



Oregon Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's Work. Our Hands

Church Sustainability Assessment

This is a tool meant to help congregations and congregation councils explore their capacity for ministry. We invite you to use this assessment as a team - as a congregational council or leadership board. Ask each team member to fill it out individually, as best they can, and then share the individual responses in prayerful conversation. Give yourselves the time necessary to pray, talk and dwell in the responses. What does this assessment help us see about ourselves? What might be the implications for the future?

A. Facilities

Building Age and Maintenance

- In what year(s) were your sanctuary/ parish hall constructed?

Sanctuary _____

Parish Hall _____

Other Building(s) _____

- HVAC and other major system operations are new, or have been replaced within the last 10 years? Y/N
- If our sanctuary A/C (or other major system) failed next week, we would have the funds on hand to replace it? Y/N
- Such an expense would pose a financial crisis for our congregation Y/N
- Think back to the last major maintenance needed (need for new roof, new windows, new a/c etc.): what was the repair needed, how did the congregation respond, and how were the needed funds secured? _____
- Is it realistic to expect the same response/resolution, when the next major building maintenance need arises? Y/N
- How is our building an asset and how is it a liability? _____

Current Building Usage

• Time wise, our building is utilized for ministry gatherings and outside community activities approximately how many hours each week (outside of Sunday morning)?

- 0-5 hours
- 5-20 hours
- 21-40 hours
- 40-60 hours

• Our facilities (sanctuary & parish hall) are:

- Under-utilized
- Just right for our needs
- Too small for our needs
- Do you currently rent any of your facilities out to other organizations? Y/N
- If so, what percentage of total income does this building usage represent on a yearly basis? _____

• Based on our answers above, do we see our current building usage as an opportunity or a threat for our sustainability as a congregation?

B. Finances

Financial Stewardship

- Our current stewardship education consists of: (check all that apply)
 - ___ Adopting a budget at the annual meeting;
 - ___ Developing an annual stewardship strategy for the calendar year
 - ___ Printing the offering amount in the bulletin each Sunday or each month;
 - ___ Including a bulletin appeal when funds are running short;
 - ___ Having a monthly stewardship temple talk, by a lay leader, that focuses on practices of generosity as part of growing in faith;
 - ___ Organizing an Annual Financial Stewardship Campaign and actively encouraging and lifting up the Biblical practice of tithing/percentage giving);
 - ___ Designating dollars in our budget for our minister(s) and voting members to attend the Synod Assembly
 - ___ Other

Half (or more) of our annual congregational giving comes from the 65+ age group? Y/N

If our congregation's top one or two giving households died within the next year, would there be a financial crisis within our congregation? Y/N

We know the giving capacity of our congregation, based on the average household income in the area? Y/N

(This number is available from census reports found at www.census.gov/quickfacts/ ...enter your state, county, city, town, or zip code....in the "Select a Fact" box, scroll down and look for the Income and Poverty section)

We have an endowment/memorial fund Y/N.

If so, we have withdrawn money from it, to pay regular ministry expenses within the past 12 months. Y/N

If yes, how much? _____

Our congregation carries this much debt _____

We receive financial gifts: (check all that apply)

Through passing plates/baskets in worship

By providing and promoting online giving, giving at kiosks, QR codes in the bulletin, etc.

By providing and promoting gifts through estate planning, trusts, stock gifts, etc. Did you know the ELCA Foundation has someone in your area specifically skilled in helping with this? You can reach Beth Adams at beth.adams@elca.org or 360.953.4401.

How much mission support do we provide to/through the Oregon Synod and ELCA?

(Mission support is an investment in our present and future to provide pastoral leadership, training, support etc. If we are not providing mission support, we are relying on the gifts of other congregations to provide for us. Congregations are invited to give a biblical tithe [10% of the operating budget] to the Oregon Synod- 42% of all giving to mission support goes to the ELCA Churchwide organization).)

- Don't provide any

- Less than 5% of our budget
- 5-10% of our budget
- > 10% of our budget

• Based on the above, is our financial stewardship an opportunity (we have the capacity to increase our giving) or a threat (we are maxed out on our giving capacity and could be in jeopardy) for our sustainability as a congregation?

Minister Compensation

- We are able to provide a full time defined compensation not including benefits (Salary+Housing+Social Security) to our minister based on the Care and Compensation Guidelines released each year by the Synod Bishop's Office. Y/N
- If not, what is the level of defined compensation we are able to provide our pastor (based on recent actual giving numbers)? _____
- We are currently able to provide full benefits coverage (full family health, disability, retiree support), and at least 10% retirement to our minister (synod guidelines are 12%) Y/N
- If not, what level of benefit coverage are we providing our pastor?

• We are providing continuing education, professional expenses and mileage reimbursement to our pastor. Y/N

• Do we see minister compensation as a strength or a weakness for our sustainability as a congregation? _____

C. People

Community Partners

We are in relationship with community groups or organizations at least monthly (this may include schools, non-profits, faith community partners, neighborhood-based groups). Y/N

Leadership

- We regularly have enough people with skills and energy to serve on Council
Y/N
- We regularly have enough people to serve on committees and teams Y/N
- We regularly have enough people to lead the most important ministries we do
Y/N
- We send congregation members/leaders to the Synod Assembly annually. Y/N
- Do we see our leadership as a strength or a weakness for our sustainability as a congregation? _____

Worship

- We regularly invite new people to provide worship leadership on a weekly basis
Y/N
- How many people are involved in worship planning and leadership on a weekly basis? _____
- When was the last time a new leader joined the leadership planning team? _____
- What has our average worship attendance been for the last 4 years?

(specific figures can be found at <http://www.elca.org/tools/FindACongregation>enter your zip code....click on your congregation's name...next click the hyperlink 'Full Trend Report for this Congregation'....a file will Download...on page 3, you can find a graph and numbers back to the year 2006)

Year _____	Amount _____
Year _____	Amount _____
Year _____	Amount _____
Year _____	Amount _____

These numbers are obtained from the Annual ELCA congregational report, submitted by your Congregational Pastor/Council leader

- Are we growing? Holding steady? Declining?
- Do we see our worship as a strength or a weakness for our sustainability as a congregation? _____

Administrative

- We have a church secretary/administrator. Y/N
- If yes, what is the average of hours per week that they work? _____
- A person who is not our minister maintains our social media and website. Y/N

- A person who is not our minister organizes our technology needs (Zoom, etc.)
Y/N

Big Picture

How did we identify the following for our sustainability as a congregation (overall asset or liability):

Facilities

Building age and maintenance _____
Current building usage _____

Finances

Financial Stewardship _____
Pastoral Compensation _____

People

Community Partners _____
Leadership _____
Worship _____

Congregations need resources to sustain ministry. The three primary resources include facilities, financial and people. Reflect on what you filled out above. Then use the following questions to estimate your sustainability.

1. Declined to not-sustainable
2. Declining but still-sustainable
3. Maintaining
4. Growing or Increasing

Do you have what you need to maintain or expand ministry? Circle one in each area:

Facilities Capacity – maintainability and usage of facilities

1 2 3 4

Financial Resources – to pay for facility, staffing, ministries, etc.

1 2 3 4

People Power – to provide leadership, strengthen and sustain one another,
connect with neighbors and the work of the Spirit beyond that walls of the church

1 2 3 4

Write the lowest number here: _____

Since people, financial resources and facilities are necessary for sustainability,
the lower number represents the “weakest link” in your congregation’s
sustainability chain.

Adapted from a worksheet developed by Bishop Sue Briner, Southwestern Texas Synod