

THE STANDARD

Stand Firm in the Faith



REPORT ON ACTIVITY SINCE LCC'S 2022 CONVENTION

| JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024

LCC Board of Directors holds regular meetings

Since the last publication of *The Standard* in the March/April 2023 issue of *The Canadian Lutheran*, Lutheran Church–Canada's (LCC) Board of Directors has met five times: twice in person and three times online.

During its regular meetings in March, June, and October, the board received reports from the president, Rev. Dr. Timothy Teuscher; the regional pastors, Rev. David Haberstock (Central), Rev. Marvin Bublitz (East), and Rev. Robert Mohns (West); and chief administrative officer (CAO) Dwayne Cleave. The committees of the board—Personnel, Finance, and Governance—provided updates on the work they completed in partnership with LCC staff. The Directors of Missions and Communications, Rev. Mark Smith and Alex Steinke respectively, provided reports on behalf of their respective committees, while the Director of Advancement, David Friesen, reported on the unfolding work of the Purpose and Priorities Planning process.

The board also received its annual report from the auxiliaries of LCC and the two seminaries. The Dean of Military Chaplains also made a report of the work of the pastors who serve as chaplains in the Canadian military.

The online meetings were focus meetings where the board discussed a single topic each time. The audited financial statements and auditor report were reviewed and received at the June meeting and final approval was given in August to the revised Director of International Missions and the new Director of Domestic Missions positions.

In addition to the regular reports and business of the church, the board also took action on the following:

MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING

LCC continues to develop these relationship documents with entities that are part of or support the synodical family. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Consultant, Rev. Nolan Astley, provided reports to the board on the status of the MOU process. The board approved Memoranda of Understanding with Lutherans for Life-Canada, Lutheran Bible Translators–Canada, and the BC Mission Boat Society.

NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING

The National Youth Gathering (NYG) committee submitted a proposal to the Board requesting the committee be included in the official structure of the synod. The synodical board that oversaw the NYG committee was dissolved decades ago and

the members of NYG who provided connectivity by serving on other LCC Board committees have since retired from those positions.

The Board approved the NYG co-chair to travel to the Higher Things conference. Rev. David Haberstock, on behalf of the President's Ministry Council (PMC), along with Dcn. Amanda Hastings (LCC board) will work with the current NYG committee members to establish a proposed new structure within the synodical framework.



ARCHIVES (AD HOC)

An *ad hoc* committee of the board was created at the board's March 2023 meeting to assess the current state of archives across the synod, and determine a short-term and long-term strategy for the preservation of the history of the congregations of LCC and the synod. In addition, the committee will work to itemize resources desirable for and already available to congregations through existing LCC resources and other religious archives such as the Concordia Historical Institute. The committee consists of Anna Gibson-Hollow, Archivist at the University of Alberta; Mathew Block, editor of *The Canadian Lutheran*; Ian Adnams, former LCC Director of Communications; Rev. Mark Hennig (LCC board) and Lois Griffin (LCC board and Lutheran East District Corporation board member). LCC staff members Iris Barta and Angela Honey provide synodical office support.

The committee has met twice and submitted a report to the board at its October meeting. Comprehensive congregation manuals for records management and archives have been drafted. A suggestion of a brief summary version was received, and the creation of the document is underway. Potential opportunities for cooperation with other archives, including other religious archives, continues to be explored, as do factors like ongoing cost for archival needs and estimated future volume.

Members of the LCC Board of Directors are elected at the synod convention held every four years. The last convention was in June 2022 in Edmonton.

ADVANCING MISSION AND MINISTRY IN LCC

In the January/February 2023 issue of *The Canadian Lutheran*, Director of Advancement, David Friesen, provided an initial update on the Purpose and Priorities Planning Process, highlighting strategic initiatives scheduled to begin in 2023. The goal of this process was to create a shared vision for the future of our church body—to direct, strengthen, and sustain our mission and ministry today and into the future. Visit LCC's website under News>Purpose & Priorities Planning for a list of the goal statements.

Much work has been done over the past year to put these initiatives into action. Although many are a work-in-progress, the following provides an update on this progress organized by goal statement. To provide input in any of these areas, please contact David Friesen.



DISCIPLE-MAKING CULTURE

Develop congregational assessment and revitalization process to assist congregations at varying stages of development.	A handful of LCC congregations are currently working with an assessment tool. Their feedback and experience will be used to determine next steps in this initiative.
Provide an ongoing series of education seminars for professional theological development.	The PMC (President's Ministry Council) is working with pastors and seminaries to identify areas of need and develop seminars.
Work with congregations to identify and develop approaches to mission outreach in their area.	RMMCs are the primary deliverer of this initiative. Synod leadership is working closely with each RMMC to identify opportunities.
Strengthen relationships between Director of Missions and partner ministries to build strong, coordinated outreach to Indigenous and underserved urban communities.	Initial work with partner ministries has begun. Follow-up will continue under the guidance of the Director of Domestic Missions when the position is filled.

MISSION OUTREACH

Call a Director of Domestic Missions.	In process. See Personnel Committee update for details.
Identify the top three underserved immigrant groups in areas where LCC has an existing congregation for possible mission expansion.	Work has begun in each region to identify these groups.
Promote opportunities for partnership with individuals to support specific missions.	The Director of Advancement and the Director of Missions are actively working with members on an ongoing basis.
Identify three prospective mission fields for Indigenous ministry.	Initial groundwork has been done. Most recent meetings occurred January 2024. The new Director of Domestic Missions will continue to develop these plans.

EQUIP LEADERS

Launch monthly Zoom calls on current, important topics, to be led by an expert chosen by Synod leadership, which are open and available to anybody within LCC in which to participate.	The PMC and CTC (Communications and Technology Committee) are working together to identify an initial series of topics for discussion.
Develop new protocols within the Pastors with Alternate Training (PAT) program to train up pastors for unique, small congregation circumstances.	The Boards of Regents of both seminaries continue discussions in collaboration with the President's Ministry Council (PMC) examining possible enhancements to pastor training and the adaptation of the PAT program.
Define the role of Director of Young Adult and Youth Ministry so that one can be called.	The BOD Personnel Committee continues to work on a job description and position details.

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Identify key areas of synodical staffing needs and develop a staffing plan (to better serve congregations and members).	Work is in progress. The immediate need for a Director of Domestic Missions is currently being addressed.
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Develop clear job descriptions and succession plans for all synodical positions.	The BOD Personnel Committee continues to review all current job descriptions to ensure they reflect the actual work being done in each position. Reviews of the positions of Director of Communications, Director of International Missions, and Director of Domestic Missions have been recently completed.
Create a calendar of national events and activities to strengthen unity and inter-congregational relationships.	A review of web-based platforms to determine the best way to share event/activity information is ongoing. Discussion on type of events is in progress.

FISCAL RESOURCES AND RESPONSIBILITY

Coincide Annual General Meeting with release of Annual Report ensuring timely, accurate, and transparent information is being released from the previous fiscal year.	LCC's last AGM was held in June 2023 which allowed for the completion of the annual audit and auditors report. It is anticipated that subsequent AGMs will be held annually in June. Further development of an LCC Annual Report is in progress.
Develop and implement a synod-wide approach to encourage, engage, and increase congregational remittances.	This is a comprehensive initiative that involves the Director of Advancement, Regional Pastors, RMMCs and most importantly, congregations. A planning session with the PMC took place in January 2024 and ongoing communication with congregations continues.
Develop improved procedures to allocate and distribute financial resources to support domestic missions (and ministry).	Working to move from reactive planning to proactive planning of mission and ministry needs and opportunities.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Identify at least one lay representative from each congregation to receive all communications from the national office.	An initial communication has been sent to all lay delegates from the convention. Follow-up is ongoing.
Create an annual communications and direct mail calendar designed to engage congregations, laity, pastors, and church workers.	Defining the various communication items and timeframes is ongoing. This includes print, web, and other electronic media. A review of web-based platforms to determine the best way to share event/activity information is ongoing.
Create report on mission needs and congregational remittances to increase awareness and response to support mission and ministry.	Report planning is underway with a target date of September 2024. Ongoing communication with congregations continues.

Action on Convention Resolutions

- Resolutions 22.2.02a (*To Reaffirm the Biblical View on Marriage and Sexuality*) and 22.2.03a (*To Rejoice in the Church's Stance on the Blessings Of Gathering In Person*) require no further action from the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR).

- In response to Resolution 22.2.04b (*To Request the PMC to Provide Relevant Materials Pertaining to the Intersection Between Biomedical Ethics, Technology and Theology*), the CTCR has prepared a list of pertinent resources. The list was sent out in the *InfoDigest* and is available on LCC's website under Who We Are>Theological Documents.

- The Personnel Committee continues to address the creation of the position mandated by Resolution 22.3.03a (*To Support Youth, Young Adult, and Family Ministry in the Synod*).

- Resolution 22.3.08a (*To Direct the Synod Board of Directors to Revisit Resolution 17.2.01 (Vicarage Placement*

Fund)) is under review by the board's Finance Committee. The Board of Directors discussed this resolution at length during the November 2023 board meeting but reached an impasse on how to proceed with implementation upon review of a resolution that was passed by delegates at the 2014 Synod convention (14.3.13) that seems to prohibit Synod from using an assessment as a source of revenue for financing a vicarage placement fund: "RESOLVED that Synod develop and promote materials to fund the recommendations made by the vicarage task force, apart from assessment, and which encourage congregations to support the work of District and Synod through ongoing support of missions."

As a result, the Finance committee will continue to evaluate the allocation of expenditures within the Synod budget and report back to the Board on whether other sources of revenue are available to finance a vicarage placement fund.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Serve, strengthen, and equip congregations for bold, faithful, Christ-centred witness.



Building on LCC's Strategic Priorities and through the resolutions adopted at the LCC Synodical Convention in June 2022, there was overwhelming congregation support to expand and extend our mission of spreading God's Word and supporting our members, especially within Canada. In order to faithfully carry out these priorities and resolutions together as members of the Body of Christ, we urge our members and congregations to reflect on the impact their role has on this ministry. Mission and ministry expansion requires an expansion of financial support as well. Below you will find information about LCC's workplan and annual congregation mission and ministry remittances, which provide a major portion of the funding to accomplish our work together.

Your mission and ministry remittance helps fund:

Domestic Missions

Supporting Missionaries-at-Large and various language ministries, as well as developing new missions and outreach so that the gifts that Christ won for us on the cross might be offered and given through the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments.

International Missions

Providing theological education for indigenous church workers, mission development and support, and works of mercy in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Cambodia, Thailand, and Ukraine.

Equipping Leaders

Recruiting, educating, and supporting ecclesiastical, diaconal, and lay leaders for the church.

Caring for our Members

Providing support for our church workers and congregations in need.

Building Synodical Unity

Providing communication and resources that inform, engage, and encourage us in our walk together.

We should take pains, with the greatest earnestness and our utmost ability, to attend to those matters that promote the extension of God's name and glory; and the spread of His Word from which alone we hope for salvation. | Preface, Book of Concord, 22

Mission and Ministry Budget vs. Actual Congregational Remittances: Five Year Trend

The table below provides an overview of congregation remittances since restructuring. The current fiscal year—February 2023 - January 2024 (FY2024)—includes remittances received up to the end of December 2023, for eleven months. The budget amount in the current year also reflects eleven months.

	FY2024 YTD (11 months)	FY2023	FY2022	FY2021	FY2020
Budget	\$2,017,000	\$2,200,000	\$2,165,000	\$2,060,000	\$2,500,000
Actual Remittance	\$1,748,889	\$2,147,250	\$2,172,798	\$2,151,139	\$2,231,240
Surplus (shortfall)	(\$268,111)	(\$52,750)	\$7,798	\$91,139	(\$268,760)

LCC Workplan for Fiscal Year 2025

The chart (*below*) and table (*to the right*) show the LCC Workplan for Fiscal Year 2025 (part of the Quadrennial Workplan) as adopted at the Synodical Convention in 2022. This workplan covers all aspects of the work of Lutheran Church–Canada. FY2025 runs from February 1, 2024 to January 31, 2025.

The FY2025 LCC Workplan has a total mission and ministry expenditure of \$3.9 million dollars. Almost 80 percent of this is focused on supporting missions and congregations, aligning with our mission statement: **“Serve, strengthen, and equip congregations for bold, faithful, Christ-centered witness.”** Our prayer is that congregation remittances are able to provide at least \$2.5 million dollars as we continue to expand the work of the church.

Mission & Ministry Workplan	
Domestic Missions	\$1,074,000
International Missions	665,000
Ecclesiastical Services	625,750
Higher Education	401,000
Communication Services	218,000
Congregational Services	135,000
Admin/Governance/Advancement	789,465
Total	\$3,908,215



- DOMESTIC MISSIONS - 27%
- INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS - 17%
- ECCLESIASTICAL SERVICES - 17%
- CONGREGATIONAL SERVICES - 4%
- HIGHER EDUCATION - 10%
- COMMUNICATION SERVICES - 6%
- ADMINISTRATION/GOVERNANCE/ADVANCEMENT - 21%

Pension Plan Merger Update

Worker Benefit Services reports that on September 21, 2023, the Alberta Pension Regulator approved the transfer of Defined Benefit (DB) pension assets and liabilities held in the LCC Pension Plan to the CAAT pension plan (“Plan Merger”).

The transfer of DB assets and liabilities was completed on November 8, 2023, and from that date CAAT has assumed responsibility for the payment of pensions that were earned under the LCC pension plan prior to the effective date of the merger, which was April 1, 2023. Since April 1, Active members have been earning their future pension benefits under the CAAT Db plus pension plan.

The next step in the process of winding up the LCC pension plan will be the dispersal of member assets held in the defined contribution (DC) component of the LCC pension plan. Our DC plan custodian, Sun-Life Financial, is currently distributing option packages to members. Each member with a DC account

will have a choice from several options on how they would like to handle their DC account balance, including:

- Using their DC account balance to purchase additional pension under CAAT’s DB plus plan for eligible periods of employment (Active members only).
- Using their DC account balance to purchase an annuity from an insurance company.
- Transferring the DC account balance into other registered retirement vehicles such as a locked in retirement account (LIRA) or life income fund (LIF) with another financial institution.
- Transferring their DC account balance to Sun Life’s group choices plan where they can continue to invest their funds.

The dispersal of DC account balances from the LCC pension plan is expected to be completed before the end of the calendar year.

2026 Convention to take place in Winnipeg

Lutheran Church–Canada's (LCC) Board of Directors has chosen Winnipeg as the host city for 2026's Synodical Convention. The venue for the convention will be the Victoria Inn Hotel and Convention Centre from Friday, June 12 to Monday, June 15, 2026.

The Convention was last held in the Central Region in 2008 under the theme "Give Jesus Glory – His Calling, Our Praise." The theme for 2026 has not yet been chosen.

Over the coming year, the Commission on Constitutional Matters and Structure (CCMS) will meet to confirm the dates required by the LCC Handbook for convention actions leading up to June 2026. In the later part of 2024, the Commission on Nominations and Elections (CNE) will also hold a first meeting to discuss the process of nominations for all positions.

The convention will deal with elections and resolutions during daily plenary sessions, and will also include topical breakout sessions. Pre-event meetings—such as those held by synod board, commissions, and committees—will be organized to prepare resolutions and reports for plenary sessions. Time will also be allotted for worship and hospitality.

Further details of the 2026 convention, including theme, agenda, and registration information will be released on an ongoing basis in *The Canadian Lutheran*, the LCC email newsletter *InfoDigest*, and on the convention website which will be launched closer to the meeting date.

Board Committee Updates

An update on recent activities by the committees of LCC's Board of Directors. All committees include at least one member of the board and work with synod staff to support the work of the synod.

FINANCE

- Will review operating results of LCC for the fiscal period ending on January 31, 2024 and comparing results to the budget. Will report their findings to the board.
- The external audit of the LCC financial statements for the period ending January 31 2024 will be completed in April.

GOVERNANCE

- Updates to the BOD Governance Manual were completed, including a policy for in-camera meetings, code of conduct updates, and a protocol for minutes.

COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

- Thirty-five parishes are now using congregational web services supported by LCC's Communications department

- LCC's Francophone Lutheran Liturgical Institute (ILLF) site, the only confessional Lutheran institute of its kind, is now providing liturgical resources in French and being utilized internationally.

- *Missouri North: The History of Lutheran Church–Canada* is now available for purchase on Amazon.ca.

- Plans are in place to cover LCC Communications while Communications Director, Alex Steinke, is on maternity leave.

PERSONNEL

- Completed the creation of job descriptions for the positions of Director of International Missions and Director of Domestic Missions. After requesting nominations for Director of Domestic Mission from the church at large, nominees were asked if they would allow their name to stand for consideration. After a review and interview process, a candidate for the position of Director of Domestic Missions was recommended to LCC's board for action.

- Synod's employee handbook was updated to revise the Maternity/Parental Leave policy as well as introduce a Supplemental Unemployment Benefit Plan (SUB) for Maternity/Parental Leave.

- In response to convention Resolution 22.3.03a (*To Support Youth, Young Adult, and Family Ministry in the Synod*), work on a job description for a worker to fill this position is in process.

RMMCs hold meetings

LCC's three Regional Mission and Ministry Councils (RMMCs) held meetings in September 2023. The primary focus of each meeting was the discussion of congregation and ministry applications for financial assistance for 2024.

Meeting on September 21 (West) and September 30 (Central and East), the RMMCs spent considerable time considering applications in light of projected funds available as reported by LCC's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Dwayne Cleave.

Financial assistance applications may be submitted by congregations for support with regular ministry activities as well as special mission projects or ministries. Applications are evaluated using a three-tiered criteria of support for: existing Word and Sacrament ministry; outreach efforts leading people to Word and Sacrament; and works of mercy.

Additionally, each RMMC has formed a domestic missions committee to support and promote existing missions within each region along with identifying new mission opportunities.

RMMC members are elected at the synod convention which is held every four years. Since the elections held in June 2022, there have been changes to RMMC membership. For an updated list, visit LCC's website here: www.lutheranchurchcanada.ca/missions/rmmc/.

Call issued for Director of Domestic Missions

Lutheran Church–Canada’s Board of Directors (BOD) met online on Thursday, January 18, 2024 to approve the recommendation of the Personnel Committee and issue a call to Rev. Jacob Quast for the position of Director of Domestic Missions.

Rev. Quast graduated from Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton in 2003. After his vicarage at Redeemer, Kitimat, B.C., he was placed at Prince of Peace, Peace River, Alberta where he served for five years before accepting the call to his current congregation, Church of the Lutheran Hour, Fort Frances, Ontario. In 2008, the Fort Frances congregation entered into a dual-parish arrangement with St. Paul Lutheran Church, International Falls, Minnesota. Rev. Quast currently has a unique situation serving two congregations in two countries and two synods.

Rev. Quast married his wife, Jolene in 1996 and they have three children.



Please pray for Rev. Quast in this time of discernment. For updates on this call, visit www.canadianlutheran.ca.

An Update on LCC’s Ukraine Aid Fund

Following the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine in February 2022, there was a significant request from members of Lutheran Church–Canada (LCC) to create a fund in support of our partner church, the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Ukraine (SELCU). Within four days, LCC established the Ukraine Aid Fund, giving LCC members the opportunity to provide funds in support of the pastors and members of SELCU.

Over the past 23 months, there has been a tremendous outpouring of support, and—as of this writing—members of Lutheran Church–Canada have generously given a total of \$780,043 to the Ukraine Aid Fund. LCC is grateful to its members, congregations, and parishes for this expression of compassion for our brothers and sisters in Ukraine.

This update hopes to answer some of the questions that are fielded by the synodical office regarding the Ukraine Aid Fund. To date, LCC has sent \$421,866 as financial aid to Ukraine, leaving \$358,177 in the Ukraine Aid Fund still to be transferred. One of the most common questions is why more funds have not been transferred. In order to be good stewards and to properly manage these funds, the leaders of SELCU advised LCC to only send funds as requested. This alleviated their concern of large fund transfers which might result in frozen accounts or fund seizures. Subsequently, LCC has been sending funds monthly by request, and SELCU has done a remarkable job utilizing these gifts to provide aid to those in need in the country. Unlike many other agencies

sending aid into the country, 100 percent of the donations to LCC’s Ukraine Aid Fund will be sent to our partner church for their use.

A n o t h e r question is why the fund amount is no longer reported in InfoDigest. While LCC does anticipate that there could be

a further need for financial support in the future, the leadership of SELCU has relayed to LCC that the amount of funds still available to be transferred, along with funding they are receiving from other partner churches/organizations, are sufficient for their current requirements. Subsequently, LCC has stopped requesting contributions to the fund. LCC will continue to report on the ongoing distributions from the current balance and provide updates from SELCU. If additional funding is required based on the needs within SELCU, LCC will initiate further requests for aid.

If you have additional questions, please direct them to Rev. Mark Smith, Director of Missions, or David Friesen, Director of Advancement.

