was not something private. What were they talking about and why were they taking so long to do it? Of course, they were talking about me and they were deciding what my salary

The Importance Of Regular Ministry Reviews

should be for the coming year.

There are public responsibilities to the vocation of ordained ministry to which I was called. Shouldn't that responsibility be shared between the pastor and the congregation who have their own vocation as the baptized people of God? After all, don't pastor and congregation do ministry together?

After 30 plus years of ministry, I have learned that regular ministry reviews can contribute to the building of healthy congregations. Constructive feedback can identify areas of job performance (yes, it is a job as well as a call)that need serious attention before that performance or lack of becomes a problem. An organized ministry review, which allows for critical reflection and the gathering of important feedback, can lead to measured accountability and increased competence for ministry. Likewise a pastor who is willing and self-confident enough to see the benefit of regular ministry reviews encourages the congregation to look at themselves and the ministry they are called to do both within the congregation and in the wider community. Reviews benefit

everybody and not just the pastor. They can also defuse any potential conflicts should the vision of the pastor not match that of the congregation. Conversation is always better than confrontation.

For sure, there are many ways to conduct a ministry review which includes assessment, support, and goal setting. The most typical is that the review is conducted by a pastoral relations committee, mutual ministry committee, or congregational council. All that is required are people who are involved in the ministry of the congregation so they are aware of what is happening, people who understand and respect the need for confidentiality, and people who can "speak the truth in love" to quote from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

One such review tool I recommend is that used by our congregations who are looking to renew the term call of their pastor. A model with five steps, it asks such questions as "What are the most productive, meaningful or appreciated aspects of your pastor's ministry?" or "What are the three most misunderstood, least appreciated or least helpful aspects of your

by Rev. Douglas Reble

pastor's ministry?" Another tool I recommend is one that focuses on BOTH pastor and congregation. To separate the ministry of one Christian, namely the pastor, for evaluation, without considering the ministry of those with whom he or she shares the work, is not only unjust but theologically unsound. Faith and covenant are the foundation for ministry evaluation. Covenant, because we are bound together through Christ, and faith because we trust in the Holy Spirit to guide us through our deliberations and reflections.

If you, your congregational council or mutual ministry committee recognizes the need for regular ministry reviews, please don't hesitate to contact me. I would be happy to share the evaluation tools I have. Remember, ministry reviews are about creating new energy for ministry and providing for life-enhancing support for the gifts of all who are engaged in the mission of a particular congregation. The purpose of a ministry review is not to prove but to IMPROVE. All will benefit and God's people will be served.

Mission Questions and the Informed Leader

by Jeff Pym



The main responsibility of a Congregational Council is to provide the kind of leadership that a church needs to faithfully fulfill its mission.

The first aspect of leadership is direction. Every congregation needs to know why it exists and where it is going. Call it purpose, vision or mission – it really doesn't matter very much – the main thing is to have one.

The Council and Pastor share the responsibility for this. The best congregational leaders will engage the entire congregation in a process of discernment and articulation. This involves asking and answering such questions as:

What does God have in mind for the future of this congregation?

What is our purpose in this community? Whom do we serve? What gifts and assets belong to this congregation? How could we put them to use in service of God's mission to the world? Articulating the answers to those questions in a compelling way is no easy task, but a congregation must be able to express its mission to its members and

the wider community.

Once the mission has been defined, the leadership must:

1. Review the congregation's official documents to ensure that the mission does not exceed the statement of its "purposes" or "objects" in its letters patent (if incorporated), charitable registration, constitution or bylaws.

2. Ensure that the resources of the congregation are mobilised to fulfill the mission priorities.

3. Continually review ministries and programs to ensure that they are achieving their desired outcomes. This means devoting considerable time in meetings to getting information from people (staff and volun-

teers) who have been given responsibility for programs.

4. Periodically review the mission or vision statements to see if they express the congregation's current beliefs about God's purpose for them.

Good leaders will use relevant information to ensure that the congregation is fulfilling both its legal obligations and its mission as the body of Christ.



Congregational Policies

by Keith Myra

Every well run organization has a set of documents stating its overall mission and governing its day to day activities. For congregations, these documents include a combination of letters patent, bylaws and constitution (depending on the congregation's incorporation status) that provide high level direction. Those congregations firing on all cylinders also have a set of documented policies that provide additional direction and guidance, explaining both the "what" and the

"why".

What's the situation in your congregation: Do you have a set of documented policies covering situations that occur commonly or that are higher risk by their nature (e.g. regulatory issues)? Or does your congregation "fly by the seat of its pants" by trying to remember "what we did the last time" a similar situation occurred or by re-inventing the wheel whenever a decision needs to be made?

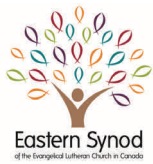
Each congregation should consider developing policies covering the following areas:

- Code of Conduct – includes conflict of interest, confidentiality and other expectations of council members
- Financial Policy – includes offering counting procedures, financial reporting requirements to council/congregation, gift acceptance, fund raising, undesignated gifts, insurance, wedding fees, etc. Information on some of

these items can be found in the [ELCIC Treasurers Booklet](#) on the ELCIC web site.

- Human Resources Policy – includes hiring, compensation, health & safety, accessibility issues, etc.
- Sexual Abuse/ Harassment Policy – for examples, refer to the Eastern Synod's [Harassment Policy](#) and the ELCIC's [Sexual Abuse or Harassment Policy](#)

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Each issue of the Leaders' Edition is also online
<http://www.easternsynod.org/content/leaders-edition>

Eastern Synod Assembly 2016 "Liberated by God's Grace"

June 23-26, 2016
International Plaza Hotel,
Airport, Toronto

When establishing your 2016 congregational budget, you should budget \$950 for each delegate (clergy and lay). More information on the Synod website shortly.

Compensation Schedule for Pastors, Diaconal Ministers, Pastoral Supply, and Interim Pastors 2015-2016 can be found [here](#).

Benevolence offerings to be credited to 2015 must be received at the synod office no later than Jan 22nd, 2016

With God's help and your generous offerings in 2016, we can continue to be a church *In Mission for Others*.



Our Ministry Story 2016 can be found at www.easternsynod.org

Congregational Policies cont.



Does your congregation "fly by the seat of its pants" by trying to remember "what we did the last time" a similar situation occurred or by re-inventing the wheel whenever a decision needs to be made?

- Privacy Policy – for an example, refer to the Eastern Synod's [Policy to Protect Personal Information](#) on the synod web site
- Protection of Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People Policy – for an example refer to the ELCIC's Protection Policy documents on the synod web site: [Introduction](#), [Protection Policy](#) and [Model Documents](#)
In addition, depending on the size of your congregation and the activities it carries out, the following types of policies may be helpful:
 - Communication Policy – for an example, refer to the Eastern Synod [Social Media Guidelines](#) on the synod web site.
 - Endowment Policy – for a sample template, refer to the [Congregational Mission Endowment Fund Bylaw](#) posted on the Evangelical Lutheran Foundation of Eastern Canada website.
 - Facilities Rental Policy – refer to "Rental of Church Facilities" in "Leaders' Edition (June, 2015)
 - Investment Policy – sample template coming soon!
 - Pastor's Discretionary Fund Policy – identifies permissible uses, reporting requirements, etc.
- Volunteer Policy
- Inclusion Policy – indicates eligibility for receiving communion, being married in the church, etc.
Each policy should be approved by council, communicated to appropriate stakeholders, reviewed periodically and revised as required.
Future editions of "Leaders' Edition" will include additional considerations, and in some cases templates, for developing some of these policies.