

Living into the Future Together: Renewing the Ecology of the ELCA (LIFT)  
Report on the Open, Clergy, and Lay Leader Questionnaire  
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In support of the LIFT Task Force, Research and Evaluation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) fielded a questionnaire addressing topics of interest to the Task Force. The questionnaire was posted on the LIFT Web site and open to anyone. The questionnaire was also fielded to a random sample of 1,167 pastors in the ELCA and a random sample of 1,366 congregational lay leaders (members of congregational councils). As of July 22, 2010, 1,515 had completed the open questionnaire, 581 (50%) had completed the clergy questionnaire, and 533 (39%) had completed the lay leader questionnaire.

The majority of respondents to the open questionnaire and the lay leader questionnaire were female (52% and 54% respectively). The majority of respondents to the clergy questionnaire were male (70%).

In each of the respondent groups, the vast majority of respondents were life-long Lutherans. Seventy-three percent of the respondents to the open questionnaire were baptized in a Lutheran church, as were 78 percent of the clergy, and 70 percent of the lay leader respondents. At least three-fourths in each of the respondent groups have been members of their congregations for 21 or more years (open, 77%; clergy, 91%; lay, 77%).

Twenty-seven percent of the respondents to the open questionnaire were 44 years of age or younger, as were 16 percent of the respondents to the clergy questionnaire, and 12 percent of the respondents to the lay leader questionnaire.

### **Factors Impacting Congregations**

The respondents to the questionnaires were asked about factors impacting their congregation over the past few years. Table 1A shows the factors where the impact was more positive than negative according to the respondents. In all three of the respondent groups there is agreement that the impact of a commitment to evangelism or outreach has been more positive than negative over the past few years, as have been changes in the quality of pastoral leadership in the church.

Opinion over the impact of changes in participation among lay leaders is more divided. Those who believe the change has been positive slightly outnumber those who believe it has been negative.

The majority believe that the impact of ethnic/racial changes in their local communities was either of no impact or the impact has been more positive than negative.

<b>Table 1A: More Positive Than Negative Changes Impacting Congregations</b>						
	<b>Open</b>		<b>Clergy</b>		<b>Lay Leaders</b>	
	<b>Positive Impact (4 or 5)</b>	<b>Negative Impact (1 or 2)</b>	<b>Positive Impact (4 or 5)</b>	<b>Negative Impact (1 or 2)</b>	<b>Positive Impact (4 or 5)</b>	<b>Negative Impact (1 or 2)</b>
commitment to evangelism or outreach	56%	8	60	5	48	11
changes in the quality of pastoral leadership in the church	45	24	52	12	44	25
changes in patterns of participation among lay leaders	33	28	36	34	27	22
ethnic/racial changes in the local community	23	9	21	8	15	8

Table 1B presents those factors that were more negative than positive. Two-thirds or more of the respondents in each of the groups believe that economic changes in their local community have negatively impacted their congregations over the past few years. A majority of the respondents in each group also indicated that changes in the culture of American society and changes in the religious climate have had a negative impact on their congregations. Finally, a majority of lay leaders and clergy believe the Churchwide Assembly action on the human sexuality social statement and related policy changes has negatively impacted their congregations.

<b>Table 1B: More Negative Than Positive Changes Impacting Congregations</b>						
	<b>Open</b>		<b>Clergy</b>		<b>Lay Leaders</b>	
	<b>Positive Impact (4 or 5)</b>	<b>Negative Impact (1 or 2)</b>	<b>Positive Impact (4 or 5)</b>	<b>Negative Impact (1 or 2)</b>	<b>Positive Impact (4 or 5)</b>	<b>Negative Impact (1 or 2)</b>
economic changes in the local community	11%	67	11	71	12	66
changes in the culture of American society	12	61	10	71	9	61
changes in the religious climate or culture of American society	12	62	10	69	11	57
conflict in the congregation	6	48	13	40	8	51
churchwide Assembly action on the human sexuality social statement and policy changes	26	45	16	53	9	61
other demographic changes in the local community (people moving in or out of the community, young people coming or going)	24	42	23	43	21	50
competition from other local congregations	7	33	5	35	10	35

The respondents to the open questionnaire who were 44 or younger had a somewhat different view of the impact of the Churchwide Assembly. A majority believe there either was no impact (34%) or that the impact was positive (31%). For the respondents who were 45 or older, 49 percent believe the impact was negative.

### **Attending an ELCA Congregation**

Table 2 shows that the majority of respondents to both the open and clergy questionnaires indicated that ELCA theology and teaching was “very important” in explaining why they attend an ELCA congregation. However, theology and teaching was much less important to the lay leader respondents. For the lay leader respondents, a majority said their appreciation of the people who attend their congregation was “very important.” This was the only item that a majority of lay leader respondents said was “very important.”

<b>Table 2: Reason for Attending an ELCA Congregation</b>						
	<b>Open</b>		<b>Clergy</b>		<b>Lay</b>	
	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Important</b>
my agreement with the theology and teaching of the ELCA	57%	32	58	31	33	50
my appreciation of Lutheran forms of worship	55	36	51	39	41	51
my appreciation of the people who attend my congregation	47	47	39	54	55	41
my appreciation of the relationship an ELCA congregation has with the wider church	37	39	35	42	16	47
the fact that my parents are/were Lutheran	24	35	24	40	30	29
the fact that my spouse is/was a Lutheran	18	30	21	36	23	30
an ELCA congregation was most convenient when I first became active in church	10	21	8	20	12	33
the fact that my closest friends attend my congregation	7	19	2	19	9	20
my association with persons in my congregation who are also important contacts in the local community	6	20	4	21	8	26

There also was considerable difference between response groups on the importance of the relationship of an ELCA congregation to the wider church. The appreciation of the relationship of their congregation to the wider church was “very important” for 37 percent of the open questionnaire respondents and 35 percent of the clergy respondents compared to 16 percent of the lay leader respondents.

No matter which group, the least important reasons for attending an ELCA congregation, according to these respondents, were because the congregation was most convenience when they became active in church, or because their closest friends were Lutheran, or because they wished to associate with persons who are important contacts in the local community.

Fifty-eight percent of the respondents who were 45 or older indicated their appreciation of Lutheran forms of worship was “very important” in their decision to attend an ELCA congregation compared to 49 percent of those who were 44 or younger.

### **ELCA Lutheran Identity**

Considerable attention has been given to the strength of a denomination’s religious identity among its members to its strength in American society.<sup>1</sup> Religious groups are more likely to grow, for example, if their members clearly understand and value their distinctiveness. In the case of ELCA Lutherans, there is evidence that the majority of lay leaders do not believe Lutherans are distinctive. In response to the question “is there anything unique about ELCA Lutherans which distinguishes them from other Christians” 31 percent of the lay leader said “no” and 37 percent said they were “unsure.”

<sup>1</sup> See for example, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Loser in Our Religious Economy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, Rutgers, 2005.

This lack of conviction about the distinctiveness of a Lutheran identity among lay members is not new. In 1982, a sample of lay members of the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) was asked “is there anything unique about Lutherans which distinguishes them from other Christians?” Forty-five percent of the lay respondents said “no” and 25 percent said they were “undecided.”

As one would expect, clergy were much more likely to believe there is something unique about Lutherans. Eighty-three percent of the respondents to the current clergy questionnaire and 85 percent of the clergy respondents to LCA questionnaire responded “yes” to this question.

### Connections with ELCA Lutheranism

Nearly two-thirds of respondents to the open questionnaire and the clergy questionnaire “strongly agreed” that it is important for them to be members of a Lutheran church. (See Table 3.) Perhaps reflecting the findings noted above that lay leaders are less convinced ELCA Lutherans are distinctive, fewer lay leaders (49%) “strongly agreed.” When asked how important it is for them to be a member of a congregation that is part of the ELCA, the percent of the respondents who “strongly agreed” falls in each of the three respondent groups, with the largest drop of 18 percent among lay leaders. Nearly a third (31%) of the lay leaders “disagreed” (23%) or “strongly disagree” (8%) that it is important for them to be a member of a congregation that is part of the ELCA.

	Open		Clergy		Lay Leaders	
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
It is important for me to be a member of a Lutheran church.	63%	26	64	32	49	40
The world needs the message that ELCA Lutheran’s bring.	56	31	56	31	26	59
I’m proud to be part of the ELCA.	56	27	48	33	33	50
It is important for me to be a member of a congregation that is part of the ELCA.	55	24	57	25	31	38
If I had to change my membership to another congregation, I would feel a great sense of loss.	48	35	36	42	52	36
The congregation I am a member of has helped me grow as a Christian.	49	42	41	52	49	46
I am hopeful about the future of the ELCA.	45	33	34	41	26	53
My congregation has strong ties to the synod.	27	45	20	48	16	53
My congregation is stronger because it is part of a wider church.	30	44	25	45	12	36
My congregation has strong ties to the wider church.	19	42	13	43	12	44

These questions about the importance of being a member of a Lutheran church and a congregation that is part of the ELCA were also included on the ELCA’s *U.S. Congregational Life Survey* in 2008. The *U.S. Congregational Life Survey* was distributed to worship attendees in 369 randomly selected ELCA congregations.<sup>2</sup> On the *U.S. Congregational Life Survey*, 52 percent of the worship attendees “strongly agreed” that it was important for them to be a member of a Lutheran church and 33 percent “strongly agreed” that it was important for them to be a

<sup>2</sup> ELCA *U.S. Congregational Life Survey* (N=29,976), 2008. Frequencies are available from Research and Evaluation, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

member of a congregation that is part of the ELCA. Sixteen percent “disagreed” (14%) or “strongly disagreed” (2%). This suggests that those who responded to the lay leader questionnaire are less connected to the ELCA than were the lay worship attendees in 2008.

When asked about the strength of ties to the synod and to the wider church, the respondents were much more likely to “agree” with the statements than to “strongly agree.” This is particularly true of lay leader respondents. Among the lay leaders, 16 percent “strongly agreed” their congregation has strong ties to the synod and 53 percent “agreed.” Twelve percent of the lay leader respondents “agreed” their congregation has strong ties to the wider church and 44 percent “agreed.”

Both the respondents to the open questionnaire and the clergy respondents were more likely than lay leaders to “strongly agree” with the statement “my congregation is stronger because it is part of the wider church. Thirty percent of the respondents to the open questionnaire and 25 percent of the respondents to the clergy questionnaire “strongly agreed,” compared to 12 percent of the lay respondents.

Finally, we asked respondents directly how connected they feel to the wider church. Once again, the lay leader respondents were least likely to feel strongly connected with 38 percent choosing a “4” or “5” on the five point scale compared to 58 percent of the respondents on the open questionnaire and 62 percent of the clergy. (See Table 4.) On the open questionnaire, there were differences by age. Sixty-two percent of those 44 or younger chose 4 or 5 on the scale compared to 55 percent of those who were 45 or older.

<b>Table 4: Connection with the Wider Church</b>						
	<b>Not Connected at All</b>				<b>Very Strongly Connected</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>
	<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>(5)</b>	
open	8%	12	20	31	27	2
clergy	6	12	19	33	29	1
lay leaders	6	14	34	29	9	8

Of the lay leaders who indicated they felt strongly connected to the wider church, 28 percent “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” that their congregations had strong ties to the wider church.

### **Factors Contributing to a Sense of Connectedness**

The respondents were asked to indicate on a five point scale (1 - “not at all” to 5 - “quite a bit”) the extent to which a series of items have contributed to their sense of connectedness to the ELCA. The items presented in Table 3 are in rank order based on the open questionnaire respondent scores.

Five items had an average score of 3.5 or above for the respondents in each of the respondent groups. (See Table 5.) These five items included common forms of worship and music, having pastors trained in ELCA seminaries, participation in synod or churchwide ministries, a shared ELCA theology, and participation with other ELCA Lutherans in shared local ministry. The clergy respondents added two additional items with average scores of 3.5 or above including attending a synod or churchwide assembly and a relationship or experience with the synod or churchwide bishop.

<b>Table 5: Factors Contributing to Connectedness to the Wider Church</b>			
	<b>Average Score</b>		
	<b>Open</b>	<b>Clergy</b>	<b>Lay</b>
common forms of worship and music	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.9</b>
having pastors trained in ELCA seminaries	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.8</b>
participation with other ELCA Lutherans in synod or churchwide ministries (outdoor or campus ministry, advocacy, Lutheran social ministries, World Hunger, disaster response, companion synods, etc.)	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.5</b>
a shared ELCA theology	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.6</b>
participation with other ELCA Lutherans in shared local ministry (food pantries, Habitat for Humanity, youth programs, etc.)	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.6</b>
attending a synod or churchwide assembly	3.4	<b>3.5</b>	2.8
the congregation's financial support shared with the synod and churchwide organization	3.4	3.4	3.2
our congregation's use of "ELCA" in its name, documents, Website, etc.	3.4	3.1	3.1
a relationship or experience with the synod or churchwide bishop	3.4	<b>3.6</b>	3.1
reading <i>The Lutheran</i> or other ELCA publications	3.3	3.1	3.0
a shared common purpose within the synod	3.3	3.2	3.1
a share ELCA stand on social issues (social statements)	3.3	3.0	2.8
engaging in social networking with other ELCA Lutherans	3.0	2.8	2.6
participation on ELCA agency or church boards, committees, task forces, etc. outside your congregation	3.0	3.1	2.5
financial support received from the wider church (loans, grants, etc.)	2.8	2.7	2.4
a shared Northern European Lutheran ethnic heritage	2.7	2.5	2.9

### **Factors Contributing to a Lack of Connectedness**

#### Churchwide Assembly Action on the Human Sexuality Social Statement and Related Policy Changes

The questionnaire included the open-ended question “What, if anything, makes you feel less part of the wider church?” Responses to this question, which were made by about 50 percent of the respondents, were coded and analyzed.<sup>3</sup> For the three respondent groups as a whole, the primary factor cited as contributing to a lack of connectedness with the wider church was conflict, most notably conflict around the recent Churchwide Assembly action. For lay leaders in particular, conflict around this action was the most commonly named factor contributing to a lack of connectedness. Many of those who opposed the changes said they felt less connected to the wider church because the church had abandoned “traditional” teachings on homosexuality and, as a result, had abandoned them. They objected to what they perceived as a significant concession to a “liberal” cultural and political agenda which is precisely the agenda they believe this church should be opposing.

The Churchwide Assembly action appears to have also negatively impacted those without strong feelings about the social statement or related policy changes and those who may have more quietly favored them. From the perspective of these groups, too many in the church have behaved in ways inconsistent with the most basic teachings of the church which they believe are to love, care for, and respect one another. This behavior has produced a church with which these individuals are not sure they wish to be associated.

<sup>3</sup> I want to thank Linda Bobbit and Scott McAnally from the LIFT Task Force for their assistance in coding the responses to this question. The conclusions drawn in this section, however, are my responsibility alone.

## A Culture of Skepticism and Institutional Disengagement

The second most frequent response to this question described a gap between congregations, other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization which may well reflect the broader cultural trend of disengagement from institutions.

Finally, some respondents made a direct critique of the churchwide organization. It is their perception that the churchwide organization does not listen to congregations; that it is not focused enough on mission; that it does not communicate well; and it does not care about congregations while it continues to expect their financial support.

### **Expectations of ELCA Lutheranism**

The respondents were asked how important the items presented in Table 6 were to them personally in terms of what they expect from being part of the ELCA.<sup>4</sup> Ninety-two percent of the clergy respondents and 85 percent of the respondents to the open questionnaire said the theology of justification by grace through faith was “very important” to them as an expectation of ELCA Lutheranism. The theology of justification by grace through faith was also the most important item to the lay leader respondents with 63 percent indicating it was “very important.” Only one item on this list—“traditional” teaching of the Bible—was more important to the lay leader respondents than to the clergy respondents or to the respondents to the open questionnaire.<sup>5</sup> Fifty-three percent of the lay leader respondents said it was very important to them compared to 46 percent of the clergy and 38 percent of the respondents to the open questionnaire.

A majority of respondents in each of the response groups indicated that three items were “very important” to them including the theology of justification by grace, a strong system of theological education for new pastors, and being a church focused on sharing the good news of the Gospel with the unchurched.

The majority of respondents to the open questionnaire and the clergy also agreed that significant involvement of laity in ministry, being a church dedicated to feeding the hungry, and strong public advocacy in behalf of the poor were “very important.”

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<sup>4</sup> This question was designed to reflect a similar question asked in 1982 on the Lutheran Church in America’s *Lutheran Listening Post* (LLP).

<sup>5</sup> There was no attempt to define “traditional” in the wording of the response category. The use of the word was an attempt to draw a parallel to its use in defining “family values” which is a phrase frequently used by conservative evangelical Christians. Certainly respondents may have interpreted the word in another context.

	<b>Open</b>		<b>Clergy</b>		<b>Lay Leaders</b>	
	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Important</b>
the theology of justification by grace through faith	85%	13	92	8	63	33
a strong system of theological education for new pastors	67	29	71	27	50	45
being a church focused on sharing the good news of the Gospel with the unchurched	64	32	74	24	53	43
significant involvement of laity in ministry	60	34	70	28	36	52
being a church dedicated to feeding the hungry	60	36	63	35	41	54
strong public advocacy in behalf of the poor	59	33	57	35	38	52
reaching out to other racial/ethnic groups	51	40	48	45	32	55
liturgical worship	48	37	42	43	37	47
the Lutheran Confessions	45	41	52	41	33	46
strong national coordination and involvement in global mission	46	42	45	45	28	56
providing worship and educational resources for congregations	41	52	34	52	33	61
traditional teaching of the Bible	38	38	46	36	53	38
strong positive relationships among ELCA congregation in the synods	40	51	39	53	25	60
strong ecumenical contacts and agreements	36	44	34	44	23	49
a strong system of higher education through ELCA colleges	33	47	35	47	19	53
starting new congregations	31	52	41	47	16	57

Finally, while a majority of the respondents on all the questionnaires indicated starting new congregations as either “important” or “very important,” it was “very important” to fewer respondents than any other items on the list.

### **Priorities for the Expressions of the Church**

The respondents were asked how involved each expression of the church (congregations, synods, the churchwide organization) should be in accomplishing 15 tasks. They were also asked to prioritize tasks for each expression. An average score was calculated using a three point scale (2 - “very involved;” 1 - “involved;” 0 - “not involved”) for the level of the involvement for each expression on each item. (See Table 7.)

The respondents from all three groups agree congregations should be responsible primarily for:

1. Ensuring that worship provides a meaningful experience of God.
2. Ensuring that children and youth receive Christian education.
3. Ensuring that adults continue to grow in knowledge and faith.
4. Sharing the good news of the Gospel with the unchurched.
5. Providing direction by setting priorities for the mission of the church.

Table 7: Priorities for Expressions of the Church									
	Open			Clergy			Lay Leaders		
	Congregations	Synods	Church-wide	Congregations	Synods	Church-wide	Congregations	Synods	Church-wide
ensure that worship provides a meaningful experience of God	<b>1.93</b>	1.12	1.09	<b>1.95</b>	1.05	1.01	<b>1.84</b>	1.24	1.13
ensure that children and youth receive Christian education	<b>1.92</b>	1.25	1.20	<b>1.95</b>	1.13	1.14	<b>1.85</b>	1.30	1.22
ensure that adults continue to grow in knowledge and faith	<b>1.88</b>	1.29	1.23	<b>1.94</b>	1.22	1.18	<b>1.78</b>	1.30	1.19
share the good news of the Gospel with the unchurched	<b>1.72</b>	1.43	1.47	<b>1.83</b>	1.43	1.45	<b>1.61</b>	1.45	1.46
provide charity and service to people in need	<b>1.85</b>	1.43	<b>1.54</b>	<b>1.89</b>	1.31	1.48	<b>1.74</b>	1.48	<b>1.52</b>
encourage members to act on the relationship of Christian faith to social, political, and economic issues	<b>1.52</b>	1.36	1.44	<b>1.52</b>	1.30	1.37	1.29	1.25	1.25
provide direction by setting priorities for the mission of the church	1.48	1.43	<b>1.51</b>	<b>1.60</b>	1.46	1.47	1.37	1.40	1.41
start new congregations	0.90	<b>1.58</b>	1.39	1.08	<b>1.61</b>	1.49	0.69	1.42	1.39
assist congregations in finding a new pastor	1.41	<b>1.70</b>	0.92	1.37	<b>1.80</b>	0.85	1.44	<b>1.61</b>	0.99
assist congregations in times of conflict	1.36	<b>1.71</b>	0.84	1.36	<b>1.77</b>	0.66	1.43	<b>1.61</b>	0.99
plan for and conduct the global mission of the church	1.21	1.37	<b>1.78</b>	1.16	1.33	<b>1.80</b>	1.05	1.35	<b>1.62</b>
provide for the education of new pastors	1.07	1.51	<b>1.73</b>	1.13	<b>1.50</b>	<b>1.76</b>	0.93	1.56	<b>1.62</b>
be responsible for the ecumenical relationships of the church	1.30	1.37	<b>1.62</b>	1.27	1.35	<b>1.66</b>	1.38	1.36	1.33
advocate with government agencies on behalf of the poor	1.20	1.36	<b>1.56</b>	1.21	1.36	<b>1.62</b>	0.99	1.28	1.38

There is also agreement from all the groups that synods should be responsible for:

1. Assisting congregations in finding a new pastor.
2. Assisting congregations in times of conflict.

There is agreement from all the groups the churchwide organization should be responsible for:

1. Planning for and conducting the global mission of the church.
2. Providing for the education of new pastors.

## Discussion

One of the goals of LIFT was to encourage broad participation in a discussion on the future of this church. To this end, discussion resources and feedback opportunities were created for many groups in the ELCA including the participants at synod assemblies.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the Task Force supported fielding a questionnaire designed for the members of this church which is the focus of this report. The design of the questionnaire was challenging. The ecology of the ELCA is complex and most ELCA members have experience with only one or two aspects of that ecology. As a result, the questionnaire focused primarily on congregations because it is the one aspect of the ecology most know best. The questionnaire also covered the connections individuals feel to the wider church and more broadly, their views of the appropriate functions of congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization.

Because there is no national membership list for the ELCA, it is impossible to draw a random sample of members and, as a result, it is impossible to know how a “typical” member of the ELCA would have responded to these questions. Clearly the respondents to the open questionnaire are not typical because the responses of those who completed the open questionnaire are much closer to those of the clergy respondents than to those of the lay leaders. Of these groups, it is reasonable to assume that the questionnaires completed by the lay leaders would be most representative of typical members of this church.

### Factors Influencing Congregations

Fifty-one percent of the lay leader respondents “strongly agreed” (12%) or “agreed” (39%) with the statement “My congregation is thriving.” On the other hand, 49 percent “disagreed” (37%) or “strongly disagreed” (12%) with the statement. The clergy respondents were more positive with 19 percent “strongly agreeing” with the statement and 54 percent “agreeing.” The respondents to the open questionnaire were in the middle with 20 percent “strongly agreeing” that their congregation is thriving and 45 percent “agreeing.”

A majority of the respondents in each of the respondent groups believe economic and cultural changes over the past few years have negatively impacted their congregations. A majority of the respondents in each of the groups also believe the Churchwide Assembly action on the sexuality social statement and the related policy changes have negatively impacted their congregations. The combination of these two factors has significantly disrupted whatever homeostasis existed in the ecology of the ELCA. There appears to be more conflict in congregations and there is evidence, particularly among lay leaders, that because of this conflict, their connection to the wider church has weakened. There is also little evidence that a strong ELCA Lutheran religious identity exists to counterbalance these trends.

### Identity

If the strength of a religious group in American society is related to the strength of its religious identity, then the responses of the lay leaders pose a significant challenge for the future. When asked “is there anything unique about ELCA Lutherans which distinguishes them from other

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<sup>6</sup> A report analyzing responses from the various groups in the ELCA including synod assemblies is not yet complete.

Christians,” 31 percent of the lay leaders said “no” and 37 percent said they were “unsure.” It may well be that many of these lay leaders believe that ELCA Lutheranism is a kind of “generic” Christianity or that whatever may have been distinct in the heritage of the ELCA is now lost or no longer relevant.

### Connections

Lay leaders as members of their local congregational councils are critically positioned to determine the level of support, financial and otherwise, for the wider ecology of the ELCA. This makes assessing the commitment of ELCA lay leaders to the wider ecology of the church critical.

#### *Congregational Connections*

As a reason for attending an ELCA congregation, 16 percent of the lay leaders indicated their appreciation of their congregation’s relationship with the wider church was “very important.” This ranks this relationship behind the importance of the appreciation of other people who attend their congregations (55%, “very important”), the appreciation of Lutheran forms of worship (41%, “very important”), the theology and teaching of the ELCA (33%, “very important”), the fact that their parents are/were Lutherans (30%, “very important”), and the fact that their spouse is/was a Lutheran (23%, “very important”).

#### *Connections to the Wider Church*

When asked how connected they feel to the wider church, 38 percent of the lay leader respondents indicated they were strongly connected, choosing 4 or 5 on the 5 point scale (1 - “not connected at all,” 5 – “very strongly connected”). Twenty percent indicated they were not connected at all, choosing 1 or 2 on the scale. Eight percent said they were “not sure” and 34 percent chose 3 on the scale. These findings suggest a significant number of lay leaders in the ELCA have modest to weak ties to the wider church.

The relative contribution or impact of these items on the level of connectedness can be measured.<sup>7</sup> For each of the following groups the items are presented in order of their **impact** on connection.

For respondents to the open questionnaire the items are:

1. a relationship or experience with the synod or churchwide bishop.
2. a shared theology.
3. a shared stand on social issues.
4. attending a synod or churchwide assembly.
5. participation with other ELCA Lutherans in synod or churchwide ministries.

For clergy respondents the items are:

1. a shared stand on social issues.
2. a relationship or experience with the synod or churchwide bishop.

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<sup>7</sup> Step-wise regression with the level of connectedness as the dependent variable.

3. a shared theology.
4. financial support received from the wider church.
5. attending a synod or a churchwide assembly.
6. reading *The Lutheran* or other ELCA publications.

For lay leader respondents the items are:

1. a shared theology.
2. a shared stand on social issues.
3. common forms of worship and music.

Two items, a shared stand on social issues and a shared theology, are common to all the groups. It is not known if this would have been the case before the 2009 Churchwide Assembly, but it is the case now.

For the respondents to the open questionnaire and the clergy engaging with the wider church (e.g., attending a synod or churchwide assembly, a relationship with the synod or churchwide bishop) also has a significant impact on how connected people feel to the wider church. It may be that these items reinforce each other—those who feel most connected are most likely to engage and/or those who engage are most likely to feel connected.

For lay leader respondents engaging with the wider church was not important at least in terms of having a relationship or experience with the synod or churchwide bishop or in attending a synod or churchwide assembly. This may be the case simply because too few have had these experiences. Instead, shared forms of worship and music was behind shared theology and a shared stand on social issues.

### Expectations of ELCA Lutheranism

A majority of respondents in each of the response groups indicated that three items were “very important” to them as expectations of ELCA Lutheranism. These items included the theology of justification by grace, a strong system of theological education for new pastors, and being a church focused on sharing the good news of the Gospel with the unchurched.

Among the lay leaders, different expectations of ELCA Lutheranism emerged, based on how connected the respondent said they were to the wider church. A majority of those who indicated they were “very strongly connected” (4 or 5 on the 5 point scale) indicated the following items were “very important.” Comparative percentages are given for those who said they are “not connected at all” (1 or 2 on the 5 point scale).

1. a theology of justification by grace through faith (79%, “very strongly connected” to 55%, “not connected”).
2. being a church focused on sharing the good news of the Gospel with the unchurched (63% to 45%).
3. a strong system of theological education for pastors (63% to 38%).
4. being a church dedicated to feeding the hungry (55% to 21%).
5. strong public advocacy on behalf of the poor (55% to 21%).

6. significant involvement of laity in ministry (53% to 25%).
7. liturgical worship (52% to 21%).
8. traditional teaching of the Bible (51% to 67%).

It is clear there are very different expectations of ELCA Lutheranism depending on how connected the lay leader respondent is to the wider church. First, those lay leaders who are very connected to the wider church have many more expectations of ELCA Lutheranism and among those expectations a majority of the respondents included being a church dedicated to feeding the hungry and strong public advocacy on behalf of the poor. The expectations of those who are not connected to the wider church are more limited. They include a theology of justification by grace and traditional teaching of the Bible.

The clergy respondents who are very connected also have more expectations of ELCA Lutheranism than those who are not, and the expectations of these two groups of clergy are different. These two groups share the following expectations:

1. a theology of justification by grace through faith (92%, “very strongly connected” to 91%, “not connected”).
2. being a church focused on sharing the good news of the Gospel with the unchurched (76% to 77%).
3. a strong system of theological education for pastors (78% to 60%).
4. significant involvement of laity in ministry (74% to 59%).

In addition, those who are very connected add the following:

1. being a church dedicated to feeding the hungry (70% to 46%).
2. strong public advocacy on behalf of the poor (68% to 27%).
3. strong national coordination and involvement in global mission (57% to 25%).
4. reaching out to other ethnic/racial groups (55% to 32%).

Those who are not connected add these two expectations:

1. traditional teaching of the Bible (43% to 75%).
2. the Lutheran Confessions (48% to 66%).

As noted at the beginning of this section, the vast majority of the respondents believe the church should be about three things—a theology of justification by grace through faith, being a church focused on sharing the good news of the Gospel with the unchurched, and providing a strong system of theological education for pastors. In addition to these expectations, however, those who see themselves as strongly connected to the wider church believe it also should be about feeding the hungry and advocating for the poor. On the other hand, the majority of those who are not well connected to the wider church do not share these expectations. Instead, their expectations of the wider church are more limited to the traditional teaching of the Bible and, for the clergy respondents, care for the Lutheran Confessions. It may be the case that a significant number of lay and clergy respondents feel disconnected from the wider church because they believe it is too involved in issues they would address differently or not at all.

For whatever reason, no matter which respondent group, the vast majority of those who say they are not connected to the wider church also believe their congregation is stronger because it is part of the wider church. The differences between those clergy and lay respondents who say they are connected and those who say they are not are very significant. Among the clergy who said they are not connected, 26 percent agreed with the statement “my congregation is strong because it is part of a wider church” compared to 88 percent of those who are very connected. Among lay leaders who said they are not connected, 20 percent agreed with the statement “my congregation is strong because it is part of a wider church” compared to 73 percent of those who are very connected.

Again, this discrepancy is reflected in views of the Churchwide Assembly. On the clergy questionnaire, 80 percent of the respondents who said they were not connected to the wider church also indicated that the Churchwide Assembly action had a negative impact on their congregation, compared to 45 percent of those who said they were very connected. Eighty-four percent of those responded to the lay leader questionnaire who said they were not connected to the wider church indicated the Churchwide Assembly action had a negative impact on their congregation, compared to 47 percent of those who said they were very connected.

#### Differences Between Clergy and Lay Leader Respondents

Clergy have higher hopes and expectations than lay leaders for the wider church. Perhaps this is to be expected. People become pastors because they believe the work of the wider church is very important. At the same time, the size of these differences is striking and the differences may well be an indication of a different understanding of the role of the wider church. A majority of both the clergy and the lay leaders “strongly agree” that the church should be expected to proclaim a theology of justification by grace through faith, to share the good news of the gospel with the unchurched, and that it should provide a strong system of theological education for new pastors. But, the clergy are much more likely to expect that the wider church should also work to feed the hungry and advocate for the poor. For example, 63 percent of the clergy believe being a church dedicated to feeding the hungry is “very important” compared to 41 percent of the lay leaders. Fifty-seven percent of the clergy believe strong advocacy in behalf of the poor is “very important” compared to 38 percent of the lay leaders.

Lay leaders are less convinced in general that congregations are stronger because they are part of the wider church. Seventy percent of the clergy “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with this statement compared to 48 percent of the lay leaders. Twenty-five percent of the clergy “strongly agreed” compared to 12 percent of the lay leaders. Lay leaders are also less convinced that the world needs the message that ELCA Lutherans bring. This is a matter of degree, but when it comes to the wider church, it is a very significant matter of degree. Eighty-five percent of the lay leaders and 87 percent of the clergy agreed with the statement, but 56 percent of the clergy “strongly agreed” compared to 26 percent of the lay leaders.

Finally, a majority of both lay leader (61%) and clergy (53%) respondents believe the Churchwide Assembly action had a negative impact (1 or 2 of the 5 point scale) on their congregations, but 37 percent of lay leaders chose the most negative point on the scale (1), compared to 26 percent of the clergy.

Why these views of the wider church differ between clergy and lay leaders is an important and significant question. It is not that lay leaders have completely different views but their understanding of the importance, role, and utility of the wider church is considerably more limited. If this gap exists between clergy and lay leaders at the congregational level, it should be no surprise that an even wider gap would exist between lay leaders, the leadership of synods, and the leadership of the churchwide organization.

**APPENDIX I**  
**Lift Questionnaire**  
 Research and Evaluation  
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
**July 22, 2010**  
 (Open, N=1,515; Lay Leader, N=533 (39%); Clergy, N=581 (50%))  
 (percentages)

Please take 15 to 20 minutes to complete this questionnaire. Your responses will help the Living into the Future Together: Renewing the Ecology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Task Force better understand your perspective on this church as they help this church plan for the future.

1. Please agree or disagree with the following statements.		Strongly <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	Strongly <u>Disagree</u>
a. If I had to change my membership to another congregation, I would feel a great sense of loss	Open	48	35	14	3
	Lay Leader	52	36	10	2
	Clergy	36	42	19	3
b. The congregation I am a member of has helped me grow as a Christian	Open	49	42	8	1
	Lay Leader	49	46	5	0
	Clergy	41	52	6	1
c. It is important for me to be a member of a Lutheran church	Open	63	26	9	2
	Lay Leader	49	40	10	1
	Clergy	64	32	4	0
d. It is important for me to be a member of a congregation that is part of the ELCA	Open	55	24	14	7
	Lay Leader	31	38	23	8
	Clergy	57	25	11	7
2. Think for a moment about the reasons why you attend an ELCA congregation. How important is each of the following?					
		Very <u>Important</u>	<u>Important</u>	Not <u>Important</u>	Not <u>Sure</u>
a. my appreciation of the people who attend my congregation	Open	47	47	5	1
	Lay Leader	55	41	3	1
	Clergy	39	54	7	0
b. my appreciation of Lutheran forms of worship	Open	55	36	8	1
	Lay Leader	41	51	6	2
	Clergy	51	39	9	1
c. my agreement with the theology and teachings of the ELCA	Open	57	32	8	3
	Lay Leader	33	50	11	6
	Clergy	58	31	8	3
d. an ELCA congregation was most convenient when I first became active in church	Open	10	21	63	6
	Lay Leader	12	33	48	7
	Clergy	8	20	66	6

		<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Not Important</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
e. the fact that my closest friends attend my congregation	Open	7	19	73	1
	Lay Leader	9	20	70	1
	Clergy	2	19	77	2
f. the fact that my parents are/were Lutheran	Open	24	35	40	1
	Lay Leader	30	29	40	1
	Clergy	24	40	35	1
g. the fact that my spouse is/was a Lutheran	Open	18	30	49	3
	Lay Leader	23	30	44	3
	Clergy	21	36	41	2
h. my association with persons in my congregation who are also important contacts in the local community	Open	6	20	72	2
	Lay Leader	8	26	65	1
	Clergy	4	21	73	2
i. my appreciation of the relationship an ELCA congregation has with the wider church	Open	37	39	21	3
	Lay Leader	16	47	32	5
	Clergy	35	42	21	2

3. In your opinion, is there anything unique about ELCA Lutherans which distinguishes them from other Christians?

	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
Open	10	73	17
Lay Leader	31	32	37
Clergy	10	83	7

4. Think about what you hope for and expect from being part of a larger group of ELCA Lutherans who share a theological point of view, worship in similar ways, and who work together in 65 synods and through a national office (the churchwide office in Chicago) to accomplish God's mission in the world.

In the context of the wider church, how important is each of the following to you personally?

		<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Not Important</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
a. a strong system of higher education through ELCA colleges	Open	33	47	17	3
	Lay Leader	19	53	24	4
	Clergy	35	47	15	3
b. strong positive relationships among ELCA congregations in the synod	Open	40	51	8	1
	Lay Leader	25	60	13	2
	Clergy	39	53	6	2
c. being a church focused on sharing the good news of the Gospel with the unchurched	Open	64	32	3	1
	Lay Leader	53	43	3	1
	Clergy	74	24	1	1

		<u>Very</u> <u>Important</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Not</u> <u>Important</u>	<u>Not</u> <u>Sure</u>
d.	a strong system of theological education for new pastors				
	Open	67	29	3	1
	Lay Leader	50	45	4	1
	Clergy	71	27	1	0
e.	traditional teaching of the Bible				
	Open	38	38	14	10
	Lay Leader	53	38	7	2
	Clergy	46	36	9	9
f.	being a church dedicated to feeding the hungry				
	Open	60	36	3	1
	Lay Leader	41	54	4	1
	Clergy	63	35	2	0
g.	strong public advocacy in behalf of the poor				
	Open	59	33	7	1
	Lay Leader	38	52	8	2
	Clergy	57	35	7	1
h.	strong ecumenical contacts and agreements				
	Open	36	44	17	3
	Lay Leader	23	49	18	10
	Clergy	34	44	20	2
i.	significant involvement of laity in ministry				
	Open	60	34	4	2
	Lay Leader	36	52	7	5
	Clergy	70	28	2	0
j.	the theology of justification by grace through faith				
	Open	85	13	1	1
	Lay Leader	63	33	2	2
	Clergy	92	8	0	0
k.	liturgical worship				
	Open	48	37	14	1
	Lay Leader	37	47	13	3
	Clergy	42	43	15	0
l.	starting new congregations				
	Open	31	52	13	4
	Lay Leader	16	57	21	6
	Clergy	41	47	9	3
m.	providing worship and education resources for congregations				
	Open	41	52	6	1
	Lay Leader	33	61	3	3
	Clergy	34	52	12	2
n.	strong national coordination and involvement in global mission				
	Open	46	42	10	2
	Lay Leader	28	56	12	4
	Clergy	45	45	8	2
o.	the Lutheran Confessions				
	Open	45	41	8	6
	Lay Leader	33	46	12	9
	Clergy	52	41	6	1

		Very <u>Important</u>	<u>Important</u>	Not <u>Important</u>	Not <u>Sure</u>
p. reaching out to other ethnic/racial groups	Open	51	40	6	3
	Lay Leader	32	55	9	4
	Clergy	48	45	5	2

5. How connected do you feel to this wider church?

		not connected <u>at all</u>			very strongly <u>connected</u>	not <u>sure</u>
		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
	Open	8	12	20	31	27
	Lay Leader	6	14	34	29	9
	Clergy	6	12	19	33	29

6. Indicate the extent to which you believe the following have contributed to your sense of connectedness.

		Not <u>at all</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	Quite a Bit
a. common forms of worship and music	Open	3	7	15	36	39		
	Lay Leader	3	5	25	38	29		
	Clergy	4	12	18	37	29		
b. our congregation's use of "ELCA" in its name, documents, Website, etc.	Open	11	12	25	32	20		
	Lay Leader	11	18	34	23	14		
	Clergy	14	17	30	23	16		
c. a shared ELCA theology	Open	8	7	17	36	32		
	Lay Leader	7	9	26	36	22		
	Clergy	9	7	15	40	29		
d. a shared Northern European Lutheran ethnic heritage	Open	23	22	28	19	8		
	Lay Leader	19	19	31	20	11		
	Clergy	26	28	27	14	5		
e. having pastors trained in ELCA seminaries	Open	5	8	17	35	35		
	Lay Leader	4	6	24	39	27		
	Clergy	2	6	19	36	37		
f. a relationship or experience with the synod or churchwide bishop	Open	13	13	21	32	21		
	Lay Leader	12	16	31	26	15		
	Clergy	7	11	21	34	27		
g. a shared common purpose within the synod	Open	11	14	25	34	16		
	Lay Leader	7	15	39	29	10		
	Clergy	8	22	28	30	12		
h. the congregation's financial support shared with the synod and churchwide organization	Open	11	11	23	35	20		
	Lay Leader	7	18	38	28	9		
	Clergy	8	14	24	36	18		

		Not at all				Quite a Bit
		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
i. financial support received from the wider church (loans, grants, etc.)	Open	20	20	27	23	10
	Lay Leader	21	24	29	19	7
	Clergy	34	22	22	16	6
j. participation with other ELCA Lutherans in shared local ministry (food pantries, Habitat for Humanity, youth programs, etc.)	Open	7	11	22	35	25
	Lay Leader	5	11	27	35	22
	Clergy	8	16	24	37	15
k. participation with other ELCA Lutherans in synod or churchwide ministries (outdoor or campus ministry, advocacy, Lutheran social ministries, World Hunger, disaster response, companion synods, etc.)	Open	5	7	19	36	33
	Lay Leader	4	14	29	33	20
	Clergy	4	8	20	39	29
l. attending a synod or churchwide assembly	Open	15	12	18	28	27
	Lay Leader	19	22	29	20	10
	Clergy	9	12	23	29	27
m. a shared ELCA stand on social issues (social statements)	Open	18	10	19	28	25
	Lay Leader	20	19	29	20	12
	Clergy	19	16	25	24	16
n. participation on ELCA agency or church boards, committees, task forces, etc., outside your congregation	Open	20	17	24	23	16
	Lay Leader	27	22	28	16	7
	Clergy	17	18	23	24	18
o. reading <i>The Lutheran</i> or other ELCA publications	Open	11	15	24	30	20
	Lay Leader	11	21	36	21	11
	Clergy	13	20	27	27	13
p. engaging in social networking with other ELCA Lutherans	Open	17	18	29	23	13
	Lay Leader	20	25	35	15	5
	Clergy	19	23	26	22	10

7. What, if anything, makes you feel less part of the wider church?

8. Please agree or disagree with the following statements.

		Strongly <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	Strongly <u>Disagree</u>
a. I'm proud to be part of the ELCA	Open	56	27	9	8
	Lay Leaders	33	50	11	6
	Clergy	48	33	11	8
b. I am hopeful about the future of the ELCA	Open	45	33	14	8
	Lay Leaders	26	53	15	6
	Clergy	34	41	16	9

		Strongly <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	Strongly <u>Disagree</u>
c. I frequently talk with other people about my faith	Open	38	49	12	1
	Lay Leaders	20	54	25	1
	Clergy	54	43	3	0
d. Most of my friends are ELCA Lutherans	Open	10	31	51	8
	Lay Leaders	5	23	61	11
	Clergy	13	39	43	5
e. Most of my friends go to church regularly	Open	15	52	29	4
	Lay Leaders	14	55	28	3
	Clergy	15	61	23	1
f. My congregation is thriving	Open	20	45	28	7
	Lay Leaders	12	39	37	12
	Clergy	19	54	23	4
g. My congregation is stronger because it is part of a wider church	Open	30	44	18	8
	Lay Leaders	12	36	42	10
	Clergy	25	45	22	8
h. The world needs the message that ELCA Lutheran's bring	Open	56	31	8	5
	Lay Leaders	26	59	10	5
	Clergy	56	31	7	6
i. My congregation has strong ties to the synod	Open	27	45	22	6
	Lay Leaders	16	53	26	5
	Clergy	20	48	26	6
j. My congregation has strong ties to the wider church	Open	19	42	30	9
	Lay Leaders	12	44	36	8
	Clergy	13	43	36	8

9. Have the following impacted your congregation over the past few years?

		<u>Negative Impact</u>		<u>No Impact</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>
		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
a. ethnic/racial changes in the local community	Open	2	7	68	17	6
	Lay Leaders	3	5	77	10	5
	Clergy	2	6	71	17	4
b. economic changes in the local community	Open	13	54	22	9	2
	Lay Leaders	16	50	22	8	4
	Clergy	16	55	18	9	2
c. other demographic changes in the local community (people moving in or out of the community, young people coming or going)	Open	9	33	34	20	4
	Lay Leaders	14	36	29	15	6
	Clergy	10	33	34	19	4

		Negative Impact		No Impact		Positive Impact	
		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	
d. changes in the religious climate or culture of American society	Open	17	45	26	10	2	
	Lay Leaders	17	40	32	9	2	
	Clergy	18	51	21	9	1	
e. changes in the culture of American society in general	Open	17	44	27	11	1	
	Lay Leaders	18	43	30	7	2	
	Clergy	16	55	19	9	1	
f. competition from other local congregations	Open	7	26	60	6	1	
	Lay Leaders	10	25	55	8	2	
	Clergy	6	29	60	4	1	
g. changes in patterns of participation among lay leaders	Open	6	22	39	26	7	
	Lay Leaders	3	19	51	21	6	
	Clergy	6	28	30	29	7	
h. changes in the quality of pastoral leadership of the church	Open	10	14	31	30	15	
	Lay Leaders	8	17	31	26	18	
	Clergy	3	9	36	38	14	
i. conflict in the congregation	Open	20	28	46	5	1	
	Lay Leaders	19	32	41	6	2	
	Clergy	12	28	47	11	2	
j. Churchwide Assembly action on the sexuality statement and policy changes	Open	25	20	29	12	14	
	Lay Leaders	37	24	30	6	3	
	Clergy	26	27	31	10	6	
k. commitment to evangelism or outreach	Open	2	6	36	41	15	
	Lay Leaders	3	8	41	36	12	
	Clergy	1	4	35	47	13	

10. The hope from the beginning of the ELCA was that the three expressions of the church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—would be “interdependent.” In this context, we would like to know how involved you believe each expression of the church should be in each of the items listed below. (For each of the following fill in one circle per line for congregations, the synods, and the churchwide organization.)

		Open			Lay Leaders			Clergy		
		Very Involved	In-Involved	Not Involved	Very Involved	In-Involved	Not Involved	Very Involved	In-Involved	Not Involved
a. Ensure that worship provides a meaningful experience of God	congregations	93	7	0	84	16	0	95	5	0
	synods	26	60	14	30	63	7	19	66	15
	churchwide organization	26	57	17	27	59	14	22	58	20

	<b>Open</b>			<b>Lay Leaders</b>			<b>Clergy</b>		
	<u>Very Involved</u>	<u>In-volved</u>	<u>Not Involved</u>	<u>Very Involved</u>	<u>In-volved</u>	<u>Not Involved</u>	<u>Very Involved</u>	<u>In-volved</u>	<u>Not Involved</u>
b. Ensure that children and youth receive Christian education									
congregations	93	7	0	86	13	1	95	5	0
synods	36	53	11	39	52	9	27	59	14
churchwide organization	35	50	15	35	53	12	28	57	15
c. Ensure that adults continue to grow in knowledge and faith									
congregations	89	10	1	80	18	2	94	6	0
synods	39	52	9	37	56	7	32	58	10
churchwide organization	34	55	11	31	57	12	32	55	13
d. Share the good news of the Gospel with the unchurched									
congregations	76	21	3	65	31	4	85	14	1
synods	53	37	10	51	43	6	50	42	8
churchwide organization	56	35	9	54	38	8	53	38	9
e. Plan for and conduct the global mission of the church									
congregations	30	62	8	17	71	12	25	67	8
synods	43	52	5	38	59	3	38	57	5
churchwide organization	81	16	3	66	31	3	82	16	2
f. Provide charity and service to people in need									
congregations	85	15	0	75	24	1	90	10	0
synods	50	42	8	51	46	3	43	45	12
churchwide organization	60	34	6	55	42	3	56	36	8
g. Encourage members to act on the relationship of the Christian faith to social, political, and economic issues									
congregations	60	33	7	42	45	13	56	40	4
synods	48	40	12	38	51	11	41	47	12
churchwide organization	53	34	13	39	48	13	49	39	12
h. Start new congregations									
congregations	20	55	25	8	53	39	24	59	17
synods	63	33	4	48	46	6	66	30	4
churchwide organization	48	43	9	47	45	8	57	35	8
i. Provide for the education of new pastors									
congregations	23	61	16	17	58	25	25	63	12
synods	57	38	5	60	37	3	55	41	4
churchwide organization	76	20	4	65	32	3	80	17	3

	Open			Lay Leaders			Clergy		
	Very Involved	In-volved	Not Involved	Very Involved	In-volved	Not Involved	Very Involved	In-volved	Not Involved
j. Assist congregations in finding a new pastor									
congregations	54	33	13	54	36	10	50	36	14
synods	73	23	4	65	30	5	82	16	2
churchwide organization	22	48	30	26	47	27	17	50	33
k. Assist congregations in times of conflict									
congregations	49	38	13	52	40	8	50	36	14
synods	75	21	4	63	32	5	79	18	3
churchwide organization	20	44	36	28	43	29	13	40	47
l. Provide direction by setting priorities for the mission of church									
congregations	53	42	5	43	51	6	65	31	4
synods	51	42	7	46	49	5	52	43	5
churchwide organization	60	30	10	50	41	9	59	30	11
m. Be responsible for the ecumenical relationships of this church									
congregations	40	51	9	44	50	6	35	57	8
synods	45	47	8	42	53	5	42	51	7
churchwide organization	69	25	6	44	46	10	71	24	5
n. Advocate with government agencies in behalf of the poor									
congregations	38	44	18	23	54	23	33	56	11
synods	49	38	13	37	53	10	47	43	10
churchwide organization	67	23	10	47	44	9	69	24	7

11. What do you believe should be the **top three priorities** for congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization? (**In the congregation column**, fill in a circle next to the **three** items you believe should be the top three priorities for congregations. Fill in three for synods **in the synod column** and three for the churchwide organization **in the churchwide organization column**.)

		Congregations	Synods	Churchwide
a. ensure worship provides a meaningful experience of God	Open	85	5	5
	Lay Leader	78	9	18
	Clergy	88	5	8
b. ensure that children and youth receive Christian education	Open	71	4	3
	Lay Leader	75	8	14
	Clergy	56	3	6

		<u>Congre- gations</u>	<u>Synods</u>	<u>Church- wide</u>
c.	ensure that adults continue to grow in knowledge and faith			
	Open	50	7	3
	Lay Leader	53	7	10
	Clergy	48	8	5
d.	share the good news of the Gospel with the unchurched			
	Open	38	14	12
	Lay Leader	29	21	24
	Clergy	48	14	12
e.	plan for and conduct the global mission of the church			
	Open	2	6	63
	Lay Leader	6	19	61
	Clergy	2	7	66
f.	provide charity and service to people in need			
	Open	30	16	12
	Lay Leader	35	20	24
	Clergy	30	7	10
g.	encourage members to act on the relationship of the Christian faith to social, political, and economic issues			
	Open	18	21	17
	Lay Leader	16	23	18
	Clergy	11	19	15
h.	start new congregations			
	Open	2	41	16
	Lay Leader	5	34	18
	Clergy	6	44	21
i.	provide for the education of new pastors			
	Open	2	19	47
	Lay Leader	7	37	34
	Clergy	2	18	53
j.	assist congregations in finding a new pastor			
	Open	1	67	3
	Lay Leader	8	59	4
	Clergy	5	76	1
k.	assist congregations in times of conflict			
	Open	1	65	3
	Lay Leader	10	53	7
	Clergy	5	69	1
l.	provide directions by setting priorities for the mission of the church			
	Open	4	12	43
	Lay Leaders	7	19	40
	Clergy	6	19	36

		<u>Congre- gations</u>	<u>Synods</u>	<u>Church- wide</u>
m. be responsible for the ecumenical relationships of this church	Open	2	7	37
	Lay Leaders	6	11	21
	Clergy	2	6	40

n. advocate with government agencies in behalf of the poor	Open	3	11	33
	Lay Leader	4	13	29
	Clergy	1	10	28

12. What is your gender?		<u>female</u>	<u>male</u>
	Open	52	48
	Lay Leaders	54	46
	Clergy	30	70

13. Were you baptized in a Lutheran church?		<u>yes</u>	<u>no</u>
	Open	73	27
	Lay Leaders	70	30
	Clergy	78	22

14. How long have you been a member of an ELCA congregation?		<u>less than a year</u>	<u>1 to 2 years</u>	<u>3 to 5 years</u>	<u>6 to 10 years</u>	<u>11 to 20 years</u>	<u>21 or more years</u>
	Open	0	1	3	6	13	77
	Lay Leaders	0	1	3	8	11	77
	Clergy	0	0	0	3	6	91

15. What is your age?		<u>18 or younger</u>	<u>19 to 24</u>	<u>24 to 44</u>	<u>45 to 64</u>	<u>65 to 74</u>	<u>75 or older</u>
	Open	1	2	24	55	15	4
	Lay Leaders	0	1	11	52	24	12
	Clergy	0	0	16	74	9	1