

“WHAT IS ELCMA?”

Thank you for asking, “What is ELCMA?” The Evangelical Lutheran Coalition for Mission in Appalachia (ELCMA) began in 1990 and is a coalition of sixteen synods, two churchwide units, and numerous congregations and individuals joined together for mission in the Appalachian region. Our Mission is:

“TO CONNECT and EQUIP GOD’S PEOPLE FOR CHRIST’S MISSION IN APPALACHIA”

ELCMA is called to:

- Support, develop and Encourage the gifts if Appalachia for ministry and celebrate Appalachian heritage and culture
- Advocate for God’s people and natural resources in ways that demonstrate faithful stewardship
- Serve as the primary networking tool in the Appalachian Region for the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,) connecting Appalachian congregations and communities with other ministries and resources around the country.

ELCMA works to fulfill its call to the region by concentrating in four primary areas: Equipping for Outreach, Advocating for Justice, Networking, and Supporting. These areas of ministry have led ELCMA to focus on four tasks:

Developing resources to assist small membership congregations.

These resources include “The Shape of Mission in Appalachia: Leadership for the Present and Future Church”, the “Handbook for Small Churches” and its regular supplements, “Appalachian Heritage Sunday Packets” and “Appalachian Sunday School.”

Strengthening and supporting leaders in their ministry. By working with the ELCA’s seminaries, the Appalachian Ministries Educational Resources Center (AMERC), First Call Theological Education events and individual synodical events ELCMA helps prepare new pastors for the “culture shock” the often experience in their first call to small membership congregations in rural and urban Appalachia. ELCMA is available as a resource to pastors and lay leaders in numerous capacities such as mentoring or coaching.

Getting to the real roots of poverty and overcoming stereotypical distortions are part of ELCMA’s call to advocate and empower for justice. ELCMA works with the ELCA’s Unit for Church in Society and the Unit for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission’s Small Town and Rural Ministry Alliance to bring congregations together around social and economic issues affecting their people and their communities. We also work ecumenically on these issues with the colleagues from Presbyterian Church USA, United Methodist Church, Roman Catholic Church, Episcopal Church and other church agencies.

Connecting the leaders in the region and outside the Appalachian territory takes various communication tools. The Prayer Invitations, Appal-bites and periodic electronic bulletins are ways ELCMA seeks to create and sustain these connections. The Annual Appalachian Assembly provides a networking opportunity for ELCMA members. Each year delegates direct the work of the Coalition for the coming year. During the event, participants share stories, hopes, resources and experiences. Through this vital network, ELCMA strives to keep its commitment to strengthen the witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ in Appalachia.

ELCMA is funded by the member synods, churchwide units, and donations from congregations and individuals. ELCMA also seeks partnership with other churchwide units and secular organizations on specialized projects. As the ministry grows each year, ELCMA strives to involve you and others who have a passion for sharing the gospel. Your financial support is critical to the Coalition’s work.

Your prayers are the most precious gifts of all. ELCMA counts on prayers to keep the ministry focused on its source, Jesus Christ. He is the source of all, including the majestic grandeur that surrounds us in this region. ELCMA offers you this blessing: May the beauty of the Appalachian Mountains, the water, and the sky touch your life with the power of God’s creation and renew your spirit.

ELCMA, PO Box 338, Indiana, PA 15701-0338

Phone/Fax: 724-463-8422

dory@elcma.org www.elcma.org