



# The Eastern Synod Lutheran Leaders' Edition

June 2015

## It's Not All About Money

Thank you for your feedback! Someone asked why we talk so much about money but not about mission. That's a good question. I don't know the answer, but I invite you to think about it and send me your thoughts.

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One of the things that Jeff Pym highlights in his council training is that good administration makes council meetings flow, and you will have more time to discuss and plan your ministry. Good administration requires that policies and procedures are in place and up to date, boundaries

are respected and responsibilities taken seriously. Leaders' Edition is our endeavor to assist you in that.

Seriously, make sure that in every meeting your council has time to pray together, share faith stories, and talk about ministry.

Make sure that your meetings are not too long, either. Here is a story about what once happened when a meeting got too long:

*A young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in the window, began to sink*

*off into a deep sleep while Paul talked still longer. Overcome by sleep, he fell to the ground three floors below. (Acts 20:9)*

Most of the councils meet in church basements, I believe, thus the consequences of someone falling asleep would not be as hazardous. But this story reminds me also of liability issues which we will address in the next Leaders' Edition.

Best,

### A Church in Mission for Others

Our vision:

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

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### Be Creative!

Did you know that there is an Eastern Synod Committee that loves to give out money? Yes! We're the **Mission Committee**, and we process grant applications for new and creative mission initiatives every Fall. In 2015, we approved about \$220,000 worth of grants, and the good news is we have a new addition-

al funding worth \$200,000 to be spent over the next 3 years!

A letter to all Congregational Chairpersons, pastors and Leaders will go out early June introducing us and explaining various funding possibilities in greater detail. Take a look! If you have any questions,

talk to your area deans and leadership teams, or your local committee member (info in the letter).

The grant application forms will be available on our Committee Webpage (on the Synod Website under "Faith in Action"), and the deadline is **September 25<sup>th</sup>**.

- Sebastian Meadows-Helmer

## Rental of Church Facilities

A congregation is permitted to rent its facilities (e.g. specific room/s), the entire building, parking lot, etc.) to individuals and/or groups at its discretion, provided that it adheres to the following rental fee considerations. Note that since congregations are registered charities, facility rentals are HST-exempt:



Rental Group	Rental Fee Considerations
Individual(s)	If made available for rental, facilities must be available to members and non-members alike and the same rental fee must be charged regardless of membership status. If the facilities will be used for a profit making venture, market value rates must be charged.
Other Registered Charities or Not-For-Profit Groups	A fee, as determined by the congregation, should be charged. In the case of those charities with a purpose/mission similar to that of the congregation, the congregation is permitted to waive the fee.
For-Profit Groups/Companies (e.g. a business)	Market value rates must be charged.
Government Bodies	Fees charged are at the discretion of the charity.

Each congregation should develop a policy governing the rental of its facilities and review this policy periodically. Among other content such a policy should include:

- ◆ The types of rental groups that will be permitted (refer to above table)
- ◆ A fee schedule (based on the type of rental as well as other considerations)
- ◆ The group or individual(s) who will approve each application
- ◆ Any rental restrictions that the congregation deems important - for example activities that conflict with the congregation’s purpose, beliefs, practices; serving alcoholic beverages; smoking; use of confetti; use of candles; access to the kitchen; sports activities, etc.
- ◆ A requirement that any outside group provide a certificate of liability insurance as proof that it is covered for activities that will be carried out in the congregation’s building. (Note that in most if not all cases, your congregation’s liability insurance policy covers only those activities that are under the direct control of your congregation).
- ◆ A rental contract template

- Keith Myra

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## Have You Filed CRA's Registered Charity Information Return (T3010) Yet?

Of all of the annual regulatory and other activities that a congregation must perform, completing and filing CRA's Registered Charity Information Return (T3010) usually ranks near the bottom of the "most-favourite" task list. Although this form is both lengthy and tedious, it is critically important in maintaining your congregation's status as a Registered Charity and hence, its ability to issue charitable donation receipts to individuals for tax purposes.

Following are a few important facts and considerations pertaining to the T3010:

- The completed form must be **received by CRA** within six months of fiscal year-end. Since fiscal year-end for most congregations is December 31<sup>st</sup>, this means that your return must be in CRA's office by June 30<sup>th</sup> at the latest - unlike individual tax returns, a June 30<sup>th</sup> postmark isn't sufficient.

- Be sure all appropriate people have been consulted when completing the T3010.

As an example, although most of the content is financially oriented, the pastor should be consulted when completing information pertaining to politi-

cal activities that the congregation may have been involved with.

- Has your church council received confirmation (likely from your treasurer) that the return for your congregation for your most recently completed fiscal year has been completed, signed and returned to CRA prior to the deadline? Better yet, has each member of the council had a chance to review the submission?

- Penalties for not filing a T3010 (or filing late) include fines and possible loss of registered charity status.

- With the exception of a

few pieces of private information (e.g. address and birthdate information for board members), complete returns for the last five years for each of Canada's more than 80,000 registered charities (including those of your congregation) are accessible for viewing from CRA's website. Why not take a look at your congregation's recent returns using the following search tool URL: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/lstngs/menu-eng.html>

-Keith Myra



## Covering Your Assets

In a healthy congregation, the council spends its time on two main jobs: leadership and stewardship.

Leadership has to do with articulating the church's mission and taking steps to see that ministries, programs and activities are in alignment with that mission.

Stewardship is taking care of things one does not own. For a congregational council, that means preserving the church's assets. We all know that assets include money and property, but less obvious categories of assets include the congregation's ability to function as a registered

charity and its reputation in the community.

While stewardship should not dominate the discussion at every council meeting, responsible leaders take care of their assets by using several tools:

### 1. Policies and procedures

These set out the ways things should be done. One clear example is financial procedures that are designed to minimize the possibility of fraudulent activity – in both reality and perception. Others are policies on conflict of interest, sexual abuse and privacy of personal information.

### 2. Information

Councils need assurance that important activities have taken place correctly and on time. This can come in the form of written reports on such things as payments (salary, statutory remittances, etc.) and required filings (e.g. ELCIC Parochial Report, Annual Charity Information Return – form T3010). Information also includes bank reconciliations and financial statements. An annual financial audit or review is a type of third-party information that provides a higher standard of assurance than self-reporting.

### 3. Insurance

Property insurance provides coverage against loss due to fire, flood, etc. plus liability coverage that protects against loss due to injury on the premises. Some policies include special liability insurance for directors and officers, which includes the congregational council. Incorporation is another form of insurance that adds some protection for leaders and members against personal liability for the errors or omissions of the congregation.

Future issues of the Leaders' Edition will cover some of these topics in greater detail.

- Jeff Pym

## The Eastern Synod Mission Priorities

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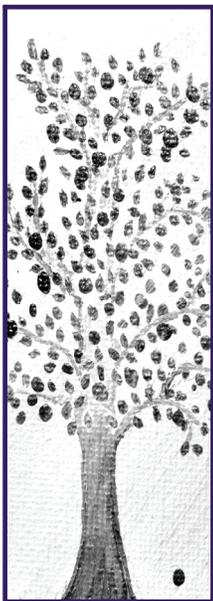
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1. We will practice Spirited Discipleship: We will encourage one another to be joyful in worship, diligent in exploring God's Word, passionate in bearing witness to our faith, generous in sharing the gifts we have received, and wise in working with all our sisters and brothers in Christ. In our life together, we will be open to the creative and loving ways that God's Spirit works in and through us as members of the Eastern Synod.
2. We will pursue Compassionate Justice: We will be mindful of the biblical principles of justice and compassion, striving to work with and for people who live on the margins of society. We will meet our neighbours, become more familiar with those living in our communities who may vary from us in age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, and religious practices, and foster a climate of invitation for all. We will also seek to take better care of the earth, and play a leading role in preserving all that God has made.
3. We will strive to be a Healthy Synod: We will have a clear sense of purpose and a strong sense of identity. We will be faithful stewards of gifts and assets entrusted to us. We will engage, cooperate with and support our national church. We will continue to assess and adjust our structures so that we remain suited to the tasks to which the Gospel calls us. We will be challenged by ongoing evaluation of our various ministries, mindful that God may lead us to end some of them and begin others.
4. We will build Effective Partnerships: We will strengthen our existing partnerships and develop new ones. This includes collaboration with congregations, ministry areas, synodically recognized ministries, specialized ministries, other synods, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, as well as ecumenical, multi-faith, and community organizations. We will frequently ask ourselves, "Do we have to do this alone?"



So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. Matt. 7:17

### Is Your Congregation Healthy?

Seven signs of healthy congregations (adapted from Peter Steinke):

#### 1. Sense of Purpose

Healthy congregations have a clear direction, a vision that is realistic but challenging and constantly revised.

#### 2. Use Conflict for Learning

Healthy congregations are not afraid of conflicts. They don't let conflicts fester, but use resources to manage them. Leaders in healthy congregations don't ask who to blame but what we can do.

#### 3. Clarity of Beliefs, Direction, Roles and Responsibilities

Healthy congregations are clear about what is salutary to their well being and what is not. Clarity maintains good boundaries. Boundaries provide a structure. A structure corals anxiety.

#### 4. Mature Interaction

In healthy congregations leaders are devoted to learning. People speak to one another, not about one another. Healthy congregations draw on their spiritual strengths.

#### 5. Focus on Service

Healthy congregations use resources well and develop new ones. People's involvement in community is encouraged and expected.

#### 6. Mood, Tone, and Spirit

Healthy congregations are spirited, caring, hopeful, playful, generous, spontaneous and fun.

#### 7. Healing Capacities

Healthy congregations respond to challenges. They avoid "quick fix" but don't drag out the process. Healthy congregations reach out to the hurting, the lonely and the needy.