



From the Bishop's Desk: LOCAL FUNDING EXPERIMENT

This "From the Bishop's Desk" note was originally sent to rostered leaders of the Metro D.C. Synod on June 2, 2015.

Dear friends,

Before we actually arrive at the National Conference Center in Leesburg I wanted to send you a piece of information I think you will find helpful and interesting to think about. The Synod Assembly is coming soon now.

For years our synod has shared between 50 and 55 percent of our income from congregations as mission support with the churchwide ministries of the ELCA. At the Synod Assembly we'll be voting on a Mission Spending Plan that includes sharing 35 percent of our income for 2016.

The synod has previously received back from our ELCA partners much of the money we use to start and to renew congregations. And we have received back almost all of the money that provides for the ministry of the Rev. Phil Hirsch, our synod's Director of Evangelical Mission.

The idea is that using local funds locally will reduce some overhead and will encourage local oversight and local enthusiasm.

For 2016 we are proposing that we would ourselves fund the work with new and renewing congregations, and that we would pay for Pr. Hirsch's ministry. We will not receive money back from the larger church to cover our expenses, and we will send a smaller percentage of our income to the churchwide offices.

We are proposing trying this as an experiment, with the foreknowledge and blessing of the Church Council of the ELCA. Four other synods are trying the same thing or almost the same thing.

The idea is that using local funds locally will reduce some overhead and will encourage local oversight and local enthusiasm. We're actually hoping there will be an increase of support from congregations, which will strengthen us here and the whole ELCA as well.

We want to be faithful stewards of God's resources and good partners with our ELCA sisters and brothers.

We are committed to growing the gospel witness here where we live and work. And we are committed to sustaining a level of mission support for the ELCA that will empower that gospel witness in other parts of our country and the world. We want to be faithful stewards of God's resources and good partners with our ELCA sisters and brothers.

Whether you're attending the Synod Assembly next month, or following reporting, or hearing about us from someone who's there, no matter what, keep our synod and its assembly in our prayers. Ask God to bless us with courage and with hope as we go forward together.

[Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod](#)

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In Jesus,
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