



endless possibilities in God's grace

Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly 2022
May 7, 2022 in Mankato - semnsynod.org/assembly

Section 1: Event Guide

Information to prepare for Assembly

Section 2: Synod Stories

Reports from tables, teams, and staff

Section 3: Celebrations

Ordination anniversaries and retirements

Section 4: Worship

Materials to follow along

Section 5: Additional Stories

Reports from ministry partners

Section 5 Contents

- 2 Region 3 Archives
- 3 Augsburg University
- 4 ELCA Federal Credit Union
- 6 ELCA Foundation
- 7 Luther College
- 9 LIRS
- 10 Lutheran Men in Mission
- 11 Lutheran Social Services
- 14 MN Council of Churches
- 15 Mission Investment Fund
- 17 Portico Benefit Services
- 18 St. Olaf College



Southeastern Minnesota Synod

of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



ELCA Region 3 Archives Report

2022 marks the 34th year of the ELCA Region 3 Archives. Paul Daniels continues in the archivist position at 80% time, half-time for the 9 synods of ELCA Region 3 and half-time for Luther Seminary. This shared position works well with Luther providing office and storage space as well as access to a much-needed volunteer pool and IT support. Luther profits from hosting the largest of the 9 ELCA regional collections as the materials are available for use by the entire seminary community.

As with so much else over the past 2 years, however, everything else was different due to the pandemic. As the statistics below indicate, many more of the Region 3 Archives services to synod offices and congregations were provided virtually. Thankfully, an increasing number of the program's offerings were already available online.

Additionally, records collection and delivery trips were not done in person, but relied on the USPS and UPS for safe transport of valuable records of all kinds to and from the ELCA Region 3 Archives.

Use of the ELCA Region 3 Archives

The Archives website, www.luthersem.edu/archives, continues to work well as our "front door" for promoting archival services to congregations and individuals. Luther Seminary provides IT support for the site and its regular updates. Researchers use the site for information on the collections as well as articles like "Ask the Archivist", focusing on particular archival topics pertinent to their church settings. Reference uses for the year were:

+Assisted a total of 868 reference patrons in the past year with a range of research interests. The majority (62%) are congregational committees working on records scanning projects, anniversary celebration planning, church history writing and general records care questions. Other significant user groups include synod leadership, church wide offices and individual researchers.

+Worked on a regular basis with all 9 synod offices, collecting valuable office records and assisting with retention plans for each office. Unlike years past, though, I dramatically reduced my on-site visits to each of the 9 synod offices. In most cases, email, phone calls, and Zoom meetings took the place of on-site meetings with synod offices staff and with congregational archives committees. These virtual visits were coordinated with 22 Zoom congregational visits throughout the 3 states of ELCA Region 3.

Collection Growth

+Collected 228 linear feet of additional synod office records from the 9 offices. These include legal, financial, personnel and program files. Much of this material is stored off-site in space leased from the Iron Mountain Co.

+Gathered 174 congregational pieces adding to a collection now totaling 6,855 files.

+Received 525 biographical pieces on clergy and lay leaders – total is now 8,826 files.

+Assisted 12 closing congregations in Region 3 with records care (scanning) and critical records collection.

Outreach and Education

+Distributed 78 copies of "Memory Work: A Guide for Congregational Archives and History" to congregations and individuals. The guide is frequently accessed digitally via the Region 3 Archives website.

+Managed off-site secure storage program via Iron Mountain Co. for permanent care of sensitive files, including candidacy, camping staff, and synod financial records.

+Promoted and managed the congregational records scanning program through Mid-America Business Systems.

Professional Development

+Daniels is an active member of the Society of American Archivists, the Midwest Archives Conference, the Twin Cities Archives Roundtable and the Lutheran Historical Conference. Daniels renewed and maintained his professional certification in the Academy of Certified Archivists.

**Respectfully submitted 3.10.22 by Paul A. Daniels,
ELCA Region 3 Archivist and Luther Seminary Archivist**

Spring 2022

Dear Friends,

As we enter the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic, we give thanks for masks, vaccines, rapid tests, and all the tools and strategies that have made a return to on-campus life a reality. From classroom to chapel, the ability to be physically present together has been a gift this year—one made even more poignant by the continuing challenges facing so many in our communities due to the pandemic, racial injustice, and compounding global crises.

After holding mostly virtual celebrations for the past two years, we joyfully anticipate next month's in-person commencement ceremony to honor the resilience of our classes of 2020, 2021, and 2022. Preparations are also underway for an all-school reunion to be held on campus in September. In addition to these milestone events, the strength of the Augsburg community is evident in the Great Returns comprehensive campaign. Chaired by Paul Mueller '84 and with commitments of more than \$105 million received to date, it is already Augsburg's largest-ever campaign, even before the official public launch in May.

In a challenging financial context for higher education broadly, we are particularly grateful for the work of our Institutional Advancement team, led by Amy Alkire, for their dedication in helping Augsburg supporters to invest in our students and the university's long-term sustainability. Augsburg recently received a renewal grant of \$1.25 million from Lilly Endowment Inc. to further develop the work of the Christensen Center for Vocation and its Riverside Innovation Hub initiative, which helps congregations build new connections with young adults at the intersections of their faith and their public lives. Other generous gifts have created new endowed faculty positions and student scholarships. In particular, we look forward to announcing the inaugural El-Hibri Endowed Chair and Executive Director for the Interfaith Institute. Together, this new leadership and our diverse student body create a unique opportunity to build an interfaith learning community that will be a model for all of higher education.

Augsburg also continues to seek opportunities to be a model when it comes to equity and affordability. In this vein, we will begin a full-tuition program this fall to recognize American Indian students from any federally recognized American Indian tribe, Alaskan Native Village, or Canadian First Nation. While several states have enacted laws providing financial aid to American Indian students, Augsburg's full-tuition program appears to be one of the first of its kind among private U.S. colleges and universities.

With the end of the spring semester, we are approaching two significant leadership transitions as Provost Karen Kaivola and Dean of Students Sarah Griesse prepare to retire. Augsburg has been profoundly blessed by their presence among us, particularly through the transformative challenges of the past several years. Paula O'Loughlin, current provost at Coe College, will become the university's new provost and senior vice president of academic and student affairs in July. Michael Grewe, our current director of campus life, will become dean of students in May.

While so much has changed since March of 2020, Augsburg remains steadfastly guided by the faith and values of the Lutheran church. We are deeply grateful for your prayerful support of our university community as together we navigate the complex issues of our time.

Faithfully yours,

Paul C. Pribbenow, Ph.D.
President

Rev. Babette Chatman
University Pastor
Director of Campus Ministry

Rev. John Rohde Schwehn
University Pastor



***Providing a full array of financial services
to ELCA members, congregations and ministries***

The ELCA Federal Credit Union, founded in 2016, provides a full suite of financial products and services to members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA. We are the first of the ELCA's financial ministries to offer loans to individuals. The Credit Union offers a rich variety of products—from savings and checking accounts and CDs... to loans, lines of credit and credit cards. We serve ministries with deposit accounts, a flexible credit card program, auto loans and unsecured ministry loans up to \$100,000 for small projects such as building repair and purchases. Our strong online presence allows members to access their funds anytime, anywhere—as consumers expect today.



Why choose the ELCA Federal Credit Union?

“To use and share what God has given for the sake of all.”

The ELCA Federal Credit Union supports the ELCA's mission of good stewardship. We provide full services to all ELCA members, congregations and related ministries.

We provide full

Our mission is to offer the most competitively priced products and services. Because we exist solely to serve our members, we can offer better rates and lower fees than many traditional banks. We have demonstrated success in providing significant savings to our borrowers.

With the church as our sponsor, we operate in ways that are consistent with the church's values. We offer a socially responsible way to do your banking.



ELCA Federal Credit Union
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Throughout the past year, we continued to serve the church and its members.

The Paycheck Protection Program drew to a close in 2021. With assistance from the Mission Investment Fund, we provided loans in 2020 and 2021 to ELCA congregations and ministries that required financial assistance during the pandemic. Covering payroll and operating expenses, these PPP loans proved to be a lifeline to a number of congregations and ministries in need. The loans were particularly meaningful to smaller congregations that didn't qualify for loans from local or national banks. Over the course of the full PPP program, the ELCAFCU provided a total of 360 loans totaling \$13.9 million. These loans helped continue payroll for some 2,100 congregation and ministry employees and continued in-person and virtual worship and ministry services for more than 95,000 church members throughout 2020 and 2021.

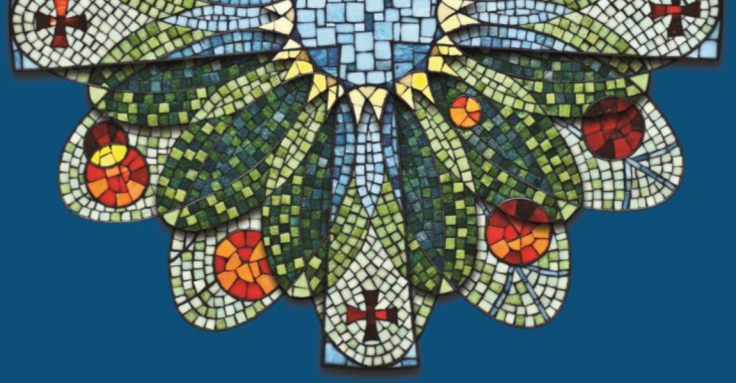
In 2021, we ushered in the third cohort of participants in the ELCA's Resourceful Servants program, designed to improve financial wellness and assist rostered leaders in building emergency savings funds. In this matching program, ELCA rostered leaders make ongoing deposits to their Credit Union emergency savings accounts, and our partner MIF matches those funds up to an established amount. Together, we already have served more than 645 rostered ministers who, collectively, have made emergency savings deposits of more than \$1 million.

Membership is open to every ELCA member, synod, congregation and ministry—and their employees.

For more information about the products and services of the ELCA Federal Credit Union, please visit our website, elcafcu.org or call us at toll free at 877-715-1111.



ELCA Foundation
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



Updates from the ELCA Foundation

Synod Assemblies 2022

The vision of the ELCA Foundation is to be a thriving ministry that develops a culture of intentional generosity and financial stewardship to expand the work of the ELCA. Our mission is to support and sustain ELCA ministries by enhancing gifting capacity and stewarding resources.

As a ministry of the ELCA, we serve individuals, congregations and worship communities; synods; the Churchwide Organization; and institutions, agencies and other related ELCA organizations.

The ELCA Foundation exists to

- Provide gift planning, administration and processing;
- Manage endowment funds and offer investment management services as an acknowledged fiduciary; and
- Engage individuals and organizations in thoughtful planning to pass on philanthropic values and support ministry passions.

In 2021, the ELCA Foundation and our network of regional gift planners walked alongside 169 donors/families in developing their gift plans, resulting in \$65.4 million in future planned gift commitments. Over \$12 million in these commitments will go to provide direct support to individual ELCA congregations. The network generated \$107.9 million in total gifts and investment assets. This includes new planned gift commitments, \$14.9 million in current gifts, including funded trusts, gift annuities and individual endowments, and \$57.2 million new assets invested in the Ministry Growth Fund (previously known as Fund A). Thank you for the opportunity to work in your synod, trusting your endowment dollars to the ELCA Foundation, and allowing us to work alongside your ministries.

The ELCA Foundation, and your regional gift planner, are here to support your ministry through shared expertise with endowments, gift acceptance policies and practices and planned giving. We also work with individual donors to ease the complexity of estate plans, planned gifts, trusts and non-cash gifts. Our services are free of charge to your congregation and its members. A local representative from our network of regional gift planners is available to work with you. Learn more about the ELCA Foundation by watching "[ELCA Foundation: Make a plan. Change the world](#)" or contact your regional gift planner to help your congregation grow its culture of giving today.

Contact your regional gift planner:

Tharan W. Leopold, CFRE, CES
Tharan.leopold@elca.org
507-838-1980
ELCA.org/Foundation

LUTHER COLLEGE

Greetings from Luther College in the beautiful Driftless region of northeastern Iowa!

This 2021-2022 academic year has been one of renewed energy and celebration of the gifts of the Luther College community. We are grateful for the dedicated, thoughtful, and conscientious group of leaders who continue to monitor and manage our Covid-19 response. Because of their leadership, and because of the campus-wide shared commitment to healthy practices, we have been able to resume a fuller schedule of on-campus in-person events, from athletic events to Christmas at Luther to admissions events to our thriving Center Stage Series.

In fall of 2021, we hosted multiple homecoming weekend events, including a special in-person Commencement Celebration for the class of 2020. This spring, our music ensembles were able to resume touring. Symphony Orchestra, Jazz Orchestra, Concert Band, and Collegiate Choral toured a variety of locations in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Nordic Choir performed during February's American Choral Directors Association regional conference in Chicago and toured the Midwest in May. We hope some of you were able to attend one of these events.

We are happy to share with you that Luther College has received a NetVUE Reframing the Institutional Saga grant of nearly \$40,000 to prepare and publish a collection of essays that explore the college's identity as a Norwegian-Lutheran liberal arts college. The grant began in February of this year and runs through January 2024, when the anthology will be published and made available to the public.

We are also grateful to the many friends and alumni who helped us raise more than \$1 million for a major renovation of the Sports and Recreation Center, part of our campus athletic complex. Along with the renovation project comes the commemorative naming of spaces to honor Luther coaches who have made a lifetime of impact on their student-athletes.

The Office for College Ministries welcomed Pastor Melissa Bills as its new Director for College Ministries and College Pastor at the beginning of this academic year. College Ministries continues to sustain weekday chapel and special event worship services, as well as to support the ongoing spiritual needs of Luther's entire campus community - students, staff, faculty, and alumni/emeriti. A new student Council for Faith and Life has been convened as a way for students to more deeply engage with intersections of faith and learning and to serve as faith and justice leaders on campus.

We encourage you (and your high school students) to visit the Luther College campus and the Decorah, Iowa community. Please help spread the word that in addition to offering a series of Church Leadership Scholarships, Luther College participates in the EPIC (Educational Partners in Covenant) grant program, which matches up to \$1000 per year in support of each student from your congregation.

Luther College, like many congregations, communities, and institutions, has been challenged to show enormous flexibility and resilience during these last years. We remain committed to providing students a supportive, faith-grounded environment of academic excellence where they can learn, grow, and discern. We look to the future with great hope and possibility, focusing our energy on values of stewardship, integration, and adaptability, recognizing our mission as being both grounded and global. Thank you for your prayers and support for Luther College. We are grateful for your partnership.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Dr. Jenifer K. Ward
Luther College President



Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Siblings in Christ of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod,

2021 was many things —frustrating, surprising, heartbreaking, and heartening —to name a few. At Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, however, the word we find ourselves using the most is transformative.

Like all of you, we found ourselves facing parallel crises: the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, an influx of vulnerable immigrant children at our border, and the devastating refugee crisis in Afghanistan. While it was an incredibly difficult year in many ways, it was also one of the most inspiring in our 83-year history.

People of faith and communities like yours stepped up in ways that we never could have expected to meet this moment and fulfill our Biblical call to welcome the stranger. In the last year alone:

- 100,000 volunteers signed up to support our refugee and immigrant neighbors
- Supporters provided more than \$30,000 worth of essential items like cell phones and gift cards to our Afghan brothers and sisters
- 14,000+ generous donors opened their hearts to the ministry of welcome
- LIRS welcomed more than 10,500 Afghans through our nationwide resettlement network
- Our team assisted in reunifying or placing nearly 33,000 children in loving homes
- We sent nearly 20,000 holiday cards and 1,750+ gifts to families affected by immigration detention
- LIRS launched several exciting new programs and offices, such as field offices in Northern Virginia and Fargo, ND; the New American Cities economic empowerment program; Mental Health services for refugee children and families, and more.

Our resettlement and immigration services were complemented by our ever-growing slate of annual programs, which offer the public opportunities to ADAPT: Act, Donate, Advocate, Pray, and Teach. We invite you to engage with LIRS, as an individual or community, through one of our five key programs:

- [Stand Up Speak Up](#) —Our interfaith advocacy program organized each spring
- [Gather](#) -A cultural education program hosted in the fall
- [Hope for the Holidays™](#) -LIRS' flagship winter program for supporting families impacted by immigration detention
- [EMMAUS Congregational Network](#) —Our network of congregations who receive resources and support from LIRS
- [LIRS Ambassador Network](#) —A community of change-makers from around the US

In 2022, we are deepening our commitment to the work of welcome and believe that together, we can realize Matthew 25:35 in communities across the United States. We are so grateful for your astounding support and look forward to welcoming our newest neighbors alongside you.

In peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristin Witte". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Kristin Witte, Director for Outreach

2022 Lutheran Men in Mission SEMN Report

Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM) provides resources and events for congregations and individuals to help men to be ***Bold, Daring Followers of Christ***. The **Southeastern Minnesota (SE MN) LMM Board** also encourages men of faith to be involved in a men's ministry in their congregations through our events and sharing of information from LMM.

A wide variety of events and resources to help men be who God intends them to be are available at www.lutheranmeninmission.org. Our Southeastern Minnesota Synod group is just one of many in the national organization of LMM. We are very thankful for our partnership with Ashley Corbett and her sharing of information via congregation communications and on the Southeastern Minnesota Synod website at www.semnsynod.org/pages/lutheran-men-in-mission

In October 2021, more than 20 men attended a one-day men's retreat at Good Earth Village. Our featured speaker, Mark Pataky, Ph.D. in Exercise Physiology with Mayo Clinic shared information about the importance of exercise for good health and well-being no matter what age. He shared recent research showing the positive effects on diabetes and talked about exercise and effect on longevity and health. Pastor Dan Doering shared his personal journey with weight loss and exercise for physical and spiritual health. Good Earth Village was an excellent host with good food and hospitality. We also shared some time on some work projects on the grounds of the camp as well.

The National LMM Bold Gathering, open to men from across the country, will be on October 7-9, 2022 at Carol Joy Holling near Ashland (Omaha), NE. It will be an opportunity for renewal and reconnecting through *Spiritual Growth, Service, Fellowship and Training*. More information will be available at www.boldgathering.com Videos and Discussion Questions from previous Virtual Bold Gatherings are also available at this site.

Below are the 2022 One Year to Live Men's Retreat "Experiences" in the region. More information can be found at www.lutheranmeninmission.org.

September 23-25 MacKenzie Center, Poynette, WI
November 11-13 EWALU, Strawberry Point, IA

There are new **Lifelines** Small Group Studies and **Fathering in 15** are available at www.projecttwelve.net. **Lifelines** are focused on Bible stories that explore ageless themes of masculinity. They form a deep, lasting foundation for growth wherever you are on your journey. **Fathering in 15** offers the flexibility and convenience that no fatherhood workshop, class, or course can offer. Through Project Twelve, you have full access to this resource at no cost.

Individuals and congregations can assist Lutheran Men in Mission, locally and nationally, by sharing the information above with others in their congregation and personal network.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the SE MN LMM Board,
Lon Buss

SE MN Lutheran Men in Mission Board Members

Larry Iverson	Bear Creek Lutheran Church, Grand Meadow
Russell Tesch	St. John's Lutheran Church, Waseca
Lon Buss	Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Rochester
Pr. Dan Bredberg	Christ Lutheran Church, Preston
Tyler Anderson	Good Earth Village, Spring Valley

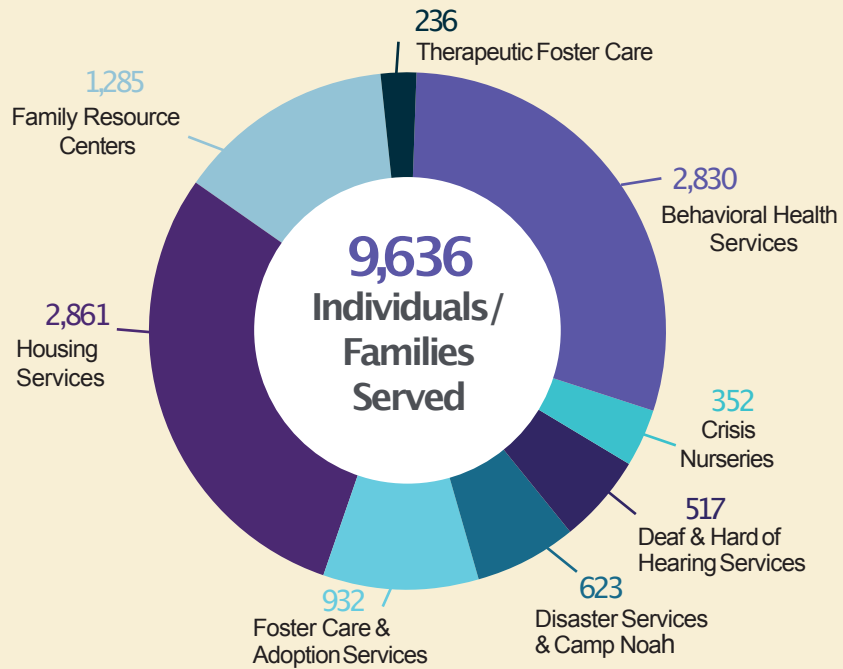
A Movement of 25,000

In 2021, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota provided more services in more places to more people than ever before. And we could not have grown services and provided support to more individuals this past year without you. Congregations, donors, volunteers and staff together are an incredible movement of 25,000 people committed to making Minnesota a better place for ALL people.



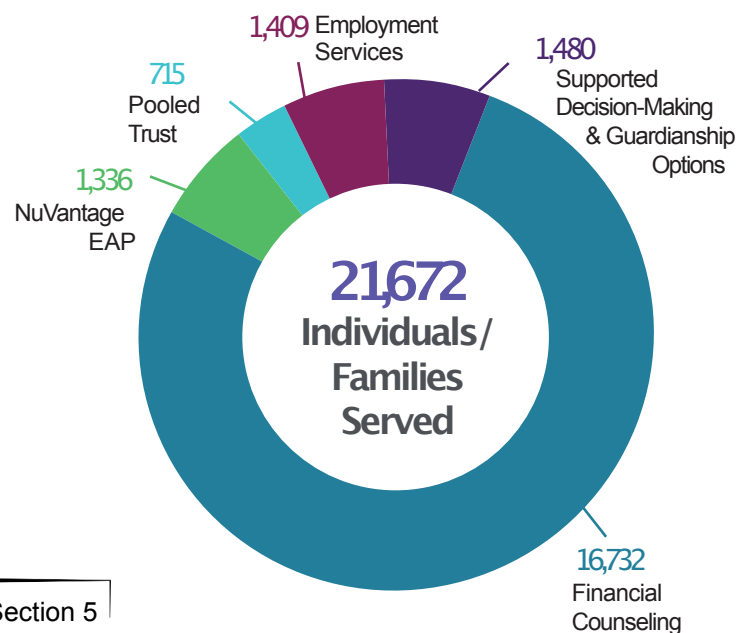
INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY SERVICES

Strengthening individuals and families to promote resiliency.



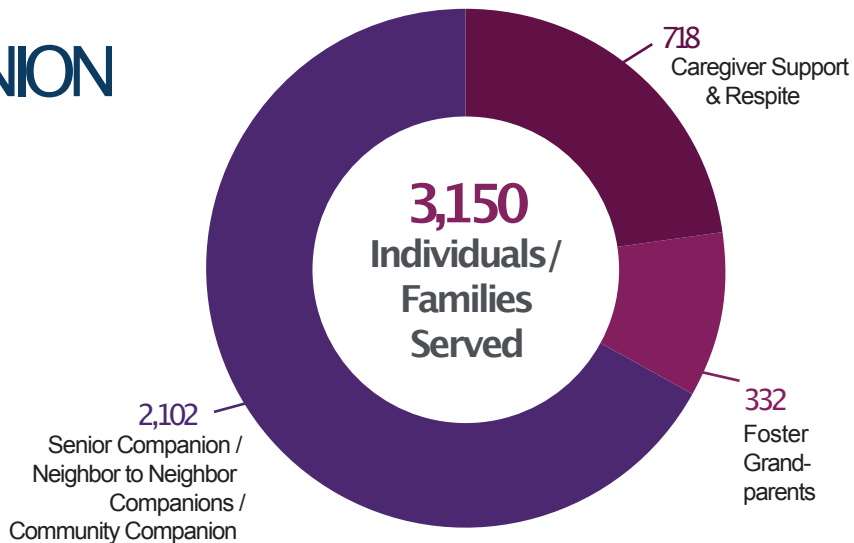
EMPLOYMENT, FINANCIAL & LEGAL SERVICES

Promoting long-term financial stability for people in all stages of life.



CAREGIVER & COMPANION SERVICES

Helping caregivers and older adults maintain healthy, balanced lifestyles.



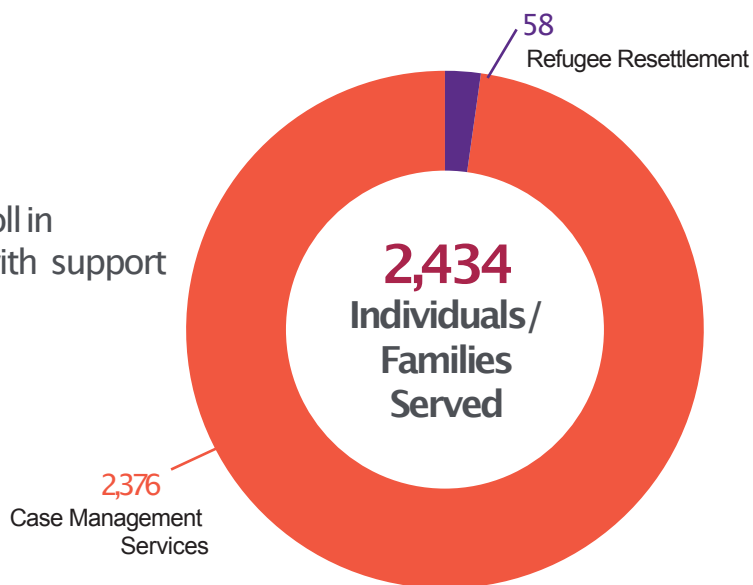
NUTRITION SERVICES

Offering healthy, delicious meal options available to anyone statewide.



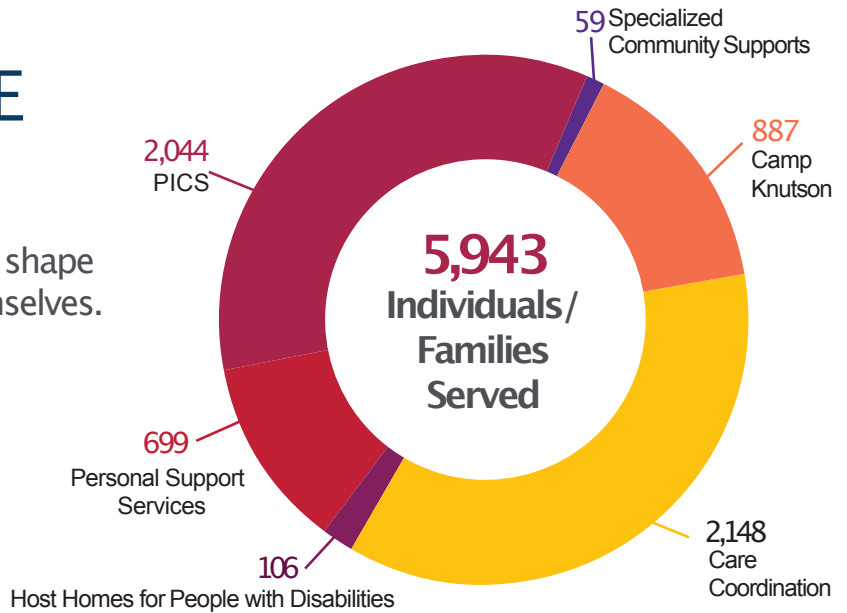
REFUGEE SERVICES

Helping new arrivals secure housing, enroll in classes, find employment and connect with support they need to gain self-sufficiency



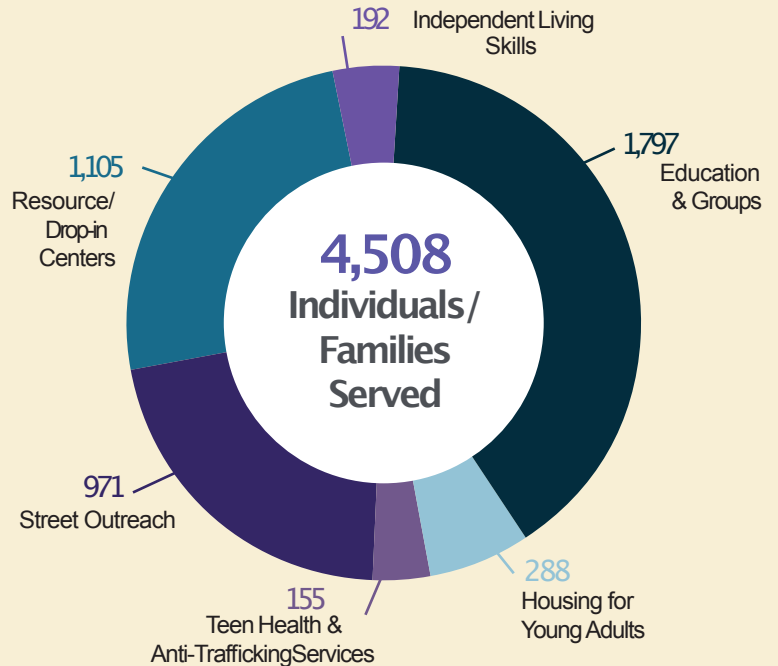
SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Empowering people with disabilities to shape and live the lives they imagine for themselves.



YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT SERVICES

Keeping youth and young families safe while supporting a healthy transition to adulthood and increased stability.



Mission

Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota expresses the love of Christ for all people through service that inspires hope, changes lives and builds community.

Vision

All people have the opportunity to live and work in community with full and abundant lives.

In 2021, the Minnesota Council of Churches

Was led by a **majority-BIPOC** board of directors with increased Black, Indigenous, Latinx and Asian representation

Raised nearly \$1,000,000 for racial justice work

Equipped denominational leaders with the best available information on COVID preparedness and mitigation through **6 cross-sector consultations** with public health professionals

Placed **72 refugees in jobs**, a **13% increase** over FY2020

Welcomed 82 refugees to Minnesota; and in the fall, 189 of an anticipated 400 Afghan arrivals.

Grew resettlement staff by 71% to meet increased refugee targets

Filed **134 citizenship, green card and work permits** in TC metro and Mankato

Launched Minnesota's Racial Legacy: Finally Telling the Truth event with **500 participants**

Initiated a Business and Financial Tapestry, helping Mankato area refugees and immigrants **build on their entrepreneurship plans**

Impacted specific audiences on Sacred Sites Tours including **120 pediatric physicians**

Explored national partnerships for Respectful Conversations in conversations with Centers for Disease Control, Carter Center, American University PERIL Institute, Princeton University Bridging Divides Initiative

Built peace with Respectful Conversations participants, of whom, **79% report more empathy, 70% report improved relationships**, and **100% report more confidence** in future conversations

Witnessed to the good work of the body of Christ in **over 90 media articles**, including Daily Mail, Minnesota Public Radio, U.S. News & World Report, WCCO TV, KSTP TV, Sojourners Magazine, Christianity Today, Christian Century, Star Tribune, Presbyterian Outlook

Saw interfaith organizer Saran Sidime **selected for Aspen Institute** "Inclusive America Project"

Hired **two co-directors** for racial justice

REFUGEE SERVICES

RACIAL JUSTICE

INTERFAITH RELATIONSHIPS

RESPECTFUL CONVERSATIONS

ADVOCACY

MINNESOTA CHURCH CENTER

Minnesota Council of Churches

mnchurches.org



Mission Investment Fund
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

With faith and finance at our core

The Mission Investment Fund, a financial services ministry of the ELCA, provides a strong, stable, faith-based way for individuals, congregations and ministries to achieve their financial goals.

MIF provides a range of investments for individuals, congregations and ministries. We put those investments to work to fund building and renovation loans for congregations and partner ministries, including social service agencies and outdoor camps.

The result? Impact investments, with a transformative impact on our communities:
Expanded worship spaces ... new space for education and youth ministry ... much-needed day care centers for working families ... industrial-grade kitchens and fellowship halls for community meals.

We were present for our investors and borrowers that needed assistance during the pandemic. We collaborated with our ministry partner, the ELCA Federal Credit Union, to offer expedited loans for congregations, ministries and individuals, as well as 360 Paycheck Protection Program loans totaling \$13.9 million. The PPP loans helped continue payroll for some 2,100 congregation and ministry employees and continued in-person and virtual worship and ministry services for more than 95,000 church members throughout 2020 and 2021.



MIF has a longstanding tradition of strength and stability. At year-end 2021, MIF had 820 loans outstanding, totaling \$575.4 million. Investment obligations totaled \$575.4 million. With total assets of \$822.0 million and net assets of \$226.4 million at year-end 2021, MIF maintains a capital ratio of 27.5 percent—positioning MIF in the top tier of well-capitalized church extension funds.

Our steadfast support continues for the members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA and the many ways you minister to a world in need. We are honored to walk alongside you as a trusted partner.

MIF at work in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod (as of December 31, 2021):

- 10 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of \$7,735,884
- \$11,327,547 in Mission Investment Fund investment obligations



Mission Investment Fund
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



The Mission Investment Fund can be your financial resource and partner of choice.

Why MIF?

MIF has demonstrated expertise in church and ministry financing. As a ministry of the ELCA with longstanding experience in congregation and ministry building projects, we're unique among lending institutions. We're prepared to listen to what you need, we understand your requirements, and we'll serve as your strategic partner.

We offer competitive rates and terms. MIF consistently offers competitive rates. And now, interest rates on loans remain at historic lows.

We offer a full suite of financial services. In addition to loans, MIF offers congregations, ministries and individuals a host of investment options. Our financial ministry partner, the ELCA Federal Credit Union, offers an additional array of financial services.

The faithful stewardship of Lutheran congregations and their members funds our loans. We use the money invested in MIF to finance hundreds of capital projects across the church.

For more information about MIF capabilities, please visit our website, mif.elca.org or contact your Regional Manager LuAnn Ferguson: 651-900-3575 luann.ferguson@elca.org

Benefit Stability in Uncertain Times

As the pandemic ebbed and flowed in 2021, Portico's benefits remained a reliable constant for ELCA congregations and organizations, affirming the importance of church together.

- ELCA-Primary health benefits helped to lower stress levels and provided virtual access to health care.
- The ELCA Retirement Plan continued to deliver strong investment returns while offering no-or low-cost access to financial planning and coaching services.

In recent years, we've brought added stability to our program by extending quality, cost-effective benefits to more of those who serve. As we include more ELCA-affiliated social ministry organizations, colleges, and universities, as well as full communion partner denominations, we grow the size of our pool, which, in turn, allows us to secure lower administrative fees and innovative benefits not typically available to smaller groups. In this way, we continue our mission to serve those who serve.



The Rev. Jeff Thiemann
President & CEO

Meeting the Need in 2021

869

Plays of New
Portico Podcast

Hosted by an ELCA pastor
on current issues impacting
our faith community.

34%

Chose New
Voluntary Benefit

Through our
cost-saving vision care
services provider.

643

Retired

In Portico's bundled benefits
program — Well done, good
and faithful servants!

7.3%

Annuity Payment
Increase

Approved for ELCA
annuitants in 2022.

2,564

Medical Visits
via Text

Through 98point6[®], our
virtual primary health
care service.

8

Large Organizations
Joined

In 2021— 1 ELCA college,
6 ELCA-affiliated social
ministries, and 1 full
communion partner
social ministry.

2,880

Classes Completed
in 2021

On Burnalong, Portico's new
online fitness and
wellness benefit.

76%

More Accessed
Financial Coaching

Through LSS of Minnesota
in 2021 than during
the same period
in 2020.

87.8%

Very Satisfied

With our Customer Care
Center service.



Founded in 1874, St. Olaf College shares with other ELCA colleges and universities a common calling to provide an education that is both “deeply rooted in the Lutheran intellectual tradition and boldly open to insights from other religious and secular traditions” (NECU, *Rooted and Open*, 2018). St. Olaf’s mission is to challenge students to excel in the liberal arts, examine faith and values, and explore meaningful vocation in an inclusive, globally engaged community nourished by Lutheran tradition.

Like colleges and congregations everywhere, St. Olaf made significant adaptations over the course of the global pandemic to enable safe delivery of its academic and co-curricular programming. Following the temporary closure of the campus in mid-spring and summer 2020, most students returned to campus in Fall 2020, and the college remained open throughout the 2020-21 academic year offering a combination of in-person, hybrid, and remote programming. This year the college is fully in-person with a variety of COVID safety protocols still in place. St. Olaf continues to attract a broad pool of talented students, currently representing 49 states and 87 countries. With an enrollment of nearly 3000 full-time undergraduates, our Fall 2021 incoming first-year students had an average high school grade point of 3.68 and a median ACT composite score of 31. Our first-years are diverse in a variety of ways, with 23% of incoming first-years self-identifying as domestic students of color, 10% as international students, 22% eligible for Pell grants, and 18% as first-generation college students. Within the student body as a whole, 19% self-identify as Lutheran and another 7% are members of a denomination in full communion with the ELCA. Among our Class of 2021 graduates, 86% had participated in an internship, mentored research experience, practicum, or other vocation-related opportunity, and two-thirds had studied off-campus. Among our Class of 2020 graduates, 95% were working, pursuing further education, or engaged in full-time military or other service program within the first six months of graduation.

St. Olaf continues to offer daily Chapel services led by the college pastors and featuring St. Olaf students, faculty, and staff as speakers and musicians. The St. Olaf Student Congregation and guests also gather for Sunday worship with Holy Communion during the academic year. All services at Boe Chapel are [streamed live](#) and then [archived](#) for on-demand viewing on the St. Olaf website. College Pastors Matt Marohl and Katherine Fick also host a chapel [podcast](#) on matters of faith and spiritual practice. Over the past three years, the College Ministry team has grown to include an Associate Chaplain for Jewish Life and an Associate Chaplain for Muslim Life, both of whom offer opportunities for worship, religious education, pastoral care, and interfaith engagement, not only for students who identify with those faith traditions but also for students of any identity.

The college also continues its weekly [Sing For Joy](#) radio program, broadcast on more than 150 stations in the U.S., the U.K., and throughout Africa, and streamed both live and on demand. Built around the Revised Common Lectionary for the church year, *Sing For Joy* integrates the best in sacred choral music with thoughtful commentary. The [St. Olaf Conference on Worship, Theology, and the Arts](#) hosted its first-ever [virtual mini-conference](#) in July 2021, welcoming more than 200 clergy and lay leaders from 41 states. The conference returns in-person on the St. Olaf campus July 25-28, 2022, with “Scatter the Imagination of Our Hearts” as its theme, and featuring theologian Willie James Jennings (Yale University Divinity School) and Professor of Homiletics and Liturgics Eunjoo Mary Kim (Iliff School of Theology) as guest keynoters.

The [Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community](#) is now in its third year of programming to advance a compelling vision for Lutheranism in the 21st century, foster inter-religious and inter-faith engagement, nurture vocational discernment, and provide national and global thought leadership across all its programming areas. The Conference on Worship, Theology, and the Arts is a program of

the Lutheran Center, and the two Associate Chaplains in College Ministry are supported by Center funding. The Center's programming for vocational discernment has been anchored by a two-year \$50,000 grant from the Council of Independent College's Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE), supporting a series of faculty and staff development activities designed to expand and broaden opportunities for student reflection on vocation, with particular focus on new requirements in the college's general education curriculum. Vocation has also been a central theme in the Center's recent thought leadership; over the past several months, Center Director Dr. Deanna Thompson has been speaking at a variety of colleges and universities, congregations, and ELCA synods on "Beyond Deep Gladness: Coming to Terms with Vocations We Don't Choose," bringing together Lutheran tradition, vocational discernment, and an understanding of trauma related to the pandemic and systemic racism, in seeking to meet the challenges of our time. In October 2021 Rev. Dr. Charlene Cox, an ELCA Minister of Word and Sacrament, joined the Lutheran Center staff as St. Olaf's inaugural Program Director for Congregational Thriving, leading the college's \$1 million five-year Lilly Endowment grant. Over the next few months, Rev. Dr. Cox will work with leaders in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA Churchwide, and the National Council of Churches to begin recruiting congregations into a process of vocational discernment guided by a series of high impact learning experiences that will engage them with their distinctive theological commitments, diverse communities, and dynamic contexts.

We look forward to welcoming you to campus, whether virtually or in person, and to welcoming the prospective students you introduce to St. Olaf.

David R. Anderson '74, *President*