

**Metropolitan Chicago Synod Strategy
for Ministry with Latino Communities**

for the term May 2016 – June 2019

Respectfully Submitted April 2016

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INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

God created our human community to be diverse and multi-cultural. In Holy Baptism, we are all called into ministry together for the sake of the Gospel, and to share our unique gifts to glorify our Father in Heaven by uniting our diversity into one body of Christ. It is important for us to state that we follow a model of accompaniment in which we come together to build the body of Christ. “Accompaniment” is a scriptural and practical way of understanding mission. Accompaniment helps us see mission without boundaries and seeks reconciliation. The ministries of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod (MCS) are called to share our assets, resources, and ministerial gifts with the body of Christ by intentionally creating a living document that addresses our multi-cultural church with the hope of creating mutual support, respect, and relationship building in order to become one united, but diverse body of Christ.

VISION

We, as a synod, will be a network of reproducing leaders & viable communities that joyfully proclaim the gospel in word and action.

STRATEGY

We will invest our assets, resources, and gifts in people and communities of disciples who spread the gospel with open hands and open hearts and are committed to justice, service and proclamation.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES & VALUES

Our missional model of accompaniment will be characterized by being intentional in

- Multiplying sustainable communities
- Multiplying partnerships in ministry
- Reproducing indigenous leadership
- Engaging in justice ministry
- Serving in the community
- Proclaiming the gospel (evangelism and discipleship)



THE CONTEXT FOR MINISTRY

There are more than 1.9 million Latinos in the Chicago metropolitan area. We currently comprise 21.5 percent of the total population making us the third largest ethnic group in the area. Significantly, Latinos comprise just over 30 percent of youth under the age of 18 years. Although many first generation immigrants migrate to Chicago, almost 1.2 million of us were born in the United States, reflecting the large number of second and third generation members of the Latino community (Pew Research Center *Hispanic Trends* 2011-2013). Estimates through 2040 project a continual growth in the Latino population in all age groups (*Impacts of Latino Population Growth on Comprehensive Planning in the Chicago Metropolitan Region* 2013). Increasingly Latinos are saying that it is not necessary to speak Spanish to be considered culturally Latino (Pew Research Center *Hispanic Trends* 2011-2013). The Latino community is now dispersed throughout the synod and we cannot ignore this fact. In our current context, Latino communities are comprised of first, second and third generation Latinos from many countries of the Spanish-speaking world. We may differ in language and culture but we share an immigrant heritage, Hispanic culture, and an intercultural personal identity.

In Latin America, the Lutheran church is practically new and little is known about it. The Lutheran church in the United States and in Europe is trying to share their faith and tradition in good faith. However, they have not yet been able to fully incorporate Lutheran theological principles within the cultural and spiritual context of Latin American people. Therefore, the Latino population does not readily identify with our European-North American cultural partners and religious practices.

Latino theology came to the forefront with the work of Gustavo Gutierrez (Peru) on *The Theology of Liberation* in 1971. Since then U.S. Latino theology has developed in response to the similarities and differences between the culture here and in Latin America. Our theological methods recognize the Bible, the community, and everyday life as sources for theology. Our discussions are collaborative and engage key issues of gospel, exile and promise, liberation to a free and abundant life, and justice. The loci of U.S. Latino theology are the family and the community. Engagement with the Latino community is therefore most successful when missional approaches include a strong focus on family and community, culture, justice, leadership opportunities, intergenerational adaptation, and language options. Outreach needs to be in the context of the Latino experience in the United States; namely, taking into account the spiritual, social, and economic needs of the Latino population.

According to The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life almost one fourth of Latinos are now Protestant but about 40% of Latinos who were born in the United States have left the Roman Catholic Church (The Shifting Religious Identity of Latinos in the United States 2014). Increasingly, second and third generation Latinos follow the general U.S. trend of being unchurched with 18% of the Latino population now being non-affiliated. This emerging dynamic in the Latino population poses a new challenge and a new opportunity. Most of the Latino congregations in the ELCA can be described as “vulnerable”, some of which are “at risk” due to the economics of the population they serve. The future of over half of these congregations, if something is not done quickly and intentionally, is bleak. They are at risk of closing.

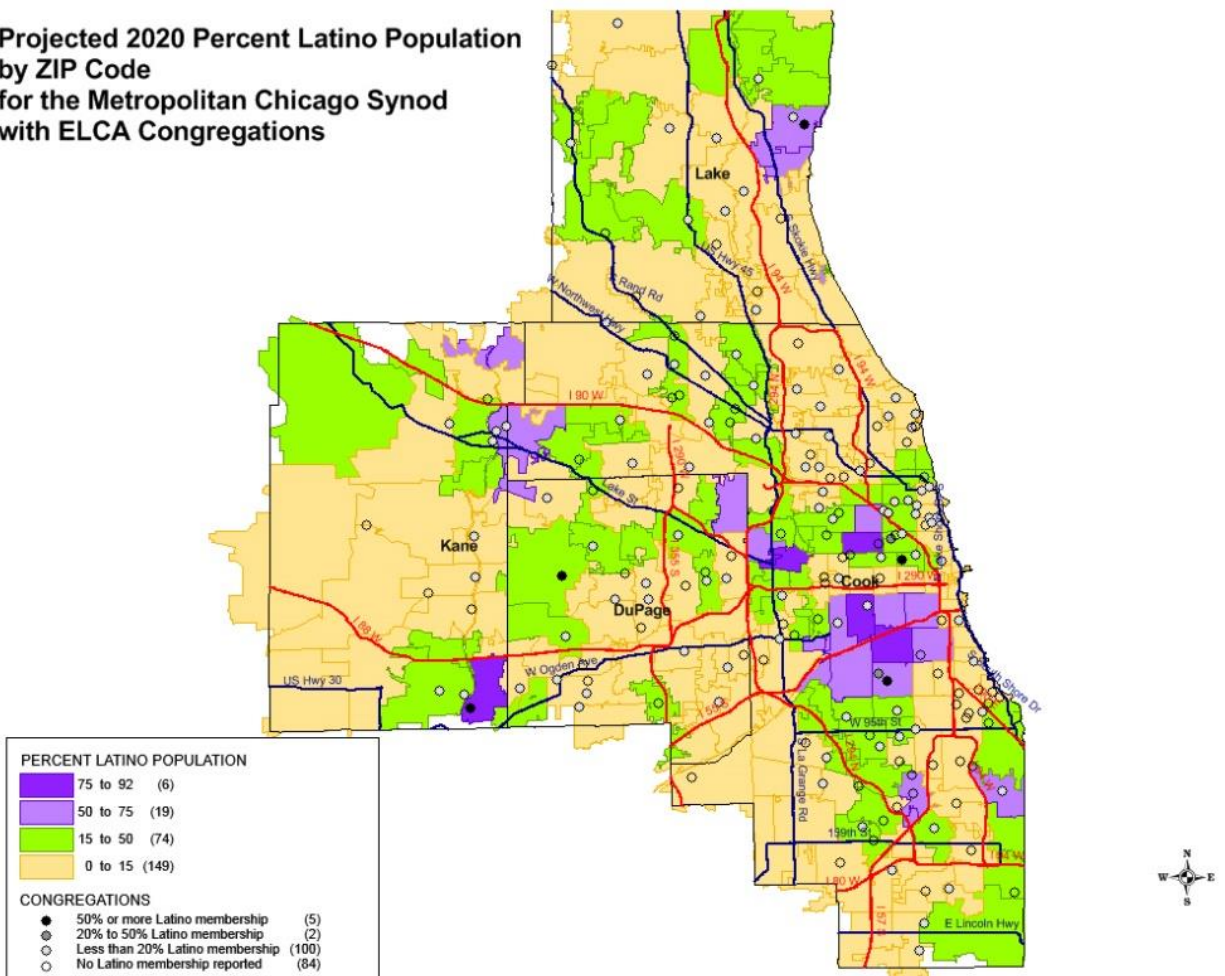
In view of the fact that today one in five Chicagoans is Latino and this population continues to grow, we have a golden opportunity for evangelism and social ministry in the Latino community.

Latino Population in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod

Metropolitan Chicago				
Total Ethnic Active Participants as of December 31, 2013				
	2013 Est. Population	% of Population	2013 Active Participants	% of Participants
African American/Black	1,401,853	15.3%	3,732	5.77%
African National/African-Caribbean*	47,257	*	179	0.28%
American Indian/Alaska Native	31,415	0.3%	17	0.03%
Arab/Middle Eastern*	63,067	*	139	0.21%
Asian/Pacific Islander	510,666	5.6%	995	1.54%
Latino/Hispanic	1,754,298	19.2%	2,105	3.25%
Multi-racial	188,853	2.1%	474	0.73%
White/Caucasian	4,496,749	49.2%	56,879	87.95%
Other	762,679	8.3%	155	0.24%
Total	9,146,513	100.0%	64,675	100.00%

Projected Latino Population Growth by 2020

Projected 2020 Percent Latino Population by ZIP Code for the Metropolitan Chicago Synod with ELCA Congregations



IMPERATIVES FOR THE THREE YEAR TERM

We have identified two main imperatives for the term of this strategy: to prepare leaders and to prepare the mission field. We need to develop both rostered and non-rostered leaders from within our congregations. We also need to explore various missional models that work in the diverse local contexts of the MCS.

Prepare Leaders

- Ecumenical Lay Leadership Academy - Focus on strong spiritual formation and discipleship.
 - Strengthen spiritual formation in key areas of ministry and service by having 50 congregants complete the program by the end of 2018. There are 10 eight-week classes in the complete cycle, of which four classes per year will be offered at each of the four Latina congregations.
 - On-going classes will be provided for 15 new participants from each congregation joining each annual cycle.
- Intentional Impact – Develop skills to strengthen and replicate leaders within our congregations.
 - Create an annual bilingual Intentional Impact class, with first class comprised of the pastors in the Latino Strategy Implementation Team (LSIT) and two lay leaders from each church. Target completion of the first course by eight lay and ordained leaders by fall 2017.
 - Ongoing - Hold follow up seminars at least annually to strengthen leadership skills within congregations.
- Seminary support - Partner with students in theological training to raise up rostered leaders.
 - Develop a network of partner congregations that provide an ongoing or one-time contribution to support one or more students by providing financial assistance for theological education (including internship and Clinical Pastoral Education).
 - Develop a plan listing options for congregations by fall of 2016. Determine levels of support including matching grants, gifts, internships, on-going contextual education, etc. During the winter of 2016 these options will be presented to the congregations at conference meetings by the leaders of the LSIT. By Spring 2017, we will form a team to be in communication with congregations and individuals to implement the support plans.
- Youth discernment - Identify future leaders early and support their response to their vocational calls.
 - Create a plan by Winter 2016 to fund sending high school students from all our Latina churches to the Youth Gathering Houston June 2018, targeting 50 students (\$50,000) in attendance.
 - Develop a retreat format by Fall 2016 that can be offered annually to confirmation students (grade 6-8) and their parents. This retreat will focus on discerning their call, opportunities for advanced education, and participation in ELCA Youth Gathering.
 - Develop a workshop for youth and parents on vocational call to rostered or ordained ministry.

- Organize a workshop for parents and students about college preparation, working with schools in or near Chicago. These schools may have different models but must have a track record of support of Latino students: College of Lake County, University of Illinois Chicago, Loyola University Chicago (Arupe College), Dominican University, St. Xavier University, Carthage College, Valparaiso University, Augustana.
 - Investigate working with Augustana leadership camp for additional leadership development of youth, i.e. Leadership Lab, by summer 2017.
- Training in justice ministry – Develop training in public witness, advocacy, and racial justice as an intentional lens for assessing our tactical plans.
- Practicing stewardship – Develop an understanding of stewardship and how it is necessary for the church in general and the local congregation in particular needs our stewardship in order to fulfill her mission to proclamation, service and justice.
 - This will be managed at the congregational level by each Pastor.
 - This will also be expanded during the Ecumenical Lay Leadership Academy (see curriculum in Appendix C).

Prepare the Mission Field

- Develop methods to shift the culture of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod (MSC) toward deeper cultural proficiency.
 - Work with the MCS Anti-Racism to schedule at least one anti-racism workshop in each of the eight conferences by Fall 2017.
 - Ensure access to translation or interpretation for synodical meetings or events.
 - Meet with all the ethnic ministry teams and the MCS Anti-Racism Team to build models for connecting churches and members of congregations with local entities doing the work of anti-racism.
- Intentionally build and nurture relationships with conference pastors and key lay leaders, strengthening networks and building relational capital.
 - It is a personal and intentional effort of both Latino and non-Latino pastors to engage and support the development of relevant ministries as our communities change and become more multicultural. For example, pulpit exchange and intercultural events.
- Mentor pastors and leaders using an accompaniment model with the goal of developing a plan for how to engage congregations in areas with changing demographics in new ministry opportunities.
 - Help congregations identify emerging demographic changes in their area.
 - Engage congregations in changing neighborhoods in conversation about changing leadership needs.
 - Start by identifying Latino Strategy Implementation Team (LSIT) mentors to work with two to three congregations (apprentice churches) who are ready to reach out to the Latino community in their backyard.
 - Ongoing goal is to identify two to three additional churches each year for this effort.

- Make the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) available to one pastor and one lay leader at each apprentice church to map their intercultural development.
- Explore methodologies for engaging Latino communities, planting churches, and expanding the ministries of existing congregations that have the potential to become more intercultural.
 - Bring Professor Daniel Rodriguez (author A Future for the Latino Church) to a Synod-wide workshop in Spring 2017 to explore engaging the broader Latino community and English-speaking congregations. Target 50 participants at a kickoff event with at least one follow up event to focus on adoption of the methodology.
 - Explore other methods used in Latino and multicultural communities outside the Chicago area, both within and outside the ELCA.
- Work with apprentice churches to develop a workshop at the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly 2018 to reproduce models of engaging communities of different cultures.

Financial Stewardship

At times the congregations and Teams of this synod need financial assistance to increase and strengthen our capacity for the mission to call the world into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ by the way of the cross. In recognition of this need the Metropolitan Chicago Synod has a restricted fund for Latino Outreach Ministry. The use of these monies is guided by the MCS “Governance Policy for Special Mission Bequests Adopted, June 2013 Policy B.1.3.1.” We are grateful for the fund and for the recognition of the need for special mission emphases within the life of our Synod. Accordingly, the Latino Strategy Implementation Team recommends that monies from this fund be used to implement this strategy. In compliance with the policy and in acknowledgement of the need to be good stewards of this fund, the Team will make recommendations to the synod council about the release of funds prior to the expenditure or contractual obligation of the funds. In recognition of our desire to teach and model good stewardship, some of the funding for these initiatives will come from the congregations of the Synod or from program participants. We anticipate requesting special mission bequests for the following initiatives, in part or in full, with the amount of the bequest to be determined at the time of the implementation:

- Youth Gathering 2018
- Lay Leadership Academy
- Intentional Impact program
- Seminary scholarships and grants
- Confirmation retreat
- Augustana leadership camp
- Anti-racism workshops (8 planned)
- ICDI inventory (12-18 planned)
- Dr. Daniel Rodriguez speaker’s fee

Summary Timeline

Semester 1 2016	Semester 2 2016	Semester 1 2017	Semester 2 2017	Semester 1 2018	Semester 2 2018
<p>Finalize and approve strategy</p> <p>Ongoing 1st phase of Lay Leadership Academy</p> <p>Strategy Workshop at MCS Synod Assembly</p>	<p>Financial program for Youth Gathering</p> <p>2nd phase of Lay Leadership Academy</p> <p>Vocational call retreat for confirmation youth</p>	<p>Launch support program for seminary education</p> <p>Augustana Leadership Camp</p> <p>Seminar with Daniel Rodriguez</p> <p>Engagement Workshop at MCS Synod Assembly</p>	<p>Evaluate progress on strategy</p> <p>3rd phase of Lay Leadership Academy</p> <p>Identify apprentice churches and offer IDI</p> <p>Work with Anti-Racism Team</p> <p>1st Intentional Impact course</p> <p>Leadership Camp for Youth</p>	<p>2nd Vocational call retreat for confirmation youth</p> <p>Engage apprentice congregations</p> <p>ELCA Youth Gathering (Houston)</p> <p>Engagement Workshop at MCS Synod Assembly</p>	<p>1st Graduates from Lay Leadership Academy</p> <p>4th phase of Lay Leadership Academy</p> <p>Intentional Impact follow up retreat</p> <p>Begin development of next 3-year strategy, which begins June 2019.</p>

MODEL FOR MISSION

The ELCA for the past few decades has focused its model for global mission on Accompaniment. This model is crucial in the ELCA's work with churches and peoples in countries around the world. It is a model that takes away the idea that those who are being served are only "objects" of the mission and moves us, as missionaries, to engage with them as partners in this ministry of reconciliation.

"Accompaniment" is a scriptural and practical way of understanding mission. A lot of mission work historically looked like this: There is God's story, my story, and your story. Mission meant I brought God's story to you. . God's story is on my side and you are on the other side. I'm crossing boundaries to bring God to you. (ELCA Global Mission, 2013)

Every day, we categorize people according to boundaries, such as:

- Rich / middle class / working poor / destitute
- Black / White / Asian / Native American / Latin@
- High-school educated / college educated / illiterate
- Hindu / Buddhist / Atheist / Muslim / Christian
- Lutheran / Episcopal / Roman Catholic / Pentecostal
- English speaker / Non-English speaker

There are a never-ending number of categories that we use to determine boundaries and build walls. However, accompaniment helps us see mission differently: In reconciliation, we realize that my story, and your story are not divided by boundaries but are both reconciled within God's story.

Whether we are preparing the mission field for planting ministries or preparing the mentor/pastor model for developing leaders, we recognize that the work we do is called mission. And this model of mission has great benefits for everyone involved. Thus the LSIT plans to engage this model of accompaniment when we look at our methodology for mission development and church planting.

Picture a tree with three strong branches stretching upward. Two of the branches are joined at the base but travel independently of one another; while separate they travel equally and jointly. This is a picture of the vision we have for the Latino Ministry Strategy.

Our strategy as we see it involves three very important branches. We need to develop methods for planting new mission ministries and to do this we will need to develop sites. And finally, along with these sites, we will need to develop leaders to serve in these sites.

There are many different models of planting currently being used in various contexts around the country; some ministries are planted within existing congregations, some are planted in stand-alone locations, and some are nested with a network of churches. It is our opinion that one model does not fit every context. We will be visiting and learning from existing ministries both in and out of the ELCA.

The other two arms or branches – the ones that travel in concert – represent our recognition that along with developing ministry locations it is very important to identify, encourage, educate, and support leaders who will serve in these new ministries. We will be seeking out and supporting both congregational lay leaders and others who will move forward on a path to being rostered. We will

develop methods for encouraging and educating bi-lingual Spanish speaking lay leaders as well as finding ways to work with the ELCA seminaries to encourage and train bi-lingual Spanish speaking rostered leaders.

An integral part of the mission work that will be done in developing both of these branches is the relationships that will be forged. We know that in our mission, our companions on the road may be individual people in our community or in other communities. Engaging in this mission through accompaniment, we remember that to proclaim the Gospel we must place a high priority on relationship – that relationship which God has intended for us since the beginning of the world. (ELCA Global Mission-Accompaniment)

As part of this relationship building, members of our congregations will learn to identify and share resources, recognize expertise in themselves and in their companions, share and listen to stories with their companions in order to learn about their experiences, and build networks that will support our companions. People in the supporting congregations will learn:

- Empathy – As we grow in our compassion, in our ability to feel the pain and joy of our companions and of all those who share the earth with us, we move from pity to compassion, from compassion to empathy, and from empathy to radical solidarity with our neighbors.
- Asset-based thinking – We learn to identify diverse gifts and see our companion and ourselves as people and organizations with many assets, gifts and strengths.
- Systems-based thinking – This process helps us perceive the connections and interdependence between self and other, between groups of people, and between people and the earth.
- Radical Hospitality – How can we move beyond a generic welcome to creating a space that our companions find truly embracing, where their gifts are honored and expressed? Christ's mission of reconciliation is an ultimate challenge to the way we live and to our fear of vulnerability. (ELCA Global Mission-Accompaniment)

In engaging God's reconciling mission through accompaniment, we work to equip ourselves and our companions for our call to share the Good News and to serve our neighbors. This strategy of the MCS is designed to build a missional model of accompaniment that will include all the congregations of the Synod. This strategy will enable us to plant sustainable worshipping communities and at the same encourage the congregations in our synod to step out in mission and be changed in the process, recognizing that God brought us all together as companions for this purpose.

APPENDIX A

Metropolitan Chicago Synod Latino Congregations Today

<i>5A Congregations Where at Least 20% of Active Participants are Identified as Latino</i>					
CongID	City	Congregation	Latino	Total	% Latino
30273	Waukegan	Parroquia Luterana Sagrado Corazón	200	200	100%
30531	Chicago	Iglesia De La Santa Cruz	600	600	100%
7308	Chicago	Iglesia Luterana De La Trinidad	107	120	89%
1974	Aurora	New Hope Lutheran Church	110	128	86%
1914	West Chicago	St Andrew Lutheran Church	306	483	63%
1925	Chicago	Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church	44	140	31%
10599	Chicago	First Lutheran Church	11	38	29%

APPENDIX B

Metropolitan Chicago Synod Latino Congregations

CONG.	LOCATION	PASTOR	LANG.	BAPT.	AVG. ATTD.	LATINO MEMB.
Parroquia Luterana Sagrado Corazón	658 Grand Ave Waukegan IL 60085	Rev. Justo Espinoza	SP	232	170	200
New Hope Lutheran Church / Iglesia Luterana Nueva Esperanza	551 South 4th Street Aurora, IL 60505	Rev. Sandra Jones	SP & EN	134	52	110 L 18 A
Trinidad	2921 W Division St Chicago IL 60622	Currently Vacant	SP	259	54	107
Iglesia de la Santa Cruz	6545 S Springfield Chicago IL 60629	Rev. Miguel Rodriguez	SP	421	430	600
St. Andrew's / San Andres	155 N. Prince Crossing West Chicago IL 60185	Rev. Joshua Ebener	SP & EN	858	226	306 L 177 A
Calvary Lutheran Church	6149 S. Kenneth Ave Chicago, IL 60629	Interim Rev. Paula Stecker & Lay Minister Maria Rojas	SP & EN	105	59	44 L 96 A

APPENDIX C

Lay Leadership Academy

Purpose

The Lay Leadership Academy is an official program of the MCS in partnership with the Episcopal Diocese that trains, equips and certifies leaders from our congregations. It exists to help lay people deepen their Christian identity as well as their participation in the mission of the whole church and other ministries of this synod.

Curriculum

The Lay Leadership Academy has a two-year curriculum which consists of ten courses. The courses are:

- Mission and Discipleship
- Church History and Reformation
- Preaching
- Stewardship: Time, Treasury and Talents
- Introduction to Bible
- Lutheranism
- Christian Education
- Liturgy
- Pastoral Care
- Mission and Evangelism