



endless possibilities in God's grace

**Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly 2022**  
May 7, 2022 in Mankato - [semnsynod.org/assembly](https://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 1 Contents**

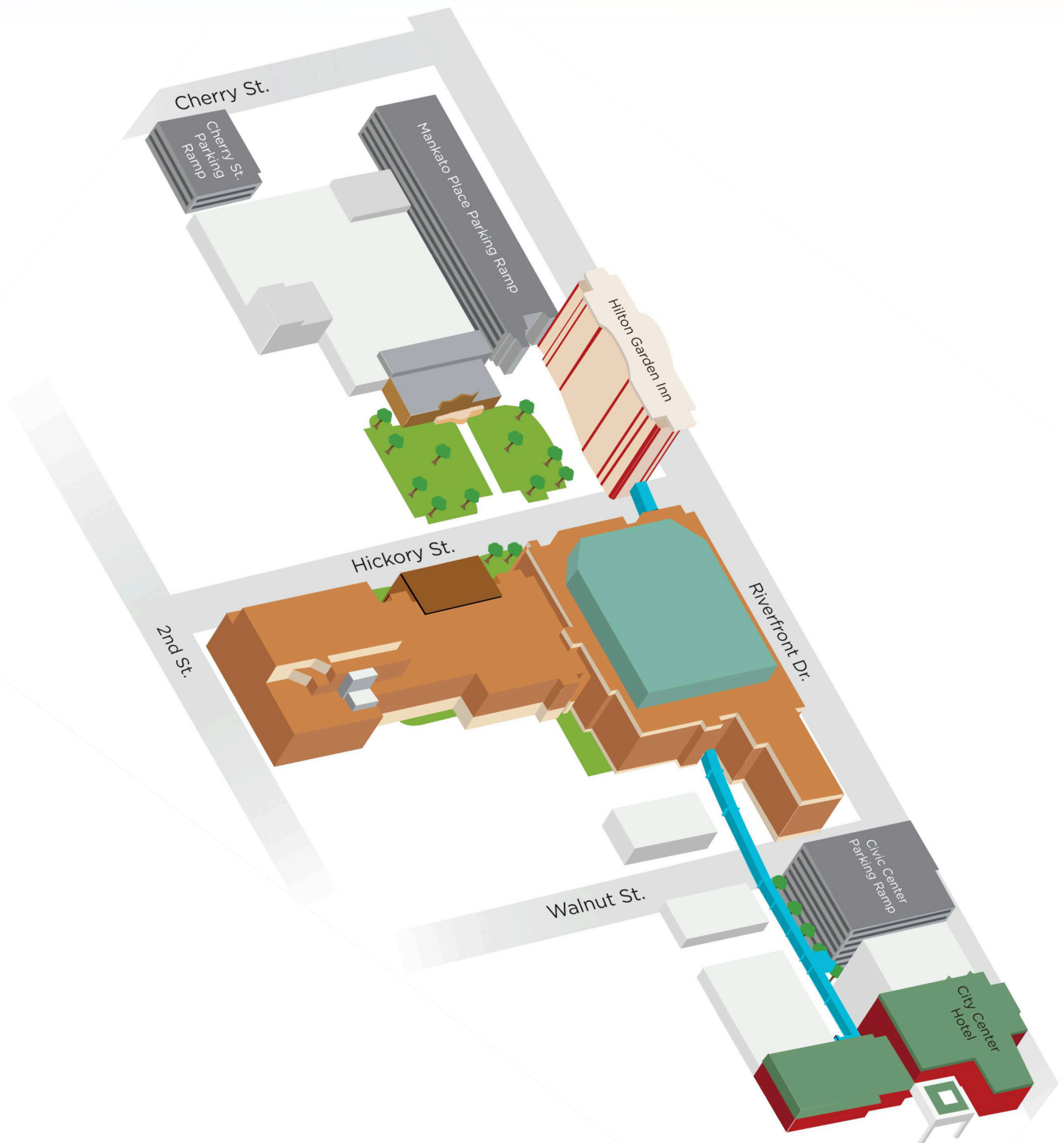
2	Venue Maps
4	Proposed Agenda
5	Special Guests
7	General Information
10	Report of the Secretary
10	Important Links
11	Roster Updates
17	Spending Plan
24	Resolutions
26	Thanks



**Southeastern Minnesota Synod**  
*of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*



# Venue Map

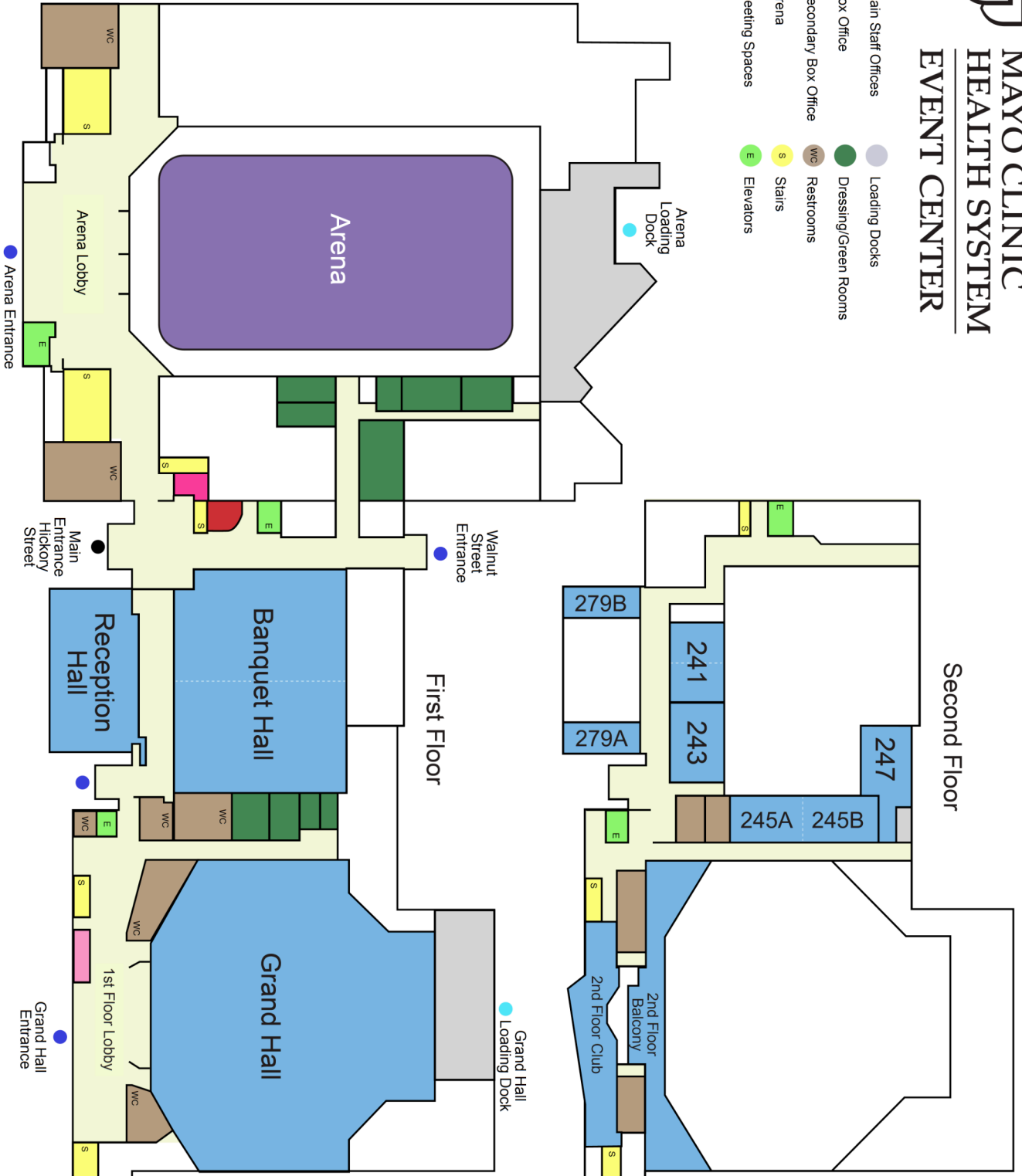


# Venue Map



## MAYO CLINIC HEALTH SYSTEM EVENT CENTER

- Main Staff Offices
- Box Office
- Secondary Box Office
- Arena
- Meeting Spaces
- Loading Docks
- Dressing/Green Rooms
- Restrooms
- Stairs
- Elevators



# Proposed Agenda

- 8-9 AM**      **Event Check-In**  
*Remember your COVID Vaccination Record or Proof of Negative COVID Test*
- 9 AM**        **Worship with Holy Communion**
- 10:15 AM**   **Plenary One**  
Welcome and Introductions  
Report of the Committee on Credentials  
Report of the Synod Nominating Committee  
Report of Reference and Counsel  
Report of the Treasurer  
Global Greetings  
*Imagine with Rozella Haydee White*  
Resolution 2022-01  
Report of the ELCA Churchwide  
Announcements
- Noon**        **Lunch**
- 1:00 PM**    **Plenary Two**  
Gathering Prayer  
Report of the Committee on Credentials  
*Imagine with Rozella Haydee White*  
Report of the SEMN Synod  
Resolution 2022:2 (if applicable)  
Report of the Secretary  
Election of Council, Boards, and Committees  
*Imagine with Rozella Haydee White*  
Break  
SEMN Synod Streams of Generosity  
Report of the Treasurer—Adoption of Spending Plan  
Late Resolutions (if applicable)  
Sharings  
*Imagine with Rozella Haydee White*  
Closing Remarks and Sending
- 5:00 PM**    **Adjournment of the Assembly**



# Special Guests

## Rozella Haydée White

Rozella Haydée White is the #LoveBigCoach, a public theologian, spiritual life coach, leadership consultant, inspirational speaker and writer focused on nurturing love that is life-giving, justice-seeking, and sustaining.

Rozella is the owner of RHW Consulting LLC, an agency focused on accompanying clients as they align their being, beliefs and behaviors in order to deconstruct and dismantle systems, structures, and social constructs that inhibit justice and liberation. Rozella supports clients as they create meaningful action that moves them towards holistic alignment, individually and collectively. She coaches executives, boards, staffs, and teams in the areas of leadership, strategic planning and visioning, conflict resolution, communication, and racial justice and equity.

For over 15 years, Rozella has been deeply committed to the nonprofit sector, working with faith-based communities, academic institutions, and community organizations based in North America, Central America, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa.

As a passionate coach, Rozella is currently enrolled in the Inner Glow Circle Coach Training Program, an approved training program of the International Coach Federation. Rozella obtained her Master of Arts in Religion with Honors from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and African Studies (Cum Laude) from Texas Southern University in Houston, TX. She received her Certification in Youth Ministry from the Center for Youth Ministry at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, IA. Rozella has also completed four units of chaplaincy training with Emory Center for Pastoral Services in Atlanta, GA, and is a certified disaster chaplain with the National Disaster Interfaith Network.

Rozella is committed to the pursuit of justice and is a co-founder of #ResistHouston, a community in Houston, TX of connection, empowerment and support for resistance against injustice. She is a member of the Multi-Faith Advisory Council of Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston; a founding member of the 9 Beats Collective, an international collaboration of world class musicians, artists, and songwriters exploring the ancient wisdom of the beatitudes; and is a board member of the Lutheran Initiative for Mission & Empowerment in Nairobi, Kenya.

She is the author of Love Big: The Power of Revolutionary Relationships to Heal the World (Fortress Press, 2019) and has written numerous articles, curriculums, and resources focused on faith and spirituality, community development, leadership, and justice steeped in a Love Ethic. Rozella is a contributor to A Rhythm of Prayer: A Collection of Meditations for Renewal (Convergent, 2021), edited by Sarah Bessey.



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Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: [@lovebigcoach](https://www.instagram.com/lovebigcoach)

# Special Guests

## Rev. Keith Fry

The Rev. Keith Fry serves as executive for administration in the Office of the Secretary in the churchwide organization. He has been in that position for a little over two years, having begun his call there one month before the beginning of the pandemic. He oversees record-keeping and statistics concerning congregations and management of the rosters of pastors and deacons of this church; minutes of official proceedings of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and Conference of Bishops; and the ELCA Archives. Prior to receiving the call to the Office of the Secretary, he was a congregation pastor in Elgin, IL, and Evanston, IL. He is a graduate of Northwestern University and the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. He resides in Chicago with his spouse and Archie and Edith, a Labrador retriever and a Cornish Rex cat.



# General Information

## WELCOME

Welcome to the 34th annual Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly, *Imagine: Endless Possibilities in God's Grace*, May 7, 2022. As an assembly of congregations we gather together to worship, learn, and participate in the decision-making business of the church.

## ABOUT

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod is a faith community of 167 congregations and six Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities as well as related institutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Southeastern Minnesota Synod is one of 65 synods that make up the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Its geographic area includes 15 counties in the southeastern corner of Minnesota. The synod is divided into five conferences, each one named after rivers in the area:

1. Root River Conference
2. Zumbro River Conference
3. Blue Earth River Conference
4. Minnesota River Conference
5. Cannon River Conference

The Office of the Bishop is located in Assisi Heights, the congregational center for the order of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi in Rochester, Minnesota. You are always welcome to visit! (When the building is open to the public.)

## REGISTRATION

On-site registration begins Friday at 8 AM.

## MEALS

The registration fees include a continental breakfast and lunch on Friday. Your name badge is your meal ticket. Please wear it at all times.

## SPECIAL NEEDS

We want to make sure you have what you need to make the assembly experience meaningful. Please let us know of any special needs before the event by calling the Office of the Bishop at 507-280-9457.

## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Thank you for working together to minimize our environmental footprint from this event. Please help recycle by returning all name badges, voting cards, unwanted paper, and completed evaluation forms to the appropriate boxes upon leaving the assembly. Also, please bring your own beverage mug. Look for containers available for general recycling.

## DISPLAYS

Be sure to visit the displays from our synod tables, teams, committees, ministry partners, and others.

## ASSEMBLY RULES

Voting Members of the Synod Assembly shall be designated by congregations and otherwise determined in accord with Chapter 7 of the Constitution, By-Laws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA. See S7.21-.32.

## VOTING MEMBER CREDENTIALS

Voting privileges are extended only to voting members of the Assembly and may not be transferred.

## ORDER OF BUSINESS

The adoption of the Synod Assembly agenda, with necessary changes, shall become the order of business for the assembly.

## QUORUM

Fifty percent (50%) of the registered voting members shall constitute a quorum.

## DECORUM & ETIQUETTE

Respect, dignity, civility, and courtesy shall be guidelines for the tone and content of all assembly discussion. Behavior outside these guidelines and which continues after warning shall be grounds for the assembly chair to restrict any further privilege of the floor.

## PRIVILEGE OF THE ASSEMBLY FLOOR

- Voting members of the assembly shall have prior right to the assembly floor.
- Officers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church



## ***General Information continued***

in America and the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA shall be entitled to the privilege of the floor at all times.

- Voting members addressing the assembly during the discussion of a pending motion or resolution shall identify themselves by name and congregation.
- Unless otherwise determined by a majority vote of the assembly, all speeches during discussion of motions or resolutions shall be limited to two minutes each.
- A person who has addressed the assembly on the pending motion or resolution may not speak to that pending motion or resolution again unless all others wishing to speak have done so.

### **VOICE GRANTED**

Pastors not on the Southeastern Minnesota Synod roster serving as interim pastors in the synod shall have voice on the assembly floor. S7.23.

### **BUDGET IMPACT**

Any resolution that adds money to the spending plan for mission and ministry should show a reduction of an equal amount in that same budget, or provide a proposal as to how the additional funds would be acquired. Any proposed amendments must be submitted by noon, Saturday, May 7, 2022.

### **VISITOR SEATING**

Visitors are welcome at the assembly. All visitors sit in a designated area.

### **VOTING PROCEDURES**

To be eligible to vote, a voting member must be seated in the assembly. No proxy or absentee voting is permitted. Voting members seated in the visitor's section will not have ballots collected or votes counted. Exceptions to this rule include officers and voting members seated on the stage or head tables and voting members serving as pages, ushers, or camera operators. A two-thirds vote is required for adoption of amendments to the constitution and by-laws of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod. A majority vote is required for approval of the synod budget, resolutions, and other actions as

specified in **Robert's Rules of Order**. In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for the bishop, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.

### **RESOLUTIONS**

A resolution for consideration at the Synod Assembly must be submitted to the Committee on Reference and Counsel no later than March 15, 2022. Resolutions may be submitted by:

- by majority vote of a congregation of the synod at a regular or special meeting of the congregation
- by approval of a two-thirds vote of a congregation council
- by majority vote of a committee of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod
- by majority vote of a conference assembly
- by a group of at least ten members of congregations of the Southeastern Minnesota synod elected to serve as voting members of the forthcoming synod assembly

Minutes showing adoption of such proposed resolutions from a meeting of a congregation, Congregation Council, committee of the synod, or conference assembly must accompany the submitted resolution. The signatures, typed names, and telephone numbers must be provided by voting members (of the forthcoming synod assembly) submitting a resolution. (S7.34.A05).

Resolutions submitted to the Committee on Reference and Counsel after March 15, 2022, will come before the assembly only by means of a motion to suspend the rules for the purpose of considering the late resolution. A vote to suspend the rules requires a two-thirds vote. (S7.34.B05, C05)

- The deadline for submitting late resolutions at the 2022 Synod Assembly is noon, Saturday, May 7, 2022.
- These late resolutions must be submitted to the Assembly on-site office and the author may be asked to meet with the Committee on Reference and Counsel. These resolutions may be submitted by the same groups listed above.

## ***General Information continued***

### **NOMINATIONS**

Nominations for synod vacancies will be made available before the Assembly at [semnsynod.org/nominations](http://semnsynod.org/nominations). Nominations will not be read to the assembly as part of the assembly agenda. Additional nominations for any vacancies can be made until noon, Saturday, May 7, 2022, by completing the 2022 Nomination Form. Nomination forms will be available at the head table on the assembly floor or at [semnsynod.org/nominations](http://semnsynod.org/nominations). Additional nominations will be announced. Ballots will be in voting member packets.

### **DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS**

Materials produced by the Office of the Bishop staff, teams, and committees may be distributed to voting members and visitors at the assembly as long as such materials are relevant to the overall work of the synod. Synod ministry partners may distribute materials produced by their organizations as long as such materials are directly related to the work of the synod.

### **SYNOD CONSTITUTION**

Our synod constitution is available on the website at [semnsynod.org/constitutions](http://semnsynod.org/constitutions).

# Report of the Secretary

Each year at the Synod Assembly, a report is presented by the synod's secretary. Our current secretary, Rev. Josh Enderson, will be presenting the report on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

The report before the assembly will focus on proposed changes to the SEMN Synod bylaws, which were recommended for approval by the SEMN Synod Council on July 21, 2021. Our Synod may amend its bylaws at any meeting of the Synod Assembly by a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting.

These proposed changes can be found below. If an item is ~~struck through~~, it will be deleted; if it is underlined, it will be added.

*Proposed Bylaw Changes relating to the Committee on the Election of the Bishop:* The proposed changes relate to S11.09.02.b., S11.09.02.c., and S11.09.02.d.

- **S11.09.02.b.** — This committee shall forward the names and biographical data of all candidates nominated by congregations ~~all candidates' names nominated by congregations and biographical data~~ to each conference assembly for consideration. Each conference assembly shall then

recommend up to three of these candidates' names ~~for further consideration by the committee.~~ to continue in the non-binding pre-assembly process.

- **S11.09.02.c.** — ~~This committee may select up to three candidates to be added to those of the conference assemblies' recommendations to help sure a broader slate.~~
- **S11.09.02.d.c.** — This committee may ~~select up to nine candidates from those names lifted up by conference assemblies and any additional names lifted up by this committee~~ and invite ~~them~~ all candidates recommended by the conference assemblies to participate in a maximum of three candidate forums to be held throughout the synod prior to the Synod Assembly provided there is more than one candidate.
- **Rationale:** Following the last bishop's election, a task force of council members reviewed the synod's process for electing a bishop. The task force felt that clarification of the Committee on the Election of the Bishop's role in the selection of candidates who participate in the candidate forums would be helpful.

## Important Links

2021 Synod Assembly minutes can be viewed here: [semnsynod.org/sa21minutes](https://semnsynod.org/sa21minutes)

2022 Nominations information, including sample ballot and biographies, can be viewed here: [semnsynod.org/nominations](https://semnsynod.org/nominations)



# Roster Updates

April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022

**Advisor for Call Process: Rev. Barbara Streed, Assistant to the Bishop - Call Process**

**Support Staff for Call Process: Cheryse L. Brenno, Call Process & Roster Administrator**

## Ordinations/Commissioning/Consecrations:

- **Ms. Peg A. Marose**, United Lutheran Seminary, Gettysburg to Solo Pastor/4 point at Good Hope Parish, Briceyn & Kiester-06/26/2021.

## New Calls within the Synod:

- **Rev. Kris Ferkin**-Interim Solo Pastor at St. John, Elton to Interim Solo Pastor at 2pt-Bear Lake Concordia & St. Paul, Albert Lea & Conger-05/01/2021.
- **Rev. Marla Rotman**-Contracted Pastor at Gloria Dei, Rochester to Associate Pastor of Programming at Gloria Dei, Rochester-05/23/2021.
- **Rev. Cheryl Indehar**- On Leave from Call to Senior Interim Pastor at St. John, Kasson-06/01/2021.
- **Rev. Michael Zaske**-Interim Associate Pastor at Gloria Dei to Interim Solo Pastor at Faith, Dodge Center-06/01/2021.
- **Rev. Mary Iverson**, Solo Pastor at Good Shepherd, Wells to Interim Solo Pastor at Trinity, New Richland-07/06/2021.
- **Rev. Susan Li**-Full Communion Partner-Interim Senior Pastor at Zion, Stewartville-07/15/2021.
- **Rev. Dr. Carl-Eric Snow Gentes**, Associate Pastor at Good Shepherd, Rochester to Senior Pastor at Good Shepherd, Rochester-07/18/2021.
- **Rev. Timothy McDermott**, Senior Pastor at Bethel, Northfield to Interim Solo Pastor at St. Ansgar's, Cannon Falls-08/01/2021.
- **Rev. Dale Svendsen**-Interim Solo Pastor at Aurora, Owatonna to Interim Solo Pastor at 3pt at Glenville Area Lutheran Parish-08/01/2021.
- **Rev. Joseph B.W. Smith**, On Leave from call to Senior Interim Pastor at Grace, Fairmont-Part/Time-08/11/2021.
- **Rev. Collette Broady Grund**, Associate Pastor at Bethlehem, Mankato to Pastor at Shelter Church/Connections Ministry-SAWC, Mankato-09/01/2021.
- **Rev. Dr. Scott Olson**, Senior Interim Pastor at Grace, Waseca to Interim Solo Pastor at Good Shepherd, Wells-09/16/2021.
- **Rev. Paul Hauschild**, Solo Pastor at Trinity, Hayfield to Senior Pastor at Chatfield, Chatfield-09/20/2021.
- **Rev. Renita Eidenschink**, Solo Pastor at Hegre to Chaplain at Northfield Hospital & Clinic/ Northfield Nursing Home, Northfield-10/18/2021.
- **Rev. Allyson Bowman**, Solo Pastor at St. Paul's, Le Center to Pastor at Zion, Stewartville-10/31/2021.
- **Rev. Timothy Bowman**, On Leave from Call/Contracted Pastor at Grace, Nerstrand to Pastor at Zion, Stewartville-10/31/2021.

## ***Roster Updates continued***

- **Rev. Kristen Anderson**, Solo Pastor at 2 pt -Faith, Janesville & North Waseca, Waseca to Bridge Interim at Trinity, Hayfield-11/21/2021.
- **Rev. Jeffrey Forbes**, Interim Solo Pastor at 2pt-Oakland & Moscow, Albert Lea & Austin to Interim Solo Pastor at Cross of Christ, Houston-12/01/2021.
- **Rev. Kris Ferkin**, Interim Solo Pastor at 2pt-Bear Lake Concordia & St. Paul, Albert Lea & Conger to Interim Solo Pastor at 2pt Trinity & Wanamingo, Wanamingo-01/15/2022.
- **Rev. Kristen Schlauderaff**, On Leave from Call to Interim Solo Pastor at 2pt-Faith, Delavan & Jackson Lake, Amboy-02/01/2022.
- **Rev. Janet Crissinger**, Full Communion Partner to Solo Interim Pastor at Zion, Lake Crystal-03/10/2022.
- **Rev. Michael Zaske**, Interim Solo Pastor at Faith Dodge Center to Solo Interim Pastor at First English, Cannon Falls-03/14/2022.

### **Synodically Authorized Lay Ministry-[SAM]: (Renewed Yearly)**

- **Larry Iverson, SAM**-09/08/2021-09/08/2022.

### **Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM):**

*none*

### **Contract for Pastoral Ministry:**

- **Rev. Dean Smith**, On Leave from Call also Contracted Pastor at Grace, Albert Lea-04/22/2021.
- **Rev. Nancy Edwardson**, On Leave from Call also Contracted Pastor to serve as Chaplain at Kenyon Senior Living, Kenyon-07/27/2021.
- **Rev. Kristin Engstrom**, New Jersey Synod to Contracted Pastor with Bethlehem, Mankato-05/01/2021 to 08/01/2021.
- **Rev. David Bucu**, Pastor at St Paul Evangelical Church of Lewiston also contracted part time at Peace, Eyota-09/06/2021.
- **Rev. E. Peter Strommen**, Retired-Minneapolis Area Synod to Contracted Directing Pastor at Zumbro, Rochester-10/04/2021.
- **Rev. Robert (Rob) Nelson**, Retired in NWMN to Contracted Pastor at Good Shepherd, Rochester-10/08/2021.
- **Rev. Daniel (Dan) Nordin**, Retired to Contracted Pastor with Cross of Christ and Cannon River, Welch-10/18/2021.
- **Rev. Kristen Venne**, Pastor at Community, Geneva also Contracted Pastor part time at Bethlehem, Mankato-10/18/2021.
- **Ms. Joy Knoppel**-First Call-Contracted Lay Minister at First, Albert Lea-10/25/2021.
- **Rev. Carl Ames**, Retired to Contracted Pastor at St. Paul, Le Center-11/01/2021.
- **Rev. Christopher Miller**, Retired to Contracted Bridge Pastor with Our Savior's, Spring Valley-12/01/2021.
- **Rev. Barbara Finley-Shea**, Retired to Contracted Pastor at St. Michael's, Waltham-01/01/2022.
- **Rev. Karl Rydholm**, Retired to Contracted Pastor at St. Paul of German Lake, Cleveland-02/20/2022.

## ***Roster Updates continued***

- **Rev. Timothy Rotman**, Full Communion Partner- to Contracted Pastor at Zumbro, Rochester-02/01/2022.
- **Marcia, Pedersen**, Candidacy to Contracted Lay Minister at St. John's, Elkton-03/01/2022.
- **Rev. Kristi Mitchell**, Pastor at Redeemer, Alden also contracted part time at Concordia Lutheran Church of Pickerel Lake, Albert Lea-03/01/2022.
- **Rev. Judy Thompson-Reitz**-Retired in Northeastern Minnesota Synod to Contracted Pastor at First, LeSueur-03/02/2022.
- **Rev. David Wall**, Retired in SWMN Synod to Contracted Pastor at Faith, Dodge Center-03/16/2022.

### **On Leave from Call:**

- **Rev. Charlie Leonard**-05/03/2021.
- **Rev. Joseph BW Smith**-07/01/2021.
- **Rev. Ronald Myers**-09/01/2021.
- **Rev. Peter Reuss**-09/25/2021.
- **Rev. Nathan Luong**-02/05/2022.
- **Rev. Erica Cunningham**-04/01/2022.

### **Transferred Into the Synod:**

- **Rev. Barbara Birkeland**, Retired-Northeastern Minnesota Synod to Retired-Southeastern Minnesota Synod-05/04/2021.
- **Rev. Paul Birkeland**, Retired-Northeastern Minnesota Synod to Retired-Southeastern Minnesota Synod-05/04/2021.
- **Rev. Kathleen Wold**, Retired-La Crosse Area synod to Retired-Southeastern Minnesota Synod-06/10/2021.
- **Rev. Roger Fears**, Southwestern Minnesota Synod to Associate Pastor First, Albert Lea-06/14/2021.
- **Rev. Grant Aaseng**, Retired-Northwest Synod of Wisconsin to Retired-Southeastern Minnesota Synod-06/23/2021.
- **Rev. Carl Ames**, Retired-West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod to Southeastern Minnesota Synod-06/23/2021
- **Rev. Glen Nelson**, Retired-ELC in Canada to Retired-Southeastern Minnesota Synod-06/29/2021.
- **Rev. Jolene Knudson-Hanse**, Eastern North Dakota Synod to Pastor at Our Savior's, Spring Valley-07/01/2021.
- **Deacon Peter Fritch-Gallatin**, Northwestern Minnesota Synod to Chaplain at Ecumen Pathstone Living, Mankato-07/06/2021.
- **Rev. Inger Hanson**, Northwest Intermountain Synod to Senior Pastor at Bethel, Northfield-07/21/2021.
- **Rev. Michael Mandsager**, St. Paul Area synod to Chaplain at Northfield Retirement Community, Northfield-08/07/2021.
- **Rev. Hayden Kvamme**, Southeastern Iowa Synod to Associate Pastor at Gloria Dei, Rochester-08/09/2021.

## ***Roster Updates continued***

- **Rev. Mary Kaye Ashley**, Southwestern Minnesota Synod to Associate Interim at St. John's, Kasson-09/01/2021.
- **Rev. Daniel Nordin**, Retired-Minneapolis Area Synod to Retired-Southeastern Minnesota Synod-09/03/2021.
- **Rev. John Braaten**, Retired-Grand Canyon Synod to Retired-Southeastern Minnesota Synod-09/03/2021.
- **Rev. Jillene Fritch-Gallatin**, Northwestern Minnesota Synod to Senior Pastor at Grace, Waseca-09/07/2021.
- **Rev. Tami Groth**, Western Iowa Synod to Chaplain at Winona Health, Winona-09/13/2021.
- **Rev. Gena Koeberl**, Southwestern Minnesota Synod to Chaplain at Mayo Clinic, Rochester-09/27/2021.
- **Rev. Susan Schoon**, Retired, St. Paul Area Synod to Retired-Southeastern Minnesota Synod-09/29/2021.
- **Rev. Peter J. Johnson**, Minneapolis Area Synod to Solo Pastor/2 Point of Moscow & Oakland Parish, Austin & Albert Lea-10/01/2021.
- **Rev. Dr. Charlene Cox**, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod to Program Director for Congregational Thriving at St. Olaf College-10/01/2021.
- **Rev. Ronald Huber**, Retired-Southeastern Iowa Synod to Retired-Southeastern Minnesota Synod-12/14/2021.
- **Rev. Timothy Sersen**, Retired-South Dakota to Retired-Southeastern Minnesota Synod-12/14/2021.
- **Rev. Jacqueline Ziemer**, Minneapolis Area Synod to Chaplain at Mayo Clinic Health Systems, Fairmont, St. James, Mankato-12/20/2021.
- **Rev. Carla Reiersen**, Southwestern Minnesota Synod to Interim Pastor at Mabel First, Mabel-(Contracted with Scheie, Mabel)-02/01/2022.
- **Rev. Lucas Peters**, Alaska Synod to Pastor at Bear Lake Concordia & St. Paul Parish, Albert Lea/Conger-03/01/2022.
- **Rev. Robert Zahn**, Southeast Michigan Synod to Senior Pastor at Zumbro, Rochester-03/01/2022
- **Rev. Clark Baldwin**, Northeastern Iowa Synod to Solo Pastor at Aurora, Owatonna-03/27/2022.

### **Transferred Out of the Synod:**

- **Rev. Randal Fett**, Solo Pastor at St. Ansgar's, Cannon Falls to South Dakota Synod-06/05/2021.
- **Rev. David Efflandt**, Senior Pastor at St. John, Kasson to Northern Illinois Synod-06/05/2021.
- **Rev. Joshua Blair**, Solo Pastor at Glenville Area Lutheran Parish, Glenville to Northeastern Minnesota Synod-07/01/2021.
- **Rev. Kimberly Kylo**, Associate Pastor at Zion, Stewartville to Saint Paul Area Synod-08/01/2021.
- **Rev. Linda Mc Peak**, Solo Pastor at Cross of Christ, Houston to La Crosse Area Synod-09/22/2021.

## ***Roster Updates continued***

- **Rev. Katelyn Rakotoarivelo**, Solo Pastor at Concordia Pickerel Lake, Albert Lea to Sierra Pacific Synod-09/21/2021.
- **Rev. Mark Dumke**, Retired to Retired-Northwest Synod of Wisconsin-12/14/2021.
- **Rev. Mark Docken**, Retired to Retired –Metro Washington DC-12/14/2021.
- **Rev. Christopher Culuris**, Pastor at Wanamingo & Trinity, Wanamingo to Southwestern Minnesota Synod-01/01/2022.
- **Rev. Heather Culuris**, Pastor at Dale & Holden, Kenyon to Southwestern Minnesota Synod-01/01/2022.
- **Rev. Andrea Myers**, Pastor at Zion, Lake Crystal to Southeastern Iowa Synod-02/14/2022.
- **Rev. Timothy Ehling**, Solo Pastor at First, Lake City to Northeastern Minnesota Synod-02/22/2022.
- **Rev. John Heille**, Associate Pastor at Grace, Fairmont to Western Iowa Synod-03/01/2022.
- **Rev. Lindsay Brennan**, On Leave from Call to Greater Milwaukee Synod-03/17/2022.
- **Rev. Jason Bryan-Wegner**, Associate Pastor at Zumbro, Rochester to St. Paul Area Synod-03/20/2022.

### **Disability:**

*none*

### **Retirements:**

- **Rev. John Holt**-05/23/2021.
- **Rev. Nancy Toensing**-06/01/2021.
- **Rev. Mark Docken**-07/01/2021.
- **Rev. Byron Meline**-07/01/2021.
- **Rev. Kristine Braaten-Lee**-08/01/2021.
- **Rev. Shari Mason**-08/01/2021.
- **Rev. Carl Bruihler, Jr.**-09/01/2021.
- **Rev. Elise Erickson**-11/01/2021.
- **Rev. Suzanne Froelich**-11/01/2021.
- **Rev. Todd Portinga**-11/01/2021.
- **Rev. Todd Substad**-12/01/2021.
- **Rev. Donald Kloster**-01/01/2022.
- **Rev. Vernon Christopherson**-01/01/2022.
- **Rev. Phillip Ruud**-02/01/2022.

### **Deceased:**

- **Rev. John H. Hagen**-09/25/2021.
- **Rev. Fred Rendstorf**-10/04/2021.
- **Rev. David Aaker**-10/12/2021.
- **Rev. Philip Peters**-11/03/2021.
- **Rev. Vickie Hultine**-01/30/2022.
- **Rev. Albert Girtz**-02/11/2022.
- **Deacon Janet Tantow**-02/16/2022.
- **Rev. Russell Wangen**-02/20/2022.



## ***Roster Updates continued***

### **Rostered Leaders Removed from the ELCA Roster:**

- Elliott Malm-07/15/2021.

### **Rostered Leaders Resigned from the ELCA Roster:**

*none*

### **Congregations Removed From the ELCA/Synod:**

- United Lutheran Church, Frost-09/24/2021.
- Bethany Lutheran Church-11/13/2021.
- South Blue Earth-02/05/2022.

### **Congregation Which Closed:**

*none*



# Proposed Spending Plan for Mission and Ministry 2023-2024

2023-2024 Budget			
1	<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>		
2	<b>Income</b>		
3			
4	<b>Mission</b>		
5		400100 · Mission Support	1,575,000.00
6		<b>Total Mission</b>	<b>\$ 1,575,000.00</b>
7			
8	<b>Other Income</b>		
9		400300 Annual Fund	75,000.00
10		400400 Event Offering	40,000.00
11		400500 Interest Income	5,000.00
12		400600 Investment Gain/Loss	3,500.00
13		400601 CYF Fund Reimbursement	
14		400602 Wittmer Fund Reimbursement	
15		400700 Unrealized Investment Gain/Loss	35,000.00
16		<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>158,500.00</b>
17			
18	<b>Program Fees (400200)</b>		
19		400210 Synod Assembly	75,000.00
20		400220 Theological Conference	20,000.00
21		400230 Events - Other	0.00
22		400240 Candidacy	4,500.00
23		400250 FCTE	5,000.00
24		<b>Total Program Fees</b>	<b>104,500.00</b>
25			
26		<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,838,000.00</b>
27			
28	<b>Expense</b>		
29			
30	<b>ELCA Mission Support</b>		
31		500100 ELCA Mission Support	677,250.00
32		<b>Total ELCA Mission Support</b>	<b>677,250.00</b>
33			

## ***Proposed Spending Plan 2023-2024 continued***

34		<b>Personnel</b>		
35		500601	Salaries & Wages	475,885.13
36		500602	Separation Pay	
37		500610	Housing Allowance	
38		500620	Continuing Education	8,125.00
39		500630	Book Allowance	14,040.00
40		500640	Payroll Tax Expense	18,188.33
41		500641	Separation Payroll Tax Expense	
42		500650	Employee Benefits - Portico	190,949.87
43		500660	Staff Travel - Synod	13,000.00
44		500661	Staff Travel - Domestic Trips	5,000.00
45		500662	Staff Travel - Global Visits	10,000.00
46		500670	Staff Development	5,000.00
47		500671	Staff Sabbatical	
48		500680	SAWC Lay Ministers	
49		500681	Contract Services	10,000.00
50		500690	Miscellaneous Personnel Expense	
51		500691	Allocate to Programs	
52		<b>Total Personnel</b>		<b>750,188.33</b>
53				
54		<b>Ministry Partners</b>		
55		500201	Campus Ministry	50,000.00
56		500202	Luther Seminary	15,000.00
57		500203	Good Earth Village	10,000.00
58		500204	Minnesota Council of Churches	5,000.00
59		500205	Lutheran Advocacy Minnesota	2,000.00
60		500206	Region 3 (Archives)	9,000.00
61		500207	Continuous Growth Pathways	15,000.00
62		<b>Total Ministry Partners</b>		<b>106,000.00</b>
63				
64		<b>Synod Ministry Programs</b>		
65		500301	Synod Assembly	75,000.00
66		500302	Theological Conference	20,000.00
67		500310	Events - Other	6,000.00
68		500320	Candidacy Committee	10,000.00
69		500330	FCTE	4,000.00
70		500340	Tables/Teams	3,000.00
71		500350	Faith Formation	500.00
72			Rostered Leader Development	7,000.00

## ***Proposed Spending Plan 2023-2024 continued***

73			Ministry Initiatives	20,000.00
74			<b>Total Synod Ministry Programs</b>	<b>145,500.00</b>
75				
76			<b>Global Partners</b>	
77				
78		500401	Global Ministry Table Discretionary	9,000.00
79			<b>Total Global Partners</b>	<b>9,000.00</b>
80				
81			<b>Governance</b>	
82		500501	Executive Committee	500.00
83		500502	Synod Council	1,500.00
84		500510	Conference of Deans	200.00
85		500520	Endowment Committee	200.00
86		500530	Bishop Transition	5,000.00
87			<b>Total Governance</b>	<b>7,400.00</b>
88				
89			<b>Operating Expenses</b>	
90		500701	Rent	48,000.00
91		500702	Contracts & Repairs	15,000.00
92		500710	Postage	4,000.00
93		500711	Office Supplies	12,000.00
94		500712	Phone & Internet	6,000.00
95		500720	Audit & Legal Services	10,000.00
96		500721	Accounting Service	18,000.00
97		500730	Insurance	10,000.00
98		500740	Bank Fees	500.00
99		500741	Credit Card Processing	2,500.00
100		500750	Office Equipment	5,000.00
101		500760	Miscellaneous Expense	1,000.00
102		500770	Communication	5,000.00
103			<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	<b>137,000.00</b>
104				
105			<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>1,832,338.33</b>
106				
107				
108			<b>Net Income</b>	<b>5,661.67</b>

# Proposed Spending Plan 2023-2024 vs. 2022-2023

		2022-2023 Budget		2023-2024 Budget	
	Ordinary Income/Expense		Ordinary Income/Expense		
1	Income		Income		
2					
3					
4	Mission		Mission		
5	400100 • Mission Support		400100 • Mission Support		
6	Total Mission		Total Mission		
7					
8	Offerings				
9	400300 • Assembly Offerings		0.00		
10	Total Offerings				
11					
12	Other Income				
13	400390 • Annual Fund		100,000.00		
14	400400 • Interest Income		5,000.00		
15	400401 • Investment Gain/Loss		3,500.00		
16	400402 • ELCA DEM Support				
17	400403 • ELCA DEM In-kind income		81,704.00		
18					
19	400404 • ELCA Grant		10,000.00		
20	Total 400402 • ELCA DEM Support		91,704.00		
21	400407 • Wittmer Fund Reimbursement		0.00		
22	400408 • Holy Spirit Fund				
23	400700 • Unrealized Investment Gain/Loss		35,000.00		
24	Total Other Income		235,204.00		
25					
26	Program Fees				
27	400200 • Theological Conf. Program Fees		7,500.00		
28	400202 • Candidacy Program Fees		4,500.00		
29	400204 • Assembly Program Fees		45,000.00		
30	400206 • Communications Program Fees		200.00		
31	400207 • C/Y/F Program Fees		250.00		
32	400208 • Miscellaneous Program Fees				
33	400210 • FCTE Program Fees		5,000.00		
34	400211 • Congregational Renewal Coaching		4,000.00		



# Proposed Spending Plan 2023-2024 vs. 2022-2023 continued

35	Total Program Fees	66,450.00	Total Program Fees	104,500.00
36				
37	400396 · Developing Leaders			
38				
39	Total Income	,876,654.00	Total Income	1,838,000.00
40				
41	Expense		Expense	
42				
43	Mission Support		ELCA Mission Support	
44	500002 · ELCA Mission Support	0.00	500100 ELCA Mission Support	677,250.00
45	500020 · Allocated to groups	0.00		
46	Total Mission Support		Total ELCA Mission Support	677,250.00
47				
48	Personnel		Personnel	
49	500100 · Salaries & Wages		500601 Salaries & Wages	475,885.13
50	500101 · Separation Pay		500602 Separation Pay	
51	500110 · Housing Allowance		500610 Housing Allowance	
52	500120 · Continued Education		500620 Continuing Education	8,125.00
53	500130 · Book Allowance		500630 Book Allowance	14,040.00
54	500140 · Payroll Tax Expense		500640 Payroll Tax Expense	18,188.33
55	500150 · Employee Benefits - Portico		500641 Separation Payroll Tax Expense	
56	500224 · Staff Travel		500650 Employee Benefits - Portico	190,949.87
57	225 · Travel-Synod		500660 Staff Travel - Synod	13,000.00
58	226 · Travel-Domestic		500661 Staff Travel - Domestic Trips	5,000.00
59	229 · Travel		500662 Staff Travel - Global Visits	10,000.00
60	500224 · Staff Travel - Other			
61	Total 500224 · Staff Travel			
62	500225 · Staff Development		500670 Staff Development	5,000.00
63	500230 · Contract Services		500671 Staff Sabbatical	
64	500240 · Miscellaneous Personnel Expense		500680 SAWC Lay Ministers	
65			500681 Contract Services	10,000.00
66			500690 Miscellaneous Personnel Expense	
67	500250 · Allocate to programs		500691 Allocate to Programs	
68	Total Personnel		Total Personnel	750,188.33
69				
70	Synod Assembly			
71	500570 · Synod Assembly Program			
72	500572 · Synod Assembly Facility			
73	Total Synod Assembly			
74				
75	1 · Developing Leaders			
76	DL-Congregational Leader Support			
77	500280 · DL-Synod Assembly	22,500.00		
78	500802 · DL-Renew! Event	1,500.00		
79	Total DL-Congregational Leader Support	24,000.00		
80	DL-Ministry Partners			
81	500300 · Lutheran Campus Ministry	50,000.00		
82	500302 · Luther Seminary	20,000.00		
83	500305 · GEV	5,000.00		
84	Total DL-Ministry Partners	75,000.00		
85	DL-Rostered Leader Support		Ministry Partners	
86	500310 · Region 3	9,000.00	500201 Campus Ministry	50,000.00

### ***Proposed Spending Plan 2023-2024 vs. 2022-2023 continued***

[illegible]



## ***Proposed Spending Plan 2023-2024 vs. 2022-2023 continued***

[illegible]

# Resolutions

1 Resolution 2022-1  
2 Submitted by the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council

3

4

5

## **2023 Minimum Compensation and Benefit Guidelines**

6

7 **Whereas,** St. Paul writes, “and each will receive wages according to the labor of  
8 each. For we are God’s servants, working together,” (1 Corinthians 3);  
9 and

10

11 **Whereas,** †S6.03.01.a in the Constitution for Synods states that the  
12 responsibilities of the synod include “providing for pastoral care of  
13 congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of  
14 Word and Service in the synod”; and

15

16 **Whereas,** the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council has reviewed the *2023*  
17 *Minimum Compensation and Benefits Guidelines*; therefore be it

18

19 **Resolved,** that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA adopt the  
20 document *2023 Minimum Compensation and Benefits Guidelines* for  
21 Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Ministers of Word and Service, and  
22 non-rostered lay professionals serving in congregations in the  
23 Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

*\*The proposed 2023 Minimum Compensation and Benefit Guidelines  
document can be viewed by going to the website:  
[semnsynod.org/compensation](https://semnsynod.org/compensation).*

# Resolutions

1 Resolution 2022-2

2 Submitted by Mount Olive Church Council, Rochester MN

3

4

## **To be a United Church that Cares for the Community**

5 **Whereas,** our Lord said that whatever we do “to one of the least members of Christ’s  
6 family” we do to Him (Matthew 25:40), and

7 **Whereas,** the Church as the Body of Christ in the world is exhorted by St. Paul and  
8 others to “work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of  
9 faith (Galatians 6:10), and

10 **Whereas,** St. John challenges us, saying, “How does God’s love abide in anyone who  
11 has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses  
12 help,” (I John 3: 17), and

13 **Whereas,** the mission of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod is “To walk together  
14 proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ,” and

15 **Whereas,** 80 of Minnesota’s 87 counties lack necessary emergency shelter beds\*, and

16 **Whereas,** 20% of Minnesota rental households are severely cost-burdened, spending  
17 50% or more of their household income for housing\*, and

18 **Whereas,** the nation’s largest and longest established coalition of faith communities, the  
19 Joint Religious Legislative Coalition (JRLC), is exhorting congregations to be  
20 advocates for sheltering needs of Minnesotans in poverty, and

21 **Whereas,** the Minnesota Council of Churches, of which the Southeastern Minnesota  
22 Synod is a member, is already a member of the JRLC, and

23 **Whereas,** the congregations of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod are made up of  
24 compassionate, creative, resourceful, and persuasive people who can be a  
25 force for good in our state; therefore be it

26 **Resolved,** that the Synod Council shall organize a three-year Housing Insecure Task  
27 Force for the purpose of guiding Synod participation to address this need, by

28 1) Encouraging its congregations to consider becoming member  
29 congregations of the JRLC, 2) Informing member congregations of the  
30 opportunities for pursuing advocacy for the housing insecure through the  
31 JRLC, and 3) Encouraging member congregations to consider being active  
32 in finding solutions for those who are housing insecure in their own  
33 community; be it further

34 **Resolved,** that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA include in its 2025  
35 annual report the activities of the said Task Force at the end of its three-year  
36 work, with appropriate celebration thereof.

37

38 \*Statistics taken from the website of the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition, [www.jrlc.org](http://www.jrlc.org).

# Giving Thanks

*...to all who make this Synod Assembly possible!*

## **Planning Teams**

### *Leadership:*

Office of the Bishop Staff  
Rev. Melanie Wallschlaeger  
Chris Roberts  
Burton Svendsen  
Larry Stacy  
Rev. Marla Rotman  
Rev. Lisa Carlson  
Reg. Jessica Bakken

### *History and consultant:*

Burton Svendsen

### *Registration:*

Gwen Larson  
Joe Ahrens

### *Technology and production:*

Chris Roberts  
Ashley Corbett

### *Hospitality and accessibility:*

Larry Stacy  
Rev. Jessica Bakken  
Kathy Chatelaine

### *Worship:*

Chris Roberts  
Bob Giere  
Rev. Lisa Janke  
Tyler Egge  
Rev. Emily Carson

### *Program Team:*

Rev. Melanie Wallchlaeger  
Rev. Marla Rotman  
Bishop Regina Hassanally

### *Aesthetics Team:*

Rev. Lisa Carlson  
Rev. Marla Rotman  
Rev. Liz Rossing  
Ashley Corbett

## **Parliamentarian**

David Borka

## **Vice President**

Lisa Dierks

## **Secretary**

Rev. Joshua Anderson

## **Treasurer**

Jeff Chestnut

## **Synod Council**

Deacon Amanda Sabelko  
Rev. Collette Broady Grund  
Rev. Jenna Couch  
Rev. Shelley Cunningham  
Rev. Kris Ferkin  
Rev. David Knox  
Marshall Laidlaw  
Anya Liedtke-Quick  
Rev. Benjamin Loven  
Karen Myers  
Gary Schindler  
Ramona Skare  
Carolyn Solberg  
Burton Svendsen  
Jonah Udstuen  
Dr. Mary Veiseth  
Rev. Dr. Kristen Venne  
Rev. John Weisenburger

## **Nominating Committee**

Rev. Kristi Mitchell  
Rev. Kathy Lowery  
Rev. Allyson Bowman  
Rev. Elizabeth Hermeier  
Lisa Dierks

## **Conference Deans**

Cathy Legried (BER)  
Rev. Kristi Mitchell (BER)  
Rev. Drew Yackel (CR)  
Rev. Corrine Haulotte (RR)  
Rev. Dean Aponte-Safe (RR)  
Rev. Liz Rossing (MR)  
Rev. Jason Pollington (MR)  
Rev. Megan Reedstrom (ZR)  
Rev. Lisa Janke (ZR)

## **Reference + Counsel**

Rev. Dr. Scott Olson  
(Chairperson)  
Susan Larson  
Rev. Beth Krolak  
Rev. Krista Henning-Ferkin  
Dick Osborne  
Rev. Emily Carson (synod  
staff liaison)  
Dave Borka (advisory  
member)

## **Committee on Credentials**

Larry Iverson  
Jackie Short  
Rev. Peg Marose  
Burton Svendsen

## **Office of the Bishop Staff**

Bishop Regina Hassanally  
Joe Ahrens  
Cheryse Brenno  
Rev. Emily Carson  
Kathy Chatelaine  
Ashley Corbett  
Rev. Matt Larson  
Gwen Larson  
Rev. Barb Streed  
Tharan Leopold, M.A. CES



endless possibilities in God's grace

**Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly 2022**  
May 7, 2022 in Mankato - [semnsynod.org/assembly](https://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 2 Contents**

- 2 Synod Structure**
- 3 Council Report**
- 4 Reports from Tables, Teams, and Committees**
- 17 Office of the Bishop Reflections**
- 25 Report from Presiding Bishop Eaton**



**Southeastern Minnesota Synod**  
*of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*





# Synod Structure

## SOUTHEASTERN MINNESOTA SYNOD

### Constitutional Committees:

- Committee on Candidacy
- Committee on Discipline
- Committee on Consultation
- Committee on the Election of a Bishop
- Audit Committee
- Endowment Committee
- Synod Nominating Committee

### First Call Theological Education

### Faith Formation Network

### Interim Network

### Conferences:

- Conference of Deans
- Root River
- Zumbro River
- Minnesota River
- Blue Earth River
- Cannon River

### Office of the Bishop Committees:

- Theological Conference
- Committees including...
  - \*Planning
  - \*Worship
  - \*Workshops
- Synodical Leader Grant Team
- Compensation Guidelines Committee
- Hunger Task Force
- Development Team
- Augsburg University Board

### Synod Council:

#### Executive Committee:

- Personnel Committee
- Finance Committee
- Committees of the Assembly including...
  - \*Planning
  - \*Workshops
  - \*Worship
  - \*Election
  - \*Credentials
- \*Reference and Counsel

#### Tables:

- Faith Formation Table
- Mission Support Table
- Congregational Renewal Table
- Global Ministry Table
- Community Accompaniment Table

#### Global Ministry Teams:

- Colombia
- Tanzania
- Medical Ministry
- AMMPARO
- Hunger

### Other Synod-Related Organizations:

- Lutheran Men in Mission
- Women of the ELCA

## Southeastern Minnesota Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

*Equipping congregations and leaders to follow Jesus into a changing world.*  
Developing leaders • Equipping congregations • Accompanying global partners



## History

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) came into being on January 1, 1988. The geographic boundaries of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod were discerned through a series of gatherings in 1986-1987. The first Synod Assembly was held in the spring of 1988. This year we celebrate our 34<sup>th</sup> assembly!

## Structure

The Holy Spirit has been continuing to call, gather, and enlighten throughout the 34 years of our synod's history. One of the ways the Spirit works is through our tables, teams, committees, and staff. The structure continues to evolve over time. The graphic above is a depiction of the current organizational layout of the synod.



# Synod Council Report

*Lisa Dierks, Vice President*

## **What is the mission of your group?**

The Synod Council serves as the synod's board of directors and as its interim legislative authority between meetings of the synod assembly. The Executive Committee consists of the four synod officers and two persons elected annually by the synod council from its own membership.

The Pandemic continued to impact our ability to meet in person for Synod Council. With almost 50% of the council members being new to their role, this year our work has focused on orientation to the work of Synod Council as well as Synod staff. We spent time reflecting on our individual strengths and the contributions the strengths of every person make to the greater good. We spent time with Rev. Matt Larson learning about the candidacy process & its many pathways. Kathy Chatelaine updated the Council on the work of Global Ministry in the Synod and some of the challenges & joys among our global partners.

## **Over the past year, how have you experienced God's faithfulness through the work of your group?**

Council members continue to be inspired and heartened by the resilience, faithfulness and creativity of the Office of the Bishop staff and the leaders and congregations across our synod in facing the challenges of the past years. God has strengthened us all to carry out the ministry of loving and serving our neighbors in new and remarkable ways.

While digital meetings and worship opportunities have allowed us to gather safely during the pandemic, they have not brought the joy of gathering in person and the same opportunities for relationship-building that come with face-to-face interactions. As we begin to gather in person on a more

regular basis, may we take the time to be appreciative of the presence of others and God in our lives.

## **How might individuals and congregations support you and the ministry with which you are involved?**

I would like to thank all the members of the Synod for your patience over this past year as I have stepped into this new leadership role. Thank you to everyone who has personally supported me and especially to Ann Peterson for sharing her wealth of experience.

# Committee on Candidacy

## *from Rev. Trish Reedstrom*

The effort of the Candidacy Committee is to work with seminarians who are interested in becoming a rostered minister of the ELCA, and to accompany them along a multi-year path toward realization of that goal. The members of the committee come from across the synod and bring varied expertise - rostered leaders, lay leaders and seminary faculty along with Rev. Matt Larson and Cheryse Brenno from the Synod Office and Deacon Krista Anderson from Region 3 of the ELCA. Our seminarians also bring varied educational and life experiences with them. Some seminarians are moving directly into ministry from their undergraduate experience while others have spent a number of years in corporate, non-profit or government settings; still others come with previous and current ministry experience, often in congregational settings. At this time a total of 22 seminarians are in the candidacy process in the SEMN Synod.

The process itself is a three-part process and begins when a candidate applies for "entrance". Entrance is the first step toward ordination and includes a comprehensive psychological assessment, background checks, health assessment, essay, recommendations and interviews. Once that step is completed the educational process begins. Approximately midway through their educational work and after completion of one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education training, candidates are endorsed. In addition to evaluation of the items already noted, there is once again a required essay and interview.

Once endorsed, it is often time for internship (for Word and Sacrament candidates) or a supervised field experience (for Word and Service candidates). These are opportunities, up to 12 months of full-time experience, to receive hands-on training and opportunities in a context appropriate to their

work. Internships may be full or part-time, and continued educational work may or may not be happening at the same time. For those congregations/leaders that have been or currently provide such experience to the candidates in our synod, thank you!

The final step of candidacy is approval, consisting of a recommendation from seminary faculty, internship evaluations, essay and interviews. Once approved the candidate is ready to receive a call, and the larger church welcomes a new leader to its ministry. This past year, 6 candidates were approved for Rostered Ministry.

It is no surprise that the work of this committee has been challenged by pandemic restrictions and requirements, but one highlight of the past year was the opportunity to resume gathering for our yearly retreat with Candidacy Committee members and candidates. This retreat occurred in November, 2021 at Good Earth Village, and the chance to gather for conversation, relationship-building and education was appreciated by all.

Individuals and congregations across the synod can assist the Candidacy Committee in their work by identifying potential future leaders of the ELCA. Candidates often tell us that they were led to ministry thanks to the words of a trusted mentor, pastor, or congregational leader who saw their gifts and encouraged them to consider seminary. These leaders are in all our congregations – look for and encourage them!

# Community Accompaniment Table

## *from Regina Seabrook*

Over the past year the Community Accompaniment Table has made some significant strides in how we understand our work and laying the foundation for the future of the Table.

In November 2021 the Table met on a Saturday for a daylong retreat to revisit our mission and vision as a table. After spending this intentional time discerning where the Holy Spirit is guiding us in this work the Table identified four goals that are central to the work we are doing. The four goals are:

1. Keep the Gospel central in our work for justice
2. Accompany and resource congregations as they live into the Gospel message of justice
3. Prioritize leadership of youth (14-17) and young adults (18-30) in this work
4. Institutionalize the work

With these four goals to guide us, the Table is working on expanding our members and restructuring so that we better support leaders and congregations in the synod and also use our resources more effectively. We are currently recruiting people and gathering a list of resources that can be shared with congregations. We are also branching out and exploring possible partnerships with the Minnesota Council of Churches and surrounding ELCA synods.

A lot is happening with the “set” the Table and we are excited to continue to walk with congregations who are doing the work of building our beloved community.

# Compensation Guidelines Taskforce

## *from Rev. Barb Streed*

### **What is the mission of your group?**

The Minimum Compensation and Benefits Guidelines Task Force (MCBG) works to present as a tool for congregations and staff to use together so that compensation and benefit decisions can be made in such a way that God's mission flourishes, staff members are cherished as servants of God, there is a sense of faithful partnership between church members and staff and all areas of the church's ministry thrive. MCBG promote calls based on matching the rostered leader's gifts with a congregation's needs, rather than encouraging leaders to select positions based too heavily on the promise of better compensation. Our committee is made up of rostered leaders, synod staff, lay professionals, and lay congregational members from the SE MN Synod. Our committee does research on comparing our synod's compensation guidelines with similar sized synods in our surrounding area, communication with Portico Benefit Services to help provide the best information to rostered leaders and congregations.

It was a goal of this group in at the time of this report in 2021 that we would move forward in offering up educational opportunities to congregations and rostered leaders regarding understanding a rostered minister's compensation and benefits. We accomplished this as we offered both zoom and in-person gatherings specifically geared towards congregational councils and rostered ministers, but were open to all. We also developed a one-page resource called *Understanding your Pastor's Compensation* provided to congregations in call process for Minister of Word and Sacrament. Our mission in all of this is to support the needs of both congregations and rostered leaders.

**Over the past year, how have you experienced God's faithfulness through the work of your group?**

It was wonderful be around the table in many conversations regarding the work of this task force: zoom Connecting with Councils gatherings, Councils as Leaders gathering, and numerous congregational call process tables. God provided the grace found in the hearts of those at these conversations that was needed to have these conversations. Good and hard questions were asked, folks were able to share vulnerably their need for better understanding around this topic, and the needs of both congregations and rostered minsters were shared in places that felt safe and open to the hearing of one another.

### **How might individuals and congregations support you and the ministry with which you are involved?**

There are a variety of ways to support the ministry of this committee. Congregations can continue to provide accurate reporting information to the synod office, as well as to reach out to this committee when they need help with translating these guidelines into real world practice with their rostered leaders or if they need help navigating the Portico Benefit options. Leadership in individual congregations can also provide updated staffing information for their congregations beyond the rostered leaders, as well as providing the synod office with current information regarding their congregational council leadership. Individual rostered leaders can continue to provide accurate information through their yearly reporting to the bishop's office in reports, as well as passing along communications from this committee to their congregational councils and leadership committees such as personnel committees.

*Submitted by  
Reverend Barb Streed  
Minimum Compensation and Benefits  
Guidelines Task Force Staff Liaison*

# Endowment Committee

## *from Dianna Parks*

### **What is the mission of your group?**

The mission of the Synod Endowment Committee is to promote the synod's endowment(s).

1. Establish and uphold the impact of the fund according to synodical bylaws.
2. Recommend education and promotion strategies for prospective donors.
3. Recommend and approve marketing pieces and other tools.
4. As appropriate, develop cultivation and solicitation strategies to include outright and planned gifts to the fund.
5. As appropriate, execute cultivation and solicitation strategies.
  - a. Maintain policies for endowment oversight to include recommendations to Synod Council
  - b. Define a checklist for receiving and investing endowment gifts to ensure proper funds management, i.e., that gifts intended to be invested in perpetuity are not set up as spendable funds.

Ensure that gifts are solicited in accordance with the Synod Gift Acceptance Policy.

### **Over the past year, how have you experienced God's faithfulness through the work of your group?**

Our group has been focusing on gratitude and impact, learning more about the way people express their faith through their gifts. It has been humbling to see what the work of the synod -- collectively and through the Office of the Bishop -- means to our community, and to learn about personal experiences that inform giving choices.

### **How might individuals and congregations support you and the ministry with which you are involved?**

As the Office of the Bishop and Synod Council implement the Five Channels of Generosity and the Holy Spirit Fund, individuals and congregations can help to promote and attract resources to fulfill the goals set therein. As Spirit moves in our synod and ministries, the endowment will be available to fund innovation and opportunities, and assist with emergencies beyond the resources of one congregation. As one body of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, together we establish our ministerial priorities and equip staff and leaders and members to do God's work in our region and the world.



# Faith Formation Table

## *from Lindsay Colwell*

### **What is the mission of your group?**

The Faith Formation Table provides a framework and networking group for equipping and mentoring faith formation leaders in the SE MN Synod. The table welcomes faith formation professionals, rostered leaders, and volunteer leaders. Recognizing that God is at work through the Holy Spirit in a variety of ways, places, and people, the table aims to foster conversation, educational experiences, and resources that help our leaders across the synod equip followers of Christ for a life of discipleship at every age and experience.

### **Over the past year, how have you experienced God's faithfulness through the work of your group?**

The Faith Formation Table continued to provide monthly meetings online on a wide range of topics such as land acknowledgment, addiction recovery, and adapting to new ways of ministry with ministry leaders such as Tiger McLuen, Kelly Sherman-Conroy, and Terri Elton. We had hoped to hold our annual January retreat in person with Dr. Terri Elton on the topic of Journeying in the Wilderness: Faith Formation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, but an upturn in COVID cases forced us to move our retreat online. This retreat was graciously sponsored by a local Thrivent representative. Throughout it all, our leaders in faith formation, from paid staff to volunteers, have continued to share faith, support, and resources as we pivot in this difficult time. Relationship with God and one another is at the heart of all we do.

### **How might individuals and congregations support you and the ministry with which you are involved?**

- Whether you are a volunteer, lay professional, or rostered leader, join our network! You can find us at [facebook.com/semnsynodfamilyministry](https://facebook.com/semnsynodfamilyministry) or email Ashley Corbett at [corbett@semnsynod.org](mailto:corbett@semnsynod.org) to be added to the email list. We are better when we have a variety of voices and partners with which we can share and learn.
- Make sure your congregation has updated information to the synod office regarding staff and contact person for faith formation.
- If you are a part of a congregation, ask your faith formation leader how you can support their personal and professional development.

*Submitted by Lindsay Colwell, Director of Youth and Family Ministry, St. John's Kasson*

# Global Ministry Table

## *from Rev. Mike Walerius*

### **What is the mission of your group?**

The mission of the Global Ministry Table is to walk hand in hand with our global partners, local congregations and ministry partners. Our focus is on building accompaniment relationships as we discover together God's call for the church universal.

### **Over the past year, where have you witnessed God at work?**

We have witnessed God's work this year in many places and in many people throughout the Global Ministry Table and work.

- 40 Together was a new initiative that Global Ministries started this past year. Through the 40 days of Lent we challenged congregations to give a dollar per baptized member to Global, and asked households to participate by giving a dollar a day per family member. These funds were then distributed to our partners. Along with the financial challenge, 40 Together also made weekly devotional videos where people told personal stories about some aspect of Global Ministries and our local partners.
- Through the continued relationship between our partners in Tanzania and Colombia, we have witnessed God's love and guidance even as we have not been able to travel due to Covid restrictions.
- We have also witnessed God in the support of global ministries throughout the Southeastern MN Synod. Your faithful support is a huge way we feel God present in this ministry.

- Finally, through the dedicated work of the Global Ministry Staff, Table, and Team members who continue to build relationships and walk with our siblings in Christ across the globe, we recognize God's loving presence.

### **How might individuals and congregations support you and the ministry with which you are involved?**

There are many ways in which individuals and congregations can support the Global Ministries.

- Through continued prayer support for both the Table and our global and local partners.
- Through financial support. There are many specific areas that individuals or congregations can give: Tanzania or Colombia Education, Tanzania Health Care, Global Ministry Undesignated, AMMPARO, local SEMN Hunger Grants. 100% of these specific global funds support Global Ministry work and the needs of our partners.
- Become an accompaniment partner congregation with a school or another congregation in Tanzania or Colombia. Congregations can build relationships through prayer, letters, video chats or other virtual communications. These relationships can be wonderful ways for entire congregations to connect with other Lutherans around the world.
- Invite a member of the AMMPARO team to your congregation for a speaking engagement where you can lean of the work they are doing with Migrant Minors in local communities, the United States and abroad.

# AMMPARO Team

## *from D.J. Chatelaine*

To the People of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod:

The AMMPARO ministry team continued our efforts to accompany migrant children and their families in Southeastern Minnesota and at the U.S./Mexico border. This ministry expands with each passing day. Here is an overview of what the AMMPARO team has been up to over the past year:

- Facilitated *A Migrant Journey* learning experience, both online and in person, for 15 SEMN Synod congregations. *A Migrant Journey* is an immersive experience for youth and/or adults that places participants in the shoes of people immigrating from Central America to the United States.
- Held a book study on The God Who Sees by Karen González. 25 people from 12 SEMN Synod congregations participated in this month-long weekly Zoom conversation.
- Continued to partner with local community organizations who provide services (education, health care, legal, food, visitation) for migrant minors and their families.
- Accompanied SEMN Synod congregations who are sponsoring asylum seekers and Afghan refugees.
- Have had continued discernment with congregations who are interested in sponsoring migrant families.
- Continued to support basic needs of migrant minors at our borderland partners: Border Servant Corps, Annunciation House, and faith shelters in Colonia Anapra.
- Visited congregations to tell the story of AMMPARO ministry in SEMN, including past border visits.
- Convened quarterly meetings of the

Welcoming Congregation Network for people to share ministries and resources.

- Advocated for immigration reform and humane treatment of migrant families at the State and National levels.

As you can see, our ministry is busy and continuing to grow. To explore opportunities, including joining individuals and congregations throughout the Synod in this transformational ministry, contact Kathy at [chatelaine@semnsynod.org](mailto:chatelaine@semnsynod.org). The Holy Spirit is at work, and we are guided to listen to the ways we can love our neighbors—near and far. Throughout this ministry our team returns to Micah 6:8: “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

In Peace,  
*D.J. Chatelaine*  
*AMMPARO Team Co-Chair*

# Hunger Team

## *from Ron Knutson*

The Hunger Team continues to uplift the basic human rights of food and shelter. We are grateful to the continued support of congregations and individuals for their contributions to the Synod's global ministry funds and to ELCA World Hunger.

This year the constraints of covid did not hold us back. A SEMN Synod congregation received a substantial three-year grant from ELCA World Hunger to address local food insecurity. In addition, through an ELCA/SEMN Synod COVID hunger grant, eight congregations received funds toward local food ministries. Significant funds have also been provided to our global partners to address COVID-related food insecurity: in Colombia for students, widows, and people with disabilities; and in the drought-stricken Central Diocese of Tanzania for rural students, palliative care patients, and subsistence farmers.

The Hunger Team has also taken the initiative of continuing an annual local grant for congregations in the SEMN Synod. With generous funding from an anonymous source, the SEMN Synod Hunger Grant will be offered again in 2022 for local hunger ministries. Watch for application details in an upcoming RC Weekly!

The team has also had new members join us, and we are thankful for that.

We encourage congregations to continue financial support of SEMN Synod's global ministry and ELCA World Hunger. Your generosity makes a difference in the lives of our siblings in Christ in both local and global communities!

*Ron Knutson*  
*Chair for the Hunger Team*

# Colombia Accompaniment Team

## *from Rev. Mark Johnson*

### **What is the mission of your group?**

The Colombia Accompaniment Team partners with the Assistant to the Bishop for Global Ministry and the Global Ministry Table to maintain and strengthen the Synod's companion synod relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO).

### **We live out our unity in Christ through the following ways:**

- Pray regularly for IELCO;
- Uphold and review the synod's covenant with IELCO and other IELCO partners through
  - communication with IELCO, synod leaders, and synod congregations;
  - implementing the mutual goals and priorities of this relationship in partnership with IELCO and;
  - regular review of the synod's financial support of IELCO.
- environmental issues; and other challenges.
- Advocate on behalf of a healthy and just public policy toward Colombia and Latin America.
- Invite your congregation to make a designated financial contribution to support the many and varied ministries of IELCO (including Education, Peace and Reconciliation initiatives, Hunger ministries)
- Serve on the Colombia Accompaniment Team.

*Submitted by: Pastor Mark Johnson,  
Chairperson,  
Colombia Accompaniment Team*

### **How might individuals and congregations support you and the ministry with which you are involved?**

- Pray for Colombia as it enters into elections for president and national leaders.
- Pray for IELCO as it reaches out to serve communities impacted by conflict, displacement, climate change, and the pandemic; to be a partner in building peace and reconciliation in Colombia.
- Have your congregation enter into an accompaniment-focused relationship with a Colombian congregation or school.
- Learn about Colombia, including the ongoing peace process and ongoing work of reconciliation and renewal;



# Medical Ministry Team

## *from Joanne Heathman*

Medical Ministry is currently a team of 10 members representing three of the five conferences in the SEMN Synod, the Assistant to the Bishop for Global Ministry, and representatives from Global Health Ministries. The Team meets quarterly, and as needed. The Team's purpose is to work in collaboration with other local partners, review health care needs and medical funding requests from our global partners, and make recommendations to the Global Ministry Table when action is needed and is consistent with goals and priorities. Challenges to the provision of healthcare services includes inadequate staffing and management, inadequate training, medical facilities, supplies and equipment, hunger, and inadequate infrastructure such as water, electricity, communication systems, and roads. As a result, medical insecurity is a way of life for many people.

The Team's responsibilities include:

- Working with the Assistant to the Bishop for Global Ministry and the Global Ministry Table to develop and strengthen the Synod's financial support and accompaniment of global and local partners in medical ministries.
- Accompanying the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, Central Diocese medical ministry initiatives.
- Accompanying the South Sudan medical ministry initiatives.
- Establishing goals and priorities for program support and project development.
- Making recommendations to the Global Ministry Table for approval of distribution of funds.
- Assisting the synod in fund raising initiatives for medical ministry.
- Reviewing and updating priorities annually and as needed.

This past year the team continued to meet via ZOOM, and participated fully to get the work of the team accomplished. God's faithfulness was evident when, over and over, dedicated team members willingly took the lead to meet group responsibilities and address challenges related to medical ministry. Medical needs met include shipments of medical supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE) to US/Mexico borderlands and rural Tanzanian communities; a physician in a small rural Tanzanian hospital receiving steady financial support so local patient care can continue; pharmaceuticals being replenished; people suffering from chronic and end-of-life diseases receiving appropriate nourishment and supportive medical care; and technology aiding communication with global friends and partners. This ministry is evidence of God's faithfulness and work in the lives of our siblings in Christ throughout the world! I am strengthened by the commitment of this group as they continue to engage and not allow a pandemic to interrupt the mission of the Team. With hope, we anticipate gathering in person at our next team meeting this spring.

Individuals can show support of Medical Ministry by volunteering to become a member of the Medical Ministry Team and by supporting your congregation's partnerships. Congregations can show support of Medical Ministry by establishing a mutual, inclusive accompaniment relationship with SEMN Synod local and global partners and generously providing funds to Tanzania Healthcare, AMMPARO or Global Ministry Undesignated. 100% of your gift goes directly to these transformative partner health ministries. Thanks be to God!

*Respectfully submitted by Joanne Heathman,  
Chair, Medical Ministry Team*

# Tanzania Accompaniment Team

## *from Rev. Nick Fisher-Broin*

*I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. . . For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus.*

-Philippians 1:3-5, 8

Paul wrote these words from prison to the people of Philippi. Although he longed to be united with the Philippians, Paul mused that his present circumstance actually spread the Gospel of Jesus. Like Paul, we long to meet face-to-face with our beloved siblings in the Central Diocese of Tanzania. And, like Paul and the people of Philippi, in spite of the pandemic, the ministry and relationships between the people of the Central Diocese and the Southeastern Minnesota Synod continue to thrive!

In 2021, with the Tanzanian government finally acknowledging the existence of COVID, congregations and communities were able to more freely embrace cultural traditions around illness and death. For example, with the death of an individual due to COVID, communities could again gather to support the grieving family rather than the family enduring a hasty burial on their own. In communication with Tanzanian individuals and congregations, we could ask about the prevalence of COVID in communities rather than using the pseudonym, 'strong pneumonia'. The investment of visits throughout the years provided a table set for adaptability, resiliency, and sustainability during challenging circumstances.

Listed below are a number of priorities which animated our partnership in the last year:

- WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Zoom or Skype calls have become the

preferred method of visiting during this time of suspended in-person visits. Going forward, we will lean into both virtual and face-to-face visits to connect with our partners.

- Students at Kijota Hull High School and Iambi Secondary School continue to be 'top performers' on national exams among Tanzanian secondary schools (public and private). The leadership, staff and students of Ihanja Technical School are transforming the once-struggling school into another successful learning space in the Central Diocese. As parents desire their children to receive a quality education that equips for the future, enrollment and waiting lists have substantially increased at all three schools. Congregations and individuals within the SEMN Synod provided *designated education funds* towards scholarships for rural children, particularly girls. During COVID, when visits home were prohibited, additional funding was provided for the extra food that was needed to sustain life.
- Palliative care ministry (end of life, chronic illness), including home and clinic visits, culturally appropriate food, and pharmaceuticals, continued at high levels. An increase of *designated health care funds* empowered palliative care staff to 'feed the hungry and care for the sick.'
- Designated health care funds* were also provided towards the salary of Iambi Lutheran Hospital's doctor/medical director. Dr. Lightness Gudu is providing stability and vision to this rural hospital.
- Pastors and evangelists received theological and pastoral formation at Lutheran Institute Kiomboi, preparing women and men to serve in rural parishes throughout the Central Diocese.
- As resources diminished in communities

## ***Tanzania Accompaniment Team continued***

already living day-to-day, *designated funds* supported diocese pastors and leaders. In turn, pastors provided food for hungry people within their parish.

- We give thanks for the life and ministry of missionary Dr. Mark Jacobson, who was diagnosed with brain cancer while in Arusha and, several months later, died while surrounded by his wife, Linda, and their daughters in Minneapolis.

How can SEMN congregations and individuals partner with our siblings in the Central Diocese of Tanzania? First and foremost – pray! Congregations are also invited to enter into or re-energize an accompaniment partnership with a Central Diocese school or congregation. And, as the Spirit leads, consider contributing financially towards health, education or general ministry initiatives.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Pastor Nick Fisher-Broin,  
Chairperson, Tanzania Accompaniment Team  
and  
Kathy Chatelaine  
Assistant to the Bishop*

# Reference and Counsel

## *from Rev. Dr. Scott E. Olson*

The work of Reference and Counsel is to shepherd resolutions brought to the synod assembly. We do this by receiving, reviewing, and editing resolutions submitted by congregations, councils, or conferences. We work with the resolution writers as needed for clarity and ensure the resolutions are formatted correctly before presenting them at the annual Synod Assembly. In prior years, we have also provided education regarding the resolution process. Our goal is to provide both the authors and voting members resolutions in their best possible form so that the assembly can make good decisions.

Over the past year, we have experienced God's faithfulness through the continued presence of experienced members, the willingness of new members to step forward, and the guidance of synod staff member Rev. Emily Carson. The entire committee approached their work with diligence, thoughtfulness, and humility.

Individuals and congregations can support the ministry of our team by praying for us in our work. We would also welcome any questions regarding crafting a resolution or the process that needs to be followed. Guidelines for crafting and submitting resolutions are available and helpful. Finally, individuals and congregations can support our work through being active in their conferences to discern what actionable resolutions the Holy Spirit might be calling them to create.

Respectfully Submitted,  
*Rev. Dr. Scott E. Olson, Chair*

# Office of the Bishop Reflections

Several years ago, I was in a room much like the one we are gathered in for our 2022 Synod Assembly. I sat in the audience listening to a parade of preachers and speakers offer their hard earned wisdom on leadership and ministry. Our teachers were from a variety of backgrounds, denominations, and business sectors. One preacher challenged us to think beyond the normal limitations of our imagination.

A few weeks later, I sat with my congregation's council and used pencils and pens to create the semblance of a horse fence in the middle of the table. As I moved the pens to create a larger and larger space, I wondered aloud what ministry would like if we learned to expand the bounds of what we thought possible. In the midst of the conversation, we asked questions of one another. *How were we allowing ourselves and our sense of call to our congregation and community to be hemmed in? What would change if we started to think of the bounds of what we'd done before as markers to be expanded upon?*

That conversation was really the beginning of this Synod Assembly. (I didn't know that at the time, of course!) For years, I've been wondering what it might mean to be a people who practice thinking beyond our normal capacity for imagination. What would it mean to be a people who wonder what opportunities lie just beyond the bounds of what we think is possible? How would that change the way we live as God's people in this place?

My hope for our time together today, and for the journey we will continue on long after this day is done, is that we might practicing thinking in a way that pushes even the bounds of our own imaginations. What if we started to imagine the impossible? What if we realized even our imaginations are small and limited when compared to the mind and heart of God?

What if, when an outlandish idea popped into our heads, or we came up with something unheard of in a brainstorming session, we actually considered what was once outlandish? What if we allowed creativity free rein every once in a while?

How would our congregations change? Who would hear the gospel in a new way? What in us and around us would be transformed?

I believe in the power of the Holy Spirit. My prayers for this synod are grounded in a petitioning of God that the Spirit might be poured out upon us so that we proclaim the gospel in ways all can hear and understand. I pray we will be an ever more bold and faithful people. I pray we continue to abide in the presence and will of God. I pray we will step out in faith at every opportunity, confident that we serve a God who is capable of doing far more than we could ever ask... or even *imagine*.

Dear friends, what haven't we even imagined yet?

In Christ,



Rev. Regina Hassanally  
Bishop of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA



# Office of the Bishop Reflections

***Joe Ahrens - Business Manager***

## **Explain your role on staff.**

I was hired as Business Manager this past July. My role is to oversee the financial and internal controls of the Office of the Bishop. This includes reviewing congregational support remittance, managing cash disbursements and payments, and maintaining the financial integrity of the organization. This also includes assisting in the annual budget and audit efforts.

## **Over the past year, how have you experienced God's grace and faithfulness in your role on staff?**

I have very much enjoyed getting to know my coworkers these past few months. I appreciate the camaraderie and levity of the staff. They have a keen focus on the mission of the synod and live it with a sense of fun. Also, Assisi Heights is a wonderful place to have an office. The grounds and building are truly magnificent and inspiring. I feel blessed, honored, and humbled to work here.

## **How might individuals and congregations support you and the ministry with which you are involved?**

I believe that sound fiscal management is grounded in transparency and that it goes both ways. I will do all I can to ensure the financial integrity of the organization and ask that you help me in this effort. For example, being as clear as possible on your congregational remittance forms helps us know exactly where you want your giving to go. While financial reports sometimes seem like numbers on a page, there is a human element behind those numbers. I am interested in learning those stories and intent. If you have questions on financial policy or best practices, I am here to help.

# Office of the Bishop Reflections

## *Cheryse Brenno - Call Process and Roster Administrator*

### **Explain your role on staff.**

My main role is with the Call Process. Maintaining the Rostered Minister Profiles and Ministry Site Profiles for the rostered leaders and congregations in transition. Administer correspondence for all call processes and mobility such as Letters of Call, Interim Agreements and Contracted Agreements with call chairs and rostered ministers.

My other responsibilities consist of the management of each rostered minister individual and congregation files, Candidacy, personnel files, Mission Support, finances, and others as assigned.

### **Over the past year, how have you experienced God's grace and faithfulness in your role on staff?**

- As we look at creative and imaginative ways to do ministry we need to dance with the Holy Spirit as we journey through these transitions. Ministry is changing and will continue to change. The last couple of years we have had so many transitions and there is where we have experience God's grace and faithfulness. So let us Dance!
- Congregations that are developing possibilities of sharing and doing ministry together.
- The building of relationships with the pastoral and lay leadership of this synod and in other synods.
- Assisi Heights! The graciousness and friendship of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi. How blessed we are!

### **How might individuals and congregations support you and the ministry with which you are involved?**

I am always forever grateful for your prayers and continued support! It has been a blessed opportunity to serve for the Office of the Bishop on Synod Staff for the past 20 years! I share with you a Bible verse I carry in my heart:

"Surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."  
Jeremiah 29:11

As we journey together to do God's work, blessing to you and remember-

***Only one thing in life  
is truly dependable and stable...  
God's love for us.***

# Office of the Bishop Reflections

***Rev. Emily Carson - Assistant to the Bishop/Director for Evangelical Mission, Cultivator of a Culture of Generosity and Care***

## **Explain your role on staff.**

It is my great joy to cultivate generosity and care throughout the life of the synod. The congregations, specialized ministries and people of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod are thoughtful stewards of their compassion, attention and resources. Each day I get to nurture and celebrate that stewardship. I also oversee synod strategies related to mission support, the annual fund, special offerings, and the 5 channels of generosity.

Congregational visits are a huge highlight of my role, and I join congregations for Sunday worship, council meetings and stewardship committee gatherings. In all of these spaces, I aspire to shine a spotlight on the movement of the Holy Spirit in ways that help all of us to more fully step into the flow of God's infinite goodness!

As the Director for Evangelical Mission, I have the privilege of accompanying new ministries in the synod and supporting efforts of innovation and collaboration within the synod and beyond. The synod regularly offers 'Power and Boundaries' workshops for congregational staff and rostered ministers, and I am the developer and facilitator of those workshops.

I am also the synod staff liaison to the Committee on Reference and Counsel, Synod Leader Grant Team, Councils as Leaders Planning Team, Connected in Mission group, and Endowment Committee - and the synod staff liaison to the Community Accompaniment Table.

**Over the past year, how have you experienced God's grace and faithfulness in your role on staff?**

The people and histories of the congregations of the synod have been my greatest teachers over the past year. Last spring I began a practice of carving time to do intentional historical research before spending time with a congregation. This has become a beloved spiritual practice. The oldest congregations of our synod go back to 1854, and I've had such profound encounters with God's grace and faithfulness as I've delved into the histories of the Lutherans of Southeastern Minnesota. Reading and hearing stories about generations of partnership, generosity and collaboration have spurred in my mind all kinds of inspiration for future synod possibilities. The past year has revealed to me the deep value of living with an openness to the Wisdom winds that blow from all directions: the past, the present and the future. I give thanks for the opportunity to learn every day from the people and histories of this synod.

## **How might individuals and congregations support you and the ministry with which you are involved?**

I would be honored to learn with and from you and your congregation. Whether it be an adult forum or a council meeting or after worship on a Sunday, I'd be so grateful to come and spend time with you and learn about the ways you're already living as faithful stewards! I'd also love to be a resource who can accompany you as you set stewardship goals and imagine new ministry possibilities as we proclaim the good news of Jesus together!

# Office of the Bishop Reflections

***Kathy Chatelaine - Assistant to the Bishop for Global Ministry***

Central to my call as Assistant to the Bishop in Global Ministry is the accompaniment of global and local congregations, leaders, ministries and individuals united in Christ-centered relationships around daily life, prayer, worship, education, health care, hunger, and justice initiatives. Imagine experiencing God's dream of life together in Christ – here and now! – as together we embrace the amazing diversity within Christ's global church both abroad and within SEMN Synod communities!

Walking together in global leadership are synod lay and rostered leaders who serve on:

- Global Ministry Table
- AMMPARO Team
- Colombia Accompaniment Team
- Hunger Team
- Medical Ministry Team
- Tanzania Accompaniment Team

**Over the past year, how have you experienced God's grace and faithfulness through your work?**

*The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, God's mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is God's faithfulness.*

-Lamentations 3:22-23

God is ever faithful! As the Holy Spirit unites us with our cherished partners and ministries throughout the world via technology such as WhatsApp, Zoom and Messenger, we continue to share joys and sorrows, prayer, stories, and our shared life together in Christ during this time when travel is suspended. Through *A Migrant Journey* interactive experience, as local confirmation students and adults to 'walk in the shoes' of Central American youth leaving their beloved communities in search of safety and life, God

inspires us to faithfully follow God's law of 'welcome the stranger'. As five female pastors from Colombia – a country where the vast majority of clergy are male – gather monthly with female pastors throughout their North American partners, leaders are mutually empowered to proclaim the abundant love and grace of Jesus – in word and action – throughout their local communities! I invite you to read more examples of God's amazing faithfulness in the reports of the Global Ministry Table and Teams, included in this packet.

**How might individuals and congregations support you and the ministry with which you are involved?**

Through global and local ministry initiatives, congregations and individuals are engaged in education, conversation, and unified action around relevant issues that we, as Lutherans and citizens of our nation, currently face. When we feed the hungry in local and global communities, share funds to educate impoverished children and provide medical care in rural Tanzanian communities, advocate for just and humane policies that impact the safety and lives of children, welcome the refugee into our communities, and pray for all of God's beloved children throughout the world, we are faithfully responding to God's faithfulness to us. Imagine the abundant love and grace of Jesus unleashed throughout local and global communities as we live God's dream of life together in Christ! I thank God for your faithfulness!

With great hope,  
*Kathy Chatelaine*  
Assistant to the Bishop

# Office of the Bishop Reflections

*Ashley Corbett - Director of Communications*

## **Explain your role on staff.**

I get to serve this synod and the Office of the Bishop in so many exciting (to me) ways related to communication: email, website, social media, videos, putting together this Pre-Assembly Report, and so on. Sharing messages and stories in careful and intentional ways is a big part of what I get to do on a regular basis. I also work hard to support, equip, and uplift our leaders in their ministry settings as best I can.

## **Over the past year, how have you experienced God's grace and faithfulness in your role on staff?**

- The relationships I have had the opportunity to grow and develop, especially as we had the opportunity to spend more and more time in-person, are a constant reminder of the faithfulness and imagination to be found within God's people.
- As I spend time with people in different spaces, I continue to learn and wonder and question everything. And repeating that cycle over and over again allows my heart and mind to constantly re-imagine how we, God's people, can be disciples in a relevant and authentic way. Sometimes I get stuck, but the practices of learning, wondering, and questioning are always what I need to get me back on track.
- Getting to spend time on creative endeavors, such as re-designing the synod's website, gives me life and reminds me how much everything is constantly changing around me, yet the most important things are always there.

## **How might individuals and congregations support you and the ministry with which you are involved?**

I appreciate when I see congregations and individuals sharing the Good News. There are so many ways to do this, and the synod works hard to be part of that. I ask that you would pay attention to what we have to say, as you are able, and then to share what is relevant as it makes sense.

I also hope that you would share with me the things you find. Not because I will pass everything along, but because the more we see and hear, the more we can imagine and wonder together.

Your continued prayers for this office are needed: prayers for God's word to be clearly proclaimed through all of our work.

Please reach out to me with your stories, ideas, questions, and dreams for God's work in this synod. You can always email me at [corbett@semnsynod.org](mailto:corbett@semnsynod.org).



# Office of the Bishop Reflections

## *Rev. Matt Larson - Assistant to the Bishop for Candidacy, Leadership, and Congregation Care*

### **Explain your role on staff.**

My role on the SEMN Synod Staff is to tend to the synod candidacy efforts, work with synod programs for leadership development, and tend to congregation care with an emphasis on working to find partnerships between congregations.

### **Over the past year, how have you experienced God's faithfulness through your work?**

- In the faithful and wise collaboration between members of the Candidacy and Fall Theological Conference Committees. In both cases, they bring creativity and dedication to their work. They care deeply about those whom they serve, tend to their needs, and tend well to the charge they have on behalf of the Synod and Church.
- In the resilience of the whole People of God in the SEMN Synod. In all the ways that they have found to continue to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, serve their neighbors, and reach out to their siblings in Christ in their congregation and all around the world. We all had to do an awful lot of adapting, and God brought good growth out of that willingness and work. We are in a season which demands resilience and adaptability; the Holy Spirit is at work in this season and in you!
- In the willingness of candidates to continue their preparation for ministry - even when circumstances have brought continued high levels of confusion and complication to that journey! The amount of chaos and polarization in so many institutions and settings would make it tempting to run for the hills - but

our Candidates continue to show trust, patience, and wisdom as they continue to make their way through the process.

- In the care, concern, and prayerful support extended to me and my family after my work-related car accident on May 12th. Countless people assured me that I was being prayed for, and I tell you the truth: those prayers were palpable. I felt it. I knew it. I am grateful for it, and for my recovery.

### **How might individuals and congregations support you and the ministry with which you are involved?**

Individuals and congregations can support me and the ministries with which I'm involved by continuing to reimagine what being church looks like, dedicating themselves to cooperation and collaboration, and tending to what is essential without fixating solely on what is comfortable or familiar.

# Office of the Bishop Reflections

## *Rev. Barb Streed - Assistant to the Bishop for Call Process and Congregation Care*

### **Explain your role on staff.**

My primary area of focus on the staff of the Office of the Bishop is call process. The time between when a rostered leader announces their resignation and the next 'settled' roster leader begins their call is a special time in the life of the congregation in which they engage in the call process. During this process, I work with congregational councils, transition teams, and call committees as, together, we engage the congregation in reflection, visioning, and self-study. I work to engage the call committee and candidates in interviewing and discerning. I work with rostered leaders who are feeling the nudge of the Spirit toward a new call in much the same way: reflection and visioning, interviewing and discerning. Additional areas of attention in my role on staff are congregational and rostered leader care. Both are opportunities for me to serve our synod in a variety of ways. I am also the staff liaison to the Minimum Compensation and Guidelines Task Force, the Constitution Updating Process, and the SEMN Synod Assembly.

### **Over the past year, how have you experienced God's faithfulness through your work?**

God continues to ignite the hearts of our staff to be deeply intentional about nurturing our relationships with the congregations of the SEMN Synod and with those called to serve as rostered ministers in our synod. These relationships that are so very important to us and to God. Through the call process, I have worked to be present with congregations in call process at three key times: when they learn they will be in transition, before they begin their self-study, before they begin interviewing candidates. It has been a joy to be in-person and available to our

congregations in transition. Perhaps the area that God has called my work, and therefore me, to be most imaginative in this past year and going forward is in response to the challenge the pastoral shortage (both interims and settled pastors). I have had the opportunity to imagine with congregations and rostered leaders how the needs of God's people might be met in new and different ways. As always, God's faithfulness has stirred hearts to be open and filled with grace as we navigate our reality together.

### **How might individuals and congregations support you and the ministry with which you are involved?**

I am always so appreciative of the grace offered when we all are trying to figure out how to re-imagine that which we do. I am always appreciative of the patience offered as we all try to take the next best step in our work, in our relationship, in ministry. I am always appreciative of open hearts and minds that folks bring to the table as we join together to listen for God's voice for our present and future together. One challenge I bring to the congregations of the SEMN Synod is to be intentional about identifying those among us who may have the gifts and heart for ordained ministry. Be bold in asking the question, "Have you ever considered being a pastor or deacon?" The church needs faith filled and faithful rostered ministers to accompany us in our faith and as we serve God's people of earth.



“And [Jesus] said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15).

Dear siblings in Christ,

When I talk about our goal of engaging a million new, young, diverse people I get asked a lot, “I’m not new, young, or diverse. Am I not important to the church anymore?” My answer is always the same, “You’ve never been more important.”

When we committed to our new goal, we identified our purpose as “Activate each of us so more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love.” This goal does not happen without the people who are already part of this church. Theresa of Avila talked about the church as the hands and feet of Christ in the world, the very way God will work to engage new people.

Those aren’t easy things to do and certainly not ones that only a few of us can do alone. God has blessed us with so many resources to do this work: nearly 3.6 million people, 65 synods, and 350 CWO staff, plus colleges, universities, seminaries, social ministry organizations, and other affiliated organizations, and our separately incorporated ministries. We truly are a church of abundance.

So, what can you do right now?

- Pray. For our church. For one another. For those whom we have yet to meet.
- Find time to listen to people who are new to the ELCA, young, and/or diverse. Share the story of Jesus with them.

Along the way, don’t forget: You are important.

Grace and peace,



endless possibilities in God's grace

**Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly 2022**  
May 7, 2022 in Mankato - [semnsynod.org/assembly](https://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 3 Contents**

- 2 Retirement Recognition
- 3 Ordination  
Anniversaries
- 4 Congregation  
Anniversaries



**Southeastern Minnesota Synod**  
*of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*



# Retirement Recognition

This section honors the rostered ministers who have retired within the past year. Some are now serving interim calls and others are exploring the new possibilities into which the Spirit is leading them. Please hold these leaders in your prayers as they transition into the next chapter of their ministry journey: retirement.

We give thanks for their leadership!

**Rev. John Holt (05/23/2021)**

**Rev. Nancy Toensing (06/01/2021)**

**Rev. Mark Docken (07/01/2021)**

**Rev. Byron Meline (07/01/2021)**

**Rev. Kristine Braaten-Lee (08/01/2021)**

**Rev. Shari Mason (08/01/2021)**

**Rev. Carl Bruihler, Jr. (09/01/2021)**

**Rev. Elise Erickson (11/01/2021)**

**Rev. Suzanne Froelich (11/01/2021)**

**Deacon Todd Portinga (11/01/2021)**

**Rev. Todd Substad (12/01/2021)**

**Rev. Donald Kloster (01/01/2022)**

**Rev. Vernon Christopherson (01/01/2022)**

**Rev. Phillip Ruud (02/01/2022)**



# Ordination Anniversaries

## **5 Years**

- Rev. Allyson Bowman
- Rev. Carrie Chatelaine
- Rev. Dean Safe
- Rev. Jacie Richmond

## **10 Years**

- Bishop Regina Hassanally
- Rev. Donald Kloster
- Rev. Elizabeth A Krolak
- Rev. Erica Cunningham
- Rev. Jenna Couch
- Deacon Kristine Oppeward

## **15 Years**

- Rev. Rebekah Timm Barnhart
- Rev. Carol Sinykin
- Rev. Daniel Bredberg
- Rev. Elise (Liz) Erickson
- Rev. Eric Anspach-Hanson
- Rev. Jason Burggraff
- Rev. Krista Strum
- Rev. Ronald Myers
- Rev. Shane Koepke

## **20 Years**

- Rev. Cheryl Indehar
- Rev. David Berg
- Rev. Keith Homstad
- Rev. Patricia Hewitt
- Rev. Paul Graham
- Rev. Shari Mason

## **25 Years**

- Rev. Cynthia Fisher-Broin
- Rev. Jay Dahlvang
- Rev. Julie Rogness
- Rev. Kristen Venne
- Rev. Kristen Anderson
- Rev. Pamela Fickenscher
- Rev. Peter Reuss
- Rev. Susan Schoon
- Rev. Wayne Vogt

## **30 Years**

- Rev. Carl Ames
- Rev. Christine Engstrom
- Rev. Mary Waudby
- Rev. Michael Mandsager
- Rev. Paul Hauschild
- Deacon Robert Tewes Jr.

## **35 Years**

- Rev. Barbara Jo Schunke
- Rev. Jeffery Sandgren
- Rev. Mark Van House
- Rev. Mark Rydberg
- Rev. Todd Substad
- Deacon Carole Joyce
- Deacon Elizabeth Lynch
- Deacon Ellen Nielsen
- Deacon Jane Lindner
- Deacon Joyce Kinney

## **40 Years**

- Rev. Daphne Hamborg
- Rev. Mark Docken
- Rev. Stephanie Frey
- Rev. Timothy McDermott
- Deacon Cynthia McLaren

## **45 Years**

- Rev. Charles Ortloff
- Rev. Chris Brekke
- Rev. Daniel Nordin
- Rev. Dennis Timmerman
- Rev. Donald Rose
- Rev. Gerald Giese
- Rev. Howard White
- Rev. Jeffrey Franko
- Rev. Richard Steffen
- Rev. Ronald Jensen
- Rev. Ronald Allen

## **50 Years**

- Rev. Iver N Torgerson
- Rev. John Gorder
- Rev. John Lohre
- Rev. Richard Salge
- Rev. Robert Rendahl
- Rev. Stephen Bohling
- Rev. Bruce Benson

## ***Ordination Anniversaries continued***

### **55 Years**

- Rev. Clark Cary
- Rev. Duane Everson
- Rev. Marvin Kormann

### **60 Years**

- Rev. Arvid Jovaag
- Rev. Elmer Odland
- Rev. Glenn Nycklemoe
- Rev. John Nordgaard
- Rev. Robert Boda
- Rev. Ronald Barth
- Rev. Roy Satre Jr.
- Rev. Russell Wangen

### **65 Years**

- Rev. Curtis Fox
- Rev. Gerhard Knutson
- Rev. John Quam
- Rev. Theodore Vinger

## **Congregation Anniversaries**

### **50 Years**

Messiah Lutheran Church, North Mankato

### **150 Years**

Urland Lutheran Church, Cannon Falls



endless possibilities in God's grace

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## **Section 4 Contents**

- |    |                 |
|----|-----------------|
| 2  | Opening Worship |
| 8  | Lyrics          |
| 11 | Closing Litany  |



**Southeastern Minnesota Synod**  
*of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*



# Opening Worship

## Prelude

## Welcome

## Litany for Openness

Holy Spirit, open our hearts.  
**Holy Spirit, open our hearts.**

As Moses lived out your call to liberate people from oppression and injustice,  
**may we be open to risking our comfort to speak words of grace to a weary world.**

As the widow of Zarephath placed her trust in you day after day that her meal would not run out and her oil would not run dry,  
**may we trust in you, with hands open to your movement in the world.**

As Jonah was shocked by the repentance of the people of Nineveh,  
**may we be open to the surprise of what your life-giving word can do among us.**

As Lydia received a heart open to your word and invited the stranger into her home,  
**may we be open to fostering invitation—to building a longer table with room for all.**

And as Mary said “yes” to the Divine, bearing Christ for a world in need,  
**may we be open to saying “yes!” to your dream of justice and peace for all creation.**

Holy Spirit, open our hearts.  
**Holy Spirit, open our hearts.**

**Song** “Spirit, Open My Heart” (#1043, All Creation Sings)

## Acknowledgements

As we come together this morning from across our synod to worship, to discern, and to open ourselves to God’s leading, let’s acknowledge some of the realities of the world from which we enter this space. In acknowledging, we remember what’s real. God, we ask that these realities might frame our time together in your wisdom, inviting us to seek truth from which we might understand each other more fully as we gather:

What is real is that we are gathering today with a wide variety of emotions and perspectives. With the last two years of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, gathering today may be exciting and you may feel like you can finally take a deep breath. On the other hand, others may be feeling anxious or overwhelmed. And all of this is okay.

What is real is that we gather on the land of the Oceti Sakowin people, land that was ceded by the U.S. government in 1851 from the Wahpekute and Wahpetunwan peoples for pennies an acre. As an acknowledgment of our past, we share in this Dakota prayer.

*Adapted from "Dakota Prayer" by Eli Taylor from the memorial at Reconciliation Park*

...Creator  
Look down upon us  
Whatever works we do  
In a humble way  
In the future, when the children see them,  
They will understand  
And have knowledge  
For this reason, here at this  
Gathering place, we have come  
Have pity on us and look!! Make us  
Live in friendship, as a community!!  
All my relatives

And what is real is who we are gathering with. Take a moment now to look around you. First, focus on the people sitting around your table. Who is sharing this day with you?

Next, look around the room.

Who is here?  
Who do you notice is not here?  
Whose voices are missing from our conversations?  
What does that mean for our discussion today?

These are among the many realities we each come to the table with today. God, grant us patience, courage, and love to see our world as it is, to see our neighbor for who they are, and remind us that you are with us in it all. Amen.

**Song** "For Everyone Born"

### **Communion**

*Adapted from THE IONA COMMUNITY: Iona Abbey Worship Book*

Not an easy peace,  
Not a conditional peace,  
Not a half-hearted peace,  
But the peace of Christ  
Is with us now.

Let us share it with one another...

It was on a night when old, familiar stories were retold that Jesus and his friends engaged in the sacred meal with Jews called the Passover.

During that meal, rich in food and memory,  
Jesus took a piece of bread.



And after he had blessed it,  
He broke it and said,  
'This is my body. It is given for you.  
Do this to remember me.'

Later in the meal, he took a cup of wine,  
And having given thanks over it,  
He gave it to his disciples with the words,  
"In this cup is the new relationship with God  
made possible because of my death.  
Drink it, all of you, to remember me.'

We gather around this table Jesus has called us to -  
Strangers and friends,  
Locals and visitors,  
Believers and doubters,  
The certain and the curious.

It is always in mixed company that Jesus gathers and invites us to this table and  
meets us in this meal. And through Jesus, we, who are different, are joined to one  
another.

So come,  
Not because you understand,  
But because you are understood.

Come,  
Not because of how you feel,  
But because God has food for you.

Come,  
For you are invited just as you are...

As Jesus broke bread,  
We break this bread (*bread is lifted*)

As Jesus took wine  
We take this cup. (*cup is lifted*)

As the first disciples shared communion  
In an upstairs room  
We share these gifts  
from hand to hand,  
And feed on them in our hearts  
With love and gratitude.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

## **Communion Instruction**

## **Communion Song**

"All Belong Here"

## Communion Blessing

May the generosity of this table and meal fill you with more grace than you knew possible.

**Amen.**

## Meditative Reading

### *The Quest*

Even though you're not equipped,  
Keep searching:  
Equipment isn't necessary on the way to the Sustainer.  
Whoever you see engaged in search,  
Become her friend and cast your head in front of her,  
For choosing to be a neighbor of seekers,  
You become one yourself;  
Protected by conquerors,  
You will, yourself, learn to conquer.  
If an ant seeks the rank of Solomon,  
Don't smile contemptuously upon its quest.  
Everything you possess of skill, and wealth, and handicraft,  
Wasn't it first merely a thought and a quest?

*by Rumi*

## Scripture Readings

Do not remember the former things,  
or consider the things of old.  
I am about to do a new thing;  
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert.  
The wild animals will honour me,  
the jackals and the ostriches;  
for I give water in the wilderness,  
rivers in the desert,  
to give drink to my chosen people,  
the people whom I formed for myself  
so that they might declare my praise.

*Isaiah 43:18-21*

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Ephesians 3:20-21*

## Reflection

Bishop Hassanally

## Breath Practice

## Song

"Listening People"

## Confession

*a confession: telling the truth together*

*By Lisa Janke and Richard Bruxvoort Colligan*

To be honest, we need help for our lives.  
Not because we're bad people, but because we are human,  
Our mistakes can hurt ourselves and others.  
Other people's mistakes can hurt us.  
It's a complicated world to navigate.

When it comes to faith,  
To be honest, we have failed to live a life of love and justice  
by the ways we think,  
by our habits of speaking,  
by our patterns of acting and reacting.

*The people of God take a deep breath*

Let's confess the truth together  
Dear God, Giver of Life,  
**We have not dedicated our hearts, minds, and bodies to love and justice.**  
**We have not recognized our neighbors as Christ.**  
**We have not forgiven others as generously as we have been forgiven.**  
**Giver of life, help us.**

We've sometimes forgotten the call to live Christ's Way.  
**Giver of life, help us.**

Our past failings weigh us down.  
**Giver of life, help us.**

Our fear tangles us up.  
**Giver of life, help us.**

Our self-centeredness sabotages the generous life we were created for.  
**Giver of life, help us.**

When we cannot accept who and what we are, we suffer.  
When we try to control others, life is a strain.  
When we forget our loving connection to the wider creation, we feel lost.  
**Giver of life, help us.**

*The people of God take a deep breath*

**Source of Life, restore us  
Your loving claim on our lives is enduring.**

Embodied Love, heal us.  
Knit us into the gospel story of Jesus Christ,  
so that we may daily experience the hope of new life.

**Breath of Life, renew us  
Your ongoing creation is always emerging  
and your creative goodness is ever at play.**

Friends of God, grace, peace and justice are in and about you.  
Welcome forgiveness, take courage and live your life deeply.  
**Amen.**

### **Prayers**

*After each petition:*  
God at work within us,  
**hear our prayers and compel us to respond.**

Into your Wisdom we commend all of our prayers, trusting in your mercy, grace and compassion.  
**Amen.**

### **Offering**

**Song**        "For the Wholeness of the Earth" (#1067, ACS)

### **An Invitation to Imagine and Opening of the Assembly**

This morning we have gathered in community, shared in the promises of a meal, and reminded ourselves what is real around us, of what challenges we face. As we close our time in worship, and continue the work of our synod together today, I invite us into a posture of imagination and possibility.

Creative and renewing God, we thank you for this day. Prepare us for a space in which we might follow your guidance - helping to make a space for all to join in your work with and among us.

Though our path is often unclear, your possibilities are endless. For the work to be done, for the conversations and the business of this synod, and for the way you might show us yet another new thing - in the spirit of God, let us work together to respond well to our changing world and follow your creative spirit.

I declare this assembly of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod to be in session in the name of the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

**Amen.**

**Song**        "Crowded Table"

# Lyrics for Worship

## **Spirit, Open My Heart (ACS #1043)**

### *Refrain*

Spirit open my heart  
To the joy and pain of living  
As you love may I love  
In receiving and in giving Spirit,  
open my heart

### *Verse 1*

God, replace my stony heart  
with a heart that's kind and tender.  
All my coldness and fear  
to your grace I now surrender.

### *Verse 2*

Write your love upon my heart  
as my law, my goal, my story.  
In each thought, word, and deed,  
may my living bring you glory.

### *Verse 3*

May I weep with those who weep,  
share the joy of sister, brother.  
In the welcome of Christ,  
may we welcome one another.

Words and music: Ruth Duck, Alfred V. Fedak.  
Text: © 1996, Pilgrim Press, The.

## **For Everyone Born**

### *Verse 1*

For everyone born, a place at the table,  
for everyone born, clean water and bread,  
a shelter, a space, a safe place for  
growing,  
for everyone born, a star overhead,

### *Verse 2*

For every gender, a place at the table,  
revising the roles, deciding the share,  
with wisdom and grace, dividing the  
power,  
for every gender, a system that's fair,

### *Chorus*

and God will delight when we are creators  
of justice and joy, justice and joy!  
yes, God will delight when we are  
creators  
of justice and joy, compassion and peace!

### *Verse 3*

From our first to our last days, a place at  
the table,  
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,  
the hands of a child in hands that are  
wrinkled,  
first to our last days, the right to belong,

### *Verse 4*

For imperfect justice, a place at the table,  
the lost and the learning, the hard-to-  
forgive,  
in anger, in hurt, a mindset of mercy,  
for imperfect justice, a new way to live,

### *Verse 5*

For all orientations, a place at the table,  
each love celebrated, an open embrace,  
a rainbow of lovers all made in God's  
image,  
for all orientations, the chalice of grace,

For everyone born, a place at the table,  
to live without fear, and simply to be,  
to work, to speak out, to witness and  
worship,  
for everyone born, the right to be free,

Shirley Erena Murray, lyrics adapted by Karyn  
Thurston, music by Ben Grace Music. Words ©  
1998 Hope Publishing Company, 380 S Main Pl,  
Carol Stream, IL 60188



# *Lyrics for Worship continued*

## **All Belong Here**

### *Verse 1*

When you're not sure who you really are  
When all you feel is the shape of your  
scars  
And you have more wounds than you can  
count  
Open your eyes, look all around  
You aren't alone, this is your home

### *Chorus*

Come and remember who you are here  
Do this to remember who I am  
Come and remember you belong here  
All belong here

### *Verse 2*

When you don't know how to forgive  
When locked doors seem like the only  
way to live  
And you've got more questions than you  
can count  
Open your eyes, look all around  
You aren't alone, this is your home

### *Bridge*

At this table come as you are  
Broken and bleeding's ok  
At this table eat and be filled  
Come and drink in this grace.

*CCLI Song # 7112307. Lyrics by Lenora Rand.  
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## **Listening People**

### *Refrain*

God's word in the flesh  
God's word in the ancient book  
Listening We're a listening people  
God's word in the wind  
God's word coming fresh today  
Listening We're a listening people

### *Verse 1*

What is God's present work? How are we  
stirred?  
Where might we open now to deeper love  
for the world?

### *Verse 2*

Noise has distracted us We've not heard  
you  
How can we tune your church to ringing  
ever more true?

### *Verse 3*

What is God's present work? Rouse us  
awake  
How are we ready to embody your word  
today?

By Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

**For the Wholeness of the Earth  
(1067 ACS)**

*Verse 1*

We lift this prayer  
for the wholeness of the earth.  
We lift this prayer  
for the wholeness of the earth.  
We lift this prayer  
for the wholeness of the earth.  
Can you feel it rising in you?

*Verse 2*

We tune our ears to the wholeness of the  
earth.(3x)  
Can you feel it ringing in you?

*Verse 3*

We turn our lives to the wholeness of the  
earth.(3x)  
Can you feel it spinning in you?

*Verse 4*

We stand our ground for the wholeness of  
the earth (3x)  
Can you feel that granite in you?

*Verse 5*

Give thanks to God for the wholeness of  
the earth.(3x)  
Can you feel it rising in you?

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**Crowded Table**

You can hold my hand  
When you need to let go  
I can be your mountain  
When you're feeling valley-low  
I can be your streetlight  
Showing you the way home  
You can hold my hand  
When you need to let go

**I want a house with a crowded table  
And a place by the fire for everyone  
Let us take on the world while we're  
young and able  
And bring us back together when the  
day is done**

If we want a garden  
We're gonna have to sow the seed  
Plant a little happiness  
Let the roots run deep  
If it's love that we give  
Then it's love that we reap  
If we want a garden  
We're gonna have to sow the seed

The door is always open  
Your picture's on my wall  
Everyone's a little broken  
And everyone belongs  
Yeah, everyone belongs

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McKenna and Brandi Carlile  
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# Closing Litany

*Based on “Jonathan James and the What If Monster” by Michelle Nelson-Schmidt*

L: Sometimes the weight of the unknown keeps us from moving forward.

**All: What if God is calling us to be a people who practice courage?**

L: Sometimes we get stuck in a rut of isolation.

**All: What if God is calling us to be a people who embrace connectedness?**

L: Sometimes we avoid change because we're scared.

**All: What if God is calling us to be a people who release fear?**

L: Gathering God, thank you for bringing us together today. Thank you for reminding us that we've been created with the capacity to imagine. In this holy space, you have given us opportunities to dream new dreams for the sake of the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in southeastern Minnesota and beyond. As we leave this place today, remind us that with you everything is possible.

**All: Amen.**



endless possibilities in God's grace

**Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly 2022**

**May 7, 2022 in Mankato - [semnsynod.org/assembly](https://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 34<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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

**WE ARE CALLED | AUGGIES**



**ELCA Federal Credit Union**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

***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 | 8765 West Higgins Road | Chicago, Illinois 60631 | Tel: 877-715-1111 | Web: [elcafcu.org](http://elcafcu.org)



**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.

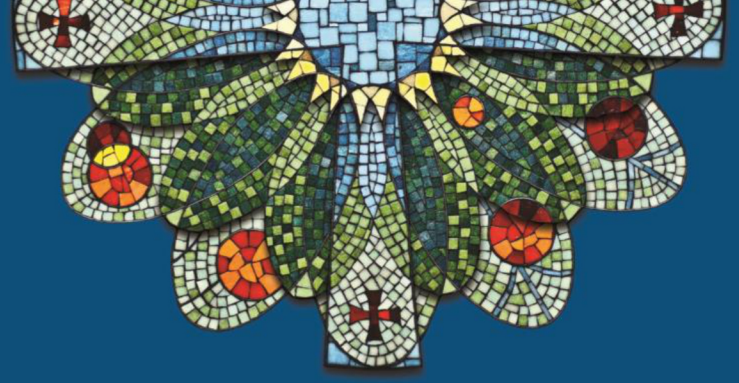
In 2021, we ushered in the third cohort of participants in the ELCA's Resourceful Servants program, designed to improve financial wellness and assist rostered leaders in building emergency savings funds. In this matching program, ELCA rostered leaders make ongoing deposits to their Credit Union emergency 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](https://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](https://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".

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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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

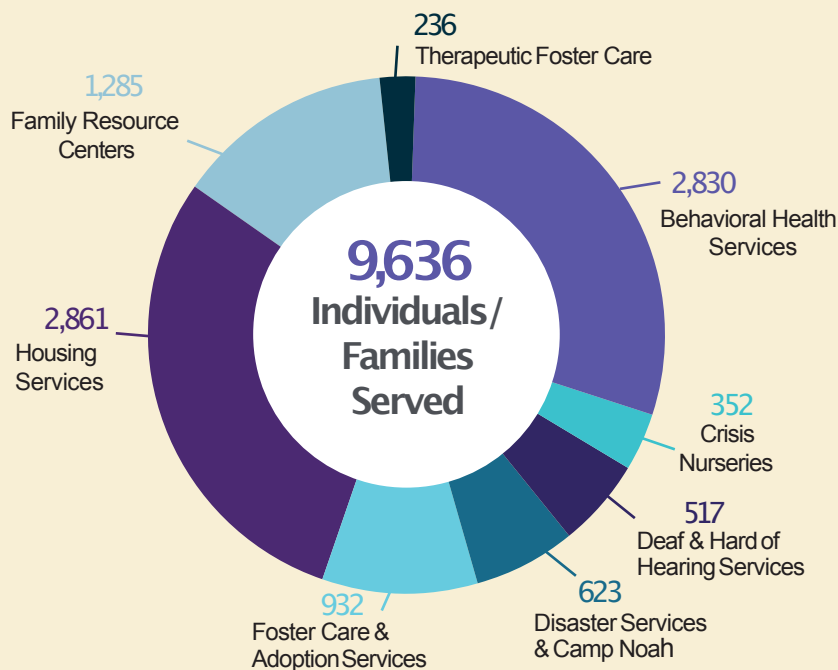
# A Movement of 25,000

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.



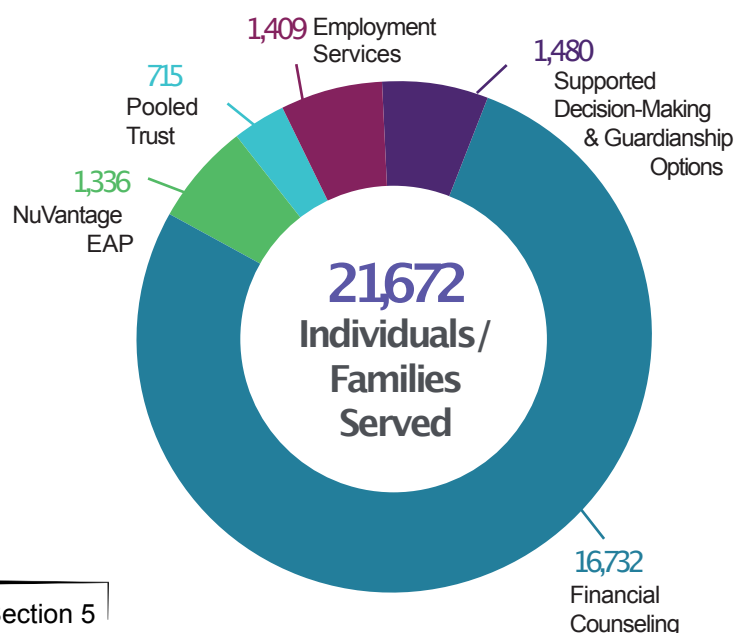
## INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY SERVICES

Strengthening individuals and families to promote resiliency.



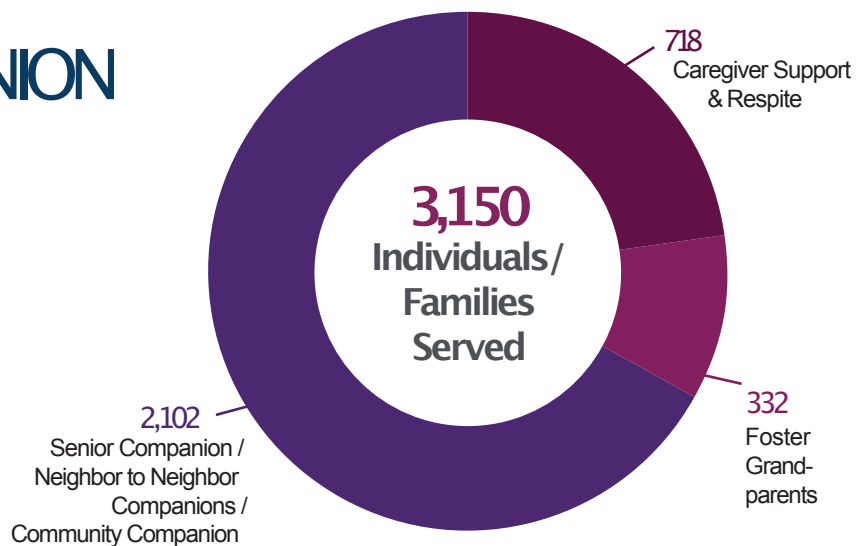
## EMPLOYMENT, FINANCIAL & LEGAL SERVICES

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



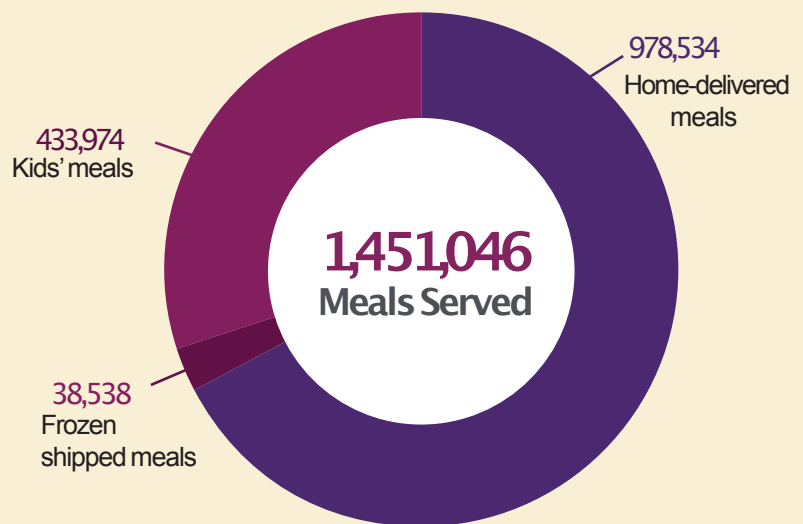
# CAREGIVER & COMPANION SERVICES

Helping caregivers and older adults maintain healthy, balanced lifestyles.



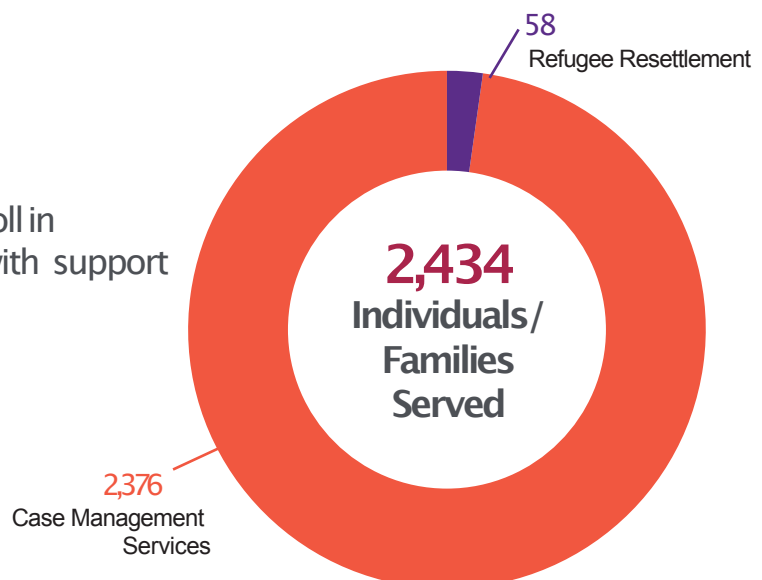
# NUTRITION SERVICES

Offering healthy, delicious meal options available to anyone statewide.



# REFUGEE SERVICES

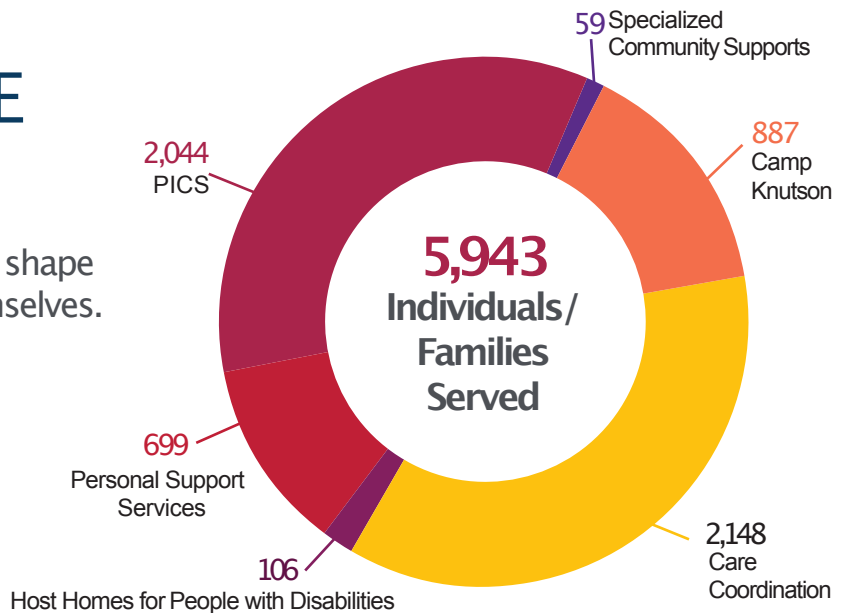
Helping new arrivals secure housing, enroll in classes, find employment and connect with support they need to gain self-sufficiency





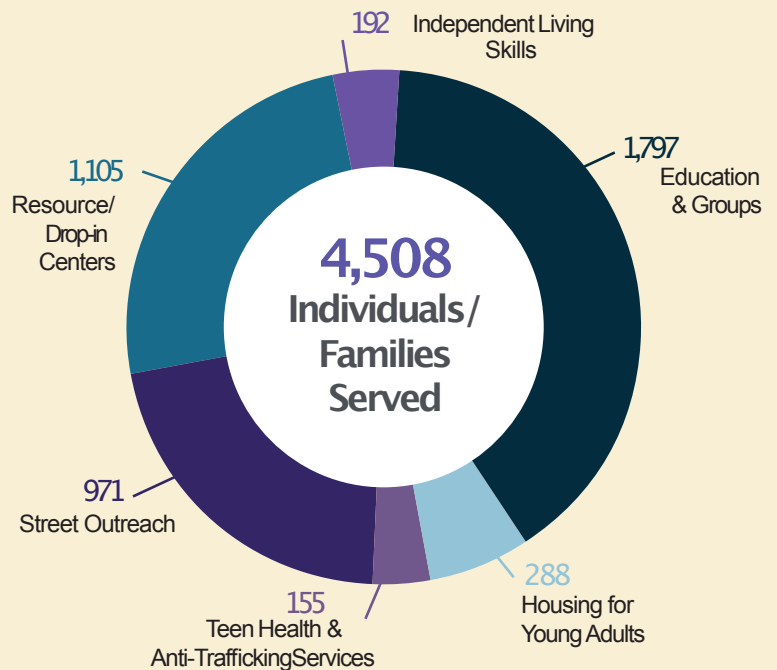
# SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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](http://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.

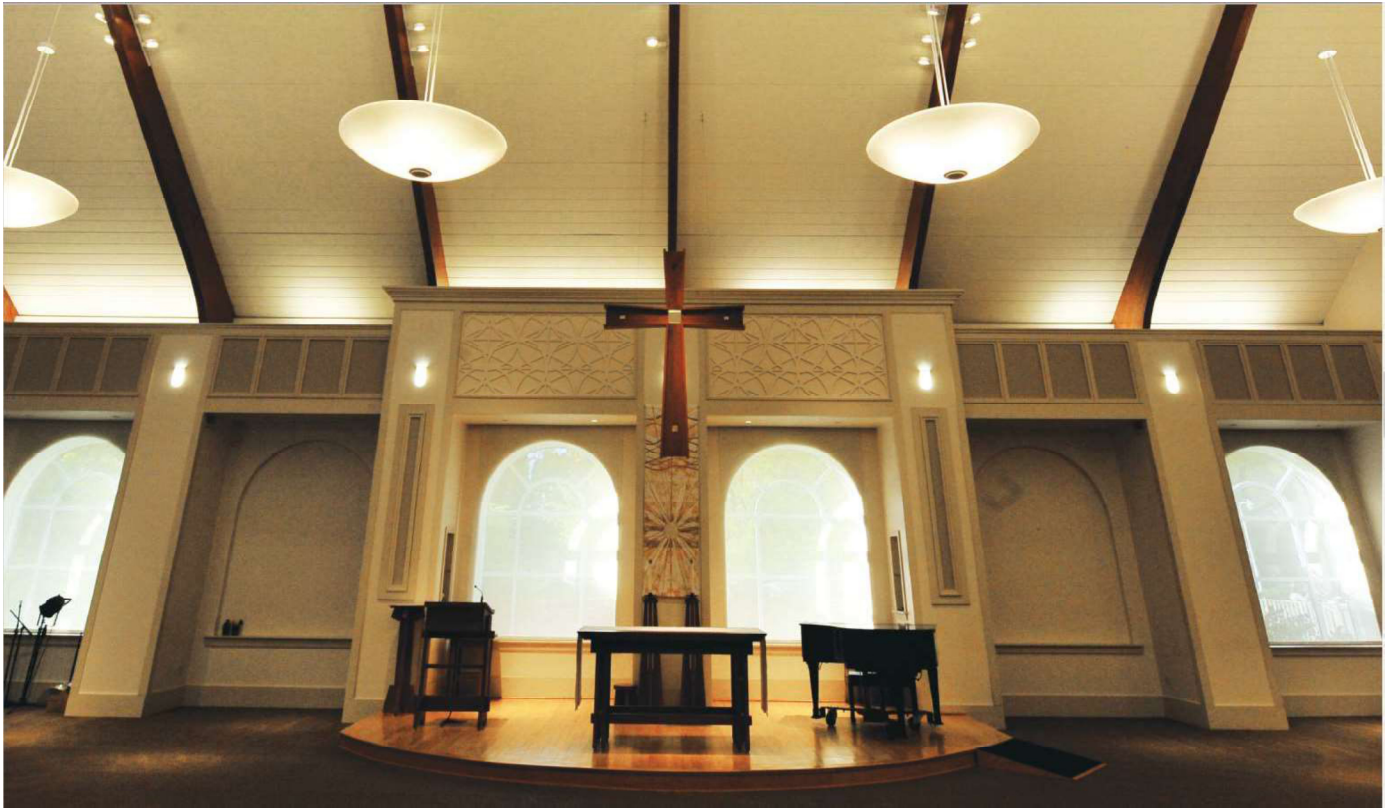
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**MIF at work in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod (as of December 31, 2021):**

- 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](http://mif.elca.org) or contact your Regional Manager LuAnn Ferguson: 651-900-3575 [luann.ferguson@elca.org](mailto: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 21<sup>st</sup> 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*