

## Director of Evangelical Mission – Annual Report to Assembly

The role of Director for Evangelical Mission isn't always the easiest to explain because the work covers a broad spectrum of responsibilities. When I visit with congregations, what I share with them is that my role focuses primarily on the following:

1. **Helping congregations, ministries, and the synod match words with their actions.** This element of the work explores how to live more fully into mission, understand who we say we are as God's people, gain clarity on who we say Jesus is, and evaluate how to turn these declarations into lived action.
2. **Working with congregations, ministries, and the synod to share the story of Jesus more effectively.** The scarier word for this facet of the work is "evangelism." While the work of evangelism (telling people about the story of Jesus) can feel awkward, the muscle we use to do it is the same one we use to share with others about our favorite book, song, or Netflix show. I believe every person is well-practiced at sharing things they find transformational, beautiful, and meaningful with others. The work of evangelism is largely rooted in a rediscovery of the story of Jesus in a way that compels us to share it the same way we share so many other things we find important or exciting.
3. **Walking with congregations, ministries, and the synod to explore where new life is possible.** Often, but not exclusively, this accompaniment occurs in moments of crisis. As financial resources, attendance, energy, and leadership options dwindle congregations are given the gift of desperation needed to explore new possibilities for their future. Sometimes the new life that results is a new sense of mission and purpose that inspires renewed energy and resources, and sometimes the new life that results is through a process of consolidation, merger, or closure that blesses a new or emerging ministry effort with resources it needs to thrive.
4. **Accompanying the synod's "Funded Ministries."** New and emerging models for ministry are alive and well in the Southeast Michigan Synod, and my role is to assist these ministries in their pursuit of gospel-centered impact. In this role, the role of Director for Evangelical Mission serves as a bridge between our synod and the ELCA as we partner together to fund these efforts. While every aspect of the work is holy, the window of hope these funded ministries provide feels particularly poignant in these challenging times. These ministries include:

### **Synodically Authorized Worship Communities (SAWC)**

Think of these worship communities as new forms of congregational life. Often, they don't look like our classic models for doing church, but always they are powerful expressions of faith engaging new, diverse people. Each of these communities are currently being led by an ordained person. While each ministry may have a unique focus, all of these ministries share the story of Jesus intentionally, and in community. SAWC's are jointly funded by the ELCA and the

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Southeast Michigan Synod.

**All.together Campus Ministry** at Wayne State University and U of M Dearborn

<https://all.togethercommunity.org/>

**Zoe Oakland Campus Ministry** at Oakland University and Rochester Christian University

<https://www.zoeoakland.org/>

**Living Red**, a ministry centered on meeting people with God’s love as they seek healing and wholeness.

<https://livingredministries.org/>

**Micah 6**, a ministry serving the community of Pontiac with a focus on relationships, food insecurity, housing, and accompaniment.

<https://www.micah6community.com/>

**Grace-In-Action**, a ministry serving the needs and giftedness of Southwest Detroit in creative ways that are rooted in the Gospel.

<https://www.graceinactiondetroit.org/>

**FedUp Ministries**, a food truck ministry serving Washtenaw County focused on food insecurity and accompaniment for people who are vulnerable.

<https://fedupministries.org/>

**Mother of the Savior Church**, a Lutheran-Episcopal Arabic worshipping community in Dearborn.

<https://www.facebook.com/motherofthesavior/>

### **Strategic Congregations**

All too familiar to all too many of us is the truth that good ministry isn’t always a financially viable endeavor. As we prioritize engaging new, young, and diverse people, it is important that we maintain, support, and encourage our communities of faith serving these types of communities. To that end, the ELCA and the Southeast Michigan Synod Fund for Mission partner together to fund Strategic Congregations in ethnic specific communities that are strengthened and stabilized by the support. Strategic Congregations include:

**Love Rising Lutheran Church, Detroit**, Love Rising Lutheran Church is a community that believes in Jesus' call to do justice, and the Holy Spirit's power, alive in us, to transform the world with love.

<https://loverisinglutheranchurch.com/>

**Genesis Lutheran Church, Detroit**

Genesis Lutheran Church is an inclusive and caring community of faith –

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dedicated and devoted to serving all in the name of Christ. They take seriously the call to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.

<https://genesislutheran.org/>

### **Congregational Outreach Ministries**

Think of these ministries as new methodologies for congregations to reach out into the world to share the love of Christ. These outreach efforts may take a variety of forms, but the commonality is that they are each anchored in a local congregation and seek to engage a community of people beyond the walls of the church. COM's are often (and preferably) led by lay people, and are jointly funded by the ELCA and the Southeast Michigan Synod Fund for Mission. Currently funded COM's include:

**Ferver Music**, a newly formed solidarity service focused on Jesus and Justice that takes place monthly at Go Comedy Club in Ferndale.

<https://fervermusic.com/jesus-justice-talks>

**Jubilee**, a food truck ministry serving various communities in Southeast Michigan with a passion for accompanying new americans.

<https://www.jubileedetroit.org/>

### 5. **Future Funding**

The times in which we live are particularly challenging, especially for our traditional ministries. As we walk alongside congregations navigating the complexity of today's world, we will also continue to stimulate innovation with new granting opportunities. Through these granting opportunities, it is the hope that, together, we find adaptive solutions to sharing the story of Jesus even if, and especially when, those solutions don't conform to our traditional approach. Increasingly, these new adaptive solutions will lean into lay leadership models that equip more people who possess the ability and passion for sharing Christ's story.