



To: Congregational Treasurers
Rostered Ministers Serving Congregations

From: Keith Myra, Treasurer

Date: December 5th, 2022

Re: 2022 Year-end and Other Important Financial Matters

In addition to being included in the December 9th weekly email newsletter to congregational lay and rostered leaders, a hardcopy version of this communication was mailed to all congregational treasurers using the church mailing address. Although intended primarily for congregational treasurers, it is also important that rostered ministers and other congregational leaders be aware of this information.

To facilitate access to the URL link references, a copy of this communication has been posted online – to find the online version, go to the home page of the Eastern Synod website (<http://www.easternsynod.org/>), scroll down to the rose coloured box titled 'Treasurers/Financial Info', click the drop down arrow, select 'News Updates' and click on the "Search" button.

If you have questions related to this communication or other financial matters, please feel free to contact me: Email: kmyra@elcic.ca Toll free: 1-877-373-5242 (Ext 224)

Earlier this year, I participated in an Eastern Synod sponsored webinar that was facilitated by Lori Guenter Reesor. Lori is a Mennonite pastor, respected speaker, blogger, author, and coach who works with churches from a variety of denominations in the areas of stewardship, finance, and fundraising. Although many of the thoughts that Lori conveyed during that webinar were insightful and practical, one of her comments in particular caught my attention. I'd like to share this with each of you. Lori said: "When I think of treasurers, I think of the line up at the Pearly Gates and how treasurers will avoid the line and be called directly in!"

As Lori implied, the role of treasurer is both demanding and perhaps at times, a thankless task. Furthermore, 2022 has been another challenging year for all congregational leaders as we continue to navigate through the pandemic. Permit me to take this opportunity to express my thanks to each of you for your service as a congregational treasurer!

As has been my custom over the years, I'd like to update you on some time sensitive information pertaining to the upcoming year-end, make you aware of a few changes that have occurred during the past year and remind you about some other important financial information that will assist you in carrying out your role in the year ahead.

A. PERSONNEL CHANGES AT SYNOD OFFICE

Please join me in a belated welcome to Terra Fegan! Terra has been serving in a temporary role as Accounting Assistant since last spring, taking over from Danielle Arsenault who is currently on maternity/family leave following the birth of her daughter, Brielle. Danielle will be returning in September, 2023. Terra's contact information is as follows:

Terra Fegan (Accounting Assistant)
Telephone: (519) 743-1461 or 1-877-373-5242 (toll free) Ext 217
email: tfegan@elcic.ca

As a result of Kim Marcy's resignation this past July, we are currently in the process of hiring for the vacant "manager, finance and administration" position. Since I will be retiring as treasurer when my current term ends in June, 2024, this manager role, along with the next treasurer, are both important parts of our synod's succession plan. As such, I'll let you know as soon as the manager position has been filled.

B. 2022 YEAR-END CLOSE

The Synod's books for 2022 will close at noon on Monday, January 23rd, 2023. In order to be credited for 2022, all remaining remittances of benevolence and other offerings must be received at the synod office by this date. Please note that due to the synod's tight year-end and auditing schedule, no extensions will be possible.

Benevolence remittances that we've received as of October 31st are tracking almost 5% behind those received for the comparable period in 2021 and about 14% lower than the comparable period for 2019 (pre-pandemic). Considering the impact that the pandemic has had on the finances of many congregations, these results, although not what we'd like to see, aren't overly surprising.

In spite of the challenges, we are grateful that many congregations have continued to contribute at their previous level and a few congregations have been able to increase their giving. Regardless of your congregation's particular situation, thank you for your most generous offerings that continue to flow into the synod office, month by month,

during these challenging and unprecedented times! Should your congregation be in a position to make an additional contribution to benevolence, over and above what you have budgeted, as always your “second mile” gifts continue to be especially appreciated! A special thanks to those congregations that have already made an additional gift.

Although our preferred practice is that benevolence and other offerings directed to the synod be given (and receipted) through the local congregation, occasionally gifts from individuals are sent directly to synod office. As is the case in each congregation, ***if a donation from an individual is received after December 31st, 2022, the synod will not be able to date it for the 2022 taxation year.***

The 2022 fourth quarter statements will be mailed to congregational treasurers and chairpersons in early February, 2023. When these arrive, please check your statement closely as these figures will be included in the year-end audit of the synod’s financial statements. Any discrepancies from your records should be reported promptly to Terra Fegan (refer to Section A above for Terra’s contact information).

C. LOOKING AHEAD TO 2023

As you finalize your budget for next year, I, along with Bishop Michael Pryse, request that you and your church council/board prayerfully consider your benevolence budget line for 2023. Hopefully you’ve had a chance to view some of the “[Stewardship & Generous Giving](#)” resources on the synod website. In addition to a series of video clips that help to explain some of our various synodical ministries, most of which are supported through benevolence offerings, we have recently posted a new “Our Ministry Together” brochure in narrative budget form, explaining how your benevolence offerings support the various ministries of the Eastern Synod and wider church. The website also includes instructions on how to order hardcopies of this resource if you wish to distribute these instead of, or in addition to, using the various digital versions in your weekly bulletins, newsletters, annual reports, etc. We continue to be grateful to each of you for the important role that you play as advocates for the ministries of the wider church. Thank you!

Rostered ministers, please keep in mind that you are responsible for ensuring that your congregation’s 2023 “Commitment Amount” to Regular (General/Undesignated) Benevolence, along with other items in the annual parochial report, are submitted by the March 31st, 2023 deadline. The ELCIC national office will provide more information early in the new year.

When submitting your 2023 remittances to the synod office, please use the 2023 version of the Congregational Remittance form to accompany your cheque. As these forms change from year to year, using the current version of the form will help to ensure that your offerings are recorded accurately. Please note, especially, the changes that have been made for 2023 to the header area of this form and that we are now requesting the name and contact information for the person who is completing the form. This will make

it easier for us to contact the appropriate individual on those occasions when we have questions.

For the convenience of congregational treasurers, a copy of the 2023 form has been included in your hardcopy mailing of this communication - please photocopy it, or obtain additional copies by going to the home page of the Eastern Synod website (<http://www.easternsynod.org/>), scroll down to the rose coloured box titled 'Treasurers/Financial Info', click the drop down arrow , select 'Forms' and click on the "Search" button. Both a fillable PDF and printed version of the 2023 forms will be available on the website in early 2023.

In addition to mailing your remittance cheques to the synod office, we are able to receive e-transfers from those congregations that have the capability to make digital disbursements from their bank account using a two-person authorization process. For more details, please contact Terra Fegan (refer to Section A above for Terra's contact information).

D. OTHER 2023 BUDGETING AND FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERATIONS

A copy of the Synod's [2023 Compensation Schedule](#) is posted on the synod's website in the Treasurer/Financial section. This information provides guidance for budgeting salaries/benefits for rostered ministers and/or pastoral supply. Questions about the information in this schedule should be referred to Rev. Doug Reble (dreble@elcic.ca; 1-877-373-5242, Ext 215).

ELCIC Group Services Inc.'s (GSI) [Fall 2022 Treasurer Information Update](#) was recently sent to all congregational treasurers and included details on a number of important items, including 2023 benefit premium rates, information that will be sent to you at the end of the year and a reminder about the opportunity that is available to plan members to reselect their benefits module option for 2023. Keep in mind that you will not be able to issue T4s for 2022 to those employees who are enrolled in the GSI Benefit plan until you receive the taxable benefit report from GSI in February 2023, since the taxable benefits need to be included in the T4. GSI will provide further instructions.

The ELCIC national office and ELCIC Group Services Inc. provide excellent resources for congregational treasurers and others involved in congregational finances:

- **[The ELCIC Treasurer's Information Booklet](#)** – The most current version is posted on the ELCIC website (www.elcic.ca - under "Resources - Treasurer's Resources").
- ***Payroll, Pension and Benefit Information*** – Detailed guidance on these matters, including several calculation worksheets, is available on the ELCIC Group Services Inc. website (www.elcicgsi.ca – under the "[Employers](#)" section).

E. CHARITY INFORMATION RETURN (T3010)

Hopefully, you have filed your congregation's 2021 Charity Information Return (T3010) by now! The deadline for filing is six months following your fiscal yearend. For your 2022 return (due by June 30, 2023 for congregations with a December 31st fiscal yearend), you have the option of using CRA's on-line service or continuing to use the paper form. For further information, refer to CRA's document: [T3010 charity return – Filing information](#). I understand that CRA is starting to become even more diligent about the importance of charities meeting these deadlines and is imposing penalties for non-compliance, including revocation of charitable status, more quickly than in previous years.

F. PROPERTY AND LIABILITY INSURANCE

it's important that congregations review their insurance coverage periodically. For example, does your property coverage provide protection in the case of overland flooding or a sewage backup? Was your policy recently amended by your insurer so that it no longer includes coverage related to COVID and other infection diseases? Although you and your church council may ultimately determine that your congregation can't afford to be insured for every risk, it's important, nevertheless, to understand what types of events are covered, and just as importantly, what ones aren't.

Congregations Insured through Aon / Ecclesiastical

A number of congregations insured through policies provided through Aon have reported unsatisfactory response times when contacting Aon with questions or concerns. Aon has acknowledged these problems, agreed that their level of service has been unacceptable. I, along with the treasurers of the other four ELCIC synods will be meeting with AON in January to discuss their plans for improving client service. Please note that Aon contact in the [ELCIC Treasurers' Booklet](#) is out of date. Current contacts are as follows. In addition, please copy elcic@aon.ca on all correspondence to Aon.

Location	Synod	Aon Contact 1	Aon Contact 2
Toronto	Eastern Synod (Ontario)	Rob Ferguson rob.ferguson@aon.ca +1.204.997.9058	Annie Ramdham annie.ramdhan@aon.ca
Montreal	Eastern Synod (Quebec)	Bonald Antoine Bonald.antoine@aon.ca 1.514.840.7852	Lyubov Desjardins Lyubov.desjardins@aon.ca 1.514.982.5346
Halifax	Eastern Synod (Maritimes)	Rob Ferguson rob.ferguson@aon.ca +1.204.997.9058	Annie Ramdham annie.ramdhan@aon.ca

Congregations Insured through Robertson Hall Insurance

As you are likely aware from a notification that Robertson Hall sent a few weeks ago, they are no longer able to offer the ACCESS Outside User Group liability insurance coverage. Since it is important that each congregation have this type of coverage in place for all rentals to all individuals and groups for events that aren't under the control of the congregation, it is important that you seek alternate coverage elsewhere. Robertson Hall recommends that

“... you advise the Outside User Group to inquire about alternate coverage that may be available directly through other special event insurance providers, such as PAL Insurance, DUUO Insurance, FRONT ROW Insurance, and etc.

Or have the Outside User Group check with their personal insurance broker for special event liability insurance that their office may have available including through other programs such as PREMIER Group Event Liability, or through their own Homeowners, Condominium or Tenant's Package Personal Liability Insurance policy.”

G. DONATIONS OF SECURITIES

Did you know that donations of securities and mutual funds provide a very tax-efficient way for donors to make charitable donations because tax on capital gains can be avoided? To accept these types of donations a brokerage account is required. The Evangelical Lutheran Foundation in Eastern Canada ([ELFEC](#)), a charitable foundation that serves congregations across the ELCIC, offers assistance to congregation by providing brokerage services to facilitate these types of donations. And although organizations such as CanadaHelps.org, offer the same services, ELFEC offers these services at much lower fees. Click on this link for information about [2022 deadlines](#).

For further information email ELFEC's Director of Finance and Marketing, Krista Kuehnbaum (kkuehnbaum@elfec.ca) or call toll-free (1-888-308-9461).

H. AUTHORIZED APPEALS FOR 2023

The synodical constitution stipulates that "special appeals to congregations for the raising of funds shall require the consent of the convention or the synod council". Unfortunately, this approval is not always requested; as a result, congregations often receive numerous solicitations from church and community related organizations.

Although some members prefer giving to specific causes, a proliferation of special appeals can be counter-productive to the support of synodical ministries that are funded through

regular benevolence dollars. These ministries are prioritized by Synod Council and approved by delegates to Assembly as part of the budgeting process.

It has been the practice of Synod Council to provide some guidance to congregations by designating a limited number of authorized synodical appeals and by communicating these priorities to each congregation on an annual basis. (Congregations retain the freedom to support additional appeals as they deem appropriate.)

In addition to ELCIC approved ministries (e.g. Canadian Lutheran World Relief, ELCIC Praise Appeal), Synod Council has authorized the following appeals for 2023:

- ***Outdoor Ministry General Appeal*** – in support of Camp Lutherlyn and Camp Mush-a-Mush in their respective catchment areas
- ***St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener*** – CTV Television Ministry Appeal

It is understood that offerings for special appeals such as these are expected to be above and beyond, not in lieu of, regular benevolence offerings.

I. ONTARIO CORPORATIONS ACT (ONCA)

After more than a decade, the Province of Ontario has finally enacted the *Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010*. This new legislation has implications for all congregations that are currently incorporated in Ontario under the previous *Corporations Act*. If your congregation is one of these, Secretary of Synod Rev. Wendell Caron Grahlman will be contacting your chairperson to help you navigate through the transition to ONCA. Although most of the changes that have been introduced by ONCA are unrelated to congregational financial issues, the requirements for an audit have been relaxed somewhat. For more information, refer to the document "[Do We Need a Financial Audit at Year-end?](#)" posted on the synod's website.

J. OTHER INFORMATION

Finally, a reminder that the Treasurers/Financial Information section on the home page of the Eastern Synod website (www.easternsynod.org) provides a wealth of information and previous communications for treasurers that are of ongoing importance. If you haven't done so, you may wish to check this out.

Wishing You and Yours a Blessed Advent Season, a Merry Christmas and



All the best in 2023!