

# A Financial Expression of Faith

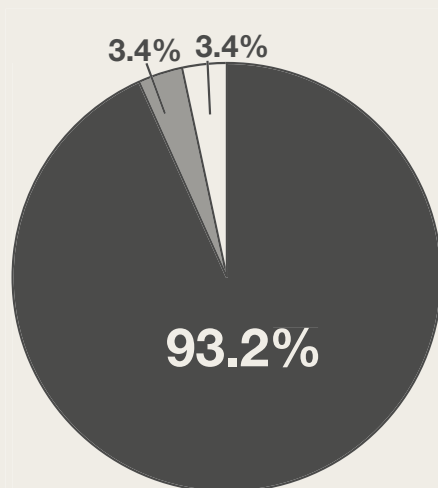
A budget accounts for the resources an organization uses to fulfill its vision. But for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), our budget does something more. It begins to tell the story of peoples' lives transformed, of God's boundless love shared with the world. It's the financial expression of our faith.

Guided by five strategic priorities, the churchwide budget sustains our work as we: support congregations; grow in evangelical outreach; step forward as a public church; deepen and extend our global, ecumenical and interfaith relationships; and bring forth and support faithful, wise and courageous leaders.

The ministries featured in *Stories of Faith in Action* are not funded by a single line item of the budget. Rather they are made possible by many programs supported by the budget and carried out through partnerships among the three expressions of this church.

For example, a new congregation doesn't begin within a groundbreaking ceremony. It starts much earlier with the development of leaders who are formed by a strong, healthy educational system from preschool to seminary. Early research and training conducted by churchwide and synod staff are the ground work needed to pick the right location and leaders. Relationship building among leaders of congregations, synods and the churchwide organization provide a firm foundation. And a commitment for ongoing funding from the three expressions ensures a successful future.

Simply put, our ministry starts with a promise that, in collaboration, we will do God's work together. Thank you for your continued support.



Mission support funds more than 80% of the churchwide budget revenue, and it continues to be the single most important source of income for our shared ministry.

In 2008, members of 10,396 ELCA congregations gave \$1.94 billion to support God's mission and ministry through the three expressions of the ELCA.

- \$1,811,907,802 (or 93.2%) remained in congregations to fund local ministries
- \$65,211,572 (or 3.4%) was shared to support synodical ministries
- \$65,286,926 (or 3.4%) was sent from synods to support churchwide ministries

## **Support Congregations and Grow in Evangelical Outreach** **29.54%**

- Proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ
- Receive, establish and renew congregations, ministries, organizations, institutions and agencies necessary to carry out God's mission through this church
- Nurture congregations by word and sacrament to be empowered for bold engagement in the world through witness and service
- Expand youth and young adult ministries
- Recognize and promote the gift of diversity

## **Deepen and Extend Our Global and Ecumenical Partnerships** **16.91%**

- Accompany churches around the world (includes sending mission personnel)
- Strengthen inter-Lutheran and full communion relationships
- Relate to other communities of faith

## **Step Forward as a Public Church** **5.68%**

- Respond to poverty, hunger, violence, disease and disasters around the world
- Develop commitments to serve creation and humanity through study and deliberation
- Develop and exercise the vehicle of leadership and engagement
- Serve in response to God's love through social ministry organizations

## **Bring Forth and Support Leaders** **15.41%**

- Provide leaders for the life and witness of this church
- Support our educational network from preschool through seminary
- Prepare, recruit and support leaders
- Support retired church leaders

## **Steward Resources to Further God's Kingdom** **4.67%**

- Grow and encourage financial resources for ministry

## **Support Governance of this Church** **2.12%**

- Provide for the biennial churchwide assembly
- Make decisions through Church Council and advisory councils

## **Coordinate and Support Ministries** **25.67%**

- Support mission through research
- Plan and evaluate the work of this church
- Provide communication and technology efficiencies
- Provide organizational and administrative services
- Coordinate relationships between the churchwide organization and synods