



Thank You For Your Generous Offerings in 2019!

This report provides a pre-audit summary of offerings for various church-wide causes that were remitted to the synod office by congregations and individuals throughout 2019. In next month's report, *"The Synod's 2019 Financial Story"*, I will provide a more comprehensive financial picture of the past year, including operating fund details (e.g. income, expenditures on synodical ministries and the resulting surplus/deficit) as well as other financial highlights.

Although from time to time we may tend to bemoan our apparent lack of financial and other resources, Bishop Michael and others have reminded us that we are the wealthiest Christians who have ever lived. Once again, as we look back on 2019, it is evident that we as a synod have so much for which to be grateful!

In total, offerings received through the synod office were approximately the same as those received in the previous year. However, when looking more closely at specific designations, as usual, there were a few "ups and downs" in 2019 compared to 2018.

On behalf of the Eastern Synod Council, **"Thank You"** to you, the members and friends of the 182 congregations that comprise our synod, for your generous gifts over the past year. Through this partnership, you fund a variety of vibrant and vital ministries within the Eastern Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, thus extending the reach of your congregation's mission across Canada and the world.

Benevolence Offerings

General Benevolence offerings represent the primary source of funding for the synod's operating budget. In 2019 these offerings increased by almost 3%, a most welcome, upward blip when viewed in the context of the more usual year-over-year declines that have formed the overall trend over much of the past quarter century.

Canadian Lutheran World Relief Offerings

Offerings to Canadian Lutheran World Relief offering consist of gifts to general/undesignated CLWR and gifts to CWLR special appeals/projects. Unfortunately, the \$13,000 increase in offerings to CLWR special appeals/projects was more than offset a decrease of \$22,000 in CLWR general/undesignated giving. As a result, total offerings for Canadian Lutheran World Relief decreased by slightly more than 3% in 2019 compared to the previous year.

Offerings to Other Eastern Synod and ELCIC Ministries

2019 remittances to other designated ministries were generally lower compared to the previous year (refer to “Summary of Total Offerings Received” section below for details). These declines included offerings designated for the ELCIC Reformation Challenge and Martin Luther University College, results that aren’t overly surprising given that the major appeals that were initiated several years ago in these areas are now winding down.

Summary of Total Offerings Received

Offerings to all causes decreased by slightly more than \$10,000 (-0.7%) in 2019 compared to the previous year. Although we would obviously prefer to see an increase, I would suggest that we view these relatively flat results as positive news in light of the significant financial challenges that a number of congregations are facing.

Given to various designated causes was as follows:

| | 2018 | 2019 | % Change |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Regular Benevolence | \$1,393,315 | \$1,430,418 | 2.7% |
| CLWR Undesignated | \$224,170 | \$202,383 | -9.7% |
| CLWR Special Appeals | \$20,202 | \$34,088 | 68.7% |
| ELCIC Global Mission | \$9,412 | \$9,028 | -4.1% |
| ELCIC Reformation Challenge | \$16,418 | \$115 | -99.3% |
| ELCIC Praise Appeal | \$3,263 | \$2,775 | -15.0% |
| Camps | \$9,947 | \$10,720 | 7.8% |
| Lutheran Campus Ministry | \$1,553 | \$4,585 | 195.2% |
| Martin Luther Univ College | \$27,654 | \$19,790 | -28.4% |
| Other Misc Designated Gifts | \$63,732 | \$44,151 | -30.7% |
| TOTAL | \$1,769,666 | \$1,758,053 | -0.7% |

A detailed listing, [2019 Congregational Remittance Report](#) showing amounts that were remitted by each congregation to each of these causes is posted on the synod web site.

May God continue to bless the all of the church-wide ministries that are made possible through our offerings to these most worthy causes!

Keith Myra
Eastern Synod Treasurer