



Metropolitan Chicago Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**STRONGER TOGETHER**

2026  
BOOK  
OF REPORTS

[mcselca.org](http://mcselca.org)

1420 West Dickens Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60614  
773-248-0021

# WELCOME

## METROPOLITAN CHICAGO SYNOD

*In Jesus' Name. Proclaim the Gospel – Make Disciples – Do Justice.*

### *Stronger Together*

*"Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing."  
— Thessalonians 5:11*

Grace to you and peace from the God who strengthens us, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is our honor to commend to you the Book of Reports for the 39th Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly. This year's assembly theme, "Stronger Together," reminds us of the interdependent balance and wholeness of the Church, journeying together to manifest God's healing and justice in the world. This theme recognizes that we live in a social environment that values competition more than collaboration, and, increasingly, an environment characterized more by hostility than harmony. This bias toward competition and antagonism creates division and unnecessary suffering.

The theme "Stronger Together" also reminds us that there is a better way. Scripture offers us the alternative vision of a wholeness and a strength that cannot be attained by any individual living and working in isolation. We can only find it by seeing ourselves, or our congregation, or our denomination, and our society as one precious thread in the complete tapestry of God's creation.

In the pages of this report, you will discover many ways that ministries across the Metropolitan Chicago Synod manifest God's healing and justice. Last year, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly elected Bishop Yehiel Curry to serve as presiding bishop, requiring the Metropolitan Chicago Synod to seek an interim bishop and enter into a new bishop call process. This has been a turbulent year for many in the synod, on many levels. In the tumult, God has been present as the Spirit continues to encourage, renew, and equip the church to respond to each new challenge in the world today. As you will read here, the ministries of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod continue to spread the good news of Christ in both word and deed. Together, we amplify the counter-cultural message that all suffering matters and that the church may be a place of healing and courage building.

As you read this report, we invite you to join us in celebrating these ministries – your ministries – as we journey together as the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, not as competitors but as a diverse church unified in the gospel, each part of God's unique tapestry. In this tapestry, it becomes clear that we are, indeed, "Stronger Together."

**Bishop Wayne Miller**

Metropolitan Chicago Synod Bishop

**Rev. Erin Clausen**

Metropolitan Chicago Synod Secretary

*\* the word 'synod' comes from a Greek word meaning 'traveling together'*



# BIENVENIDO

## SÍNODO METROPOLITANO DE CHICAGO

*En el nombre de Jesús. Proclama el Evangelio. Forma Discípulos. Haz Justicia.*

### *Más Fuertes Juntos*

*"Por lo tanto, ánimo y edifíquense unos a otros, como en efecto ya lo hacen."  
— 1 Tesalonicenses 5:11*

Es un honor para nosotros recomendarles el Libro de Informes de la 39ª Asamblea del Sínodo Metropolitano de Chicago. El tema de la asamblea de este año, «Más fuertes juntos», nos recuerda el equilibrio interdependiente y la plenitud de la Iglesia, que camina junta para manifestar la sanación y la justicia de Dios en el mundo. Este tema reconoce que vivimos en un entorno social que valora más la competencia que la colaboración y, cada vez más, un entorno caracterizado más por la hostilidad que por la armonía. Esta inclinación hacia la competencia y el antagonismo crea división y sufrimiento innecesario.

El tema «Más fuertes juntos» también nos recuerda que existe un camino mejor. Las Escrituras nos ofrecen una visión alternativa de plenitud y fortaleza que ningún individuo puede alcanzar viviendo y trabajando de forma aislada. Solo podemos encontrarlo al vernos a nosotros mismos, a nuestra congregación, a nuestra denominación y a nuestra sociedad como un solo hilo precioso en el tapiz completo de la creación de Dios.

En las páginas de este informe, descubrirán muchas maneras en que los ministerios del Sínodo Metropolitano de Chicago manifiestan la sanación y la justicia de Dios. El año pasado, la Asamblea General de la ELCA eligió al obispo Yehiel Curry como obispo presidente, lo que obligó al Sínodo Metropolitano de Chicago a buscar un obispo interino e iniciar un nuevo proceso de elección de obispo. Este ha sido un año turbulento para nosotros en el sínodo, en muchos aspectos. En medio de los cambios, Dios ha estado presente, pues el Espíritu continúa animando, renovando, y capacitando a la iglesia para responder a cada nuevo desafío del mundo actual. Como leerán aquí, los ministerios del Sínodo Metropolitano de Chicago continúan difundiendo las buenas nuevas de Cristo tanto de palabra como de obra. Juntos, amplificamos el mensaje contracultural de que todo sufrimiento importa y que la iglesia puede ser un lugar de sanación y fortaleza.

Al leer este informe, los invitamos a unirse a nosotros para celebrar estos ministerios —sus ministerios— mientras caminamos juntos como el Sínodo Metropolitano de Chicago, no como competidores, sino como una iglesia diversa unida en el evangelio, cada uno parte del singular tapiz de Dios. En este tapiz, se hace evidente que, en efecto, somos «Más fuertes juntos».

**Obispo Wayne Miller**

Sínodo Metropolitano de Chicago, Obispo

**Rev. Erin Clausen**

Secretaria del Sínodo Metropolitano de Chicago

*\* la palabra 'sínodo' viene de la palabra Griega que significa 'viajar juntos'*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS



## PRESIDING BISHOP REPORT

English / 6                      Español / 7

## SYNOD OFFICERS REPORTS

**Bishop's Report** *Wayne Miller* / 10

**Vice President's Report** *Terry Henderson* / 15

**Secretary's Report** *Erin Clausen* / 16

Summary of Synod Council Actions / 19

Minutes of the Synod Assembly / 25

Necrologist Report / 58

Changes in the Synod Roster and Congregations / 60

Synod Roster of Congregations / 62

Synod Roster of Ministers / 68

**Treasurer's Report** *Yvette M. NewberryWhite* / 74

Proposed Operating Budget Fiscal Year 2027 / 76

Proposed 2027 Budget Notes / 78

Independent Auditor's Report / 79

Statement of Financial Position / 83

Statement of Activities / 85

Statement of Cash Flows / 86

Statement of Functional Expenses / 87

Notes to Financial Statements / 88

Schedule of Synodical Treasury Expenditures for Grants to Beneficiaries as Compared to Budget / 101

Schedule of Synodical Treasury Standing Committee Expenses / 102

Schedule of Operations by Fund / 103

## CONFERENCE REPORTS

Near West / 106

North / 106

Northeast / 107

Southwest / 108

West / 109

## MINISTRY REPORTS

African Descent / 112

Allyship Team / 115

Candidacy Committee / 116

Companion Synod Advisory Team / 117

Deaf Ministry / 119

Ecumenical Office / 120

Environmental Concerns Working Group / 121

Working Group on the Middle East / 122

Youth Ministry Network / 124

## PARTNERS IN MINISTRY REPORTS

Advocate Health Care / 126

Concordia Place / 130

Global Refugee / 131

Lutheran Campus Ministry *University of Chicago* / 134

Lutheran Campus Ministry *Northwestern* / 136

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois / 137

Lutherdale Outdoor Ministries / 139

Mission Investment Fund / 141

Portico Benefits / 142

RefugeeOne / 143

Region V / 147

## COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES REPORTS

Luther College / 149

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago / 151

Wartburg Theological Seminary / 153

St. Olaf College / 154

## OTHER DOCUMENTS

Rules of Organization and Procedure / 156

Constitution / 170

Compensation Guidelines / 217

# PRESIDING BISHOP REPORT

REV. YEHIEL CURRY



*"I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).*

March 23, 2026

Dear siblings in Christ,

As you gather for your synod assembly, I want to express my gratitude for what you are doing — and have been doing — for this church, *our* church.

In the months since I was installed as presiding bishop, I have been focused on connection. Some of you have heard me talk about what it means to be a connected church. This vision of connectedness grows directly out of one of the three priorities we, as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, have named for this season of our life together.

When we lifted up these priorities, we committed ourselves to them not as abstract ideas but as guiding commitments for how we live and serve as church. As I reflected on them, the third priority stood out with particular clarity: to be a connected, sustainable church, raising the bar together.

That priority has been shaping my thinking and my leadership. It asks not just what we do but how we do it — together, across congregations, synods and the churchwide organization. Connectedness is not a program or a slogan; it is a way of being church that recognizes our shared calling and our shared responsibility. This is not my church. It is yours. It is ours, together. The ministries you carry out in your congregations and synods are not just yours — they are ours together.

Over the next several years, you will hear this priority expressed with greater focus and clarity. In 2026, our emphasis is on connection — strengthening relationships, listening deeply and recognizing how much we depend on one another.

In 2027, you will begin to hear me speak more intentionally about sustainability — how we steward our people, our resources and our structures so that our witness remains strong for generations to come. By 2028, connection and sustainability will come together in a shared language of togetherness, as we more fully live into who God is calling us to be as church.

So, when you hear language about being together, it is about living out the ELCA's vision of a world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation. It matters deeply to me that we know who we are, moving forward as one body, trusting God and one another.

I believe this is how connection is built — not by standing alone but by being church together.

With gratitude and hope,



The Rev. Yehiel Curry  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

# REPORTE DE OBISPA PRESIDENTE

REV. YEHIEL CURRY



*“Yo soy la vid y ustedes las ramas. El que permanece en mí, como yo en él, dará mucho fruto; separados de mí no pueden ustedes hacer nada” (Juan 15:5). 850am-1005*

23 de marzo de 2026

Estimados hermanos en Cristo:

Ahora que van a reunirse en su asamblea sinodal, quiero expresar mi gratitud por lo que están y han estado haciendo por esta iglesia, *nuestra* iglesia.

En los meses desde que fui instalado como obispo presidente, me he concentrado en la conexión. Algunos de ustedes me han oído hablar sobre lo que significa ser una iglesia conectada. Esta visión de conexión surge directamente de una de las tres prioridades que nosotros, como la Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en América, hemos nombrado para este período de nuestra vida juntos.

Cuando destacamos estas prioridades, nos comprometimos con ellas, no como ideas abstractas, sino como compromisos que nos guían en cómo vivir y servir como iglesia. Al reflexionar sobre aquellas, la tercera prioridad sobresalió con una claridad particular: ser una iglesia conectada y sostenible, elevando el estándar todos juntos.

Esta prioridad ha estado moldeando mi pensamiento y mi liderazgo. No solo pregunta qué hacemos, sino cómo lo hacemos — juntos, en todas las congregaciones, los sínodos y la organización nacional. La conexión no es un programa ni un eslogan; es una forma de ser iglesia que reconoce nuestro llamado y responsabilidad compartidos. Esta no es mi iglesia. Es de ustedes. Es nuestra, juntos. Los ministerios que llevan a cabo en sus congregaciones y sínodos no son solo suyos —son nuestros juntos.

Durante los próximos años van a escuchar esta prioridad expresada con mayor enfoque y claridad. En 2026, nuestro énfasis está en la conexión: fortalecer las relaciones, escuchar profundamente y reconocer cuánto dependemos unos de otros.

En 2027 comenzarán a oírme hablar con más intención sobre la sostenibilidad: cómo cuidamos a nuestra gente, nuestros recursos y nuestras estructuras para que nuestro testimonio siga siendo fuerte para las generaciones venideras. Para 2028, la conexión y la sostenibilidad se unirán en un lenguaje compartido de unidad, mientras vivimos más plenamente lo que Dios nos está llamando a ser como iglesia.

Entonces, cuando escuchen lenguaje sobre estar juntos, este tiene que ver con vivir la visión de la ELCA de un mundo que experimenta la diferencia que la gracia y el amor de Dios en Cristo marcan en todas las personas y la creación. Es sumamente importante para mí que sepamos quiénes somos, avanzando como un solo cuerpo, confiando en Dios y en los demás.

Creo que así es como se forja la conexión: no estando solos, sino siendo iglesia juntos.

Con gratitud y esperanza,



El Rvdo. Yehiel Curry  
Obispo Presidente  
Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en América



# SYNOD OFFICERS

Bishop

WAYNE MILLER

Vice President

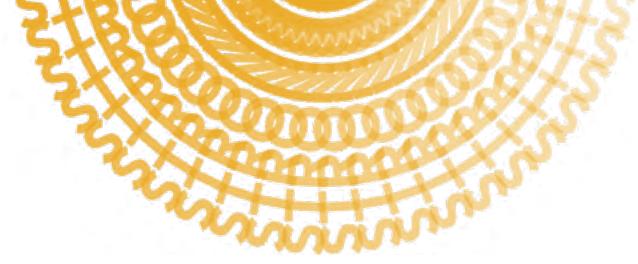
TERRY HENDERSON

Secretary

ERIN CLAUSEN

Treasurer

YVETTE NEWBERRYWHITE



# BISHOP'S REPORT

REV. WAYNE MILLER

*"Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing."*

— 1 Thessalonians 5:11

The theme for the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly is Stronger Together, an opportunity to celebrate all the ways in which the ELCA, on the territory of this synod, is a community deeply engaged in encouraging one another and building each other up as we engage in the process of calling our next synod bishop.

For me, personally, this has been a year of joyful and unexpected opportunity, as I have returned briefly to a role that I occupied as the called bishop for 12 years, from 2007-2019. I am profoundly grateful to Bishop Yehiel Curry and the Synod Council for entrusting me with this stewardship in the wake of his election as Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.



And I would go on to say that "stewardship" has consistently been the central theme of my work here from Sept. 1, 2025, to the official beginning of our new bishop's service on Sept. 1, 2026. I re-entered the bishop's office immediately mindful of the excellent leadership we have enjoyed since I retired in 2019. Bishop Curry has consistently and creatively advanced the level of confidence in the synod's commitment to the primary work of inspiring, equipping, and extending the reach of congregational mission. As a result, my role here has, to a great degree, been that of a "steward of continuity," by doing all that I can to keep anxiety in the synod low, to keep morale high, and to keep the ship moving forward on a steady course. This may sound like a simple and unambitious goal. But in our cultural climate of instability, hostility, polarization, institutional contraction, and increasingly egregious injustice, the stewardship of continuity has had ample challenges of its own.

By God's grace, I have not been shouldering this responsibility alone. I am grateful beyond measure to have had the opportunity to serve alongside the extraordinarily faithful and capable staff of the synod office: Pastor Kathy Nolte, Pastor Carla Thompson-Powell, Pastor Sunitha Mortha, Pastor Nathan Klein, Tom Anderson, Deacon Julie Sevig, Deacon Pam Shearman, Heather Haynes, Pastor Paul Willey, Rojas-Banda, Pastor Wyvetta Bullock and Pastor Anna Roper, and a special thanks to Pastor Robin Brown, who has stepped in this year as my administrative assistant to keep my life organized and my priorities clear. Working together, we have been far stronger than any of us could be alone.

## REPORTING ON THE UNKNOWN

In general, my reports to the Synod Assembly during my time as the regularly called bishop were designed to be forward-looking and set a tone for what I thought was coming. This report, however, is given at a time when



future directions for our shared mission and ministry are in the hands of a new bishop yet to be elected. So, it would be presumptuous for me to forecast specifics about where we will be moving next.

Nonetheless, I do not want to miss an opportunity to share some of the perspectives that necessarily emerge at the end of a long career in pastoral ministry, one-third of which was spent in the office of synod bishop. Thus, I would like to frame my reflections more as a series of questions than answers; wonderings rather than conclusions, in hopes that these wonderings might open a lively conversation within the synod about where the Holy Spirit might be calling us next:

## I WONDER ABOUT "GROWTH"

For virtually my entire pastoral career, I have labored under the assumption that institutional expansion is directly correlated with mission success. This assumption is reinforced by the measurement parameters of our annual congregational reports. We measure attendance numbers, participation numbers, financial contribution numbers, endowment numbers, baptism numbers, membership transfer numbers, etc. And all these measurements imply that institutional expansion is "success" and institutional contraction is "failure." And this has significant implications for both our anxiety and our morale.

It is no secret to anyone that the institutional and social pressures on our congregations are formidable and growing. As our congregations age, they shrink. As the costs of staff and building maintenance expand, survival anxiety expands proportionately. Because of this, the number of congregations and ministries in the synod, as throughout the ELCA, continues to decline. When I began my ministry in the bishop's office in 2007, I began every sermon with a greeting from the 206 congregations and mission communities of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod. This was down significantly from the 250 congregations that comprised this synod at the birth of the ELCA in 1988. Today, we are the home of 148 congregations and communities.

So, we worry... obsessively... about growth and attrition. But even though congregational growth is exhilarating and energizing, I wonder, now, if the metrics of institutional expansion are sufficient to tell us how we are doing in the things that matter most. Some congregations expand because they continue to be joyful, imaginative, flexible, and responsive to the gifts, passions, and needs of those within the church and those in the neighborhood. But some congregations expand because they are chasing and pandering to a popular culture based on beliefs and values that are polar opposites to the way of the cross. Some congregations decline because they have lost touch with the mission field they have been called to serve and have curved relentlessly in on themselves. But some congregations have trouble expanding their membership because they are living faithfully by very unpopular and counter-cultural attitudes toward things like consumerism, materialism, power, stewardship, violence, compassion, social responsibility, hospitality, interpersonal relationships, and the value of promises. It is not always easy to grow large in a culture with a radically different vision of what it means to live life well. And yet we are all stronger because of the steadfast faithfulness of their work and witness.

So, I wonder if one of the challenges before us is to look for new ways to measure our faithfulness that focus on “transformational impact” rather than institutional expansion alone. Who is being changed by our presence and our effort? How is that transformation happening? How are we being transformed by worship, and learning, and our engagement with the world? Do we still have confidence that if we faithfully plant and water, God will give the growth that is sufficient for us—or must we ourselves grow the church?

## I WONDER ABOUT “FLOW”

Despite our persistent anxiety about not having “enough” resources to do what we need to do, it is important to remember that the ELCA is NOT a poor church. Shortly before my retirement in 2019, we concluded a comprehensive campaign that yielded \$250 million in contributions to the ministries of this Church. The ELCA Foundation manages \$1.2 billion in invested assets; the Mission Investment Fund holds \$779 million in total assets. The Metropolitan Chicago Synod alone owns and operates \$454 million in property assets. And our collective congregational endowment assets are now reported at \$41 million, which means that our endowments almost exactly equal our regular giving of \$42 million.

But historically, the mission of the ELCA has not been funded by fixed assets, investments, and accumulated wealth. The ELCA is a denomination constructed as a great river with a lock and dam system along its way. Members of the body of Christ generously pour resources into their congregational offering plates, some of which meet local operational, ministry, and mission needs.

But there is also an abundance that flows downstream to the synod. The synod then uses a portion of that abundance for operational, ministry, and mission needs for the local synod. Those expenses include an adequate staff to support the work of congregations, and grants to congregations for new mission endeavors.

More than half of the synod’s income then flows out to mission partners in the area, and to the churchwide organization to meet operational, ministry, and mission needs including distribution to mission work all over the world. This is how the synod extends your mission.

It is a very sound flow chart for our resources, and one that is almost completely dependent upon the individual generosity and institutional trust of millions of weekly worshippers providing a steady, reliable income stream.

But the culture has changed. Institutional trust is at an all-time low. Operational expenses at each point in our stewardship river are increasing dramatically. And a growing proportion of our collective resources is in the form of wealth rather than income. Wealth, in the form of property assets and investment assets, is a glacier—a “frozen” resource—providing only the interest “melt” off the top of the iceberg for the flow of the river. As a result, all expressions of the Church... congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization... are increasingly dependent upon wealthy individuals and the ability of each expression of the Church to accrue their own wealth by building endowments and investment portfolios as a source of security to withstand the declining stream of regular voluntary income.

The Metropolitan Chicago Synod is part of this trend. As more congregations have closed, building and wealth assets have accrued to the synod and have been placed in prudent investments. The value of those assets has grown to \$15 million. Bishop Curry has greatly expanded the use of those funds for grants to congregations, mostly used as innovation grants or start-up grants for new mission ventures.

But the great disparities of wealth and income that persist in this synod mean that many of our most vibrant and necessary missions are simply not part of the flow. And innovation granting does not address the increasing expenses and decreasing income that these ministries require in order to keep doing the vital work that makes us stronger together.

So, I wonder now, if there are prudent, responsible ways that we have not yet imagined to shift our investment strategy beyond investing in the accumulation of wealth, to investment in communities and neighborhoods, through partnerships with local congregations, that allow us to open a valve and adequately irrigate the entire landscape of the synod in a more equitable way.

I wonder if it is time for the synod to follow the flow of our entire economy and undertake a stewardship development campaign that goes beyond merely asking congregations to put more into the river, and instead pushes toward inviting wealthy individuals to support directly missions of the synod that give them joy and satisfaction and hope.

And these questions lead directly to my third wondering:

## I WONDER ABOUT “SELF-SUFFICIENCY”

We live and work in a cultural environment that places a very high value on individual self-sufficiency, or self-reliance. Our relationships are increasingly transactional, grounded in quid pro quo exchange rather than commitment to long-term covenants. We tend to see interdependence as a failure of independence rather than as the fulfillment of our individual gifts. We see competition for scarce resources—so-called “social Darwinism”—as an economic ideal, and collaboration and cooperation, at best, as a temporary necessity on the path toward individual separation from the crowd.

It would be difficult to construct a worldview of self-sufficiency from the New Testament, where we read in Acts that the early Church held all things in common and each received according to their needs from the commonwealth. And I wonder which members of the Body of Christ we see as self-sufficient; the hands, the feet, the nose, the eyes? Our instincts, as a deep religious tradition, tell us that none of us is self-sufficient. All that I am and all that I have comes by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. My life is built on the blessing and generosity of all who have come before me and all who work beside me. And the value of my own life is that it is a gift that I can use to love and serve my neighbors—both now and for generations to come.

And yet, the ELCA has constructed its entire ecclesiology around the essential building block of the independently incorporated, self-sufficient congregation.

It is a model built on white middle-class values in close alignment with white middle-class cultural assumptions about the ultimate value of individualism, autonomy, independence, and the perpetual growth of institutional strength and capacity. And it is a model that served us well in our cultural environment for generations.

But it is also a model built on a flow structure that no longer exists, growth assumptions that no longer exist, and equitable distribution assumptions that have never existed. The Metropolitan Chicago Synod includes 16 zip codes in which the median household income is less than \$50,000 per year (approximately the poverty level for a family of four). We have ELCA congregations serving in 15 of those 16 zip codes, all trying to do mission on a congregational self-sufficiency model that depends upon a reliable annual income stream of \$200,000 per year (minimally) from free-will offerings given by those people living on less than \$50,000 per year.

I wonder if we are ready, yet, to face the hard reality that, with all the best intentions and for all the right reasons, we have created a system that is inherently and inescapably institutionally unstable in the places where institutional stability and mission continuity are most urgent. This institutional instability also contributes to a leadership crisis, where it is nearly impossible to invite new people into professional rostered ministry careers when they are expected to give up four years of lost earnings and put their lives on a credit card during seminary in order to graduate into a call that cannot reliably provide a livelihood for themselves and their families.

## NEVERTHELESS . . .

Underneath all of these wonderings, of course, there are also certainties. The challenges are great, and no single person—even our new bishop—has the whole answer to how we are being called to live into the adventure that God is opening before us... but TOGETHER... together as individuals, together as congregations, together with ELCA partners, together with ecumenical and interfaith relationships, together with business interests, together with political leaders... TOGETHER we are strong enough; we have enough; we are enough. God's grace is still sufficient for us. We only need to grow in our capacity to live with our hands open, opening once to freely receive God's abundance and opening again to freely release what we have freely received.

And it is a certainty that no matter what challenges are before us, the ministries of the ELCA and the Metropolitan Chicago Synod are giving life, changing lives, and saving lives every single day, in a thousand ways. And it is in turning toward the strength between us that we also turn toward the Christ in whom we live and move and have our being.

### **Rev. Wayne Miller**

Metropolitan Chicago Synod Interim Bishop



# VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

TERRY HENDERSON

*“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel.”*

— Philippians 1:27

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Family of Christ, as I continue to serve as vice president of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, I am humbled and honored to serve. You have entrusted me to be a part of the governance of our synod—a call that I take seriously, trusting God to lead and guide us. I look forward to the opportunity to participate in synod ordinations and other gatherings, where I get the opportunity to speak with members of congregations.



Thank you, Synod Council, for your commitment and dedication to the governance of our synod. In every decision, you discern how it affects the congregations and/or synod. Our quarterly meetings continue to be hybrid, with most members meeting in person.

Synodical vice presidents continue to meet monthly via zoom for learning and clarification of our responsibilities. We are often joined by a representative from the churchwide organization.

Though his tenure in his second term was short-lived, I would like to thank Bishop Curry for his compassion, insight and dedication to our synod. May God continue to bless Bishop Curry as he carries out his call as presiding bishop.

Thank you to Wayne Miller, our current interim bishop. Your presence has brought a seamless transition of wisdom and leadership in our synod. Though short-lived, I have enjoyed our time together.

We remain a vibrant, faithful, energetic and courageous synod led by God. I give thanks to God for the many blessings bestowed upon us.

Yours in Christ,

**Terry Henderson**

Vice President, Metro Chicago Synod



# SECRETARY'S REPORT

REV. ERIN CLAUSEN

The church body of which we are a part, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, is organized as one body with three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. This understanding is outlined in our governing documents, which are covenants—sacred promises—between each of the expressions of the ELCA. The three expressions of church have a long legacy of sharing the good news of God’s grace (in both law and gospel) in many ways. While the congregations and ministries of the church have different ways of proclaiming the good news, we recognize that we proclaim the same fundamental message across the church. In the ELCA, our underlying conviction about who we are as a church is that we are stronger together.



The governing documents of each of the three expressions of church outline this understanding. Your congregation’s governing documents (constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolution, as well as church policies) are covenants between the ELCA, the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, and your members. These sacred promises connect us and strengthen our collective ministry. The parts of the constitution called “required provisions” (marked with an asterisk \* in your constitution) are those parts that keep our unique and diverse congregations connected to one another in one confession of faith, polity, and commitment to the gospel. Keeping your governing documents up to date (and following the documents you have adopted) is vitally important to ensure your ministry continues. Updates to the Model Constitution for Congregations were adopted by the Churchwide Assembly in 2025; I encourage your congregation to consider adopting these as soon as possible. I also know that this process often seems tedious and agonizing. But there’s good news! It does not need to be that way. As your synod secretary, one of my roles is to help your congregation with the details of your congregation’s governing documents and how your current situation informs your ministry and congregational operation. The synod’s Constitution Review Committee stands ready to assist as well. Please contact me any time you have questions or want to begin this important process.

One way the expressions of church operate stronger together is through the connection of congregations to synods and the churchwide unit. Each congregation has the opportunity to send voting members to the synod assembly, to receive reports from the synod officers, to elect these officers and members of the synod council and synod committees, and to consider resolutions and memorials regarding actions of the synod. During the 2025 Synod Assembly, the assembly re-elected Bishop Yehiel Curry to a second term. Then, at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly, the churchwide assembly elected Bishop Curry to the position of presiding bishop of the ELCA. The synod council and staff worked with Bishop Curry to develop an interim plan until the synod assembly could elect a new bishop, and we have been delighted that Bishop Emeritus Wayne Miller agreed to serve as interim bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod. At the 2026 Synod Assembly, the assembly will



elect a bishop who will begin September 1, 2026. As veterans to this process, we are confident that Bishop Miller will work to make the transition as smooth as possible. I have been grateful for Bishop Miller's careful and thoughtful guidance of the synod this year as he has prepared congregations, synod staff, and rostered leaders to receive our new bishop.

As we continue our ministry together, I remain honored to serve you as your elected synod secretary. I appreciate the opportunity to work with congregations, ministries, and leaders across the synod who seek to manifest God's presence on this earth. I am grateful to the many ministries who have trusted me and the Constitution Review Committee to assist as you steward your congregation's governing documents. I deeply appreciate Interim Bishop Wayne Miller, Vice President Terry Henderson, Treasurer Yvette NewberryWhite, the dedicated volunteers on the Synod Council and executive committee, as well as the synod's pastoral and professional staff. Finally, I thank you and your congregations for your ministry. As we journey together in this world, may we daily discover that we are indeed Stronger Together.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Rev. Erin Clausen**

Metropolitan Chicago Synod Secretary







# Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council Meeting

## 2025 Summary of Actions

- S.C.25.01.01** Vote for Synod Council to approve the Consent agenda as amended.
- S.C.25.01.02** Vote for Synod Council to move to the Retirement Roster Rev. James Nieman.
- S.C.25.01.03** Vote for Synod Council to approve On Leave From Call Status for Rev. Matthew Zemanick.
- S.C.25.01.04** Vote for Synod Council to approve On Leave From Call Status for Rev. Kristian Johnson.
- S.C.25.01.05** Vote for Synod Council to adopt the minutes of the October 26, 2024 synod council meeting as amended.
- S.C.25.01.06** Vote for Synod Council to extend a Synod Council call to Dcn. Tracy Katschke-Goss as the Events Stewardship Manager at Loaves and Fishes Community Services, Naperville.
- S.C.25.01.07** Vote for Synod Council to extend a Synod Council call to Rev. Deanna L. Langle as the Campus Pastor at Lutheran Campus Ministry at Northwestern University.
- S.C.25.01.08** Vote for Synod Council to formally adopt the resolution “Affirming Metropolitan Chicago Synod’s ‘Reconciling in Christ’ Commitments” as presented at the 2024 Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly and referred by the rules of the assembly to the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council, as presented.
- S.C.25.01.09** Vote for Synod Council to adopt as a Continuing Resolution the official statement of welcome as a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) synod previously adopted as a part of the resolution “Affirming Metropolitan Chicago Synod’s “Reconciling in Christ” Commitments” and numbered in the

appropriate section of Metropolitan Chicago Synod's governing documents as S.6.04.A25.

- S.C.25.01.10** Vote for Synod Council to grant privilege of voice and vote at the 2025 Synod Assembly to those persons on the Retirement, Disability, and On Leave from Call rosters who have appropriately indicated their desire for such privileges, as presented.
- S.C.25.01.11** Vote that the Synod authorizes the following ministries that continue as Synod Authorized Worshiping Communities in 2025:  
[Chosen Bethel Family Ministries, Chicago] (Pastor Walter & Pastor Sandra Gillespie)  
[Joy Life Center, Chicago] (SAM Bobby Lewis)  
[Love Faith & Hope, Chicago] (Pastor Felicia Campbell)  
[Mision Luterana Unidad de Berwyn] (Pastor Maria Rojas)  
[Mosaic Lutheran Church, Chicago] (Pastor Manoj Gunthoti)  
[San Timoteo, Chicago] (Pastor Patricia Cuyatti Chavez)  
[Shepherds Heart Ministry, Chicago] (Pastor Paul Willey)  
[Tumaini Swahili Chapel, Chicago]  
[Tumaini Swahili Chapel, Aurora]
- S.C.25.01.12** Vote for Synod Council to designate Resurrection, Oak Forest as a Synod Authorized Ministry.
- S.C.25.04.13** Vote for Synod Council to recommend the proposed 02/01/26 - 01/31/27 budget to the 2025 Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly for debate and adoption.
- S.C.25.04.14** Vote for Synod Council to adopt the minutes of the January 25, 2025 synod council meeting as presented.
- S.C.25.04.15** Vote for Synod Council to grant privilege of voice and vote at the 2025 Synod Assembly to those persons on the Retirement, Disability, and On Leave from Call rosters, and those serving the Metropolitan Chicago Synod from full-communication partners who have appropriately indicated their desire for such privileges, as amended.
- S.C.25.04.16** Vote for Synod Council to postpone the previously considered motion until following the bishop's report.
- S.C.25.04.17** Vote for Synod Council to recommend the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2025 Synod Assembly to the 2025 Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly as presented.
- S.C.25.04.18** Vote for Synod Council to recommend the Memorial "National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools" for consideration at the 2025 Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly as presented.



- S.C.25.04.19** Vote for Synod Council to recommend the Memorial “To Stand up for Human Rights, an End to the Occupation of Palestine, and Recognition of Palestinian Statehood” for consideration at the 2025 Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly as presented.
- S.C.25.04.20** Vote for Synod Council to extend a Synod Council call to Rev. Nixon Mwitula as the Mission Developer of Tumaini, Aurora.
- S.C.25.04.21** Vote for Synod Council to extend a Synod Council call to Rev. Tiffany Chaney as the Vice President of Mission and Spiritual Care at Advocate Health, Oak Brook, IL.
- S.C.25.04.22** Vote for Synod Council grant privilege of voice and vote at the 2025 Synod Assembly to those persons on the Retirement, Disability, and On Leave from Call rosters, and those serving the Metropolitan Chicago Synod from full-communion partners who have appropriately indicated their desire for such privileges, as amended.
- S.C.25.05.23** Vote for Synod Council to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented.
- S.C.25.05.24** Vote for Synod Council to grant On Leave From Call status to Rev. Hannah Hawkinson.
- S.C.25.05.25** Vote for Synod Council to grant On Leave From Call status to Rev. Christopher Drummond.
- S.C.25.05.26** Vote for Synod Council to adopt the minutes of the April 26, 2025 synod council meeting as presented.
- S.C.25.05.27** Vote for Synod Council to grant privilege of voice and vote at the 2025 Synod Assembly to those persons on the Retirement, Disability, and On Leave from Call rosters, and those serving the Metropolitan Chicago Synod from full-communion partners who have appropriately indicated their desire for such privileges, as presented.
- S.C.25.05.28** Vote for Synod Council to recommend the 2025 Synod Assembly Agenda to the 2025 Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly as presented.
- S.C.25.05.29** Vote for Synod Council to recommend the “Land Acknowledgement Resolution” for adoption at the 2025 Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly as presented.
- S.C.25.05.30** Vote for Synod Council to recommend the Memorial “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW)” for adoption at the 2025 Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly as presented.



- S.C.25.05.31** Vote for Synod Council to adopt the “Resolution in opposition to the Illinois Law Prohibiting the Boycott of the state of Israel” as presented.
- S.C.25.05.32** Vote for Synod Council to adopt the “For Formal Adoption of and Church-wide Engagement with Sumud: for Justice in Palestine and Israel” as presented, and to instruct the secretary to report this action and forward this resolution to the ELCA Churchwide Council for consideration.
- S.C.25.05.33** Vote for Synod Council to adopt the “Request for report on Board of Pension Investment Screening Related to ELCA Middle East Strategy” as presented, and to instruct the secretary to report this action and forward this resolution to the ELCA Churchwide Council for consideration.
- S.C.24.10.66** Vote for Synod Council, with regard to Resurrection Lutheran Church, Niles, exercise the power of †S13.24 of the synod constitution to “take charge and control of the property of a congregation of this synod to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of this synod....  
d. The Synod Council determines that the membership of a congregation has become so scattered or so diminished in numbers that it cannot provide required governance or that it has become impractical for the congregation to fulfill the purposes for which it was organized.
- S.C.24.10.67** Vote for Synod Council to appoint the following  
Credentials Committee: Pastor Kathy Nolte  
Worship Committee: Pastor Christina Garrett Klein  
Minutes Committee: Pastor Erin Clausen  
Nominations & Elections Committee: Rev. Darryl Thompson Powell  
Sergeants at Arms: Pastor Paul Pfeffer  
Reference and Counsel Committee Co-Chairs: Rev. Anne McCall and Deacon Heather Feltman with Rev. Sunitha Mortha as the Staff Relator.  
Bishop Election Committee: Rev. Robin Brown & Rev. Aneel Trivedi
- S.C.25.08.34** Vote for Synod Council to move into executive session.
- S.C.25.08.35** Vote for Synod Council to affirm the recommendation of Presiding Bishop Eaton and Presiding Bishop-Elect Curry that Rev. Wayne Miller serve as interim bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod until the beginning of the next elected bishop’s term.
- S.C.25.08.36** Vote for Synod Council to designate the X# Synod Assembly to be held on June 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at the Q Center, St. Charles, Illinois.
- S.C.25.08.37** Vote for Synod Council to appoint the following individuals to the 2026 Committee on Pre-Election Canvass / Bishop Election Committee:  
Rev. Aneel Trivedi



Rev. Kyle Johnson  
Rev. Fanya Burford-Berry  
Ms. Ami Frick  
Miss Amelia Smith-Laubenstein

- S.C.25.08.38** Vote for Synod Council to authorize the transfer of the title of the synod car Bishop Curry currently drives to Yehiel Curry.
- S.C.25.08.39** Vote for Synod Council to steward the receipts of the Norman Nelson Trust (\$39,500) and St. James, Western Springs closure (\$1,080,500) as follows:  
\$55,000 Synod Council Lodging  
\$25,000 Staff Travel  
\$48,000 St. Andres  
\$50,000 Young Adult Event  
\$250,000 Synod Assembly Fund  
\$400,000 New Mission Fund  
\$25,000 Bishop Installation  
\$75,000 Bishop Transition  
\$15,000 Grant for Congregation of new bishop  
\$100,000 Distressed Properties  
\$77,000 Deficit Allowance  
for a total allotment of \$1,120,000.
- S.C.25.10.40** Vote for Synod Council to approve the move of Mosaic Lutheran SAWC from 6740 W. North Avenue, Chicago, IL to St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Midlothian, IL.
- S.C.25.10.41** Vote for Synod Council to approve the Consent agenda as presented.
- S.C.25.10.42** Vote for Synod Council move to the Retirement Roster Rev. Bruce Anderson.
- S.C.25.10.43** Vote for Synod Council to move to the Retirement Roster Rev. Keith Fry.
- S.C.25.10.44** Vote for Synod Council to approve On Leave From Call Status for Rev. Eric Worringer.
- S.C.25.10.45** Vote for Synod Council to approve On Leave From Call Status for Rev. Sally Hanson.
- S.C.25.10.46** Vote for Synod Council to approve On Leave From Call Status for Dcn. David Glover.
- S.C.25.10.47** Vote for Synod Council to extend On Leave From Call Status for Rev. Rebecca Gordon.
- S.C.25.10.48** Vote for Synod Council to extend On Leave From Call Status for Rev. Julie Grafe.

- S.C.25.10.49** Vote for Synod Council to appoint Rev. Julie Boleyn to serve on the 2026 Bishop Election Committee.
- S.C.25.10.50** Vote for Synod Council to adopt the minutes of the May 29, 2025 synod council meeting as presented.
- S.C.25.10.51** Vote for Synod Council to adopt the minutes of the August 22 & 23, 2025 synod council meeting as presented.

# ASSEMBLY MINUTES





**Metro Chicago Synod Assembly 2025  
38<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly:  
Go Therefore!**

**Friday, May 30 – Saturday, May 31 2025**  
**O CENTER**  
**1405 N. 5TH AVE., ST. CHARLES, IL 60174**

**Day 1: Friday, May 30th**

**Morning Worship**

At 8:05 a.m. the assembly began with the reading of this Native Land Acknowledgement:

The Metropolitan Chicago Synod is located on the traditional unceded homelands of the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi Nations. Many other tribes such as the Miami, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac, and Fox also called this area home. The region has long been a center for Indigenous people to gather, trade, and maintain kinship ties. Today, one of the largest urban American Indian communities in the United States resides in Chicago. Members of this community continue to contribute to the life of this city and to celebrate their heritage, practice traditions, and care for the land and waterways.

We embrace and recommit to the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery and to Indigenous rights, racial justice, and cultural equity not only through our statements but also in our decisions and actions.

The assembly then continued with morning worship.

**Plenary I**

**Opening of the Synod Assembly**

The assembly had the opportunity to view a video of the Good News Garage, a ministry of Trinity Lutheran Church, Des Plaines.

Following this video, Bishop Curry declared the 38<sup>th</sup> assembly of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod in session at 8:41 a.m. Bishop Curry made brief remarks about the theme of the assembly and the videos that the assembly would view.

**Appointment of Parliamentarian**

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 1 of 32

Bishop Curry then appointed Ms. Joan Bundley as parliamentarian for the assembly, having previously consulted with the Synod Council. Ms. Bundley is a Registered Parliamentarian with the National Association of Parliamentarians. Bishop Curry also noted that Ms. Bundley has served as the parliamentarian for the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assemblies for ten years.

### **Welcome of Guests and Appointment of Committee Chairs**

Bishop Curry invited Mr. Terry Hendrickson, Synod Council Vice President, to make introductions of the guests attending the Synod Assembly. Vice President Henderson introduced churchwide representative, Deacon John Weit. He also introduced regional bishops Bishop Greg Busboom, Central/Southern Illinois Synod and Bishop Martin Halom, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin. Vice President Henderson also encouraged members of the assembly to meet other partners in ministry at the Vendor Area over the course of the day.

Following these introductions, and having previously consulted with the synod council, Vice President Henderson shared the appointment of the following people as chairs of this year's assembly committees:

**Credentials Committee:** Pastor Kathy Nolte

**Worship Committee:** Pastor Christina Garrett Klein

**Minutes Committee:** Pastor Erin Clausen

**Nominations & Elections Committee:** Rev. Darryl Thompson Powell

**Sergeants at Arms:** Pastor Paul Pfeffer

**Reference and Counsel Committee Co-Chairs:** Rev. Anne McCall and Deacon Heather Feltman with Rev. Sunitha Mortha as the Staff Relator.

**Bishop Election Committee:** Rev. Robin Brown & Rev. Aneel Trivedi

Vice President Henderson also welcomed the language interpreters:

Ms. Patti Oberbeck and Ms. Patti Shore Kaden, ASL interpreters

Ms. Maggie Del Toro and Ms. Alejandra Rojas, Spanish language interpreters.

Finally, Vice President Henderson showed slides introducing the synod pastoral and professional staff, thanking them for their ministry.

Bishop Curry thanked Vice President Henderson for making these introductions, and also thanked him for his service in the synod.

### **Rules of Organization and Procedure**

Bishop Curry then introduced the first item of business before the assembly - the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2025 Synod Assembly. He noted that because the Rules of Organization and Procedure and the agenda for the 2025 Synod Assembly have been recommended to the assembly for adoption by the Synod Council; thus, these motions will not require a second.

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)

*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*

Page 2 of 32

Synod Secretary Rev. Erin Clausen gave a brief overview of the purpose of the assembly, a brief introduction to Robert's Rules which will govern the assembly, an explanation of the bar of the assembly, and a reminder of decorum and the process for addressing the assembly. Rev. Clausen explained that three resolutions and one memorial were submitted for consideration and briefly outlined the process to submit a resolution or memorial to the assembly at this point. She also explained that some votes would be taken by showing a blue card, and others would be taken electronically; voting members should take care to see that they have access to both of these. Nominating and Elections Committee Chairs Rev Robin Brown and Rev. Aneel Trivedi will oversee the conduct of elections and provide voting instructions prior to the elections. Deacon John Weit will oversee the conduct of the bishop election. Secretary Clausen reminded the assembly that all of these matters are contained in the document, "Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2025 Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly."

Following this introduction, on behalf of the Synod council, Secretary Clausen presented the motion to the assembly:

**To adopt the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2025 Synod Assembly (exclusive of quoted and highlighted constitutional provisions and bylaws that already are in force).**

There was no discussion and the assembly voted to adopt the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2025 Synod Assembly as presented.

Secretary Clausen then explained that the final Book of Reports will be distributed following this Assembly and will include these Rules of Organization and Procedure and the Bishop's Report.

#### **Adoption of the Agenda**

Bishop Curry invited Secretary Clausen to present the agenda. Secretary Clausen presented the following motion to the assembly:

**On behalf of the Synod Council, I move the adoption of the 2025 Synod Assembly agenda found in your welcome bag and on the screens.**

Having been recommended for approval by the synod council, the proposed agenda does not require a second. There was no discussion, and the assembly adopted the agenda as presented.

#### **Introduction of Bishop Election**

At 9:08 a.m. Bishop Curry relinquished the chair to ELCA Churchwide Representative, Deacon John Weit. Deacon Weit briefly explained that the election of the bishop is a call process in which the assembly calls a person who will serve as pastor, Chief Executive Officer, and public leader for the synod. Following this explanation, he invited Rev. Aneel Trivedi, one of the bishop election co-chairs, to join him at the podium.



### **Introduction to The Bishop Election Process**

Deacon Weit then continued with an overview of the of the process for electing a bishop used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, an ecclesiastical ballot. He explained the constitutional process as it will be used during this assembly. Following this explanation, Pastor Trivedi led the assembly in a test vote to ensure that everyone understood how the voting process would work.

Following the test vote, Deacon Weit invited Rev. Kathy Nolte to the podium to present the credentials report.

### **Credentials Report**

Rev. Nolte reported that as of 9:37 a.m., 408 voting members have registered. That number includes 164 Rostered Ministers and 244 Lay Voting Members. The assembly is thus currently comprised of 40% Rostered Ministers and 60% Lay Voting members. This number represents 84% of the total number of people registered for the synod assembly.

### **Process for the First Ballot for Bishop**

Deacon Weit gave another overview of the requirements for the first ballot for bishop. He explained again that the first ballot begins the ecclesiastical ballot process. When directed to “vote now,” voting members of the assembly will have ten minutes in which to submit the name of any Minister of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America whom they believe is called to serve as Bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod. A 75% majority on the first ballot is required for election. If no one receives a 75% vote, this ballot will be considered a Nominating Ballot. After voting closes for Ballot 1, there will be no further opportunities in this election process to add names to the list of nominees for bishop. And likewise, when the results of Ballot 1 are given, there will be only one opportunity for those nominated on Ballot 1 to withdraw from nomination. Ballot 2 will then consist of all those nominated on Ballot 1 who have not withdrawn. Ballot 2 is on the agenda to be addressed at approximately 1:10 pm today.

Following these reminders, Deacon Weit called on Pastor Aneel Trivedi, Co-Chair of the Synod Election Committee, to give the instructions for casting Ballot 1.

Rev. Trivedi explained that following these instructions, Dcn. Weit would ask for a moment of prayer. Then voting members would follow the same instructions as in the test ballot to log in and submit their vote. He reminded voting members to raise their hand if they experienced difficulties or need assistance and a member of the Elections Committee or a Synod Council volunteer would come to provide assistance as quickly as possible.

Deacon Weit asked for questions from the assembly, and these were answered. Then he invited Pastor Sean Ramsey to pray. At 9:42 a.m. Deacon Weit declared voting on Ballot 1 for bishop open. At 9:49 a.m., after asking if anyone needed more time to vote, Dcn. Weit declared the first ballot for the election of the bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod closed.



### **Advocate Greeting**

Deacon Weit returned the chair to Bishop Curry, who explained that Advocate Healthcare had once again agreed to provide financial support for the assembly. At 9:55 Bishop Curry invited Rev. Tiffany Chaney with Advocate Health Care to greeting to the assembly.

Following the greeting from Rev. Chaney, Bishop Curry explained that the assembly would take a break and move to workshops. The second plenary session will begin at 11:15 a.m.

### **Plenary II**

#### **Vice President's Report**

A video was shown in the plenary hall beginning at 11:14 a.m. Bishop Curry then explained that Vice President Henderson was being called away from the assembly early, inviting him to give his report. At 11:19 a.m. Vice President Henderson shared the Vice President's report with the assembly.

#### **Churchwide Report**

At 11:25 a.m. Bishop Curry explained that as the ELCA, we are a church with three expressions: congregations, synods and the Churchwide office. We exist in interrelationship to deepen and extend God's mission. He then invited Deacon John Weit to give the report of the ELCA Churchwide Office.

Deacon Weit introduced himself and his role as Executive for Worship in our ELCA churchwide organization. He gave thanks for the many ways that we partner together as congregations – synod – and the churchwide organization to steward God's message of good news for all the world. As the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we envision a world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation. We are freed by that grace to be part of bringing that vision to life, to love and serve our neighbor. This church benefits from the gifts of time and talent offered by faithful volunteers throughout the ELCA who serve on committees and engage in special efforts with and for the Churchwide Organization. He briefly outlined how financial gifts are used to extend God's grace and love into the world from the Churchwide Organization. These include the ministry of ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response.

Dcn. Weit also introduced several items of business that the Churchwide Assembly will address in July, 2025. First, the new socials statement ***Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All*** has been reviewed by bishops and the Church Council. It addresses religious liberty, Christian vocation, the nature of power, extreme polarization, Christian nationalism, and law and gospel in relation to society. The **Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church** also will present a report. Over the course of nearly two years, the commission met 12 times as it sought to fulfill the mandate "to reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism." The commission completed its work this spring and sent

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*

Page 5 of 32

its findings and recommendations to the Church Council for its consideration and action. Some of the recommendations related to the ELCA constitutions were acted upon last November, and many of those constitution amendments have been forwarded to the Churchwide Assembly. Other recommendations were acted upon by Church Council this past April. Voting members of the assembly will elect a new presiding bishop and new secretary. The assembly will also consider proposed editorial updates to wording in one section of the 2009 social statement *Human Sexuality: Gift & Trust*. This is the first of two reconsiderations authorized by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

Deacon Weit concluded with invitations for congregations to look for the resourced available on the ELCA website, as well as a video message from the Presiding Bishop.

### **Report of The First Ballot for Bishop**

Following Deacon Weit's report, Bishop Curry relinquished the chair to Deacon Weit, who then invited the Election Committee co-chairs, Rev. Aneel Trivedi and Rev. Robin Brown to the podium to provide the Report of the First Ballot for Bishop.

On the first ballot of the Bishop's Election, there were 394 total ballots cast and 385 legal ballots cast. The number of ballots required for election is 75% of the legal votes, or 289 votes.

The vote totals were:

Yehiel Curry 224  
Katie Hines-Shah 31  
Jennie English-Dumont 22  
Jeanine Reardon 20  
Ruben Duran 18  
Jeff Mikyska 9  
Kathy Nolte 7  
Jason Glombicki 4  
Heidi Torgerson 4  
Lawrence Clark 3  
Nathan Houstin 3  
Kyle Johnson 3  
Kyle Severson 3  
Julie Boleyn 2  
Adam Dowd 2  
Kelly Faulstich 2  
Kristian Johnson 2  
Craig Mueller 2  
Shelly Satran 2  
Mark Borgetti 1  
Erik Christensen 1  
Erin Coleman-Branchaud 1

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 6 of 32

Dave Daubert 1  
Robert Davis 1  
Christina Garrett-Klein 1  
Luke Harris-Ferree 1  
James Honig 1  
Carl Johnson 1  
Nathan Klein 1  
Kendall Koenig 1  
Paul Kopka 1  
Matthew Laubenstein 1  
Tim Linstrom  
Troy Medlin 1  
Elizabeth Palmer 1  
JoAnn Post 1  
Maria Rojas 1  
Eddie Rosa Fuentes 1  
Michelle Sevig 1  
Pam Voves  
Donald Wink 1

Deacon Weit declared that there was no election, and indicated that the assembly's second ballot for bishop is scheduled for 1:00pm. Rev. Trivedi explained the process for removing one's name from the ballot. At 11:47am, Deacon Weit ceded the chair back to Bishop Curry.

Following brief announcements by Rev. Nathan Klein, Bishop Curry declared the assembly in recess until 1:00pm.

### **Plenary III (1:00 - 2:30pm)**

At 1:05pm, Bishop Curry declared the assembly back in session. He then yielded the chair to and Deacon John Weit.

#### **Process for the Second Ballot for Bishop**

Deacon Weit reminded the assembly of the process for the second ballot for bishop. He explained that the name of every eligible person who was nominated and who did *not* withdraw will appear on the second ballot. He also reminded the assembly that no additional nominations can be made at this time and that 75% of the legal ballots cast are required for election on the second ballot. The report on the results for the second ballot is expected at 1:30pm. If there is no election on the second ballot, the third ballot will contain the names of the 7 persons (plus ties) that received the most legal votes cast on the second ballot. Following these reminders, he called on Rev. Kathy Nolte to give an updated Credentials Report.

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 7 of 32

### **Credentials Report**

Pastor Nolte reported that as of 12:30 p.m., 423 voting members have checked in. That number includes 173 Rostered Ministers and 250 Lay Voting Members.

### **Second Ballot for Bishop**

Following the credentials report, Dcn. Weit invited Pastor Trivedi to provide instructions for the second ballot for bishop, and he did so. Dcn. Weit then invited Pastor Bethany Ulrich to pray. invoke the Spirit's presence as we cast the second ballot. Following this prayer, the second ballot for bishop was cast. Deacon Weit explained that the results from the second ballot for bishop would be reported at approximately 1:35pm. While the results from the second ballot for bishop were tabulated, Glocal Musicians provided music for the assembly to join in song.

### **Report of the Second Ballot for Bishop**

Dcn. Weit was informed at 1:35pm that the votes had been tabulated. He again invited the Bishop Elections Committee Chairs Rev. Aneel Trivedi and Rev. Robin Brown to the podium to share the Report of the Second Ballot for Bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod.

Pastor Trivedi reported that on the second ballot of the Bishop's Election, there were 395 total ballots and 395 legal ballots. The number of votes needed to win the election in this first round is 75% of the legal votes, or 297 votes. The vote totals for the second ballot were as follows:

Yehiel Curry 271  
Katie Hines-Shah 42  
Jeanine Reardon 24  
Jennie English-Dumont 22  
Ruben Duran 17  
Jeff Mikyska 8  
Jason Glombicki 5  
Erin Coleman-Branchaud 4  
Elizabeth Palmer 1  
Donald Wink 1

Deacon Weit declared that based upon the report of the Election Committee, there is no election. The following persons will appear on the third ballot:

Yehiel Curry  
Katie Hines-Shah  
Jeanine Reardon  
Jennie English-Dumont  
Ruben Duran  
Jeff Mikyska

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 8 of 32



Jason Glombicki

Deacon Weit invited the election co-chairs to instruct us about the next steps of the election process, after which he shared that the Third Ballot for Bishop would take place at approximately 3:00pm. He then yielded the chair back to Bishop Curry.

#### **Nominations & Elections**

Bishop Curry invited the assembly to view a video from Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. He then invited Rev. Darryl Thompson Powell, chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee, to explain the regular election process. Rev. Thompson Powell explained the election process for voting on members for the Synod Council, the Consultation Committee and the Committee on Discipline.

#### **Explanation of Diversity and Runoff**

Pastor Thompson Powell also explained that, the Nominations and Election Committee created this ballot to satisfy both the nominations received and the diversity guidelines established in the synod's constitution. The diversity guidelines include gender diversity, ethnic diversity, young adult representation, and lay member over rostered representation. To satisfy these guidelines, some positions have only one nominee while others may have as many as four. Nominees must be elected by a majority of the legal votes cast. For positions with more than three nominees, the two nominees with the most votes will continue forward in a runoff election. In the event of the second and third nominee receiving the same number of votes, the top three will move forward in the runoff.

#### **Explanation of First General Ballot**

Bishop Curry thanked Rev. Thompson Powell for this explanation, then called Rev. Kathy Nolte to provide the credentials report.

#### **Credentials Report**

Pastor Nolte declared that as of 4:23pm, 423 voting members had checked in. That number includes 173 Rostered Ministers and 250 Lay Voting Members.

#### **First General Ballot**

Bishop Curry invited Rev. Eric Schaeffer to pray, then declared voting open. There were issues with the wireless internet connection, so Bishop Curry asked that the tech team play videos of the rostered leaders with major anniversaries and the first call and new to synod rostered leaders. As the wifi still was not working, at 2:03pm Bishop Curry suggested to the assembly that this vote be taken by acclamation, since there were no opposed positions. Seeing no opposition, Bishop Curry asked the assembly to vote for the entire slate by blue card. At 2:04pm, Bishop Curry declared the entire slate of the first general ballot elected.

#### Synod Council Lay Female

Dr. Nancy E. Arnesen (2<sup>nd</sup> term)

Ms. Kristina Herrera (2<sup>nd</sup> term)

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)

*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*

Page 9 of 32

Synod Council Lay Male  
Mr. Dennis Debrie (1<sup>st</sup> term)

Synod Council (Youth)  
Ms. Amelia Smith-Laubenstein (1<sup>st</sup> term, female)

Synod Council Rostered  
Rev. Julie Boleyn (1<sup>st</sup> term, female)  
Rev. Kelly Faulstich (1<sup>st</sup> term, female)  
Rev. Joel Lohafer (2<sup>nd</sup> term, male)

Committee on Discipline (Rostered)  
Rev. Kyle Eugene Johnson (male)  
Rev. Anne McCall (female)

Consultation Committee (Rostered)  
Rev. Philip D. Lund (male)  
Rev. Amy Wiegert (female)

#### **Portico Greeting**

At 2:04pm, Bishop Curry invited Ms. Jennifer Prinz to share a greeting and video from Portico Benefits Services with the assembly.

#### **Report of the Treasurer / Introduction of Proposed Budget**

Bishop Curry then invited the synod treasurer, Ms. Yvette NewberryWhite, to provide the Treasurer's Report and introduce the 2026 proposed budget.

Treasurer NewberryWhite shared that the Treasurer's report, 2026 Proposed Operating Budget and the Audited financial statement report are all found in the 2025 Book of Reports. In summary, for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2025, the Synod received congregational benevolence in the amount of \$2,331,493 equaling nearly 83% of the anticipated budgeted amount, slightly below the prior year. We are thankful for your stewardship and our partnership together -- congregations, individuals, and our partners -- witnessing and working in this great Synod. Total revenue and other support were \$2,748,146. 50% of benevolences received, \$1,158,430 was remitted to Churchwide, which takes those funds, combines it with other benevolences, and through ministry worldwide, bears witness to the love of Christ. Additionally, 9% (\$202,493) of congregational benevolences also provides financial support to our partners in ministry such as Lutheran Seminaries Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and Wartburg, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, Bethel New Life, Refugee One, Lutheran Volunteer Corps, Campus Ministry, and more. Total Churchwide and Ministry Partner support constitutes 59% of the budget. This is shown in detail in the supplemental schedules of the Audit report. The Operational Budget programming and administrative expenses of the Synod were \$1,349,943.

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 10 of 32

## 2026 Proposed Operating Budget

Treasurer NewberryWhite then brought the assembly's attention to the 2026 Proposed Operating Budget.

### Budgeted Revenue

For the 2026-year operating budget, presented for approval at this Assembly, the budgeted revenue from Congregations remains the same as last year \$2,400,000, which is 83% of Anticipated Revenue. Also budgeted is Other income (Interest, Dividends and Authorized Management Fees—17% of Anticipated Revenue-- of Five hundred Sixty-Five thousand dollars totaling total Operating Revenue of \$2,965,000.

### Budgeted Expenses

Budgeted Expenses consists of partnership sharing to Churchwide, again \$1,200,000 – which is 50.0% of anticipated congregational benevolence, and Partner Ministry support, \$217,034, together they total 59% of budgeted benevolence. Budgeted Synod programming and operations expenses are \$1,547,966.

**Treasurer NewberryWhite then moved the adoption of the 2026 budget on behalf of the Synod Council.**

Bishop Curry announced to the assembly that as the 2026 budget had been moved for consideration by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council, the budget does not require a second. He then asked the assembly if any discussion was needed before calling for a vote. Following brief discussion, Bishop Curry called for a vote on the 2026 budget by acclamation at 2:24pm.

**Bishop Curry declared the 2026 budget adopted.**

## Report of the Secretary

At 2:45pm Bishop Curry invited Rev. Erin Clausen to give the Report of the Secretary. Secretary Clausen focused on the importance of governing documents to the mission of congregations and the church at large. She also reported the following synod council actions, also listed in the Book of Reports:

1. The Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council, with regard to Resurrection Lutheran Church, Niles, exercise the power of †S13.24 of the synod constitution to “take charge and control of the property of a congregation of this synod to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of this synod...
  - d. The Synod Council determines that the membership of a congregation has become so scattered or so diminished in numbers that it cannot provide required governance or that it has become impractical for the congregation to fulfill the purposes for which it was organized.

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 11 of 32

The adoption of this motion may be appealed to the 2025 Synod Assembly.

2. According to the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2024 Synod Assembly, any resolution to the assembly that was not addressed on the assembly floor would be referred to the Synod Council for appropriate disposition. Therefore, the 2024 Resolution “Affirming Metropolitan Chicago Synod’s “Reconciling in Christ” Commitments” was considered and adopted by the synod council in January, 2025. [S.C.25.01.08] The official Reconciling In Christ Statement of Welcome for the Metropolitan Chicago Synod as adopted in this resolution was then adopted as Continuing Resolution S.6.04.A25. This welcome statement reads as follows:

“We, the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, welcome you into the fullness of God’s love. You are a beloved child of God, made in God’s image.

We welcome you and celebrate all that makes you who you are, including: your gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, race, culture, ethnicity, country of birth, socioeconomic or employment status, physical abilities, political party, immigration status, home address, medical or psychological history, family status, age, and religious/spiritual background.

You are accepted and affirmed just as you are—with all your differences and gifts.

In our synod’s continued effort to live out this welcome, we are committed to the work of anti-racism, social and economic justice, and environmental care. We seek to dismantle oppression in all its forms—internally, interpersonally, and structurally . We are committed to celebrating and uplifting this diversity in our leadership, policies, practices, and culture. Rather than using our differences to divide us, we pledge to use our differences as gifts for our work together.”

3. The synod council received a resolution from the Working Group on the Middle East entitled “Justice for Palestinians and Israelis Programming,” asking the synod council to address the Churchwide Council. This resolution was adopted by the synod council in October, 2024 and forwarded this resolution to the Churchwide Council for action and implementation. Secretary Sue Rothmeyer then informed the Bishop of action taken by the Executive Committee of the Church Council at its Nov. 14, 2024, meeting. The committee voted:

To refer the “Justice for Palestinians and Israelis Programming” resolution from the Metropolitan Chicago Synod to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the Office of the Secretary, and the Service and Justice home area for their consideration in the preparations and agenda planning for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

### **Process for the Third Ballot for Bishop**

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 12 of 32



At 3:04pm, Bishop Curry thanked Secretary Clausen for her report and invited Deacon John Weit and Rev. Aneel Trivedi back to the stage for the Third Ballot for Bishop. Dcn. Weit reminded the assembly that the seven nominees (plus ties) who received the most legal votes on the second ballot will appear on the third ballot. Also, on the third ballot, 2/3 of legal votes cast are necessary for election. The assembly was given 20 minutes to review the biographical information provided for each of the seven nominees.

### **Credentials Report**

At 3:27, Dcn. Weit asked Rev. Kathy Nolte to present the credentials report. She shared that as of 3:27pm, 423 voting members have checked in. That number includes 173 Rostered Ministers and 250 Lay Voting Members.

### **Third Ballot for Bishop**

Dcn. Weit then called on Pastor Aneel Trivedi, Co-Chair of the Synod Election Committee, to give instructions for casting Ballot 3. Following the instructions, he invited Pastor Llewellyn Dixon to pray prior to opening voting. At 3:41pm, Dcn. Weit declared voting on the third ballot for bishop closed, and yielded the chair back to Bishop Curry.

### **Resolutions**

I now called upon Rev. Anne McCall and Deacon Heather Feltman, Co-Chairs of the Committee on Reference and Counsel, to present each resolution and memorial and offer the assembly instructions on the resolution and memorials which are before the assembly.

Deacon Heather explained that the Committee on Reference and Counsel has met and reviewed one resolution and three memorials, finding them to be in order according to the Churchwide Organization guidelines provided by the ELCA Office of the Secretary. The Committee conducted a pre-hearing event for all resolutions except for the “Resolution of Thanks” which is posted on the synod website. Furthermore, the Synod Council reviewed and recommended the one resolution and three memorials be considered for deliberation.

Dcn Feltman then presented the following memorial, on behalf of the Committee on Reference and Counsel:

#### **To Stand up for Human Rights, an End to the Occupation of Palestine, and Recognition of Palestinian Statehood**

**WHEREAS** the ELCA in its 2017 social message *On Human Rights* states that “concern for the well-being of others lies at the very heart of Christian faith (Matthew 22:36-40)”; and that “The ELCA as a church... supports human rights around the globe in its work with global partners” and “our church seeks to accompany those among our global partners who suffer human rights violations” (p. 10); and

**WHEREAS** the ELCA Churchwide Assembly has since 2001<sup>2</sup> repeatedly expressed support for an end to the Israeli occupation and for the formation of an independent Palestinian state; and



**WHEREAS** the United Nations in its Resolutions 446, 452, 465, 471 and 476 has already declared that the state of Israel’s military occupation of the West Bank is illegal according to international law; and

**WHEREAS** Israel’s ongoing occupation of the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza continues to endanger the security and well-being of both Palestinians and Israelis and makes peace in the region an unattainable goal; and

**WHEREAS** by the pervasive power of sin, violence breeds more violence, including the recent assassination of two young Israeli embassy staffers in Washington, DC; hatred produces the world-wide escalation of anti-Jewish, anti-Arab, and anti-Muslim sentiment; and anger leads to a craving for vengeance with greater and greater indiscriminate and unspeakable acts of inhumanity in Gaza that mirror genocide—all of which incur God’s judgment and call to repentance; and

**WHEREAS** illegal military occupation has included the following activities that contravene international human rights and in some cases constitute ethnic cleansings:

- Restriction of the freedom of movement within the Palestinian Territories due to checkpoints, and restrictive residency cards<sup>6</sup>;
- Military incarceration without due process or a civil trial<sup>7</sup>;
- Demolition of family homes<sup>8</sup>;
- Restriction of electricity and water usage<sup>9</sup> that is administrated by the state of Israel;
- Appropriation of Palestinian homes in Jerusalem<sup>10</sup>;
- Appropriation of Palestinian land by illegal Israeli settlements<sup>11</sup>; therefore be it

**RESOLVED: That the Metropolitan Chicago Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly** to encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, and appropriate Churchwide units to advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Metropolitan Chicago Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly** to urge the Presiding Bishop to direct a letter to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, calling for the U.S. to take foreign policy actions that will support the human rights of all Palestinians and Israelis by calling for an end to the illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and by working toward the recognition of Palestine as a legitimate state in the United Nations, as other U.N. member states have done; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Metropolitan Chicago Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly** to encourage individuals and congregations of the ELCA to pray ELCA members, congregations, synods, including specifically our sisters and brothers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the

World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI), as they bring comfort, support, accountability, and relief.

**Submitted by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Working Group on the Middle East**  
Pastor Robin Brown Our Saviour’s, Arlington Heights  
Dixie Downes Luther Memorial, Chicago



Pastor Joanne Fitzgerald United Lutheran, Oak Park  
Pastor Anna-Kari Joy Langseth Johnson Christ, Chicago  
Emanuel Johnson Christ, Chicago  
Hope Johnson Christ, Chicago  
Pastor Kelsey Johnson Redeemer, Hinsdale  
Pastor Kristian Johnson Christ, Chicago  
Xavier Johnson Christ, Chicago  
Cheryl Juris Zion, Elgin  
Alice Kosnik Ascension, Northfield  
Terry Guymon Kylo Zion, Tinley Park  
Carol Schersten LaHurd Holy Trinity, Chicago  
Daniel Newgarden Ebenezer, Chicago  
Pastor Jeff Nichols Grace, LaGrange  
Gail Price Ascension, Northfield  
Dieter R. Schulte Luther Memorial, Chicago  
Pastor Ben Sloss Our Saviour's, Naperville  
Elisabeth Trost Immanuel, Chicago  
Pastor Leslie Weber St. Mark, Mt. Prospect

Following brief discussion, Bishop Curry called for a vote by acclamation at 3:50pm and declared the memorial adopted.

The Bishop then called on the co-chairs of the Committee on Reference and Counsel to present the next memorial for consideration by the assembly.

#### **National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools**

**WHEREAS**, from 1819 to 1969, countless Indian day schools and over 520 Indian boarding schools operated in the United States, with 417 receiving federal support [1], where Native children were forcibly taken from their families and communities, prohibited all expression of Native language and culture, and required to perform manual labor [2], with a goal to “Kill the Indian in him, and save the man” [3]; and

**WHEREAS**, religious organizations collaborated with the federal government in operating more than half of these federally-funded schools; and predecessor denominations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) operated Bethany Indian Mission Boarding School in Wittenburg, Wisconsin [4], and other non-federally funded boarding schools, day schools, and related institutions [5]; and

**WHEREAS**, these schools were part of a larger strategy of physical and cultural genocide that included forcing Indigenous people and Tribal Nations off of their original homelands and onto reservations so that settlers and governments could claim the stolen land for themselves, undermining sovereignty [6], and perpetrating extermination in multiple other ways; and



**WHEREAS**, boarding school students, which at one point included over 83% of all Native children [7], often suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse that caused deep trauma for the children, their families, their tribal communities, and subsequent generations [8]; and an untold number of children died while at boarding schools (nearly 1,000 identified to date) [9]; and

**WHEREAS**, the ELCA has committed to work against injustices and toward healing as stated in “The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery” (2016) [10] and the “Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People” (2021) [11], therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, that the **Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America** to address the legacies of our church’s role in Indian Boarding Schools through the following actions:

1. Actively invite and equip all congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;
2. Broaden and deepen awareness at congregation, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools, through creation of adult and children/youth educational programs and materials and through consistent publishing of articles in all of the church’s publications;
3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and clergy volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see [www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools](http://www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools)) to locate all known records related to the ELCA’s predecessor bodies’ involvement with Indian boarding and day schools and to educate others about Indian boarding schools;
4. Encourage ELCA affiliate ministries to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative; and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
5. Organize and care for all information in the ELCA’s possession that was recorded about Indian boarding and day schools and the students who attended them, forcibly or otherwise; carry out this work in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative and the ELCA Archives; recognize that this information belongs to and is a source of healing for student survivors, their descendants, communities, and Tribal Nations; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and
6. Identify sources of funding to sufficiently support research and organizing efforts; and to sufficiently support digitization and labeling of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records.

Author: Elizabeth M. Andress, Co-lead (lay volunteer), ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools; [liz@solbrack.com](mailto:liz@solbrack.com), 651-983-8105 (m)

**NOTES**

1. “Indian Boarding Schools in the United States.” National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition. January 2025: <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2025-Indian-Boarding-Schools-Map-.pdf>

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)

*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*

Page 2 of 32

2. David Treuer, *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America From 1890 to the Present* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2019): 141.
3. “Kill the Indian in him, and save the man”: R.H. Pratt on the Education of Native Americans.” Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center. Accessed February 15, 2025. <https://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/teach/kill-indian-him-and-save-man-r-h-pratt-education-native-americans>
4. Anna M. Peterson, “Norwegian Americans and the Bethany Indian Mission,” *Currents: The Newsletter of the Norwegian-American Historical Society* (Volume 189, Fall 2023): 6-9.
5. United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report Volume II - List of Other Institutions* (Appendix F), July 2024, <https://www.bia.gov/service/federal-indian-boarding-school-initiative>
6. Ned Blackhawk, *The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2023): 333-337.
7. “US Indian Boarding School History.” National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition. Accessed February 15, 2025. <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/education/us-indian-boarding-school-history/>
8. United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report Volume II*, July 2024, 15, <https://www.bia.gov/service/federal-indian-boarding-school-initiative>
9. Matthew Brown. “Survivors Say Trauma from Abusive Native American Boarding Schools Stretch Across the Generations.” *AP*. Updated November 5, 2023. <https://apnews.com/article/native-american-boarding-schools-victims-3f927e5054b6790cef1c6012d8616ad6>
10. “ELCA Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery,” Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, 2016, [https://resources.elca.org/wp-content/uploads/Repudiation\\_Doctrine\\_of\\_DiscoverySPR16.pdf](https://resources.elca.org/wp-content/uploads/Repudiation_Doctrine_of_DiscoverySPR16.pdf)
11. “A Declaration of the ELCA to American Indian and Alaska Native People,” Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, 2021, [https://resources.elca.org/wp-content/uploads/Declaration\\_to\\_American\\_Indian\\_Alaska\\_Native.pdf](https://resources.elca.org/wp-content/uploads/Declaration_to_American_Indian_Alaska_Native.pdf)

Approved by the Church Councils of

- Christ Lutheran Church-Albany Park
- Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church-Naperville
- St. Luke’s Lutheran Church of Logan Square

And by congregational consensus

- Iglesia Luterana De La Trinidad

Following brief discussion, Bishop Curry called for a vote by acclamation and declared the memorial adopted.

The Bishop then called on the co-chairs of the Committee on Reference and Counsel to present the next memorial for consideration by the assembly.

### Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW)

**WHEREAS**, in the United States, violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women has reached devastating levels, with over 5,700 reported missing in 2016 according to FBI data<sup>1</sup>, and approximately 4,200 missing and murdered cases remain unsolved according to the Bureaus of Indian Affairs<sup>2</sup>; and

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
 Page 3 of 32



**WHEREAS**, American Indian and Alaska Native women face disproportionate rates of violence compared to non-Hispanic White women, being three times more likely to experience murder, twice as likely to experience rape, and five times more likely to experience physical violence by an interracial intimate partner, with over 96% of sexual violence perpetrated by non-Indigenous men<sup>3</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, American Indian and Alaska Native families seeking justice face a complex maze of jurisdictional barriers between federal, state, and tribal authorities, with this jurisdictional confusion often serving as justification for inadequate investigation of cases, insufficient data collection, and lack accountability, particularly affecting Indigenous women in urban areas<sup>4</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has committed to addressing injustices against Indigenous peoples through its “Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery” (2016) and “Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People” (2021), while also addressing gender-based violence through various Social Statements and Messages; and

**WHEREAS**, the Women of the ELCA have shown leadership through their work on human trafficking, child protection, and Truth and Healing Movement activities<sup>5</sup>; therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the churchwide organization to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women through the following actions:

1. To strengthen education by requesting Augsburg Fortress, ELCA Hunger Appeal, Women of the ELCA, and the ELCA communications and service and justice staff work together to:
  - a. Develop educational resources about the prevalence and origins of this crisis
  - b. Commemorate MMIW Awareness Day annually on May 5
  - c. Promote the wearing of red and participation in educational opportunities and advocacy opportunities for missing and murdered Indigenous women
2. To lament and repent by requesting Augsburg Fortress and the ELCA worship staff work together to:
  - a. Provide prayers of repentance and intercession for congregational and synodical use
  - b. Plan a public service at the 2028 Churchwide Assembly of lament and repentance that leads to further actions toward healing
3. To advance advocacy and partnership by requesting the ELCA service and justice, witnessing in society, and advocacy staff to:
  - a. Support legislation at local, state, and national levels addressing MMIW
  - b. Communicate ways for ELCA congregations to support such legislation



c. Collaborate with governmental, ecclesiastical, and non-profit organizations to increase public awareness and provide concrete ways for congregations to support affected families through prayer, search efforts, and appropriate outreach.

Approved for submission by the Northwest Conference, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA.

1FBI National Crime Information Center, <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/249822.pdf>  
2US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs,  
<https://www.bia.gov/service/mmu/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-people-crisis>  
3FBI National Crime Information Center and the National Congress of the American Indian, <https://www.ncai.org/section/vawa/overview/key-statistics>  
4Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls report of the Urban Indian Health Institute, <https://www.uihi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Missing-and-Murdered-Indigenous-Women-and-Girls-Report.pdf>  
5ELCA Truth and Healing Movement website: <https://www.elca.org/our-work/congregations-and-synods/ministries-of-diverse-cultures-and-communities/indigenous-ministries-and-tribal-relations/truth-and-healing-movement>

Following brief discussion, Bishop Curry called for a vote by acclamation at 4:11pm and declared the memorial adopted.

The Bishop then called on the co-chairs of the Committee on Reference and Counsel to present the next resolution for consideration by the assembly.

### Land Acknowledgement

**WHEREAS**, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has committed to addressing injustices against Indigenous peoples through its “Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery” (2016) and its “Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People” (2021) (“the Declaration”); and

**WHEREAS**, the Declaration states, “We commit to supporting Tribal nations in their work to preserve their languages, and we commit to begin the practice of land acknowledgements at all expressions of this church.”<sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the ELCA has not adopted a land acknowledgement; therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Synod Council of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the ELCA adopt a land acknowledgement and display it on the synod’s Website; and be it further

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 5 of 32



**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the ELCA encourage its congregations, social ministry organizations, and campus ministries to develop and display a land acknowledgement on their respective Websites.

Approved for submission by the Northwest Conference of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA.

[https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Declaration\\_to\\_American\\_Indian\\_Alaska\\_Native.pdf](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Declaration_to_American_Indian_Alaska_Native.pdf)

Following brief discussion, Bishop Curry called for a vote by acclamation at 4:14pm and declared the memorial adopted.

Bishop Curry thanked the committee for their hard work.

#### **Report of the Third Ballot for Bishop**

At 4:21pm, Bishop Curry relinquished the chair to Deacon John Weit, who invited the Bishop Elections Committee Chairs Rev. Aneel Trivedi and Rev. Robin Brown to the podium to share the Report of the Third Ballot for Bishop.

On the third ballot of the Bishop's Election, there were 388 total ballots cast and 388 legal ballots. The number of votes needed to win the election in this first round is 2/3 of the legal ballots, or 259 votes. The vote totals were as follows:

Jeff Mikyska 8  
Ruben Duran 9  
Jason Glombicki 9  
Jennie English Dumont 21  
Jeanine Reardon 26  
Katie Hines-Shah 50  
Yehiel Curry 265

At 4:23pm, Deacon Weit declared Yehiel Curry elected as bishop. He then thanked the Bishop's Election Committee for their efforts.

#### **Closing of Day 1**

Following prayer and brief announcements, at 4:37pm Bishop Curry declared the assembly in recess until 9am.

### **Day 2: Saturday, May 31**

#### **Opening & Sunergos Award 2025**

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 6 of 32

At 9:15am, Bishop Curry declared the assembly back in session. He then invited Rev. JoAnn Post to present the Sunergos Award to this year's recipient, Dr. Carol Schersten Hurd. Pastor Post presented the award with this introduction:

This assembly's Sunergos Award for Synodical Service is presented to Dr. Carol Schersten LaHurd, for her lifelong commitment to inter-religious and ecumenical work, and peace making across the church. She currently serves with the ELCA's Sumud initiative for justice in Palestine and Israel, and as chair of the synod's Working Group on the Middle East. Dr. LaHurd is tireless in her commitment to educate and advocate for peace and understanding across religious and national borders. Task Force members report that she generously shares her vast knowledge in a way that encourages, supports, and appreciates the efforts of committee members as they learn and take on new responsibilities. Her life is a model of Jesus' own passion for patient teaching, radical welcome, and generous inclusion.

Dr. LaHurd lives in Chicago where she serves as adjunct professor at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. From 2006-2010 she was coordinator of the Middle East peace-making campaign of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). She has taught biblical studies and Islam. With her family she has lived in Damascus, Syria, and Sana'a, Yemen, where she taught English as a second language and did research on women in Islam.

Dr. LaHurd is broadly published on biblical and interfaith topics. She has deep and extensive experience in inter-religious and ecumenical work. She has been co-chairperson of the Muslim-Christian Relations Committee of the Minnesota Council of Churches, chairperson of the Ecumenical Affairs Committee of the Minneapolis Area Synod, member of the ELCA Peace Task Force, and member of the North Carolina Synod Ecumenical Affairs Committee. Dr. LaHurd served on the Board of the ELCA Division for Global Mission from 1997-2003. Currently she is active in adult spiritual formation at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Chicago.

#### **Ecclesiastical Ballots for Vice President and Secretary**

Bishop Curry then invited the chair of the Nominations & Elections Committee Chair, Rev. Darryl Thompson Powell, to provide information on the ecclesiastical ballot for Vice President. Pastor Thompson Powell explained the election process referred to as the ecclesiastical ballot.

#### **Credentials Report**

Bishop Curry called on Rev. Kathy Nolte to give the Credentials Report. As of 9:30am today, 439 voting members have checked in. That number includes 178 Rostered Ministers and 261 Lay Voting Members.

#### **First Ballot for Vice-President**

Bishop Curry declared voting open at 9:48am, and closed at 9:55am.

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 7 of 32

### **First Ballot for Secretary**

Bishop Curry then invited the chair of the Nominations & Elections Committee Chair, Rev. Darryl Thompson Powell, to provide information on the ecclesiastical ballot Secretary. Pastor Thompson Powell explained the election process. At 10:02am, Bishop Curry declared voting to be open and closed at 10:08am.

### **Youth Choir and Youth Poets**

Members of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church, St. Charles, sang for the assembly, followed by the youth poets who had been chosen to present at the assembly:

“Go” written and recited by Jayveon Baskerville

He said... Go.

Not wait.  
Not watch.  
Not whisper to your own echo in a Sunday seat.

Go.  
Not stay tucked in the safety of stained-glass stories  
but walk into wild places  
where the light’s still flickering  
and love has no translation yet.

He didn’t say,  
“Go only when you feel ready,”  
“Go only where it’s pretty,”  
or “Go only to the ones who look like you.”

He said —  
Go, therefore,  
like a river unleashed,  
like fire with a mission,  
like a heartbeat with direction.

Make disciples —  
not just fans, not followers for a moment,  
but lives lit with the same flame that found you,  
hands reaching for the same grace that held you.

Of all nations —  
because the cross was never meant to be claimed by one flag,  
one skin,  
one tongue.

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 8 of 32



It's a table with room for every soul  
and chairs that stretch beyond borders.

Baptize them  
in the name that split the sea,  
the Son who broke the grave,  
and the Spirit still speaking in quiet flames.

Go —  
and let your feet carry the gospel  
like seeds in the wind.  
Let your life be the sermon  
before your lips even speak.

He said, Go —  
and the only question left  
is will you?

“Go Therefore” written and recited by Laurielle Ngassa  
Inspired by Matthew 28:19

Go therefore, to the ends of earth,  
Where silence waits for gospel birth.  
Beneath each sky, on every shore,  
Declare the love we can't ignore.

Make disciples, near and far,  
Not by sword, but by the star  
The Morning Light, the risen Son,  
Who conquered death the Holy One.

Baptize them in the sacred name,  
Father, Son, and Spirit flame.  
Let water wash and hearts be stirred,  
By grace received and gospel heard.

Teach them all He gave to you,  
The narrow path, the walk that's true.  
Not in fear, but clothed with peace,  
Until the day when time shall cease.

And low, He walks with every soul,  
A Shepherd near, a constant goal.

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 9 of 32



From now until the end of days,  
He walks beside us all our ways.

So go therefore, do not delay,  
The fields are white, the light is day.  
The world awaits what heaven gave:  
A love that lives beyond the grave.

**AL SERVICIO** Written & Recited BY: Angel Salcedo

CUANDO SIRVO NO SOLO DOY,  
CUANDO SIRVO YO RECIBO.  
AMOR Y BENDICIONES,  
QUE NO DIMENSIONO NI CONCIBO.

SI DE VERDAD ESTOY DANDO,  
EN COMPASIÓN Y CARIDAD.  
SOY TOCADO POR EL ESPÍRITU  
Y LLENADO DE DIVINIDAD.

SERVIR ES ENTREGARME,  
SIN JUICIO ALGUNO O RESISTENCIA.  
ES EXPANDIR MI CORAZÓN,  
DISFRUTANDO LA EXPERIENCIA.

DE LO QUE HAGO NO ME JACTO,  
MI TRABAJO ES SILENCIOSO.  
SERVIR NO NECESITA EGO,  
PORQUE EN SÍ ES MARAVILLOSO.

SI VOY A REALIZAR UN SERVICIO,  
LO HAGO CON AMOROSIDAD.  
POR QUE A TRAVÉS DE MI SERVICIO,  
DIOS HACE SU VOLUNTAD.

SI EL SERVICIO ME LLAMA,  
QUE ME ENCUENTRE BIEN DISPUESTO.  
ESTE LLAMADO ES DEL PADRE,  
QUE ME DIO LA VIDA PARA ESTO.

AUNQUE UN SERVICIO NO SEA GRATO,  
SIN DUDAR IGUAL ASISTO.

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 10 of 32

PORQUE SÉ BIEN QUE LO QUE HAGO,  
ES EL TRABAJO DEL CRISTO.

**SERVICE** Written & recited by Angel Salcedo

WHEN I SERVE, I DON'T JUST GIVE.  
WHEN I SERVE, I RECEIVE.  
LOVE AND BLESSINGS,  
WHICH I CAN'T DIMENSION OR CONCEIVE.

IF I AM TRULY GIVING,  
IT IS IN COMPASSION AND CHARITY.  
I AM TOUCHED BY THE SPIRIT  
AND FILLED WITH DIVINITY.

TO SERVE IS TO GIVE MYSELF,  
WITHOUT JUDGMENT OR RESISTANCE.  
IT IS TO EXPAND MY HEART,  
ENJOYING THE EXPERIENCE.

I DO NOT BOAST ABOUT WHAT I DO;  
MY WORK IS SILENT.  
SERVING DOES NOT REQUIRE AN EGO,  
BECAUSE IT IS WONDERFUL IN ITSELF.

IF I AM GOING TO PERFORM A SERVICE,  
I DO IT WITH LOVINGNESS.  
BECAUSE THROUGH MY SERVICE,  
GOD DOES HIS WILL.

IF SERVICE CALLS ME,  
LET ME BE WELL DISPOSED.  
THIS CALL IS FROM THE FATHER,  
WHO GAVE ME LIFE FOR THIS.

EVEN IF A SERVICE IS NOT PLEASANT,  
I WILL ATTEND WITHOUT A DOUBT.  
BECAUSE I KNOW WELL  
THAT IS WHAT I DO. IT IS THE WORK OF CHRIST.

**Poema a la Justicia** Written & recited by Omar Salcido  
La Justicia esta llena de injusticia,  
especialmente para la juventud

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 11 of 32



Enseñame a abrir mis brazos ala justicia divina,  
no me enseñes un Dios que no acepta y castiga.

Enseñame a orar con sus palabras  
no con las tuyas.  
Enseñame a caminar con él.

Enseñame que en la justicia divina  
Dios me acepta, a pesar de todo

Enseñame que él esta conmigo  
incluso cuando me equivoco

Enseñame que cuando no se que hacer  
él esta ahí para guiarme

Enseñame que la justicia no llega  
cuando se rechaza la misericordia y persiste el pecado.

Y yo estoy hecho a imagen y semejanza de Dios.

#### **Report of the Bishop**

At 10:22, Bishop Curry gave his report to the assembly, showcasing several of the ministries across the synod. Each of these ministries live out what it means to “Go Therefore” as church.

#### **Advocate Health Care: Keynote Session**

At 11:51 Bishop Curry invited Ms. Dia Nichols from Advocate Healthcare to address the assembly, thanking them for their financial support of the Synod Assembly and the previous night’s diner.

#### **Report of the First Ballot for Vice President**

At 12:33pm, Bishop Curry invited the Nominations & Elections Committee Chair, Rev. Darryl Thompson Powell, to provide the report of the First Ballot for Vice President. On the first ballot of the Vice President’s Election, there were 209 votes and 189 legal votes cast. The number of votes needed to be elected in this first round is 2/3 of the legal votes, or 126 votes. No one achieved the minimum number of votes to be elected on this ballot, so the assembly will vote on a second ballot. The persons on the second ballot will be:

Terry Henderson 110  
Ivan Perez 20  
Ami Frick 10  
Angela Bell 5

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 12 of 32

Vanessa Young 5  
Jayne Shimko 4  
John Volkening 4  
Ronald Tuan-Mu 3  
Debbie Garrison 2  
Mark Mathyer 2  
Greg Andrews 1  
Nancy Arneson 1  
Vicki Broberg 1  
Rick Brown 1  
Dan Cramer 1  
Dennis Debie 1  
Jennifer DeLeon 1  
Robert Esmail 1  
Judith Hanson 1  
Heather Haynes 1  
Wendy Heilman 1  
Robert Langlois 1  
Daniel Morris 1  
Madethe Mwakalukwa 1  
Rahel Mwitula-Williams 1  
Loretta Northcutt 1  
Mir Pawlak 1  
Elsie Sabbithi 1  
Mary Simonis 1  
John Smith 1  
Randy Steinheimer 1  
Evelyn Straw 1  
Clyde Andrew Walter 1  
Christine Weber 1

**Report of The First Ballot for Secretary**

Rev. Thompson Powell then moved the results of the first ballot of the Secretary's Election, there were 234 votes and 225 legal votes cast. The number of votes needed to be elected in this first round is 2/3 of the legal votes, or 150 votes.

The results from the first ballot are as follows:

Sue Allen 1  
Carl Johnson 1  
Larry Clark 1  
Jennie English Dumont 1  
Kristina Herrera 1  
Jayne Shimko 1  
Susan Johnson 1  
Paul Kopka 1

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 13 of 32



Troy Medlin 1  
Jeff Mikyska 1  
Kathy Nolte 1  
Eric Schaefer 1  
Kyle Severson 1  
Linda Vargas 1  
Nancy Arnesen 2  
Fanya Berry 2  
Anna-Kari Johnson 2  
David Nelson 2  
Yvette NewberryWhite 2  
Maria Roja 2  
Linda Thurston 2  
Jeanine Reardon 3  
Katie Hines-Shah 3  
Heather Feltman 3  
Kelsey Johnson 5  
Jason Glombicki 9  
Erin Clausen 174

Bishop Curry shared congratulations to Secretary Elect Erin Clausen, who received 174 of the legal votes cast. I invite her to address the assembly at this time.

#### **Nomination Acceptance Procedure**

Rev. Darryl Thompson Powell briefly outlined how to withdraw from the election for Vice President. Following brief announcements, at 12:43pm, Bishop Curry declared the assembly in recess.

#### **Plenary VII**

Bishop Curry called the assembly back into session at 2:01pm, inviting Pastor JoAnn Post to provide housekeeping details.

#### **Second Ballot for Vice President**

At 2:08, Bishop Curry invited Nominations & Elections Committee Chair, Rev. Darryl Thompson Powell, to give the instructions for the second ballot for Vice President. Rev. Thompson Powell called for a Credentials Report, which is as follows:

As of 2:10pm today, 439 voting members have checked in. That number includes 178 Rostered Ministers and 261 Lay Voting Members.

Pastor Thompson Powell reminded the assembly of the voting procedure. Bishop Curry then invited Pastor Andrea Delaney to pray before declaring voting open at 2:12pm. Voting was declared closed at 2:18pm.

#### **Spoken Word Performance**

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 14 of 32

While the assembly awaited election results, Bishop Curry invited Ms. Elena Birdwell to give a spoken word youth performance.

Reflection Written & recited by Elena Birdwell

My name is Elena Birdwell, I am a 6th grade student at Campanelli Elementary School in Schaumburg and I belong to St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Park Ridge.

My Asian heritage comes from my dad's mom, or as I call her my Nai-Nai. She is the whole reason I am here. She was born in Taiwan and immigrated to the US when she was 14 years old. She had to learn English in high school before going to Rice University for college. She also had two children - my dad and aunt - who both have two children of their own.

So now that you have some background, let's get started.

I was asked to write a poem on what it's like to be an American Asian, and it was difficult because although my experience is different from some of my friends with other backgrounds, to me it just seems normal. Most of my friends are mixed or other races but we are friends because of our personalities and interests, not our skin color. One of my friends was born in Asia. I know many others who were born abroad but we still have things in common. I have three close friends from school and we all have some Asian heritage. My best friend Sissi was born in China, my friend Evelyn is half Russian and half Chinese, and finally Zohra is 25% Pakistani, 25% Indian and half Chinese. The culture is different at all of our houses. At Sissi's we eat hot pot and dumplings for dinner and have Chinese cookies as snacks. At Zohra's we bring the spiciest snakes we can find and she eats them without batting an eye. At Evelyn's we speak more Chinese since her Pou Pou lives with them. I guess it is a little different than people with only one language background because when we go home we speak Chinese but that's not so different from some of my classmates who speak Polish, Spanish or other languages at home.

While I have Chinese heritage from my Nai Nai I also have Irish, Italian, Scottish and German ancestry but none of us speak any of those languages and the culture persists mainly through food. I feel the most connected to my Asian heritage since we still speak the language and my Nai Nai can tell stories about her native country. But, as she says, she has embraced the American way.

From a kid's perspective what I want to say is that I know that there are people out there that will mistreat people because they are different. People are often mistreated for what makes them unique. So if someone asks me what they should do if they are bullied for being Asian I would tell them to have pride in who they are and to go forth and love who they are.

Written and recited by Elena Birdwell, age 12 April 30, 2025

### **Greetings from Visiting Bishop and Others**

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 15 of 32

Bishop Martin Halom shared greetings from the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin. The representative from ELCA World Hunger provided brief greetings as well. The assembly also watched videos from LSSI and Glenbrook Parish, as well as a memorial video of those rostered leaders who have died in the synod over the last year.

#### **Report of The Second Ballot for Vice-President**

Rev. Darryl Thompson Powell was invited to share the report of the second ballot for Vice President.

On the second ballot of the Vice President's Election, there were 313 votes and 313 legal votes cast. To be elected in this second round, a majority of the legal votes cast is needed, or 157 votes. The vote totals were as follows:

Nancy Arneson 1  
John Smith 1  
Robert Esmail 2  
Wendy Heilman 2  
Mark Mathyer 3  
Madethe Mwakalukwa 3  
Jayne Shimko 4  
Ronald Tuan-Mu 4  
Angela Bell 8  
Vanessa Young 14  
Ivan Perez 20  
Ami Frick 24  
Terry Henderson 227

#### **Resolution of Thanks**

Bishop Curry shared congratulations for Vice-President Elect Henderson, then invited Committee on Reference and Counsel's co-chairs to provide one last resolution

### **A RESOLUTION OF THANKS AT THE 2025 ASSEMBLY OF THE METRO CHICAGO SYNOD OF THE ELCA**

**Whereas**, that the voting members of the 2025 Assembly of the Metro Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America offer thanks and prayerful support to our bishop, our officers, our synod council, our synod staff, and our deans for their faithful service and loving support in our life together and,

**Whereas**, we offer thanks and prayers for everyone who helped Assembly participants gather this day to tend to the business of the synod and the broader church and,

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 16 of 32

**Whereas**, we give thanks for our Churchwide Representative, Deacon John Weit, ELCA's Executive for Worship, and Bishop Martin Halom, of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin; and Bishop Greg Busboom, Central/Southern Illinois Synod and,

**Whereas**, we give thanks for our worship leaders, volunteers, and musicians and,

**Whereas**, we give thanks for the representatives of the many partners in ministry who are at this assembly and,

**Whereas**, we give thanks for all those who offered their service to this synod through the election process, to those who were elected, and to those who continue to serve and,

**Whereas**, we offer thanks to the those who made this assembly possible in various ways, for our parliamentarian, Ms. Joan Bundley, the Worship Committee: Rev. Christina Garrett Klein, Rev. Nathan Klein, and Mr. Alex Linn, the Minutes Committee: Rev. Erin Clausen, the Credentials Committee: Rev. Kathy Nolte, the Nominations & Elections Committee: Rev Darryl Thompson Powell, the Sergeants at Arms: Rev. Paul Pfeffer, and the Reference and Counsel Committee: Rev. Anne Ritke McCall and Deacon Heather Feltman and, our Youth Poets, Jayveon Baskerville, Elena Birdwell, Laurielle Ngassa, Angel Salcedo and Omar Salcido and,

**Whereas**, we offer thanks for our workshop leaders: Carla Thompson-Powell, Rev. Jane Kunzie-Bruner, Mr. Dia Nichols, Rev. Sunitha Mortha, Rev. Maria Rojas-Banda, Tom Anderson, Rev. Kirsten Peachey, Rev. Tiffany Chaney, Rev. Ann Gonyea, Metro Chicago Working Group on the Middle East, Ms. Alehandra Perez, Ms. Tanya Fisher, Partners for Sacred Places, Ms. Everdith Landrau and Ms. Mary Campbell and,

**Whereas**, we offer thanks for our language interpreters: Patti Oberbeck and Patti Shore Kaden, as our ASL interpreters, and to Maggie Del Toro, and Alejandra Rojas, as our Spanish language interpreters and,

**Whereas**, we acknowledge the hard work and give thanks for the faithful service of this year's Synod Assembly Manager: Nic Barnum and,

**Whereas**, we offer thanks to the Q Center staff and technical crew Time Frakes, Videographer, Mr. Ari Neiditz, Video Editor and Ms. Maribel Lopez, Web Consultant, and those who have prepared our meals and served them and,

**Whereas**, that above all, we give thanks to God for God's continued presence among us and our world,

Pastor Anne then concluded with a "Prayer for other Synod Assemblies."

Bishop Curry thanked her and all the members of the Committee on Reference and Counsel for their diligent work, as well as the Bishop Election Committee and Deacon John Weit.

#### **Closing of the Assembly**

Bishop Curry led the assembly in a brief closing litany before declaring the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly closed and adjourning at 2:56pm.

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page 17 of 32

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Erin Clausen  
Metropolitan Chicago Synod Secretary.

Minutes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Metropolitan Chicago Synod (May 30-31, 2025)  
*approved 04/2026 by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council*  
Page **18** of **32**

# NECROLOGIST REPORT

MAY 2025 THROUGH APRIL 2026

## JANE KUNZIE-BRUNNER

Jane Kunzie-Brunner, 67, of Lake Barrington died March 19 from cancer. Her funeral was March 23 at Lutheran Church of the Atonement in Barrington with private interment. Visitation was at Davenport Family Funeral Home and Crematory in Lake Zurich.

Pastor Kunzie-Brunner served Lutheran Church of the Atonement of Barrington and Bethlehem Lutheran Church in St. Charles. She earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois (UIUC), a Master of Divinity and a Doctor of Ministry from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and a JD degree from Valparaiso University School of Law in Indiana.

She is survived by her children, Kathryn Kunzie and Alex Julianne Brunner, and six siblings. She was preceded in death by her parents, John, Judie and Carlene Kunzie.

Her published obituary contains this tribute to: "...her love of a good Diet Coke, black licorice, Dolly Parton, roller coasters, studying the Bible and the law, sending greeting cards and collecting china. Throwing dinner parties, lavishing gifts and praise on the people she loved. Wearing a purple boa and a tiara to chemotherapy. Her love of life and approaching death with confidence in the resurrection."

### **Full obituary:**

<https://www.davenportfamily.com/obituaries/jane-kunzie-brunner>

## BARBARA SPANDET GAZZOLO

Barbara Louise Spandet Gazzolo, 94, of Evanston died Feb. 1. A memorial service was scheduled for 11 a.m. on May 30 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Evanston.

Gazzolo was a pastor of St. James Lutheran Church in Lake Forest from 1982 to 2005, when she retired. She was also a graduate of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. She was born Aug. 21, 1931, in Dwight, Ill., to Danish parents Olga Regina and Jens Jessen Spandet. She was mother to four children and four grandchildren.

In a longer obituary provided by her family, her children wrote: "Our mother will be remembered for her moral clarity, intellectual seriousness, keen and kind wit, abiding compassion, and a knack for embracing life as a lark. She lived her life without spectacle, leaving a legacy of justice-centered ministry, committed activism, and most of all, love expressed through deep connections with colleagues, friends, and her ever-expanding family."

### **Full obituary:**

<http://starksfamilyfh.com/obituaries/barbara-gazzolo>



## RONALD MILLER BUCH

Ronald Miller Buch, 82, died January 13 in Glendale, Ariz. His funeral was Feb. 21 at Glueckert Funeral Home in Arlington Heights.

Pastor Buch served in chaplaincy and social services at Northwest Community Hospital in Arlington Heights from 1975 until his retirement in 2009.

He was born Sept. 22, 1943, in Storm Lake, Iowa. A graduate of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, he served as a pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Sioux City, Iowa, before becoming a chaplain.

He is survived by his wife, Annell Bonaguidi Buch; three children, Aaron (Catherine) Buch, Jason (Ann) Buch, and Kristin (Chris) Quinn; four step-children, William (Kimberly) Bonaguidi, Steve Bonaguidi, Robert (Dawn) Bonaguidi, and Laura (Wade) Chance; six grandchildren and five step-grandchildren, and his brother, James Buch.

### **Full obituary:**

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/arlington-heights-il/ron-buch-12711488>

+ Rest eternal grant them, O Lord;  
and let light perpetual shine upon them. +



# CHANGES IN THE SYNOD ROSTER & CONGREGATIONS

## ADDITIONS TO THE CLERGY ROSTER BY ORDINATION

### September 6, 2025

Rev. Melissa Dailey-Bravo  
*Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Cicero*

Rev. Dennis J. Debrie  
*Lutheran Church of Martha & Mary, Mt. Prospect*

### January 17, 2026

Rev. Timothy Colon-Geistlinger  
*Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Glenview*

Rev. Sharei Green  
*United in Faith Lutheran Church, Chicago*

Rev. Rodger L. Jones  
*Bethel Lutheran Church, Chicago*

### April 18, 2026

Rev. Linda Davies  
*All Saints Lutheran Church, Palatine*

## ADDITIONS TO THE CLERGY ROSTER BY RITE OF RECEPTION

Rev. Nixon Mwitula. *Tumaini Swahili Chapel, Aurora*  
Rev. Tomasz Pels , *Acacia Park Lutheran Church,  
Norridge*

## ADDITIONS TO THE ROSTER BY RITE OF REINSTATEMENT

Rev. James Moore  
*St. Philip Lutheran Church, Glenview*

## CLOSED CONGREGATIONS

Unity Lutheran Church of Berwyn 4/27/2025  
Resurrection Lutheran Church, Niles 5/18/2025  
Trinity Lutheran Church of Park Forest 11/30/2025  
St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Skokie 12/14/2025

## RESIGNATIONS

Kathryn Lawler-Wunsch 4/15/2026  
David Hanson 2/27/2026

## REMOVED FROM THE ROSTER

N/A

## REMOVED FROM ROSTER BY DEATH

Jane Kunzie-Brunner 3/19/2026  
Barbara Spandet Gazzolo 2/1/2026  
Ronald Miller Buch 1/13/2026



## RETIREMENTS

Rev. Ronald W. Feltman  
Rev. Marrion Johnson  
Rev. Daniel Schwich  
Rev. Bruce Anderson  
Rev. Keith Fry  
Rev. Thad W. (Will) Fisher  
Rev. Paul M. Kopka  
Deacon Sue Rothmeyer  
Rev. Nestor Espinoza  
Rev. Robert Davis  
Rev. JoAnn Post  
Rev. Kevin Massey  
Deacon Marlene Daubert

Deacon Christine Yucha , *Lutheran Social Services of Illinois*  
(from *North Carolina Synod*)

## TRANSFERS OUT

Rev. Samantha Nichols, *Central States Synod*  
Rev. Paul Petersen, *Northern Illinois Synod*  
Rev. Andrew Rindfleisch, *Minneapolis Synod*  
Rev. Hannah Hawkinson, *Saint Paul Area Synod*  
Rev. Eric Worringer, *Rocky Mountain Synod*  
Rev. Norman Keith Fry, *Florida-Bahamas Synod*  
Rev. Roy Olson, *Grand Canyon Synod*  
Rev. Michael Stadie, *Minneapolis Area Synod*  
Rev. Timothy Seitz, *Saint Paul Area Synod*

## TRANSFERS IN

Deacon David Webb, *St. Mark, Aurora*  
(from *Southwest California Synod*)

Rev. Christine Webb, *The Table Church, Batavia*  
(from *Southwest California Synod*)

Rev. Joseph Yucha, *Our Saviour, Arlington Heights*  
(from *North Carolina Synod*)

Rev. Dawn Roucka, *Bethlehem, Elgin*  
(from *Northern Illinois Synod*)

Rev. Mauricio Vieira, *Gloria Dei, Northbrook*  
(from *Central/Southern Illinois Synod*)

Rev. Daniel Heim, *Good Shepherd, Oak Park*  
(from *Southwestern Texas Synod*)



# SYNOD ROSTER OF CONGREGATIONS

**Acacia Park Lutheran Church**

4307 N Oriole Ave, Norridge, IL, 60706-1146

**All Saints Lutheran Church**

630 S Quentin Rd, Palatine, IL, 60067-6759

**Ascension Lutheran Church**

400 Nuttall Rd, Riverside, IL, 60546-1807

**Augustana Lutheran Church Of Hyde Park**

5500 S Woodlawn Ave, Chicago, IL, 60637-1621

**Bethany Lutheran Church**

8 S Lincoln St, Batavia, IL, 60510-2424

**Bethany Lutheran Church**

500 Lemont St, Lemont, IL, 60439-4029

**Bethany Lutheran Church**

9147 S Jeffery Ave, Chicago, IL, 60617-3755

**Bethel Lutheran Church**

4211 W West End Ave, Chicago, IL, 60624-2245

**Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church**

9401 S Oakley Ave, Chicago, IL, 60643-6748

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church**

340 Grand Blvd, Elgin, IL, 60120-4224

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church**

PO Box 3850, St Charles, IL, 60174-9085

**Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church**

6149 S Kenneth Ave, Chicago, IL, 60629-5209

**Chosen Bethel Family Ministries**

6201 S Sangamon St, Chicago, IL, 60621-2005

**Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church**

3253 W Wilson Ave, Chicago, IL, 60625-4740

**Christ Lutheran Church**

41 S Rohlwing Rd, Palatine, IL, 60074-6459

**Christ Lutheran Church**

595 N Deerpath Dr, Vernon Hills, IL, 60061-1801

**Christ Lutheran Church**

60 55th St, Clarendon Hills, IL, 60514-1475

**Christ the Lord Lutheran Church**

12N462 Tina Trl, Elgin, IL, 60124-4876

**Christ the Mediator Lutheran Church**

3100 S Calumet Ave, Chicago, IL, 60616-3930

**Christus Victor Lutheran Church**

1045 S Arlington Heights Rd, Elk Grove Village  
IL, 60007-3703

**Come Alive Ministry Of Faith  
Lutheran Church**

2206 E 73rd St, Chicago, IL, 60649-3217

**Concordia Lutheran Church**

3855 N Seeley Ave, Chicago, IL, 60618-3911

**Congregacion Luterana San Timoteo**

2101 N Kildare Ave, Chicago, IL, 60639-3659

**Ebenezer Lutheran Church**

1650 W Foster Ave, Chicago, IL, 60640-2014



**Edgebrook Lutheran Church**

5252 W Devon Ave, Chicago, IL, 60646-4145

**Edison Park Lutheran Church**

6626 N Oliphant Ave, Chicago, IL, 60631-1514

**Epiphany Evangelical Lutheran Church**

314 W Vallette St, Elmhurst, IL, 60126-4267

**Evangelical Lutheran Church Of All Saints**

5800 State Park Rd, Fox Lake, IL, 60020-1182

**Evangelical Lutheran Church of St Luke**

1500 W Belmont Ave, Chicago, IL, 60657-3108

**Faith Lutheran Church**

12642 S Massasoit Ave, Palos Heights, IL, 60463-2422

**Faith Lutheran Church**

18645 Dixie Hw, Homewood, IL, 60430-3714

**Faith Lutheran Church**

3000 Liberty St, Aurora, IL, 60502-9512

**Faith Lutheran Church**

41 N Park Blvd, Glen Ellyn, IL, 60137-5713

**First Evangelical Lutheran Church**

2519 Grove St, Blue Island, IL, 60406-2309

**First Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church**

1124 S Ashland Ave, Chicago, IL, 60607-4604

**First Lutheran Church**

3500 W Fullerton Ave, Chicago, IL, 60647-2418

**Geneva Evangelical Lutheran Church**

301 S 3rd St, Geneva, IL, 60134-2725

**Gethsemane Lutheran Church**

1937 S 50th Ave, Cicero, IL, 60804-2428

**Gloria Dei Lutheran Church**

1133 Pfingsten Rd, Northbrook, IL, 60062-4449

**Gloria Dei Lutheran Church**

4501 Main St, Downers Grove, IL, 60515-2881

**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**

PO Box 121, Robbins, IL, 60472-0121

**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**

611 Randolph St, Oak Park, IL, 60302-3217

**Grace Lutheran Church**

1624 E Euclid Ave, Mount Prospect, IL,  
60056-1552

**Grace Lutheran Church**

501 Valley Park Dr, Libertyville, IL, 60048-3416

**Grace Lutheran Church**

1430 South Blvd, Evanston, IL, 60202-2767

**Grace Lutheran Church**

493 Forest Ave, Glen Ellyn, IL, 60137-4104

**Grace Lutheran Church**

200 N Catherine Ave, La Grange, IL, 60525-1826

**Grace Of Lily Lake Lutheran Church**

5N600 Hanson Rd, St Charles, IL, 60175-8125

**Holy Cross Lutheran Church**

802 E Geneva Rd, Wheaton, IL, 60187-2808

**Holy Cross Lutheran Church**

1151 N Saint Marys Rd, Libertyville, IL,  
60048-1641

**Holy Family Lutheran Church**

542 W Hobbie St, Chicago, IL, 60610-2407

**Holy Spirit Lutheran Church**

30 Riverwoods Rd, Lincolnshire, IL, 60069-4002

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church**

357 Division St, Elgin, IL, 60120-5642

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church**

2328 Central Rd, Glenview, IL, 60025-4271

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church**

350 E Madison St, Lombard, IL, 60148-3456

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church - South Loop**

1218 W Addison St, Chicago, IL, 60613-3819

**Hope Lutheran Church**

1660 Checker Rd, Long Grove, IL, 60047-5289

**Iglesia De La Santa Cruz**

6545 S Springfield Ave, Chicago, IL, 60629-4756

**Iglesia Luterana De La Trinidad**

2921 W Division St, Chicago, IL, 60622-2708

**Immanuel Lutheran Church**

1500 W Elmdale Ave, Chicago, IL, 60660-2418

**Immanuel Lutheran Church**

616 Lake St, Evanston, IL, 60201-4413

**Irving Park Lutheran Church**

3938 W Belle Plaine, Ave, Chicago, IL, 60618-1921

**Joy Life Center**

1805 W Monterey Ave, Chicago, IL, 60643-4292

**Joy Lutheran Church**

749 S Hunt Club Rd, Gurnee, IL, 60031-2406

**Jubilee Faith Community Church**

17450 Pulaski Rd, Country Club Hills, IL,  
60478-4639

**Lake View Lutheran Church**

835 W Addison St, Chicago, IL, 60613-4309

**Lebanon Lutheran Church**

13100 S Manistee Ave, Chicago, IL, 60633-1742

**Living Lord Lutheran Church**

1044 Congress Dr, Bartlett, IL, 60103-5757

**Lord of Life Lutheran Church**

119 W Wise Rd, Schaumburg, IL, 60193-4067

**Lord of Life Lutheran Church**

725 75th St, Darien, IL, 60561-4239

**Love, Faith & Hope Church of the ELCA**

1923 W 51st St, Chicago, IL, 60609-4843

**Luther Memorial Lutheran Church**

2500 W Wilson Ave, Chicago, IL, 60625-3026

**Lutheran Church Of Martha & Mary**

606 W Golf Rd, Mount Prospect, IL, 60056-4207

**Lutheran Church Of The Atonement**

909 E Main St, Barrington, IL, 60010-4688

**Lutheran Church Of The Cross**

2025 S Goebbert Rd, Arlington Heights, IL,  
60005-4203

**Lutheran Church Of The Good Shepherd**

1111 N Elmhurst Rd, Prospect Heights, IL, 60070-1011

**Lutheran Church Of The Holy Spirit**

1335 W 115th St, Chicago, IL, 60643-4446

**Lutheran Church Of The Master**

580 Kuhn Rd, Carol Stream, IL, 60188-9285

**Lutheran Church of the Resurrection**

15050 S Central Ave, Oak Forest, IL, 60452-1158

**Messiah Lutheran Church**

1605 Vernon Ave, Park Ridge, IL, 60068-1567

**Messiah Lutheran Church**

25225 W Ivanhoe Rd, Wauconda, IL,  
60084-2405

**Misión Luterana Unidad De Berwyn**

6720 31st St, Berwyn, IL, 60402-3140

**Mosaic Lutheran Church Of Chicago**

14700 Kildare Ave, Midlothian, IL, 60445-3336

**Mount Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church**

10400 S Kostner Ave, Oak Lawn, IL, 60453-4814

**Naperville Yuhllin Church**

2200 Ridge Ave, Aurora, IL, 60504-7500

**New Hope Lutheran Church**

4701 N Randall Rd, Aurora, IL, 60506-1918

**New Light Christian Church, ELCA**

1700 N Rand Rd, Palatine, IL, 60074-1126

**Our Savior Lutheran Church**

420 W Downer Pl, Aurora, IL, 60506-5035

**Our Savior Lutheran Church**

8607 Narragansett Ave, Burbank, IL, 60459-2426

**Our Saviour Lutheran Church**

19058 Burnham Ave, Lansing, IL, 60438-3992

**Our Saviour Lutheran Church**

1234 N Arlington Heights Rd, Arlington Heights, IL,  
60004-4741

**Our Saviour's Lutheran Church**

815 S Washington St, Naperville, IL, 60540-7443

**Parroquia Luterana Sagrado Corazon**

658 Grand Ave, Waukegan, IL, 60085-4156

**Peace Lutheran Church**

1050 S Old Rand Rd, Lake Zurich, IL, 60047-2868

**Pilgrim Lutheran Church**

4300 N Winchester Ave, Chicago, IL,  
60613-1016

**Prince Of Peace Lutheran Church**

2600 75th St, Woodridge, IL, 60517-2852

**Prince Of Peace Lutheran Church**

930 W Higgins Rd, Schaumburg, IL, 60195-3204

**Prince Of Peace Lutheran Church**

1213 W Army Trail Blvd, Addison, IL, 60101-3105

**Redeemer Lutheran Church**

1006 Gillick St, Park Ridge, IL, 60068-4639

**Redeemer Lutheran Church**

651 E 166th St, South Holland, IL, 60473-2337

**Redeemer Lutheran Church**

139 E 1st St, Hinsdale, IL, 60521-4253

**Redeemer's Lutheran Church**

4955 158th St, Oak Forest, IL, 60452-3513

**Rejoice Lutheran Church**

500 N Randall Rd, Batavia, IL, 60510-3735

**Resurrection Lutheran Church**

3309 N Seminary Ave, Chicago, IL, 60657-2220

**Resurrection Lutheran Church**

9777 Grand Ave, Franklin Park, IL, 60131-3358

**Savior Divine Lutheran Church**

10040 S 88th Ave, Palos Hills, IL, 60465-1120



**Shekinah Chapel**

13800 S Wabash Ave, Riverdale, IL, 60827-2906

**Shepherd Of The Lakes Lutheran Church**

285 E Washington St, Grayslake, IL, 60030-1133

**Shepherd's Heart Ministry**

6352 W Gunnison St, Chicago, IL, 60630-2954

**St Andrew Lutheran Church**

155 N Prince Crossing Rd, West Chicago, IL,  
60185-2443

**St Andrew Lutheran Church**

10 S Lake St, Mundelein, IL, 60060-2712

**St Andrews Lutheran Church**

845 W Strieff Ln, Glenwood, IL, 60425-1315

**St James Lutheran Church**

1380 N Waukegan Rd, Lake Forest, IL,  
60045-1147

**St James Lutheran Church**

8000 S Michigan Ave, Chicago, IL, 60619-3511

**St John Lutheran Church**

1235 Wilmette Ave, Wilmette, IL, 60091-2557

**St Luke Lutheran Church**

23W080 Butterfield Rd, Glen Ellyn, IL,  
60137-6904

**St Luke Lutheran Church**

3325 W Wrightwood Ave, Chicago, IL,  
60647-1405

**St Luke's Lutheran Church**

205 N Prospect Ave, Park Ridge, IL, 60068-3571

**St Mark Lutheran Church**

200 S Wille St, Mount Prospect, IL, 60056-3121

**St Mark Lutheran Church**

11007 S 76th Ave, Worth, IL, 60482-1192

**St Mark Lutheran Church**

27 S Edgelawn Dr, Aurora, IL, 60506-4301

**St Mark Lutheran Church**

655 E 88th St, Chicago, IL, 60619-6805

**St Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church**

3350 N Delany Rd, Waukegan, IL, 60087-1343

**St Michaels Lutheran Church**

PO Box 1142, La Grange Park, IL, 60526-9242

**St Paul Lutheran Church**

545 S Ardmore Ave, Villa Park, IL, 60181-2929

**St Paul Lutheran Church**

515 S Wheaton Ave, Wheaton, IL, 60187-5213

**St Paul Thai Lutheran Church**

7416 Dixon St, Forest Park, IL, 60130-1098

**St Paul's English Evangelical Lutheran Church**

824 N Lewis Ave Waukegan, IL, 60085-2625

**St Paul's Lutheran Church**

1004 Greenwood St, Evanston, IL, 60201-4212

**St Philip Lutheran Church**

1609 Pflingsten Rd, Glenview, IL, 60025-1247

**St Stephen Lutheran Church**

14700 Kildare Ave, Midlothian, IL, 60445-3336

**St Stephen Lutheran Church**

8500 S Maryland Ave, Chicago, IL, 60619-6216

**St Thomas Lutheran Church**

8000 S Jeffery Blvd, Chicago, IL, 60617-1037

**St Timothy Lutheran Church**

1313 N Mill St, Naperville, IL, 60563-2522

**The Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**Of The Ascension**

460 Sunset Ridge Rd, Northfield, IL, 60093-2717

**The Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**Of The Good Shepherd**

7800 W McCarthy Rd, Palos Heights, IL,  
60463-1233

**Trinity Lutheran Church**

25519 W State Route 134, Ingleside, IL,  
60041-9508

**Trinity Lutheran Church**

675 E Algonquin Rd, Des Plaines, IL, 60016-6249

**Trinity Lutheran Church**

3637 Golf Rd, Evanston, IL, 60203-1124

**Trinity Lutheran Church**

9701 Brandt Ave, Oak Lawn, IL, 60453-3026

**Trinity Lutheran Church**

3201 Meadow Dr, Rolling Meadows, IL,  
60008-2728

**Trinity Lutheran Church**

3S460 Curtis Ave, Warrenville, IL, 60555-3405

**Trinity United Lutheran Church**

658 Grand Ave, Waukegan, IL, 60085-4156

**True Light Lutheran Christian Church**

1220 E Irving Park Rd, Streamwood, IL,  
60107-3154

**Truth Lutheran Church**

503 W Bauer Rd, Naperville, IL, 60563-1261

**Tumaini Swahili Chapel**

6740 W North Ave, Chicago, IL, 60707-3938

**United In Faith Lutheran Church**

6525 W Irving Park Rd, Chicago, IL, 60634-2416

**United Lutheran Church**

409 Greenfield St, Oak Park, IL, 60302-1143

**Unity Evangelical Lutheran Church**

1212 W Balmoral Ave, Chicago, IL, 60640-1309

**University Lutheran Church**

42204 Orrington Ave, Evanston, IL, 60201-2818

**Wicker Park Lutheran Church**

1500 N Hoyne Ave, Chicago, IL, 60622-1804

**Windsor Park Lutheran Church**

2619 E 76th St, Chicago, IL, 60649-4203

**Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church**

330 Griswold St, Elgin, IL, 60123-7624

**Zion Lutheran Church**

PO Box 515, Deerfield, IL, 60015-0515

**Zion Lutheran Church**

17100 69th Ave, Tinley Park, IL, 60477-3412

**Zion Lutheran Church of Avalon Park**

8455 S Stony Island Ave, Chicago, IL,  
60617-2245



# SYNOD ROSTER OF MINISTERS

## BISHOP

Interim Bishop Wayne N. Miller

## DEACONS

Deacon Richard A. Albrecht  
Deacon Arletta J. Anderson  
Deacon Carol J. Ashmont  
Deacon Linda L. Bensen  
Deacon Doris A. Bettin  
Deacon Mark D. Burkhardt  
Deacon Mary S. Calhoun  
Deacon Marlene N. Daubert  
Deacon Inez T. Davis  
Deacon Bill Decker  
Deacon Linda S. DeGuzman  
Deacon Steven L. Dickens  
Deacon Erika D. Dornfeld  
Deacon Carole A. Edwards  
Deacon Sara Erie  
Deacon Heather L. Feltman  
Deacon Patricia A. Gerber  
Deacon Joan H. Geuss  
Deacon David M. Glover  
Deacon Beata M. Halter  
Deacon Annette Hernandez  
Deacon Karen Katamay  
Deacon Tracy A. Katschke-Goss  
Deacon Judith A. Kiehm  
Deacon Michael J. Knuth  
Deacon Wanda L. Krentz  
Deacon Barbara L. Kudirka  
Deacon Anne J. Lee  
Deacon David H. Maring  
Deacon Rosamond K. Maschoff

Deacon Billie M. Navarro  
Deacon Jean M. Nye  
Deacon Joanne M. Otte  
Deacon Bob Pope  
Deacon Eric P. Price  
Deacon Sandy Reback  
Deacon Lois C. Richardson  
Deacon David W. Rohlwing  
Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer  
Deacon Lora Salley  
Deacon Carol L. Schickel  
Deacon Jason Schultz  
Deacon Julie B. Sevig  
Deacon Marji E. Shannon  
Deacon Pamela K. Shearman  
Deacon Kayla E. Smrt  
Deacon Nancy L. Snell  
Deacon Paula C. Spengler  
Deacon Sarah L. Swagler  
Deacon Julia A. Thomson  
Deacon James E. Valentine  
Deacon Ruth A. Walp  
Deacon David P. Webb  
Deacon Christine L. Yucha

## PASTORS

The Rev. David G. Abrahamson  
The Rev. Klaus-Peter Adam  
The Rev. George F. Aigner  
The Rev. Said R. Ailabouni  
The Rev. Amy O. Aimonette  
The Rev. Leland Albright  
The Rev. Sue E. Allen  
The Rev. Carl L. Anderson  
The Rev. Bruce T. Anderson



The Rev. Nathan P. Anderson  
The Rev. Jason M. Anderson  
The Rev. Suzanne L. Anderson-Hurdle  
The Rev. James S. Andrews  
The Rev. Mary F. Appelt Graves  
The Rev. Jarvi Arthur  
The Rev. Terrence G. Baeder  
The Rev. Patricia A. Baik  
The Rev. Donald W. Balster  
The Rev. Wayne A. Basch  
The Rev. Justin B. Baxter  
The Rev. Dennis L. Beach  
The Rev. Vivian J. Becker  
The Rev. Kim L. Beckmann  
The Rev. Andrew J. Bell  
The Rev. Alvin J. Bergh  
The Rev. Claudia D. Bergmann, Ph.D.  
The Rev. Dale H. Beutler  
The Rev. Lynn M. Bird  
The Rev. Glenn H. Blackwelder  
The Rev. Joseph M. Bocko  
The Rev. Julie E. Boleyn  
The Rev. Carol J. Book  
The Rev. Mark J. Borgetti  
The Rev. Erin K. Bouman  
The Rev. Stephen P. Bouman  
The Rev. Michael W. Bradburn  
The Rev. Carol J. Braun  
The Rev. Donald M. Bravin  
The Rev. Robin K. Brown  
The Rev. David O. Bruner  
The Rev. Wyvetta Bullock  
The Rev. Christopher D. Buresh  
The Rev. Fanya K. Burford-Berry  
The Rev. Antonio J. Cabello  
The Rev. Falcia R. Campbell  
The Rev. Robert S. Castello  
The Rev. Gordon D. Covers  
The Rev. Tiffany C. Chaney  
The Rev. Mark Y. S. Chen  
The Rev. Chi-Shih Chen

The Rev. Erik C. Christensen  
The Rev. Jim Christian  
The Rev. Anne M. Christiansen  
The Rev. Young H. Chung  
The Rev. Lawrence J. Clark  
The Rev. Erin E. Clausen  
The Rev. Erin N. Coleman Branchaud  
The Rev. Rebekah M. Costello  
The Rev. Michael D. Costello  
The Rev. Linda S. Covey  
The Rev. Colin S. Cranmer  
The Rev. Thetis R. Cromie  
The Rev. Roger S. Crum  
The Rev. Robin Currie  
Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry  
The Rev. Patricia V. Cuyatti-Chavez  
The Rev. Melissa C. Dailey  
The Rev. Gustav A. Danielson  
The Rev. Diane R. Dardon  
The Rev. Dave Daubert  
The Rev. Robert A. Davis  
The Rev. Eric L. Dawson  
The Rev. Dennis J. Debie  
The Rev. Dafne Del Risco-Nolla  
The Rev. Andrea M. Delaney  
The Rev. Susan P. Devermann  
The Rev. Neris Diaz-Cabello  
The Rev. Lew Dixon  
The Rev. Robert S. Douglas  
The Rev. Elle Dowd  
The Rev. Adam E. L. Dowd  
The Rev. Christopher L. Drummond  
The Rev. Ruben F. Duran  
The Rev. Jean M. Duran  
The Rev. Melody B. Eastman  
The Rev. Katherine L. Ehlert  
The Rev. Dave Elliott  
The Rev. Jennie English-Dumont  
The Rev. Myron M. Erickson  
The Rev. Nestor R. Espinoza Perez  
The Rev. Kelly K. Faulstich

The Rev. Ronald W. Feltman  
The Rev. Michael D. Fick  
The Rev. Edith T. Finsaadal  
The Rev. Will Fisher  
The Rev. Joanne K. Fitzgerald  
The Rev. Soren S. L. Flessen  
The Rev. James H. Frank, II  
The Rev. John M. Freidheim  
The Rev. Katie Freund  
The Rev. Janet E. Frystak  
The Rev. Paul K. Galchutt  
The Rev. Patricia A. Geiseman  
The Rev. Timothy E. Geistlinger  
The Rev. Curtis W. Gerald  
The Rev. John E. Gerike  
The Rev. Sandra Gillespie  
The Rev. Walter Gillespie, Jr.  
The Rev. Amy L. Gillespie  
The Rev. Joleen M. Gleasman  
The Rev. Jason S. Glombicki  
The Rev. Nancy J. Goede  
The Rev. Robert M. Goldstein  
The Rev. Ann M. Gonyea-Alexander  
The Rev. Rebecca I. Gordon  
The Rev. Julie Grafe  
The Rev. Sharei A. Green  
The Rev. Sue E. Grudt  
The Rev. Richard A. Grudt  
The Rev. James T. Gullickson  
The Rev. Manoj K. Gunthoti  
The Rev. Donald M. Hallberg  
The Rev. John L. Halvorson  
The Rev. Anna M. Hamilton Hicks  
The Rev. Shauna K. Hannan, Ph.D.  
The Rev. Sally E. Hanson  
The Rev. Jessica A. Harren  
The Rev. Nancy E. Harris  
The Rev. Lukas E. Harris-Ferree  
The Rev. Gail L. Heidtke  
The Rev. Dan Heim  
The Rev. David J. Heim

The Rev. Joy T. Heine  
The Rev. Peter A. Hellstedt  
The Rev. Kurt K. Hendel  
The Rev. Robert C. Hereth  
The Rev. John C. Hildner  
The Rev. Cynthia K. Hileman  
The Rev. Elisabeth R. P. Himmelman  
The Rev. Katie E. Hines-Shah  
The Rev. Richard E. Holmer  
The Rev. Matthew J. Holmes  
The Rev. W T. Holmes  
The Rev. Christopher J. Honig  
The Rev. Tim Housholder  
The Rev. Nathan A. Houston  
The Rev. C M. Ideran  
The Rev. Charles D. Infelt  
The Rev. Y. Franklin Ishida  
The Rev. Sharai J. Jacob  
The Rev. Charisse J. Jensen  
The Rev. Kristian E. Johnson  
The Rev. Montgomery A. Johnson  
The Rev. Kenneth E. Johnson  
The Rev. Robert C. Johnson  
The Rev. Marrion O. Johnson, Sr.  
The Rev. Carl L. Johnson  
The Rev. Kyle E. Johnson  
The Rev. Richard W. Johnson  
The Rev. Anna-Kari J. Johnson  
The Rev. Vickie D. Johnson  
The Rev. Kelsey L. Johnson  
The Rev. Rodger Jones, Jr.  
The Rev. Richard K. Kaeske  
The Rev. Lydia E. R. Kalb  
The Rev. James D. Kegel  
The Rev. Dennis H. Kelly  
The Rev. Phyllis N. Kersten  
The Rev. Terry Kilens  
The Rev. Jae-Bum Kim  
The Rev. Fredric D. Kinsey  
The Rev. Lloyd R. Kittlaus  
The Rev. Christina G. Klein



The Rev. Nathan Klein  
The Rev. Laura L. Kline  
The Rev. Robert S. Klonowski  
The Rev. Paul M. Kopka  
The Rev. Jeffrey E. Koth  
The Rev. Rhonda L. Kral  
The Rev. David O. Kylo  
The Rev. John A. Lang  
The Rev. Deanna L. Langle  
The Rev. David J. Langseth  
The Rev. Wendy F. Larson  
The Rev. Raymond Legania  
The Rev. David L. Lewis  
The Rev. Pongsak Limthongviratn  
The Rev. Timothy C. Linstrom  
The Rev. Joel T. Lohafer  
The Rev. David J. Lowry  
The Rev. Dean Lueking  
The Rev. Nancy E. Lund  
The Rev. Philip D. Lund  
The Rev. Mark A. Lund  
The Rev. Rick Lund  
The Rev. David R. Lyle  
The Rev. Lindsay K. Mack  
The Rev. Carl R. Malin  
The Rev. Timothy R. Manwell  
The Rev. Kevin A. Massey  
The Rev. Anne R. McCall  
The Rev. Pdraig McGuire  
The Rev. Dan McKnight  
The Rev. Troy E. Medlin  
The Rev. Eardley L. Mendis  
The Rev. David A. Mercurio  
The Rev. Charles R. Merkner  
The Rev. Sally M. Meyer  
The Rev. Christine N. Meyer  
The Rev. Douglas L. Meyer  
The Rev. Dennis A. Meyer  
The Rev. Jeffrey G. Mikyska  
The Rev. Gwendolyn E. Miller  
The Rev. Eric G. Miller

The Rev. Bruce K. Modahl  
The Rev. Jennifer M. Moland-Kovash  
The Rev. Seth M. Moland-Kovash  
The Rev. Alex R. Molina  
The Rev. Christina M. Montgomery  
The Rev. James F. Moore  
The Rev. Daniel R. Morris  
The Rev. Reginald Mortha  
The Rev. Craig M. Mueller  
The Rev. Nixon E. Mwitula  
The Rev. Roberto Navarro  
The Rev. David C. Nelson  
The Rev. Chris Neptun  
The Rev. James R. Nieman  
The Rev. Kelly E. Nieman Anderson  
The Rev. Kathryn A. Nolte  
The Rev. Linda O. Norman  
The Rev. Jared A. Olson  
The Rev. Paul J. Olson  
The Rev. Gary L. Olson  
The Rev. David E. Olson  
The Rev. Franklin C. Orton  
The Rev. Margaret M. Otte  
The Rev. Elizabeth A. Palmer  
The Rev. Martin W. Pauschke  
The Rev. Tom Pels  
The Rev. Nic Peñaranda  
The Rev. Richard J. Perry, Jr.  
The Rev. David W. Peters  
The Rev. David J. Petersen  
The Rev. Brooke N. Petersen  
The Rev. Julie A. Peterson  
The Rev. Paul D. Pfeffer  
The Rev. Arnold O. Pierson  
The Rev. Charles B. Plummer  
The Rev. JoAnn A. Post  
The Rev. Stefan Potuznik  
The Rev. Melanie L. Potuznik  
The Rev. Carla T. Powell  
The Rev. Darryl T. Powel  
The Rev. Thomas D. Prochaska

The Rev. Rhonda L. Pruitt  
 The Rev. Jenna R. Pulkowski  
 The Rev. Arthur E. Puotinen  
 The Rev. Dan Quest  
 The Rev. Louis J. Quetel  
 The Rev. Frederick E. N. Rajan  
 The Rev. Sean Ramsey  
 The Rev. Jeanine L. Reardon  
 The Rev. Karl N. Redelsheimer, Jr.  
 The Rev. Kaari M. Reiersen  
 The Rev. Fred Reklau  
 The Rev. H. Karl Reko  
 The Rev. Timothy S. Robertson  
 The Rev. Luz M. Robles  
 The Rev. Maria A. Rojas-Banda  
 The Rev. Mark D. Rollenhagen  
 The Rev. Anna R. Roper  
 The Rev. Eddie A. Rosa Fuentes  
 The Rev. Nitza B. Rosario  
 The Rev. Michael R. Rothaar  
 The Rev. Dawn D. Roucka  
 The Rev. Marguerite A. Rourke  
 The Rev. Michael P. Russell  
 The Rev. Julie E. Ryan  
 The Rev. Elaina B. Salmon  
 The Rev. Shelly L. Satran  
 The Rev. Eric N. Schaefer  
 The Rev. George M. Schelter  
 The Rev. Miriam Schmidle  
 The Rev. Joseph A. Schultz  
 The Rev. John E. Schumacher  
 The Rev. Peter C. B. Schwich  
 The Rev. Daniel J. Schwich  
 The Rev. Kathie B. Schwich  
 The Rev. PT Seitz  
 The Rev. Mark V. Selbo  
 The Rev. Frank C. Senn  
 The Rev. Kyle R. Severson  
 The Rev. Michelle L. Sevig  
 The Rev. Linda J. Seyenkulo  
 The Rev. Robert L. Shaner  
 The Rev. Meagan D. Sherman-Sporrong  
 The Rev. Harlan F. Showers, Jr.  
 The Rev. Benjamin J. Sloss  
 The Rev. Mark E. Sloss  
 The Rev. Matthew J. Smith-Laubenstein  
 The Rev. Michael A. Steinke  
 The Rev. Cynthia R. Stengel  
 The Rev. Trudy A. Stoffel  
 The Rev. Paul T. Stone  
 The Rev. Matthew F. Stuhlmuller  
 The Rev. John R. Stumme  
 The Rev. John E. Sturz  
 The Rev. Mark J. Sundberg  
 The Rev. Kendrick W. Suter  
 The Rev. Rosanne A. Swanson  
 The Rev. Sarah E. Swindall  
 The Rev. Michael C. Szydlowski, II  
 The Rev. Tom Terrell  
 The Rev. Rebecca Thomas-Templeton  
 The Rev. Christine C. Thompson  
 The Rev. Jerald C. Thorson  
 The Rev. Linda J. Thurston  
 The Rev. Paul A. Tieman  
 The Rev. Heidi L. Torgerson  
 The Rev. Aneel Trivedi  
 The Rev. Jay E. Trygstad  
 The Rev. Philip M. Trzynka  
 The Rev. Scot W. Turnbull  
 The Rev. Bethany R. Ulrich  
 The Rev. Omega V. Varma Sabbithi  
 The Rev. Vernon A. Victorson  
 The Rev. Mauricio C. F. Vieira  
 The Rev. Janet Volk  
 The Rev. Pamela J. Voves  
 The Rev. Jerry A. Wagenknecht  
 The Rev. Zachary D. Wagner  
 The Rev. Willard E. Wagner  
 The Rev. David H. Walters  
 The Rev. Peter Y. H. Wang  
 The Rev. Marian M. Y. Wang  
 The Rev. Carol L. Wasemiller



The Rev. Joel S. Washington  
The Rev. Maxine M. Washington  
The Rev. Christine C. A. Webb  
The Rev. Les Weber, Jr.  
The Rev. Wende West  
The Rev. Lester A. White  
The Rev. Amy L. Wiegert  
The Rev. Emily A. Wiles  
The Rev. Carole P. Willer  
The Rev. Paul S. Willey  
The Rev. Jason L. Williams  
The Rev. Dayton A. Williams  
The Rev. Mike Willis  
The Rev. Linnea B. Wilson  
The Rev. Gretchen B. Winkler  
The Rev. Brian W. Wise  
The Rev. Chris Wogaman  
The Rev. Michael J. Wonderlich  
The Rev. Lit Inn Wu  
The Rev. Joseph P. Yucha  
The Rev. Matthew G. Zemanick  
The Rev. Dale A. Ziemer  
The Rev. Krista M. Zimmerman  
The Rev. Nicholas J. Zook

# TREASURER'S REPORT

YVETTE M. NEWBERRYWHITE

For the fiscal year ending January 31, 2026 operating budget, the synod received congregational benevolence in the amount of \$2,298,772 equaling 96% of the anticipated budgeted amount, 2% below the prior year. We are thankful for our partnership together—congregations, individuals, and our partners—witnessing and working in this great synod. Total revenue and other support were \$3,200,858.

The Synod Council this year distributed \$1,478,550 of unrestricted congregational benevolence received to program ministry support of our partner institutions. \$195,079 of this sum went to organizations and agencies in budgeted grants. The remainder of partner institutional support represents our tithe of received benevolence to the ministry of the larger

Church in the amount of \$1,283,471 to the churchwide organization. This is shown in the supplemental schedules of the annual audit report included in the Book of Reports. All designated funds received are forwarded to the designee in a timely fashion. The program and administrative operating expenses of the synod were \$1,688,378.

During the past several years, ownership interest in real estate properties reverted to the synod through congregational dissolution. The synod has recorded the value of these properties based on real estate appraised values, sale prices or current offer prices. This year's audited financials reflect Contributed Property under Revenues, Gains and Other Support in the amount of \$5,240,000. The majority of those proceeds are subject to donor designations and will be distributed upon the sale of the properties. Other unrealized gains come from our endowment structure. These funds are invested in both the ELCA Foundation and a portfolio of mutual funds at Thrivent, with combined balances at year end of approximately \$15 million. Included in the audited financial statements for the past year is a gain on investments of \$1,492,961. This is due solely to the accounting standard requiring that we record the fund investments at market value and show the unrealized gains & losses in the income statement. We have NOT sold these investments, and the market values fluctuate daily.



For the 2027 year budget, presented for approval at this assembly, the partnership sharing to churchwide remains at 50% of unrestricted benevolence received. This support, along with our ministry through synod partners, totals 59% of the budget.

It is a privilege to serve as your synod treasurer. We are Stronger Together, engaging the gifts God provides, working together and sharing our resources in good, faithful stewardship to be able to raise, equip, touch, support and strengthen God's Beloved Community. We give thanks for each and every one of you.

*Yvette NewberryWhite*

**Yvette M. NewberryWhite**

Treasurer, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA



# PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027: 2/1/27 - 1/31/28

## REVENUE

	<u>2027 Proposed</u>	<u>2026 Budget</u>	<u>2025 Actuals</u>
Congregational Benevolence	2,400,000	2,400,000	2,298,772
Interest and Dividends	35,000	35,000	33,331
Authorized Management Fees	564,840	530,000	470,004
Reserve Revenue			27,554
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>2,999,840</b>	<b>2,965,000</b>	<b>2,829,661</b>

## EXPENSES

Mission Support to ELCA	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,149,386
Partner Ministries	217,034	217,034	200,824
Campus Ministry 3.00% 3.00%	72,000		
Lutheran School of Theology 1.50% 1.50%	36,000		
Wartburg Seminary 1.25% 1.25%	30,000		
Lutheran Social Services 1.75% 1.50%	36,000		
Lutheran Outdoor Ministries .50% 0.50%	12,000		
Lutheran Volunteer Corps .25% 0.25%	6,000		
Bethel New Life .25% 0.25%	6,000		
Refugee One .25% 0.25%	6,000		
Companion Synod .25% 0.25%	6,000		
Region 5 Assessment	4,256		
Region 5 Outdoor Camps	825		
Illinois Conference of Churches	1,953		
Global Mission	4,475	4,475	897
Justice Team	600	600	0
Outreach	1,200	1,200	817
Worship	6,000	6,000	2,582
Metro Chicago Youth	11,000	11,000	2,783
Candidacy	24,000	24,000	14,460



**EXPENSE (CONTINUED)**

	<b><u>2027 Proposed</u></b>	<b><u>2026 Budget</u></b>	<b><u>2025 Actuals</u></b>
Education & Support	24,000	24,000	405
Deaf Ministry	9,400	9,400	7,600
Diakonia Ministry	1,200	1,200	0
Ecumenical Relations	2,500	2,500	1,900
Synod Communication	2,500	2,500	2,870
African Descent Team	10,000	10,000	17,678
Latinx Team	10,000	10,000	36
Anti-Racism Team	15,000	15,000	0
Synod Personnel	1,196,181	1,161,341	1,215,280
Occupancy	33,750	33,750	30,513
Office Operations	92,500	92,500	79,883
Insurance, Audit, & Legal	85,000	85,000	83,048
Staff Expenses	30,000	30,000	12,702
Synod Council	8,500	8,500	5,997
Synod Assembly	15,000	15,000	0
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>2,999,840</b>	<b>2,965,000</b>	<b>2,829,661</b>
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>



# PROPOSED BUDGET NOTES 2027

- Mission Support from congregations remained at a budgeted amount of \$2.4 million, in line with actual Mission Support received in the range of \$2.3 million for each of the last three years.
- Authorized Management Fees remained within 4.0% of the endowment investment balances at the fiscal year-end. These fees are in line with accounting standards and are considered as revenue, representing the management of the endowment process. Market increases in the valuation of the investment portfolio brought the combined balances to \$15.2 million.
- Contributions to the wider church, as a percentage of the synod's Mission Support revenue, remained the same for Partner Ministries (9%) and Mission Support to the ELCA (50%).
- Budgeted expenses remained largely constant. Nominal increases were included to accommodate personnel costs.



**METROPOLITAN CHICAGO SYNOD OF  
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN  
CHURCH IN AMERICA**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
AS OF JANUARY 31, 2026 AND 2025**

**TOGETHER WITH AUDITOR'S REPORT**



Certified Public Accountants  
4320 WINFIELD ROAD, SUITE 450  
WARRENVILLE, IL 60555  
630 665 4440  
duganlopatka.com

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Synod Council  
Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

### *Opinion*

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which comprise the statements of financial position as of January 31, 2026 and 2025, and the related statements of activities, cash flows and functional expenses for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as of January 31, 2026 and 2025, and its changes in net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

### *Basis for Opinion*

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to meet our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

### *Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements*

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in aggregate, which raise substantial doubt about Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's ability to continue as a going concern within one year after the date that the financial statements are available to be issued.



Independent Auditor's Report  
To the Synod Council  
Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

***Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements***

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgement made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgement, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, which raise substantial doubt about Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control related matters that we identified during the audit.



Independent Auditor's Report  
To the Synod Council  
Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

***Supplementary Information***

Our audits were conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. Schedules 1 through 3 are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the information is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

*Dugan + Lopatka*  
DUGAN & LOPATKA

Warrenville, Illinois  
May 4, 2026



# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

JANUARY 31, 2026 AND 2025

	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
<u>ASSETS</u>		
CURRENT ASSETS:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 255,237	\$ 581,507
Cash held for others	149,963	147,141
Investments	1,131,349	1,473,479
Property held for sale	4,913,477	1,638,477
Benevolence receivable	14,633	14,633
Notes receivable - current	11,063	12,868
Deposits and prepaid expenses	<u>97,357</u>	<u>85,580</u>
Total current assets	<u>6,573,079</u>	<u>3,953,685</u>
LONG-TERM ASSETS:		
Notes receivable, net of current maturities	21,500	54,949
Investments	14,905,843	12,950,406
Property and equipment, net	<u>3,044,929</u>	<u>2,431,883</u>
Total long-term assets	<u>17,972,272</u>	<u>15,437,238</u>
OTHER ASSETS:		
Right of use assets	<u>14,541</u>	<u>19,257</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 24,559,892</u>	<u>\$ 19,410,180</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

4



# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

JANUARY 31, 2026 AND 2025 / EXHIBIT 1

	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
<u>LIABILITIES</u>		
CURRENT LIABILITIES:		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 47,721	\$ 79,220
Beneficiary grants payable	254,776	272,981
Custodial and transmittal funds	149,963	147,141
Operating lease liability, current maturities	<u>4,716</u>	<u>4,716</u>
Total current liabilities	<u>457,176</u>	<u>504,058</u>
LONG-TERM LIABILITIES:		
Operating lease liability, net of current maturities	<u>9,825</u>	<u>14,541</u>
<u>NET ASSETS</u>		
NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS:		
Designated	14,021,689	12,943,049
Undesignated	8,768,690	4,600,784
NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	<u>1,302,512</u>	<u>1,347,748</u>
Total net assets	<u>24,092,891</u>	<u>18,891,581</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 24,559,892</u>	<u>\$ 19,410,180</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

5



# STATEMENT ACTIVITIES

JANUARY 31, 2026 AND 2025 / EXHIBIT 2

EXHIBIT 2

METROPOLITAN CHICAGO SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES  
FOR THE YEARS ENDED JANUARY 31, 2026 AND 2025

	2026			2025		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
<b>REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT:</b>						
Benevolences from member congregations	\$ 2,298,772	\$ -	\$ 2,298,772	\$ 2,331,493	\$ -	\$ 2,331,493
Contributions	185,496	175,550	361,046	140,425	160,204	300,629
Contributed property	5,240,000	-	5,240,000	-	-	-
Interest and dividends	495,343	-	495,343	549,846	-	549,846
Other	461	-	461	846	-	846
Net assets released from restrictions	220,786	(220,786)	-	628,442	(628,442)	-
	8,440,858	(45,236)	8,395,622	3,651,052	(468,238)	3,182,814
Gain (loss) on sale of property	55,214	-	55,214	(146,335)	-	(146,335)
Unrealized gain on investments	1,492,961	-	1,492,961	962,775	-	962,775
<b>Total revenues, gains and other support</b>	<b>9,989,033</b>	<b>(45,236)</b>	<b>9,943,797</b>	<b>4,467,492</b>	<b>(468,238)</b>	<b>3,999,254</b>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>						
Program	3,811,434	-	3,811,434	3,758,649	-	3,758,649
Management and general	931,053	-	931,053	914,716	-	914,716
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>4,742,487</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,742,487</b>	<b>4,673,365</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,673,365</b>
Change in net assets	5,246,546	(45,236)	5,201,310	(205,873)	(468,238)	(674,111)
NET ASSETS, Beginning of year	17,543,833	1,347,748	18,891,581	17,749,706	1,815,986	19,565,692
NET ASSETS, End of year	\$ 22,790,379	\$ 1,302,512	\$ 24,092,891	\$ 17,543,833	\$ 1,347,748	\$ 18,891,581

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

6



# STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

JANUARY 31, 2026 AND 2025 / EXHIBIT 3

	2026	2025
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:</b>		
Benevolences, grants and contributions received	\$ 2,659,818	\$ 2,617,489
Investment income received	495,343	549,846
Grants paid	(2,613,216)	(2,503,741)
Cash paid to vendors and employees	(2,086,515)	(2,275,748)
Net cash (used in) operating activities	<u>(1,544,570)</u>	<u>(1,612,154)</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:</b>		
Purchase of property and equipment	(14,000)	(36,600)
Proceeds from sale of property held for sale	1,320,214	2,232,965
Proceeds from sale of investments	375,000	-
Purchases of investments	(495,346)	(549,846)
Receipts from notes receivable	35,254	(83,053)
Issuance of notes receivable	-	45,773
Net cash provided by investing activities	<u>1,221,122</u>	<u>1,609,239</u>
<b>NET CHANGE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>	<b>(323,448)</b>	<b>(2,915)</b>
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS, Beginning of year</b>	<b>728,648</b>	<b>731,563</b>
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS, End of year</b>	<b><u>\$ 405,200</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 728,648</u></b>
<b>RECONCILIATION OF CHANGE IN NET ASSETS TO NET CASH (USED IN) OPERATING ACTIVITIES:</b>		
Change in net assets	\$ 5,201,310	\$ (674,111)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash (used in) operating activities:		
Depreciation	100,954	90,484
(Gain) loss on sale of property held for sale	(55,214)	146,335
Donated property	(5,240,000)	-
Unrealized (gain) on investments	(1,492,961)	(962,775)
Non-cash portion of lease expense	4,716	4,717
(Increase) decrease in assets -		
Benevolence receivable	-	(14,633)
Deposits and prepaid expenses	(11,777)	(65,528)
Increase (decrease) in liabilities -		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	(31,499)	12,394
Custodial and transmittal funds	2,822	(126,874)
Lease liability	(4,716)	(4,717)
Beneficiary grants payable	(18,205)	(17,446)
Net cash (used in) operating activities	<u>\$ (1,544,570)</u>	<u>\$ (1,612,154)</u>
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents - unrestricted	\$ 255,237	\$ 581,507
- held for others	149,963	147,141
<b>Total cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b><u>\$ 405,200</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 728,648</u></b>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

7

# STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

JANUARY 31, 2026 AND 2025 / EXHIBIT 4

EXHIBIT 4

METROPOLITAN CHICAGO SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES  
FOR THE YEARS ENDED JANUARY 31, 2026 AND 2025

	2026			2025		
	Program	Management and General	Total Expenses	Program	Management and General	Total Expenses
Salaries and housing allowances	\$ 491,630	\$ 410,375	\$ 902,005	\$ 324,587	\$ 299,619	\$ 624,206
Employee benefits and payroll taxes	270,606	225,919	496,525	277,746	256,380	534,126
Staff development	34,714	28,981	63,695	43,481	40,136	83,617
Grants	2,595,011	-	2,595,011	2,486,295	-	2,486,295
Meetings and conferences	47,777	-	47,777	42,743	-	42,743
Repairs and maintenance	101,592	84,816	186,408	74,512	68,781	143,293
Technology	23,849	19,910	43,759	19,126	17,654	36,780
Scholarships	17,862	-	17,862	170,325	-	170,325
Depreciation expense	55,020	45,934	100,954	47,052	43,432	90,484
Insurance	33,266	27,773	61,039	34,017	31,401	65,418
Professional fees	66,497	55,515	122,012	88,321	81,527	169,848
Utilities	25,095	20,950	46,045	67,876	62,654	130,530
Telephone	4,329	3,615	7,944	3,389	3,128	6,517
Printing and postage	5,739	4,792	10,531	5,906	5,452	11,358
Supplies	2,603	2,173	4,776	3,999	3,692	7,691
Youth events	35,484	-	35,484	66,932	-	66,932
Miscellaneous	360	300	660	931	860	1,791
Workshops	-	-	-	1,411	-	1,411
	<u>\$ 3,811,434</u>	<u>\$ 931,053</u>	<u>\$ 4,742,487</u>	<u>\$ 3,758,649</u>	<u>\$ 914,716</u>	<u>\$ 4,673,365</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

8

METROPOLITAN CHICAGO SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
JANUARY 31, 2026 AND 2025

(1) NATURE OF ACTIVITIES AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES:

This summary of significant accounting policies of Metropolitan Chicago Synod (the “Synod”) is presented to assist in understanding the Synod’s financial statements. The financial statements and notes are representations of the Synod’s management who is responsible for their integrity and objectivity. These accounting policies conform to accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America and have been consistently applied in the preparation of the financial statements.

The financial statements were available to be issued on May 4, 2026, with subsequent events being evaluated through this date.

Nature of Activities -

The Synod was established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (“ELCA”). The Synod is responsible for oversight of the life and mission of the ELCA in the assigned territory of metropolitan Chicago (the counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, and Lake) in the State of Illinois. The Synod is supported primarily through congregational donor benevolences. The Synod makes significant grants to ELCA.

Financial Statement Presentation -

The financial statements of the Synod have been prepared in accordance with U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). Under GAAP, the Synod is required to report information regarding its financial position and activities according to two classes of net assets: without donor restrictions and with donor restrictions.

Without donor restrictions - Net assets that are not subject to donor-imposed restrictions and may be expended for any purpose in performing the primary objectives of the Synod.

With donor restrictions - Net assets subject to stipulations imposed by donors and grantors. Some donor restrictions are temporary in nature; those restrictions will be met by actions of the Synod or by the passage of time. Other donor restrictions are perpetual in nature, whereby the donor has stipulated that the funds be maintained in perpetuity.

Use of Estimates -

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Cash and Cash Equivalents -

For purposes of the statement of cash flows, the Synod considers all highly liquid debt instruments purchased with an initial maturity of three months or less to be cash equivalents. Cash and cash equivalents exclude cash held in investment funds.



(1) NATURE OF ACTIVITIES AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES:

(Continued)

Credit Risk -

Financial instruments which potentially subject the Synod to concentrations of credit risk consist principally of cash. The Synod places its cash and deposits with high credit quality financial institutions; however, deposits may exceed the federally insured limits.

Investments -

The Synod invests in the ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust, ELCA Mission Plus Fund and mutual funds from Thrivent Investment Management. These investments consist of various marketable securities, corporate bonds, and U.S. government securities. Investment securities, in general, are exposed to various risks, such as interest rate, credit and overall market volatility. Due to the level of market risk associated with certain investment securities, it is possible that changes in the values of investment securities will occur in the near term and that such changes could materially affect the amounts reported in the statement of financial position. Investments in marketable securities are carried at fair value determined based on quoted market prices for those investments. Donated investments are recorded at fair value when received.

Property and Equipment -

Property and equipment are stated at cost or market value at the donation date. Acquisitions of property and equipment with a useful life greater than one year are capitalized. Assets are depreciated or amortized over the estimated useful lives of the assets which range from 3 to 40 years, using the straight-line method. Generally, maintenance and repairs are expensed as incurred. When assets are retired or otherwise disposed of, the cost and related accumulated depreciation and amortization are removed from the accounts and the resulting gain or loss is included in the statement of activities. There were no impairment losses for the years ended January 31, 2026 and 2025, respectively.

The church properties are currently being used by the Synod and the ELCA Domestic Mission Unit to seed new churches in their particular areas. The properties are being used rent free. The properties are being depreciated on a straight-line basis over 40 years. The Synod has made conditional promises to give the properties to these new churches once they meet all the requirements to become organized congregations.

Donated Property and Equipment -

Donations of property and equipment are recorded as contributions at fair value at the date of donation. Such donations are reported as increases in net assets without donor restrictions unless the donor has restricted the donated asset to a specific purpose. Assets donated with explicit restrictions regarding their use and contributions of cash that must be used to acquire property and equipment are reported as restricted contributions. Absent donor stipulations regarding how long those donated assets must be maintained, the Synod reports expirations of donor restrictions when the donated or acquired assets are placed in service as instructed by the donor. The Synod reclassifies net assets with donor restrictions to net assets without donor restrictions. The Synod received \$5,240,000 and \$0- of donated property during the years ended January 31, 2026 and 2025, respectively. The some of the assets are used in program activities while others are held for sale, and once sold the proceeds are used in program activities.



(1) NATURE OF ACTIVITIES AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES:

(Continued)

Income Taxes -

The Synod is exempt from United States federal and state income taxes under the provision of Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). The Synod does not file income tax returns in either the U.S. federal jurisdiction or Illinois as the Synod meets the requirements to be exempt from filing returns unless they incur unrelated business income. The Synod does not expect a material net change in unrecognized tax benefits in the next twelve months.

Revenue Recognition -

The Synod recognizes contributions when cash, securities, or other assets; an unconditional promise to give; or a notification of a beneficial interest is received. Conditional promises to give – that is, those with a measurable performance or other barrier and a right of return – are not recognized until the conditions on which they depend have been met.

The Synod reports gifts of cash and other assets as restricted support if they are received with donor stipulations that limit the use of the assets, or if they are designated as support for future periods. When a donor restriction expires; that is, when a stipulated time restriction ends or purpose restriction is accomplished, net assets with donor restrictions are reclassified to net assets without donor restrictions and reported in the statement of activities as net assets released from restrictions. Donor-imposed contributions whose restrictions are met in the same reporting period are reported as net assets without donor restrictions.

Transmittal Funds -

The Synod receives funds designated for transmittal to various church-related organizations from member congregations and individuals. These funds are accumulated and periodically remitted to the designated organizations and are included as a current asset, cash held for others, and as a liability in the statement of financial position and not included in the statement of activities.

Custodial Funds -

Custodial funds consist of grants received from third parties to be used for a designated purpose and disbursed by the Synod. These funds are included as a current asset, cash held for others, and as a liability in the statement of financial position and are not included in the statement of activities.

Property Held for Sale -

Property held for sale consists of church buildings and land from congregations of the Synod which dissolved. Upon the dissolution of the congregations, the assets of the congregation reverted to the Synod which may hold or sell the property in accordance with its policies and procedures.

Leases -

The Synod determines if an arrangement is a lease or contains a lease at inception of the contract. The Synod's operating leases are presented in operating lease right-of-use assets, current portion of operating lease liabilities, and long-term portion of operating lease liabilities in the accompanying Statement of financial position as of January 31, 2026 and 2025.



(1) NATURE OF ACTIVITIES AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES:  
(Continued)

Leases - (Continued)

Operating lease right-of-use assets and lease liabilities are measured based on the present value of future lease payments over the lease term at each lease's commencement date. As most of the Synod's leases do not specify their implicit rate, the Synod has elected a practical expedient to use the nominal yield, at lease inception, applicable to U.S. Treasury instruments with a maturity of similar length of the lease term.

Operating lease right-of-use assets include all fixed contractual lease payments and initial direct costs incurred by the Synod, less any lease incentives the Synod receives from the lessor. The Synod has elected a practical expedient to account for lease and non-lease components together as a single lease component. The terms of the Synod's leases generally contain lease payments and reimbursements to the lessor of the Synod's proportionate share of common area maintenance (CAM), real estate taxes and other pass-through charges. Only the fixed lease components are included in the right-of-use assets and lease liabilities. Additionally, the Synod has elected not to apply these lease accounting policies to leases with a term of one year or less at the commencement date.

Operating lease expense for lease payments is recognized on a straight-line basis over the terms of each lease. Variable lease components include CAM, real estate taxes and other charges and are recorded as lease expense as incurred.

The Synod's leases can contain options granting the right to renew or extend the term of the lease for specified option periods. The decision as to whether the Synod will exercise the renewal options is generally at the Synod's sole discretion. The Synod includes lease extensions in the lease term when it is reasonably certain that the Synod will exercise the extension.

Functional Allocation of Expenses -

The financial statements report certain categories of expenses that are attributed to a program or supporting function. Therefore, expenses require allocation on a reasonable basis that is consistently applied. The expenses that are allocated include salaries and related expenses, depreciation, professional fees, and other expenses which are allocated on the basis of estimates of time and effort.



(2) TRANSMITTAL AND CUSTODIAL ACTIVITIES:

As discussed in Note 1, the Synod serves as a conduit for the transmittal of funds from member congregations and as a custodian for other organizations' funds. The transmittal and custodial activity for the year ended January 31, 2026 was as follows:

	Balance January 31, 2025	Receipts	Disbursements	Balance January 31, 2026
Transmittal funds -				
World Hunger	\$ 11,154	\$ 76,246	\$ 70,212	\$ 17,188
Companion Synod	10,058	-	10,058	-
Disaster Relief	2,218	22,581	20,915	3,884
LSSI and other MCS	56,929	4,475	2,112	59,292
ELCA Missionaries	200	667	200	667
SOLI Grant	2,405	-	-	2,405
Other miscellaneous ELCA	<u>16,476</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>16,426</u>
Total transmittal funds	<u>99,440</u>	<u>103,969</u>	<u>103,547</u>	<u>99,862</u>
Custodial funds -				
Let's Talk	4,309	-	-	4,309
Mission Partners	493	-	-	493
Augustana / Henze	10,699	-	-	10,699
Medill Ave RE Taxes	<u>32,200</u>	<u>2,400</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,600</u>
Total custodial funds	<u>47,701</u>	<u>2,400</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>50,101</u>
Total	<u>\$ 147,141</u>	<u>\$ 106,369</u>	<u>\$ 103,547</u>	<u>\$ 149,963</u>

(3) NOTES RECEIVABLE:

The Environmental Concerns Loan Fund is used to make non-interest-bearing loans to congregations for energy efficiency studies and related repair projects.

Notes receivable consisted of the following:

	<u>January 31,</u>	
	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
Environmental Concerns Loan Fund:		
Non-interest-bearing loans with quarterly payments ranging from \$750 to \$1,000 due at various dates through December 2029 .	\$ 26,750	\$ 32,750
Orihuela, West Medill Ave, Chicago note: Promissory installments note, bearing interest at 6%, with monthly interest and principal payments of \$591 through July 31, 2026.	4,063	10,691



(3) NOTES RECEIVABLE: (Continued)

	<u>January 31,</u>	
	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
First Luther – Fullerton:		
Non-interest bearing loan. Payment on the loan will be made once the Church building is sold.	\$ -	\$ 22,626
Individual note:		
Non-interest-bearing loan with monthly payments of \$250 starting upon receiving full-time call.	<u>1,750</u>	<u>1,750</u>
	32,563	67,817
Less - Current portion	<u>(11,063)</u>	<u>(12,868)</u>
	<u>\$ 21,500</u>	<u>\$ 54,949</u>

(4) INVESTMENT:

The funds' market values are as follows:

	<u>January 31,</u>	
	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
Pooled investment account	\$ 10,601,672	\$ 9,089,760
Mutual funds	4,304,171	3,860,646
Money market	<u>1,131,349</u>	<u>1,473,479</u>
	<u>\$ 16,037,192</u>	<u>\$ 14,423,885</u>

(5) FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS:

The Accounting Standards Codification for Fair Value Measurements established a framework for measuring fair value. That framework provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. The hierarchy gives the highest priority to unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities (Level 1 measurement) and the lowest priority to unobservable inputs (Level 3 measurements). The three levels of the fair value hierarchy under this codification are described as follows:

Level 1:

Inputs to the valuation methodology are unadjusted quoted prices for identical assets or liabilities in active markets.

(5) FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS: (Continued)

Level 2:

Inputs to the valuation methodology include:

- quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets;
- quoted prices for identical or similar assets or liabilities in inactive markets;
- inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability;
- inputs that are derived principally from, or corroborated by, observable market data by correlation or other means.

If the asset or liability has a specified (contractual) term, the level 2 input must be observable for substantially the full term of the asset or liability.

Level 3:

Inputs to the valuation methodology are unobservable and significant to the fair value measurement.

The asset or liability's fair value measurement level within the fair value hierarchy is based on the lowest level of any input that is significant to the fair value measurement. Valuation techniques used need to maximize the use of observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs.

The following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for assets measured at fair value. There have been no changes in the methodologies used on January 31, 2026 and 2025.

Mutual Funds: Valued at the daily closing price as reported by the fund. Shares in mutual funds held by the Synod are open-ended mutual funds that are registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission. These funds are required to publish their daily net asset value and to transact at that price. The mutual funds held by the Synod are deemed to be actively traded.

Pooled Investment Account: Valued at an unquoted value of an investment pool as determined at a prorated portion of a larger investment group.

Money Market Funds: Valued at cost as of the year end, which approximates market.

The preceding methods described may produce a fair value calculation that may not be indicative of net realizable value or reflective of future fair values. Furthermore, although the Synod believes their valuation methods are appropriate and consistent with other market participants, the use of different methodologies or assumptions to determine the fair value of certain financial instruments could result in a different fair value measurement at the reporting date.

(5) FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS: (Continued)

The following table sets forth by level, within the fair value hierarchy, the Synod's assets at fair value:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Assets at Fair Value as of January 31, 2026</u>			
	<u>Level 1</u>	<u>Level 2</u>	<u>Level 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
Investments -				
Equity funds -				
U.S. large cap	\$ 1,025,133	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,025,133
U.S. mid/small cap	529,028	-	-	529,028
International	<u>353,482</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>353,482</u>
	<u>1,907,643</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,907,643</u>
Fixed income funds -				
Balanced stocks and bonds	929,261	-	-	929,261
High yield bonds	230,337	-	-	230,337
Intermediate long-term bonds	856,338	-	-	856,338
Intermediate short-term bonds	<u>380,592</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>380,592</u>
	<u>2,396,528</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,396,528</u>
Total mutual funds	<u>4,304,171</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,304,171</u>
Pooled investment account	-	-	<u>10,601,672</u>	<u>10,601,672</u>
Money market funds	<u>1,131,349</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,131,349</u>
Total investments	<u>\$ 5,435,520</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 10,601,672</u>	<u>\$ 16,037,192</u>



(5) FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS: (Continued)

Description	Assets at Fair Value as of January 31, 2025			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Investments -				
Equity funds -				
U.S. large cap	\$ 882,537	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 882,537
U.S. mid/small cap	504,972	-	-	504,972
International	<u>266,618</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>266,618</u>
	<u>1,654,127</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,654,127</u>
Fixed income funds -				
Balanced stocks and bonds	836,314	-	-	836,314
High yield bonds	213,910	-	-	213,910
Intermediate long-term bonds	797,129	-	-	797,129
Intermediate short-term bonds	<u>359,166</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>359,166</u>
	<u>2,206,519</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,206,519</u>
Total mutual funds	<u>3,860,646</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,860,646</u>
Pooled investment account	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,089,760</u>	<u>9,089,760</u>
Money market funds	<u>1,473,479</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,473,479</u>
Total investments	<u>\$ 5,334,125</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 9,089,760</u>	<u>\$ 14,423,885</u>

Certain assets and liabilities are measured at fair value on a non-recurring basis, and, therefore, are not included in the preceding table.

Financial instruments classified as level 3 in the fair value hierarchy represent the Synod's investments in financial instruments in which the Synod has used one significant unobservable input in the valuation model. The following table presents a reconciliation of activity for the level 3 financial instruments for the years ended January 31, 2026 and 2025:

	2026	2025
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 9,089,760	\$ 8,000,571
Unrealized gain on investments	1,148,638	765,659
Investment income reinvested	<u>363,274</u>	<u>323,530</u>
Balance, end of year	<u>\$ 10,601,672</u>	<u>\$ 9,089,760</u>

(6) PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT:

Property and equipment consisted of the following:

	<u>January 31,</u>	
	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
Church properties:		
Land	\$ 278,000	\$ 278,000
Buildings and improvements	2,638,600	1,938,600
Land	105,964	105,964
Building and improvements	1,328,323	1,314,323
Office equipment and furnishings	147,197	147,197
Automobile	40,000	40,000
Computer equipment and software	<u>113,827</u>	<u>113,827</u>
	4,651,911	3,937,911
Less - Accumulated depreciation	<u>(1,606,982)</u>	<u>(1,506,028)</u>
Property and equipment, net	<u>\$ 3,044,929</u>	<u>\$ 2,431,883</u>

Depreciation expense for the years ended January 31, 2026 and 2025 amounted to \$100,954 and \$90,484, respectively.

(7) LEASES:

The Synod has various operating leases for security equipment. The operating leases will expire at various dates through 2030.

The components of lease expense for the years ending January 31, 2026 and 2025 are as follows:

	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
Operating lease cost	\$ 5,207	\$ 5,207
Short-term lease cost	2,691	4,783
Variable lease cost	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total lease expense	<u>\$ 7,898</u>	<u>\$ 9,990</u>

Future minimum lease payments under noncancelable leases as of January 31, 2026 are as follows:

2027	\$ 5,207
2028	5,207
2029	5,207
2030	<u>436</u>
Total future minimum lease payments	16,057
Less imputed interest included	<u>(1,516)</u>
Present value of net minimum lease payments	<u>\$ 14,541</u>

(7) LEASES: (Continued)

The following provides additional information related to the Synod's leases as of and for the years ended January 31, 2026 and 2025:

	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
Current portion of lease liabilities	\$ 4,716	\$ 4,716
Long-term portion of lease liabilities	<u>9,825</u>	<u>14,541</u>
Total lease liabilities	<u>\$ 14,541</u>	<u>\$ 19,257</u>
Weighted average lease term	3 years	4 years
Weighted average discount rate	3.91%	3.91%

Cash paid for amounts included in the measurements of the Synod's leases for the years ended January 31, 2026 and 2025 are as follows:

	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
Operating cash from operating leases	<u>\$ 5,207</u>	<u>\$ 5,207</u>

(8) NET ASSETS - DESIGNATED:

The Synod Council passed resolutions to establish designated funds to be used for mission work, pay costs associated with the management of church properties received by the Synod through congregational dissolution and sponsor a leadership conference. Certain congregational dissolutions resulted in property transfers of a non-cash nature, thus requiring the Synod to expend its own unbudgeted funds to maintain the properties.

Designated funds consisted of the following:

	<u>January 31,</u>	
	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
Fund for Mission of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod	\$ 7,406,927	\$ 6,906,308
Deaf Ministry	10,530	10,530
Property management	22,719	22,719
Distressed Properties	289,015	224,015
Bishop & Staff travel	23,181	30,681
Bishop's Discretionary	39,493	51,386
Conference Deans	17,589	19,314
Synod Mission on the Margins	2,915,108	2,658,589
Leader Development Fund	1,699	6,109
Congregational support	11,621	11,122
Retiree Luncheon	35,355	35,355
Synod Council Event Fund	72,318	61,505
Portico Financial Review	104,303	237,394
Companion Synod Fund – Domestic	46,214	46,631
Word & Services Project	102,600	157,600
Lay Leadership Event - Carlmark	193,759	258,026

(8) NET ASSETS - DESIGNATED: (Continued)

	<u>January 31,</u>	
	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
St James – Western Springs	\$ 3,759	\$ (25,583)
St. Luke – Elmhurst	3,000	3,000
New missions	590,942	540,524
Campus ministry	984,481	902,558
DIB Position Funding	400,000	400,000
Rostered Ministries Gathering	6,244	30,590
Boundaries Training	3,912	1,328
Bishop New Term	149,376	75,000
St. Matthew Itasca	5,328	179,348
Future Assemblies	152,643	99,000
Nelson Trust Distribution	32	-
Raymond Mehl Trust	16,663	-
Middle East Working Group	178	-
Young Adult Event Fund	50,000	-
Deficit Allowance	50,296	-
Congregational Support – Bishop Elect	15,000	-
St. Andrew – West Chicago	2,455	-
Evangelism Initiative	2,000	-
Barbara J. Harms Trust	<u>292,949</u>	<u>-</u>
Total designated net assets	<u>\$ 14,021,689</u>	<u>\$ 12,943,049</u>

(9) NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS:

The Synod receives contributions and grants that are restricted for specific purposes or time periods. The net assets with donor restrictions consisted of the following:

	<u>January 31,</u>	
	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
Environmental Concerns Loan Fund	\$ 34,217	\$ 28,217
Deaf ministry	5,869	5,869
Church improvements	371,875	373,026
Asian Strategy	117,884	120,383
Latinx Strategy	135,865	182,587
Grants Program - Carlmark	1,790	345
Southwest Conference SAWC	105,770	105,770
African Descent Strategy	(13,660)	8,659
Ashburn LC Proceeds	32,928	32,928
Scholarships	199,106	213,207
Grace Lutheran Seminary	70,775	77,216
Emerson Trust	51,891	51,891
Youth Ministry	89,729	11,342
Shepherd's Heart	51	30,950
AGCS	79,671	86,607
Lutheran Disaster Response Fund	3,000	3,000
Zimmer Trust	12,802	12,802
Redeemer Park Ridge Bequest	<u>2,949</u>	<u>2,949</u>
Total net assets with donor restriction	<u>\$ 1,302,512</u>	<u>\$ 1,347,748</u>

20

(10) PENSION PLAN:

Substantially all employees scheduled to work 20 or more hours per week for six months or more per year are covered by the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program. The pension plan is a defined contribution plan and is funded based on a percentage of defined compensation. The pension expense for the ELCA Pension Fund for years ended January 31, 2026 and 2025 approximated \$104,510 and \$103,124, respectively.

(11) LIQUIDITY AND AVAILABILITY:

	<u>January 31,</u>	
	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
Financial Assets -		
Cash	\$ 255,237	\$ 581,507
Benevolence receivable	14,633	14,633
Short-term investments	1,131,349	1,473,479
Note's receivable – current	11,063	12,868
Investments	<u>14,905,843</u>	<u>12,950,406</u>
Total financial assets	16,318,125	15,032,893
Less: Donor imposed restrictions, included in financial assets	<u>(1,302,512)</u>	<u>(1,347,748)</u>
Internal designations -		
Board advised funds for long-term purposes, included in financial assets	<u>(14,021,689)</u>	<u>(12,824,958)</u>
Financial assets available to meet cash needs for general expenditures that is without donor or other restrictions limiting their use within one year	<u>\$ 993,924</u>	<u>\$ 860,187</u>

The Synod's goal is to generally maintain enough financial assets to meet 3 months of operating expenses (approximately \$1,200,000).

The Synod manages its liquidity and reserves adhering to the following principles:

- operating within a prudent range of financial soundness and stability.
- incurring unbudgeted costs only when such costs are funded.
- maintaining adequate liquid assets to fund near-term operating needs.



METROPOLITAN CHICAGO SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
SCHEDULE OF SYNODICAL TREASURY EXPENDITURES  
FOR GRANTS TO BENEFICIARIES AS COMPARED TO BUDGET  
FOR THE YEARS ENDED JANUARY 31, 2026 AND 2025

	2026		2025	
	Actual	Budget (unaudited)	Actual	Budget (unaudited)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	\$ 1,283,471	\$ 1,200,000	\$ 1,158,430	\$ 1,400,000
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois	34,482	36,525	34,753	42,000
Lutheran Campus Ministries	67,354	73,050	69,506	84,000
Companion Synod	-	8,404	5,058	7,000
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago	34,482	36,525	34,753	42,000
Wartburg Seminary	28,735	30,438	28,961	35,000
Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center	11,494	12,175	11,584	14,000
Bethel New Life	5,747	6,088	5,792	7,000
Lutheran Volunteer Corps	5,747	8,088	5,792	7,000
Regional Center for Mission	4,260	4,260	3,516	3,512
Illinois Conference of Churches	1,953	1,953	1,953	1,953
Outdoor Ministries	825	825	825	825
	<u>\$ 1,478,550</u>	<u>\$ 1,418,331</u>	<u>\$ 1,360,923</u>	<u>\$ 1,644,290</u>

The 2026 budgeted figures presented are as approved in the minutes of the Synod Assembly held on April 26, 2025.

The 2025 budgeted figures presented are as approved in the minutes of the Synod Assembly held on April 27, 2024.

METROPOLITAN CHICAGO SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
SCHEDULE OF SYNODICAL TREASURY STANDING COMMITTEE EXPENSES  
FOR THE YEARS ENDED JANUARY 31, 2026 AND 2025

	2026	2025
Committees:		
Ministry	\$ 22,465	\$ 25,784
Synodical Mission	341,962	262,346
Worship	2,582	3,076
Youth and Young Adult Ministry	35,484	66,932
	\$ 402,493	\$ 358,138



METROPOLITAN CHICAGO SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
SCHEDULE OF OPERATIONS BY FUND  
FOR THE YEARS ENDED JANUARY 31, 2026 AND 2025

	2026			2025		
	Operating Fund	Restricted & Designated Funds	Total	Operating Fund	Restricted & Designated Funds	Total
<b>REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT:</b>						
Benevolences from member congregations	\$ 2,298,772	\$ -	\$ 2,298,772	\$ 2,331,493	\$ -	\$ 2,331,493
Contributions	(2,681,644)	3,042,690	361,046	(1,884,046)	2,184,675	300,629
Interest and dividends	126,947	368,396	495,343	107,754	442,092	549,846
Other	461	-	461	846	-	846
Reserve Revenue	27,554	(27,554)	-	-	-	-
Interfund management fee	470,004	(470,004)	-	215,883	(215,883)	-
Total revenues, gains and other support	<u>242,094</u>	<u>2,913,528</u>	<u>3,155,622</u>	<u>771,930</u>	<u>2,410,884</u>	<u>3,182,814</u>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>						
Program	757,325	3,054,109	3,811,434	1,917,590	1,841,059	3,758,649
Management and general	931,053	-	931,053	914,716	-	914,716
Total expenses	<u>1,688,378</u>	<u>3,054,109</u>	<u>4,742,487</u>	<u>2,832,306</u>	<u>1,841,059</u>	<u>4,673,365</u>
Change in net assets before other changes in net assets	<u>(1,446,284)</u>	<u>(140,581)</u>	<u>(1,586,865)</u>	<u>(2,060,376)</u>	<u>569,825</u>	<u>(1,490,551)</u>
Contributed property and other assets from church closings	5,240,000	-	5,240,000	-	-	-
Unrealized gain on investments	318,976	1,173,985	1,492,961	169,788	792,987	962,775
Gain (loss) on disposal of property held for sales	55,214	-	55,214	(146,335)	-	(146,335)
Total other changes in net assets	<u>5,614,190</u>	<u>1,173,985</u>	<u>6,788,175</u>	<u>23,453</u>	<u>792,987</u>	<u>816,440</u>
Total change in net assets	<u>4,167,906</u>	<u>1,033,404</u>	<u>5,201,310</u>	<u>(2,036,923)</u>	<u>1,362,812</u>	<u>(674,111)</u>
NET ASSETS, Beginning of year	<u>4,600,784</u>	<u>14,290,797</u>	<u>18,891,581</u>	<u>6,637,707</u>	<u>12,927,985</u>	<u>19,565,692</u>
NET ASSETS, End of year	<u>\$ 8,768,690</u>	<u>\$ 15,324,201</u>	<u>\$ 24,092,891</u>	<u>\$ 4,600,784</u>	<u>\$ 14,290,797</u>	<u>\$ 18,891,581</u>





# CONFERENCES

Central (*no report*)

Near West

North

Northeast

South (*no report*)

Southwest

West

# NEAR WEST

During the past year, our conference and its leaders have continued to prioritize connection, support, and relationships for our colleagues, rostered leaders, lay leaders and conference partners.

We held in-person meetings Sept. 11 and Oct. 9 in 2025, with many of our leaders participating in the synod Rostered Ministers Gathering Nov. 10-12. We held in-person meetings on February 12, March 12, April 9 and May 14 in 2026 to check in, share joys and burdens, and hear about ministries throughout our conference. On Feb. 12 we heard a presentation by Rev. Kelly Nieman-Anderson from LSSI.

In response to increased immigration enforcement in 2025 and 2026, several of our congregations have provided support to local communities, Mision Luterana Unidad de Berwyn, and the synod Latinx ministry. Additionally, I have continued to extend invitations to our rostered leaders for one-to-one meetings.

Our conference looks forward to another year together in ministry.

Respectfully,

Rev. Chris Honig, dean

# NORTH

2025 saw some new opportunities and ways of engaging each other and our churches. Average attendance for the conference was up, as was the number of pastors willing to host conference meetings.

We welcomed one new pastor, two retired pastors, and one new seminarian to our conference this year. We have a rotation set for our conference meetings and I'm thankful for all the leaders who have been willing to graciously host our meetings, the hospitality and fellowship we've shared, and the great resources that we walk away with each meeting.

We met monthly and had a range of speakers from the area share more details about their program or organization, which provided us with new resources and contacts to bring back to our congregations. We heard about GivNKind, which is a local resource for churches for low cost supplies that we might use for ministry. Friends from LSSI came to share updates on their ministry and provided ideas on how our congregations could help. We had a guest speaker from Lutheran Indian Ministries. We learned about Faith in Place and opportunities to make green spaces through grants through them. We talked about collaborative sermon prep. We discussed the impact the current administration is having on the Latinx community and we



are partnering with Sagrado Corazon to offer help where it's needed. The connections and resources that we've learned about from the guest speakers and each of us sharing what we are doing within our congregations has helped us all. We continue to grow closer as we use our conference meetings to build connections and resources. We use our conference emails to ask questions and look for resources throughout the year, which has been valuable.

This is the first year we have had a joint conference-based service project for all our congregations to participate in: a packing event for Feed My Starving Children in May. It was great to see the members from the churches come out and meet each other while serving others.

I am thankful for the times we are able to gather and the commitment of the churches in this conference to support each other. Through our continued conversations, sharing our ideas, connections, and our resources with each other, we continue to be the body of Christ in the north conference of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod.

Pastor Eric Schaefer, dean

## NORTHEAST

Our conference meets monthly on the last Wednesday of the month during the academic year, meeting 10 times during 2025-26. We rotate our meeting location across our conference and begin with a brief order of worship followed by a program and/or check-ins. This year, some areas of focus were youth faith formation, staffing structures, membership, and the Faith & Civic Life social statement. We continue to grow, learn, and share in ministry together.

We are proud of our conference's connection and consistency of meeting together. Co-deans Faulstich and Harris-Ferree continue to split the dean duties and represent the city and suburbs, respectively.

Report submitted by Pastors Kelly Faulstich and Luke Harris-Ferree, co-deans



# SOUTHWEST

The Southwest Conference has continued to host monthly hybrid in-person and virtual meetings. The SWC conference co-deans are Pastor Bethany Ulrich (First Lutheran, Blue Island) and Pastor Lynn Bird (Zion Lutheran, Tinley Park).

## **2025-26 saw several educational events with local leaders, including:**

- Father Vasyl Sendeha, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Sts. Peter and Paul in Palos Park, told us how our congregations could best support their efforts in supporting Ukrainians abroad and in the Chicagoland area.
- Pastor Maria Rojas-Banda, pastor of Unidad Lutheran Church and the chair of the Latinx Strategy working group met with us to share how our congregations can accompany our Latinx neighbors and congregations with the continued ICE presence.

## **Our churches merged and/or partnered with a shared pastor this year:**

- Trinity Lutheran Church, Park Forest, and Our Savior Lutheran Church, Lansing, merged as one body in Our Savior's facility. Pastor Christopher Wogaman commended the members of Trinity to the care of Pastor Kyle Johnson. Thanks be to God!
- Jubilee, Country Club Hills, and Good Shepherd, Robbins, began a ministry partnership on September 23, 2025, with Pastor Llewellyn Dixon serving in both congregations.

## **We welcomed:**

- Immanuel Karunakaran, serving as intern at Good Shepherd in Palos Heights.
- Pastor Manoj Gunthoti, serving St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Midlothian. St. Stephen's also began hosting
- Mosaic Dinner Worship this year.
- Lorin Kirksey, SAM, serving Resurrection Lutheran in Oak Forest.

## **We said farewell and godspeed to:**

- Pastor Rosanne Swanson in June 2025 as she retired and moved to Minnesota.
- Pastor Carole Willer, who retired from Our Saviors in Burbank.

## **We continually give God thanks and praise for:**

- Pastor Elaina Salmon's restored health and return to ministry at Bethany Lutheran, Lemont.
- Pastor Maxine Washington's retirement from Redeemer, South Holland.

**As planned:** SW Conference leaders enjoyed food and fellowship at Baba Saj Mediterranean Restaurant in December 2025 and will again in July 2026; SW Conference congregations and their leaders are invited to Zion in Tinley Park for a free blue-grass concert on the front lawn and a BYO-picnic summer fellowship.



**Ministry in the SW Conference continues to be creative**, shared, and challenging. Several of our congregations have made creative community connections and found new ways to open church buildings to non-profit community partners and/or to share space with other faith communities.

We give glory to God for our shared ministry through Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastors Bethany Ulrich and Lynn Bird, co-deans

## WEST

### **From the well-caffeinated and well-loved West Conference**

Grace and peace from the West Conference, where the coffee is strong, the laughter is louder than it should be, and the white elephant gifts exchanged could qualify as a means of grace.

We have been meeting monthly this year—on purpose, even—and it has become holy ground for us. What began as “another thing on the calendar” has become a steady rhythm of connection, prayer, problem-solving, storytelling, and, bringing our own lunch as we gather around the table.

We gather around tables—sometimes with agendas, sometimes with mild chaos—but always with genuine affection for one another. We talk shop. We swap ideas. We confess frustrations. We celebrate wins. We compare notes on stewardship letters, council dynamics, HVAC systems that refuse to cooperate, and the mysterious ways of the Holy Spirit (who, like our building boilers, moves when and how the Spirit chooses).

One of our greatest joys has been welcoming new clergy into our midst. There is nothing quite like watching a colleague arrive with a mixture of excitement and “What have I gotten myself into?” and being able to say, “You’re not alone.” We have made room at the table, passed the coffee, and offered the kind of practical wisdom that only slightly battle-tested clergy can provide.



What we have rediscovered this year is simple but profound: we genuinely like one another. We love the time to connect beyond email threads and synod assemblies. We love being able to say, “You too?” and hear, “Oh yes. Me too.”

In a season when ministry can feel isolating, the West Conference has been a steady reminder that we belong to each other. We pray together. We dream together. We occasionally commiserate together. And then we eat together—because Lutherans.

In the West Conference, we are laughing, welcoming, and sending. We are strengthening one another for the work of the gospel.

And if you’re ever wondering whether collegial support matters—come join us and bring your lunch. We’ll save you a seat.

With gratitude and strong coffee,

Pastor Sarah Swindall and Pastor Elisabeth Pynn Himmelman  
West Conference co-deans



# MINISTRIES



African Descent

Allyship Team

Candidacy Committee

Companion Synod  
Advisory Team

Deaf Ministry

Ecumenical Office

Environmental Concerns  
Working Group

Working Group on the  
Middle East

Youth Ministry Network

AFRICAN DESCENT LUTHERAN ASSOCIATION

CHICAGO METRO CHAPTER OF THE ELCA

APRIL 2026

Submitted by Connie D. Thomas, president



Who are we? The term “African descent” refers to people who self-identify as Black, African Caribbean, African American, African Nationals and others of African ancestry from numerous countries who now live in the United States.” We operate within a network of African descent participants in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America across the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The mission statement of the Chicago Metro Chapter reads, “As members of the body of Christ, called to love and care for our neighbor, we seek to serve as a beacon of light and hope by lifting up the gifts of, and serving as a resource for, our siblings in the African Descent community. Basically, we attempt to be a resource to our fellow congregations in the African Descent community while focusing on preparing our youth for the work ahead.

**Accordingly, our ministry in the Chicagoland area included the following 2025 activities:**

1. Representing the ADLA Chicago Chapter on July 25-27 by reporting our goals and achievements to our fellow ADLA members at the 19<sup>th</sup> National Biennial Assembly in Phoenix, Ariz., and seeking ways to develop stronger ties with this body for the sake of joint ministry. The guest speakers were electrifying and the atmosphere collegial and sacred. Presenters spoke using the overall theme of “Lest We Forget.” Dr. Traci Blackmon’s delivery of “You Will Not Erase Us” spoke to the hearts and minds of us all and became the battle cry of the weekend. Our own Yvette NewberryWhite shared remarks from the Deaconess Community (DC) and its work here and abroad. Highlights included news of projects offering refugee assistance programs for housing, legal services, etc.
2. Presenting the achievements of ADLA at the Equipping Event for clergy and lay members in October. Contributing to the planning sessions for the future of the church. Thanks to Thomas Smith and Delois Thomas for carrying on in the president’s absence.
3. Supporting ADLA Strategy Team and ADLA Congregations in planning Advent Services during November-December Advent church season. The theme centered around “Jesus as King.” (No Other King).

4. Celebrating the Christmas season and those who have contributed to the successful work of ADLA Chicago Chapter during the 2025 year in a Holiday Event hosted by Bethany Lutheran Church and Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit members. Reviewing notes from synod regarding the election of a new CMS Bishop was the main topic of the day.
5. Organizing and planning the ADLA GALA event in conjunction with synod staff and ADLA Descent Strategy members during January and February. Hosting the ADLA GALA on the evening of Friday, Feb. 28, at South Shore Cultural Center. It was truly a spiritually uplifting event. Our presiding bishop, Rev. Yehiel Curry, was able to join us by the wonders of technology in a recorded video. Special guests included Interim MCS Bishop. Rev. Wayne Miller, ELCA Secretary CeCee Mills, and recipient of the first annual ADLA Outstanding Leadership Award, Dr. Linda E. Thomas, LSTC dean of students, vice-president of student affairs, and other titles throughout her years of service. Much thanks to you all for your presence and participation. A rousing applause is due the ADLA GALA planning team. The entire celebration was outstanding.
6. Assisting Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit with announcing its Pre-Lenten Revival. Bethany Lutheran choir and leaders provided Gospel songs and praise. Shekinah Pastor Jason Williams and Pastor Rodger Jones of Bethel West preached powerful sermons during the three- day event. Minister Philip Wallace was the host pastor and one of the spirit-filled preachers as well.
7. ADLA President Connie Thomas worked closely with south and west side pastors to offer a most memorable series of Lenten and Holy Week services on the theme “Let’s Have A Little Talk with Jesus.” Thanks to Pastors Lawrence Clark and Rodger Jones for their leadership roles in finalizing plans. Pastor Fanya Burford-Berry we appreciate your financial role in taking care of Seven (7) Last Words of Jesus” participants. As usual, Dr. Wyvetta Bullock’s coordination of synod responsibilities was phenomenal. And, again, ADLA executive board members, without you this work does not happen as efficiently and effectively as it does.
8. Planning a “Youth Community Service Day before June 19, 2026, and celebrating the participants in a special Juneteenth ADLA meeting at the Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit while participating in the third annual Zoom Bible Study sponsored by Black Churches for Digital Equity (June 19) on the same date is currently under discussion. All youth will be asked to complete a project in their local church community or in conjunction with the Maple Park-Morgan Park event sponsored by Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit in late May or early June for publication in the ADLA Newsletter. This newsletter is currently published every other month for ADLA congregations. Soon we hope to disseminate it throughout all ADLA Chapters across North America and other associated continents.

## AFRICAN DESCENT STRATEGY TEAM

The African Descent Strategy Team grew by one during 2025. We are now 20 congregations of predominantly African Descent in this synod. The team welcomed Pastor Nixon Mwitula, Tumaini Chapel, Aurora, a new ministry under development.

### **The congregations are:**

Bethany – Chicago	Love, Faith & Hope Ministry – Chicago
Bethel (West) – Chicago	Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit – Chicago
Chosen Bethel Family Ministries – Chicago	St. Mark – Chicago
Christ the Mediator – Chicago	St. Stephen's – Chicago
Come Alive Ministry of Faith – Chicago	St. Thomas – Chicago
First Immanuel – Chicago	Shekinah Chapel, Riverdale
Good Shepherd – Robbins	Tumaini – Aurora
Holy Family – Chicago	Tumaini – Chicago
Joy Life Center – Chicago	Windsor Park – Chicago
Jubilee Faith Community Church – Country Club Hills	Zion – Chicago

### **Members-at-large:**

African Descent Lutheran Association President  
African Descent Lutheran Association Treasurer

The Metropolitan Chicago Synod African Descent Strategy Team is an appointed working team. It is composed of the pastoral leaders and council presidents of the African Descent congregations in this synod. The synod invites these leaders to work with the synod in equipping its AD congregations, strategizing on pastoral leadership, and advising on congregational situations.

During 2025 the strategy team held a third annual congregational equipping event and participated with the African Descent Lutheran Association in hosting an Annual Gala in February and Lenten and Holy Week services. All of these activities exceeded the previous year's attendance!

The team celebrated the election of Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry and Secretary CeCee Mills. The two were honored at the 2026 Annual Gala.

In December 2025, the team began to strategize short-term and long-term goals. Interim Bishop Wayne Miller joined the team meeting in December to assist in this planning. A May 2 retreat will continue the dialogue with the synod.

Please visit the Metropolitan Chicago Synod website <https://mcselca.org> for more information and to view the event photo gallery.

Rev. Wyvetta Bullock, convener



# ALLYSHIP NETWORK

The Metro Chicago Synod Office convened the Allyship Network in 2022. The core leadership team was intentionally centered among white leaders with demonstrated commitment to anti-racism work while prioritizing listening, relationship, and accountability with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, & People of Color) leaders. Grounded in the conviction that the church is incomplete without one another, the Allyship Network has sought to help the synod dismantle systems of exclusion and more fully embody beloved community in alignment with the ELCA's commitments to repentance and reparative action.

The work of the Allyship Network has focused on several key areas: cultivating a broader network of synod leaders equipped for anti-racism work; strengthening opportunities for learning and formation; exploring reinvestment strategies; supporting BIPOC leadership; and maintaining alignment with Synod Council priorities, Churchwide strategies, and ethnic-specific ministry networks.

One significant initiative was an immersive educational experience on Chicago's history of redlining, developed in partnership with the Folded Map Project and offered at the 2024 Synod Assembly. This experience—and the research that informed it—was intended to support the development of a resolution related to reparations and reinvestment. In 2025, the synod's Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (DIB) work piloted the Folded Map toolkit in two congregations, bringing the history and ongoing impact of redlining into local congregational formation.

Since the 2024 Synod Assembly, the Allyship core team's work has been shaped by significant leadership transitions and emerging community needs. Several core team members stepped back between 2024 and 2025, slowing the development of a cohesive resolution on reparations and reinvestment. At the same time, Bishop Curry's election as presiding bishop in summer 2025 placed the synod and its ministries into a broader season of transition.

In spring 2025, the Allyship Network paused its work with the intention of identifying new core team members and reconvening in the fall. That same season, however, saw a surge of ICE and Customs and Border Protection activity across the Chicago metro area. The ongoing impact on the synod's Latinx congregations required sustained attention and care, redirecting much of the remaining Allyship leadership team's focus toward emergency response and support.

Following the election of a new bishop at the 2026 Synod Assembly, the Allyship leadership team will prepare a transition brief documenting key learnings from this work—what was attempted, what bore fruit, what shifted in leadership and context, and what remains unfinished, particularly regarding reparations, reinvestment, and synod-wide accountability. This brief will offer recommendations for how these learnings may help shape future synod priorities, DIB formation pathways, and structures for institutional accountability.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Heidi Torgerson, Allyship Team chair



# CANDIDACY COMMITTEE

The Metropolitan Chicago Synod (MCS) Candidacy Committee acts on your behalf to assess the readiness of those who sense a call to ministry and to guide them through the process of becoming rostered ministers in the ELCA. MCS continues to accompany one of the largest and most diverse groups of candidates for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament (pastors) and Ministry of Word and Service (deacons) in our denomination. We have candidates from across the ELCA and across the globe.

## **Candidacy by the numbers in 2025:**

- We accompanied 31 active candidates in 2025, with 22 more in discernment.
- 2 candidates were in the Theological Education for Emerging Ministry (TEEM) program and served in congregations as they went through the candidacy process.
- 39 percent of our current candidates identified as persons of color or have a first language other than English. This includes 9 international candidates, 13 percent of our candidates are part of the LGBTQIA+ community.
- 9 candidates were approved for ordained ministry and began the first call process: 7 for Ministry of Word and Sacrament and 2 for Word and Service.
- 14 new candidates were entranced in the past year with an average age of 47 and 10 being second career.

We continue to find new ways of navigating candidates through the process of becoming rostered leaders in the ELCA. These are not short cuts, but rather adaptations that reflect the changing way people become pastors and deacons. This is one of our great strengths as a synod. In the past people with tremendous gifts were left behind because they could not pause their life for four years of seminary. Now those amazing leaders can follow their call to ministry, have the same level of theological and practical education, and bring their unique gifts to bear today's challenges in congregational ministry. Their varied experiences bring wider wisdom to the roster and allow them to reach communities that more traditionally trained pastors never could.

There are ongoing challenges with welcoming all to the roster, from navigating ever shifting immigration policy with our international candidates to the homophobic governmental policies that affect POC & LGBTQIA+ candidates. However, the ways we have overcome those challenges witnesses to church's call to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God so that our world might slightly move closer to God's kingdom.

Despite those challenges we are seeing an increase in new candidates and those discerning a call to be pastors and deacons. After a multi-year lull due to COVID, we had 14 new candidates in the last year alone. This means soon we will need more internship sites. Could your congregation be one? We also continue to count on the financial support the church receives to help ensure our candidates begin ordained ministry with as little debt as possible. Fifteen of our active candidates received Fund for Leaders scholarships, totaling \$150,000 in support. Your faithful giving to the future of the church is greatly appreciated as it directly supports future pastors and deacons.



Finally, we give thanks to all those who raise up future rostered leaders: pastors, congregations, church leaders, campus & outdoor ministries. Never underestimate how a simple invitation may be the divine spark that moves people to serve as a deacon or pastor. So, invite someone you think might be interested to contact us about candidacy at [candidacy@mcselca.org](mailto:candidacy@mcselca.org). The resources “Called to Lead” and “Llamado a Ser Líder” are available at [elca.org/resources/candidacy](http://elca.org/resources/candidacy) to share with people discerning a call to ministry.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Andrew J. Bell, chair of the Candidacy Committee

## COMPANION SYNOD ADVISORY GROUP

*“The road to heaven passes through your neighbor’s house.”*  
– ELCSA Presiding Bishop Rev. Nkosinathi Myaka

### **Members**

Rev. Elaina Salmon, chair, Rev. Sunitha Mortha (staff), Rev. Chris Buresh, LaToya Gray

### **What is a companion synod?**

Companion synod relationships of the ELCA connect Lutheran churches throughout the world with ELCA synods and congregations. These relationships are concrete expressions of the communion and fellowship with the more than 140 Lutheran member churches of The Lutheran World Federation

### **Who is our companion?**

The Metropolitan Chicago Synod companion synod relationship is with the Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA). The Central Diocese is in the Gauteng Province. It is highly urban, home to the cities of Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Soweto.



## Report of 2025-2026 activities

The Metropolitan Chicago Synod joined five other ELCA synods and seven dioceses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa for a historic consultation held during ELCSA's 50th Anniversary Golden Jubilee celebration in December 2025. Pastor Sunitha Mortha, associate to the bishop, and Marvin E. Wickware Jr., Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago professor, represented the Metropolitan Chicago Synod.

During the visit, there was a panel discussion on theological education, updates from the Seminary at Umphumulo, dedicated space for companion synods to reflect on their covenants, and worship and spiritual grounding. Pastor Mortha reported to the Synod Council that it was "a prophetic witness to unity, shared humanity, and faithful resistance to forces that seek to divide and dehumanize."

When our companions visited in 2024, Bishop Curry of Metropolitan Chicago Synod and Bishop Seane of the Central Diocese signed a covenant that articulated a shared vision for the development of companion relationships between parishes in the Central Diocese and congregations in Metro Chicago.

This year, the Companion Synod Advisory Group will be working with our companions to launch the pilot Companion Parish/Congregation program. Three Metropolitan Chicago Synod congregations which have been involved since the inception of the parish-congregation relationships in 2017 will be involved in this pilot. Initially congregations and parishes will connect via virtual formats and then later this year members of MCS congregations will travel to visit their companion parishes in the Central Diocese. We seek to develop these relationships based on four pillars: Prayer, Presence, Projects, Peace. MCS congregations involved in the pilot are Bethany Lutheran Church (Lemont), Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (Palos Heights), and Shekinah Chapel (Riverdale).

The Companion Synod Advisory Group will also be confirming our whole list of companion congregations and adding new congregations who are interested in a companion partnership.

Over the years of this companionship, we have shared each other's joys and sorrows as those involved have experienced changes in leadership, personal losses, significant health issues, and the experience of a worldwide pandemic. We have prayed with and for each other, accompanied one another, and been mutual sources of comfort and hope as we have shared our faith in Christ. For that, we offer our thanks and praise to God.

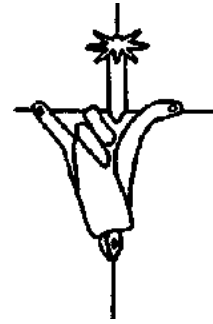
Respectfully submitted,

MCS Companion Synod Advisory Group  
Rev. Elaina Salmon, chair  
Rev. Sunitha Mortha, synod staff



# *Lutheran Deaf Ministry*

## *Metropolitan Chicago Synod*



February 25, 2026

### **2025 LUTHERAN DEAF MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT**

Over the past few years, the Metropolitan Chicago Synod (MSC) Lutheran Deaf Ministry (LDM) has faced a continuing decline in participation, primarily due to the uncertainty caused by the global pandemic, which led to numerous pauses, delays, and cancellations. Additionally, we've experienced the loss of some of our older members and others who have moved out of the state or chosen to step away from active involvement.

As the ministry's community has continued to become smaller in 2025, we've remained committed to adapting our focus. We have placed a strong emphasis on ensuring access to worship by offering both in-person interpreted services and live-streamed options. We are also dedicated to raising awareness about the Deaf community by offering American Sign Language (ASL) courses. Furthermore, we continue to support MSC churches by providing interpreters for special occasions, ensuring that all can participate and engage in the life of the church.

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Downers Grove has faithfully continued offering interpreted worship services, both in-person and via live streams on social media platforms, every Sunday throughout 2025. Similarly, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Schaumburg has maintained its commitment to interpreted worship by providing services three Sundays each month, both in-person and through live streams on Facebook.

We are deeply blessed and grateful for the continued support and willingness of Rev. Tim Robertson from Gloria Dei and Pastor Erin Clausen from Prince of Peace. Both pastors have graciously made themselves available to provide emergency services, hospital visits, funerals, and other pastoral care, always alongside an interpreter to ensure accessibility for any Deaf member requesting a visit.

One of our ongoing challenges is the widespread dispersion of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing individuals across the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, making it nearly impossible to find a single location that can effectively serve them all. Additionally, many individuals face financial constraints that require reliance on public transportation to access worship services. Unfortunately, PACE bus service is extremely limited on Sundays, with transfers between different buses often necessary when traveling between suburbs. Similarly, train service to the suburbs is also limited on Sundays, further complicating access.

Despite these challenges, the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing community demonstrates remarkable resilience, faithfully following a Deaf pastor wherever they are called, eager to hear the Word of God in their own language. We remain deeply grateful for the continued support of the Metro Chicago Synod in sustaining this vital ministry.

We are also actively involved with the Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association (ELDA), the national organization of the ELCA that supports Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing congregations across the U.S. A portion of our budget is dedicated to supporting various Deaf organizations around the world. In previous years, we've sent offerings to Africa to assist a young Deaf boy in attending school with an interpreter. More recently, our annual offerings have been directed to the Haiti Deaf Academy, which provides vital educational programs for

# ECUMENICAL OFFICE

Grace and peace to you as we live more deeply into our assembly theme, Stronger Together.

It is a privilege to serve on behalf of Bishop Miller and the Metropolitan Chicago Synod as your Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer. At its heart, this work is about tending relationships. It is about showing up consistently in rooms where trust is built over time, where theological differences are taken seriously, and where shared commitments are named. I have had the honor to be the synod's presence in these relationships, and I am grateful to the bishop and staff for their support.

This year, our synod participated in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. As the invited preacher, Bishop Miller shared that the world is watching us, not only our words but also our actions. He called us to live our unity in concrete ways, through prayer, partnership, and shared responsibility in our everyday lives. During that observance, Bishop Miller signed a document affirming our shared commitment to Care for Creation alongside ecumenical partners. That act was more than symbolic. It expressed our understanding that Christian unity must bear fruit in public witness and shared responsibility for God's world.

Throughout the year, I have also had the privilege of attending the National Workshop for Christian Unity as our synod's representative, being a guest speaker on the Lutheran perspective on Nostra Aetate during an Iftar dinner, attending the national gathering for the American Jewish Committee, and collaborating in conversations about Lutheran-Catholic relationships on college campuses.

Chicago is unique because we are rich in Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Evangelical, Jewish, Muslim, and other faith communities that care deeply about the common good and their expressions of faith. I seek to represent our synod with joy and love in these gatherings. Ecumenism is not about minimizing our differences; it is about learning how to remain faithfully Lutheran while building durable bridges for our world.

In this moment in our country, religious voices can either inflame division or cultivate wisdom. When we pray together, when we sign shared commitments, when we speak with one another rather than about one another, we embody a church that believes reconciliation is possible. Much of this work unfolds at the congregational level. Pulpit exchanges, shared service projects, neighborhood dialogues, and joint advocacy efforts quietly shape the world we hope to become.

I encourage congregations to continue leaning into these relationships and to share their stories so that we can celebrate and strengthen what is already taking root across our synod. This is a time for ecumenical and interfaith communities to show that we are stronger when we are together, and I want to thank you for the work that you are doing in your individual context.

I remain grateful for the opportunity to serve in this role and look forward to the year ahead. We are, in very real ways, stronger together.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Brian W. Wise  
pastorbrian@oursaviours.com



# ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS WORKING GROUP

The Synod's Environmental Concerns Working Group (ECWG) continues to advocate for care for God's creation as a focus of synod ministries. The ECWG oversees the synod's No-Interest Energy Improvement Revolving Loan Fund. No loans were made in 2025; however, Grace Lutheran Church in Libertyville implemented its rooftop solar project in January 2025, which was financed in part with a \$20,000 loan from the synod's Loan Fund made in late 2024. Since 1994, this Revolving Loan Fund has made \$334,460 in loans for 34 projects across the synod, using \$61,000 in capital. We welcome the opportunity to make additional loans to congregations wishing to enhance their energy and financial stewardship.

The ECWG is also a resource to assist congregations in adopting green practices and educating their members about environmental stewardship. Some members of the ECWG are trained as climate ambassadors and are available to make presentations on the climate and other environmental topics to congregations. Congregations that wish to learn about the Revolving Loan Fund, environmental stewardship, or how to start a congregational green team can contact me at [kwestlake@aol.com](mailto:kwestlake@aol.com) or 847-848-0415.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Westlake, ECWG chair



# WORKING GROUP ON THE MIDDLE EAST

The Synod Working Group on the Middle East currently consists of 18 persons ranging from teens to mid-80s in age. We meet at least monthly by Zoom and two or three times per year in person. See the vision and mission statements, member list, and sign up button for our resource and event notices at <https://mcselca.org/ministries/working-group-on-the-middle-east/>.

Our chief goals remain awareness, accompaniment, and advocacy.

## AWARENESS

To better inform synod members and congregations, we distributed MailChimp messages at least monthly to over 80 synod members and created a peace partners resource page at <https://linktr.ee/MCWGME>.

### **Informative events in 2025 sponsored or attended by WGME members:**

**March 3:** hosted a synod-wide Zoom forum, “People of Faith Respond to Violence and Confusion in the Holy Land.”

**March:** shared prayers and information about Palestine and Israel at the March 29 Lay Leadership Day and at the March 22 annual Lutheran/Catholic Morning of Dialogue and Prayer at St. Sabina Academy, Chicago.

**May 2025 Synod Assembly:** hosted a display table, distributed resources and bookmarks, and presented a repeating workshop reaching at least 90 people. At least a dozen from the WGME attended as voting members, presenters, and guests.

**June 19:** co-hosted the Healing to Hope “Breaking the Cycle” event at St. Luke’s, Park Ridge; presentation by Rami Khader, who heads Anar, a West Bank nonprofit that provides psychosocial support and arts-based healing for families suffering the trauma of occupation.

**October 25:** presented a workshop for the Synodical Women’s Organization: “Knowing and Accompanying our Holy Land Neighbors.”

**November 18:** hosted a nationwide Zoom lecture by Rev. Donald Wagner: “Lessons from Bonhoeffer and South Africa: Calling the Church to Resist Anarchy, Zionism, and Christian Zionism.”

**Members delivered congregational talks** at Ascension, Northfield; Holy Trinity, Chicago; Christ, Palatine; Unity, Oak Park; Wicker Park, Chicago; and Trinity, Evanston.



### Outreach to youth, a new special emphasis:

**April 13 (Palm Sunday):** hosted an intergenerational film discussion and pizza supper around the documentary film "The Stones Cry Out," on the history of Palestinian Christians at Holy Trinity, Chicago.

**November 22:** presented a slide talk and interactive learning at the fall eco-justice youth retreat at Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center in Oregon.

### ACCOMPANIMENT

During 2025 the Working Group initiated a program to recruit **liaisons in every synod conference and in numerous** congregations; sign up at <https://mailchi.mp/cc733a051fad/email-sign-up>. Prayer petitions expressing solidarity with both Palestinians and Israelis were offered for use at several synodical events.

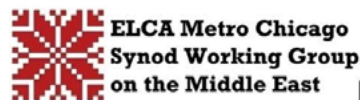
WGME leaders consult regularly with Rev. Khader El-Yateem, ELCA executive for Service and Justice, and Maddi Froiland, coordinator of the ELCA program. Sumud: For Justice in Palestine and Israel (<https://www.elca.org/how-we-serve/global-mission/sumud>).

To further our connection with our neighbors in the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land** (ELCJHL) we consulted with Simon Awad, head of the ELCJHL's Environmental Education Center, in preparation for the Nov 22 youth retreat at Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center.

We strengthened collaboration with other **organizations accompanying Palestinian Christians and Muslims** through the engagement of WGME members: Tracie Ortman as heard of Bright Stars of Bethlehem, Pastor Kelsey Johnson as head of Opportunity Palestine, and Elisabeth Trost as board member of the Seraj Library Project. Member Pastor Jeff Nichols is active with Chicago area groups Chicago Faith Coalition on Middle East Policy (<https://www.facebook.com/CFCMEP/>) and Committee for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel (<https://www.cjpip.org/>). WGME members Jeff Nichols and Carol LaHurd are also active in the independent US Lutheran Palestine Israel Justice Network (US-LPIJN).

### ADVOCACY

**For the May 2025 Synod Assembly** we drafted and presented a **Holy Land memorial**, adopted by a near-unanimous vote at the Synod level, which was later bundled and adopted along with nine other similar memorials at the **July 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly as "Toward Ending the Occupation of Palestine."** This process, during which we collaborated with other synod working groups, resulted in an affirmative vote of 95% at the Churchwide Assembly. See the adopted Churchwide Assembly resolution text here: <https://resources.elca.org/faith-and-society/toward-ending-the-occupation-of-palestine/>



The Star of Bethlehem is a traditional *fatreez* (embroidery) image used by Palestinians; with gratitude to the Institute for Palestinian Studies <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en> Learn more <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/1656612>

## MCS Youth 2025-26 Report

The MCS Youth Ministry Leaders Network focuses primarily on ministry with youth in middle and high school (grades 6-12), though we do also discuss young adult and occasionally children's ministry. MCS YMNet is open to youth ministry leaders and volunteers of all kinds in MCS ELCA congregations—full-time, part-time, rostered, lay, parent. We gather to get to know each other, share joys, concerns and problem-solve or strategize together, and to plan a few events throughout the year where our youth can come together to see how many of us there are and gain an understanding of the bigger church outside of their congregation. Leaders continue to meet mostly monthly on Zoom this school year, though we met in person occasionally.

Three synod youth events were held/scheduled during the 2025-26 school year, in a repeat pattern from 2024-25 which seems to be working well for us. On Saturday, Nov 15, approximately 100 MCS youth (grades 8-12) and adult leaders from 13 congregations gathered at St. Andrew Lutheran Church, West Chicago, for a one-day retreat titled "Different Gifts, One Spirit." Joe Davis and Dave Scherer (AGAPE\*) were our keynote speakers, workshop and worship leaders. They led us in discussion of the theme verse, 1 Corinthians 12:4-7: "Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit... for the common good." Youth also completed a WELCA spiritual gifts assessment created by Valora Starr and had time for discussion of results as well as structured free time where they could choose between outdoor play, an arts and crafts project, or writing workshop time with Joe/Dave.

In February we continued our tradition of having a retreat at Lutherdale Bible Camp in Wisconsin. More than 150 participants (youth and adult) joined in faith, fellowship and fun gathering around the topic of the 10 Commandments. This retreat is open to both middle and high school youth and continues to serve as a special learning and fun opportunity for many of our congregations' confirmation programs.

Our last synod youth event of the 2025-26 school year, yet to take place at submission of this report, is another continued tradition—the Ultimate Lock-in at Enchanted Castle Family Entertainment Center in Lombard on Friday, April 17, also open to grades 6-12.

In January many of our leaders attended the 2026 ELCA Youth Ministry Network "Extravaganza" conference. To learn more about this annual opportunity, visit <https://www.elcaymnet.org/>.

In 2026-27, we plan to continue with our three-event pattern: grades 8-12 gathering Saturday, November 14, location TBD; youth retreat at Lutherdale in late January or February (2027) and a spring lock-in at Enchanted Castle. We will continue monthly Zoom meetings on the third or fourth Thursday of the month from 10:30 am to noon. If you would like to stay updated on meetings/events or have other questions about MCS youth ministry, please email [mcelcayouth@gmail.com](mailto:mcelcayouth@gmail.com). Thank you for your support!

Respectfully submitted,

*Pastor Anna E. Roper*



# PARTNERS IN MINISTRY



Advocate Health Care

Concordia Place

Global Refuge

Lutheran Campus Ministry  
University of Chicago

Lutheran Campus Ministry Northwestern

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

Lutherdale Outdoor Ministries

Mission Investment Fund

Portico Benefits

RefugeeOne

Region V

## 2026 Report to the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the ELCA

Advocate Health is the third largest nonprofit integrated health system in the United States, serving nearly six million patients across six states. At Advocate Health, we believe everyone matters and are committed to creating spaces where all belong and can thrive; we chart new paths to achieve the extraordinary; we collaborate with humility, turning the best ideas into new possibilities; and we drive change through fearless curiosity and unshakable optimism.

Find us at: <https://www.advocatehealth.org/>

---

*From discovery to everyday moments, we're redefining care – for you, for us, for all.*

---

### Celebrating our Covenantal Partnership

Advocate Health Care in Illinois continues our affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the United Church of Christ (UCC). As partners, ELCA and UCC clergy and lay leaders serve on our Advocate Health Care Board of Directors, our Mission and Spiritual Care Committee, and the Governing Councils at our Illinois hospitals. You will find a list of all those who have served over the past year at the end of this report.

We are pleased to share some of the ways we have been working to ensure that all people have a fair shot at *living well*.

### Investing in Our Communities

**Community Benefit:** Advocate Health invested nearly \$6.2 billion in community benefit last year. Equating to nearly \$17 million a day and representing a 2.2% increase from the previous year, the investment builds on Advocate Health's purpose to redefine care for all. Advocate Health has also streamlined access to care by removing paperwork barriers for those who qualify for financial assistance – automatically enrolling nearly 90% of eligible patients.

**Prescriptions at the push of a button:** To combat pharmacy deserts, Advocate Health Care introduced prescription vending machines on Chicago's South Side, which dispense medications for common and chronic conditions, and connect patients with virtual pharmacists.

**Expanding Access to Care:** More than \$150 million in new ambulatory projects are strengthening Advocate Health Care's community presence across the region. New clinics in Westmont, Naperville, Hoffman Estates and Chicago's Webster neighborhood will expand access to primary and specialty care, helping families get the right care at the right time -- close to home.

## Caring for the Spirit

**Chaplaincy and Clinical Pastoral Education:** Our chaplains provide comprehensive spiritual care that supports patients, families, physicians, and teammates during some of life’s most vulnerable moments. Chaplains offer support with attention to spiritual, religious, and cultural values. Through *Chaplain Connect*, individuals have 24/7 access to confidential spiritual care by phone, ensuring timely support during uncertainty, anxiety, grief, and significant life transitions. Our spiritual care ministry is further strengthened by our ACPE-accredited Clinical Pastoral Education program, which prepares future chaplains through rigorous, interfaith formation for service in complex healthcare settings.

## Driving Accountability

**Ethics:** Our clinical ethics service supports patients, families, and care teams as they navigate complex medical decisions with compassion, clarity, and integrity. In 2025, the ethics team provided 555 consultations across Illinois and Wisconsin, addressing issues such as goals of care, decision-making capacity, surrogate decision-making, and end of life concerns. In addition to consultation, the ethics team provides education and leadership to strengthen ethical awareness and shared decision-making. Together, this work helps ensure care is patient-centered, values-informed, and grounded in Advocate Health’s mission.

## Engaging Faith Partners

**Faith and Health Partnerships:** Our team works across Illinois and Wisconsin to promote health equity and community well-being in three ways.

- 1. Neighborhood Model:** We embed a Faith Community Nurse and Community Connector to work collaboratively with faith communities and other partners to address health issues that the community has said are important to them. We have neighborhood partnerships in 5 communities across Illinois and Wisconsin.
- 2. Regional Impact:** We equip faith communities across all of our service areas to be places of healing and care and to promote mental well-being, trauma-healing, and social connection through awareness raising, skill building, and structured partnership.
- 3. Faith Community Nurse Network:** Our Faith Community Nurse Coordinators support professional nurses who want to blend their professional and spiritual gifts by serving their congregation and their neighborhood. We bring nurses together for professional development, resources, collaboration, and support.

To learn more about Advocate Health Care’s achievements in 2025, visit our Year in Review report at: [Advocate Health 2025 Year in Review](#)

Join our Faith and Health Partnership mailing list by clicking the following link: [Signup Form](#) or by using this QR code:



## **With gratitude to those who served Advocate Health**

We are grateful for the partnership of our ELCA and UCC partners who have walked alongside us in ministry, offered counsel, prayer, accountability and vision. Thank you for your time, wisdom and investment in this healing ministry.

### **Advocate Health Board of Directors**

Michele Baker Richardson, Chairperson, UCC Lay  
Mark Harris, UCC Lay  
John Timmer, ELCA Lay

### **Advocate Health Care Board of Directors**

David Anderson, UCC Lay  
Rev. Kathie Bender Schwich, ELCA Clergy  
Bishop Yehiel Curry, ELCA Clergy (through September 2025)  
Rev. Dr. Nathaniel Edmond, Vice Chairperson  
Mark Harris, UCC Lay  
Gail Hasbrouck, UCC Lay  
Bishop Wayne Miller, ELCA Clergy (beginning October 2025)  
Rev. Dr. Terrill Murff, UCC Clergy  
Dr. Clarence Nixon, Chairperson

### **Mission and Spiritual Care Committee of the Advocate Health Care Board**

Rev. Donna Childs, Wider Faith Community Member (WI)  
Deacon Marlene Daubert, ELCA Clergy (completed term December 2025)  
Rev. Michelle Day, UCC Clergy  
Rev. Dr. Llewellyn Dixon, ELCA Clergy  
Rev. Dr. Nathaniel Edmond, AHC Board Representative  
Rev. Kathleen Gloff, UCC Clergy (WI)  
Mark Harris, AHC Board Representative, Committee Chair, UCC Lay  
Marie Higgins, UCC Lay  
Tammy Jackson, ELCA Lay  
Rev. Mary Martha Kannass, ELCA Clergy (WI)  
Irshad Khan, Wider Faith Community Member  
Rev. Kathy Lawes, UCC Clergy  
Rev. Kathy Nolte, ELCA Clergy  
Rabbi Joseph Ozarowski, Wider Faith Community Member  
Gerardo Perez, ELCA Lay (completed term December 2025)  
Harlette Smith Washington, UCC Lay

## **Advocate Health Care Hospital Governing Council Representatives**

### **Advocate Christ Medical Center**

Rev. Benna Whyte Bell, UCC Clergy  
Rev. Vickie Johnson, ELCA Clergy  
Darron Ramsey, ELCA Lay

### **Advocate Condell Medical Center**

Rev. Selena Blackwell, UCC Clergy  
Nanette Dahlke, ELCA Lay  
Rev. Matthew Smith-Laubenstein, ELCA Clergy

### **Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital**

Rev. Katie Hines-Shah, ELCA Clergy  
Rev. Scott Oberle, UCC Clergy

### **Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital**

Ben Grover, ELCA Lay  
Rev. Eric Fistler, UCC Clergy  
Rev. Dan McKnight, ELCA Clergy  
Roslind Spalding, UCC Lay

### **Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center**

Rev. Tasha Vinson Brown, UCC Clergy

### **Advocate Lutheran General Hospital**

Rev. Carol Hill, UCC Clergy  
Ronald Mallicoat, ELCA Lay  
Rev. Aneel Trivedi, ELCA Clergy

### **Advocate Southland Health Network**

Rev. Christopher Buresh, ELCA Clergy  
Rev. Lawrence Clark, ELCA Clergy  
Rev. Dr. Terrill Murff, UCC Clergy  
Dr. James Richardson, UCC Lay





concordia place

# Fiscal Year 2025 Impact Report



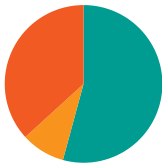
## Over 1,000 served in FY25

- 699 infants and toddlers in Early Childhood Education and Care
- 72 families in Home Visiting services
- 116 5- to 12-year-olds in After-School Enrichment and Summer Camp
- 173 13- to 18-year-olds in Teen Leadership

“At every stage, our son was in a classroom with caring and nurturing teachers who supported his development, physically and emotionally.”  
– Concordia Place parent

## By the Numbers | Committed to our Mission

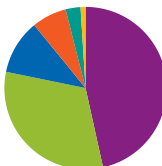
Concordia Place serves everyone! We foster a socioeconomically and racially diverse program by accepting state subsidies and using our own sliding tuition scale



**54% Low Income**  
**9% Moderate Income**  
**37% Median+ Income**



**90%+ of children** transitioning from Concordia Place to kindergarten met or exceeded standards in all measured development areas



**47% Latino**      **7% Black**  
**32% White**      **3% Asian**  
**11% Multiracial**      **1% Other**



**4 Chicago Centers**  
**200+ Team Members**



**all 4 centers** are NAEYC accredited, the nationally recognized standard of excellence that fewer than 10% of providers obtain



**all 4 centers** earned the Gold Circle of Quality rating from ExceleRate Illinois, which fewer than 15% of providers in Chicago have





Dear Partners in welcome,

Grace and peace to you this synod assembly season. **At Global Refuge we remain committed to the work of welcome, no matter the challenges.** For more than 85 years, Global Refuge (formerly known as Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service) has championed the work of welcome by providing support to immigrants and refugees as they rebuild their lives in the United States. Founded by heartbroken Lutherans in the United States who felt called to provide a home for those fleeing violence during the World Wars, Global Refuge has continued this good work welcoming more than 850,000 newcomers since 1939.

Our mission states, "As a witness to God's love for all people, we stand with and advocate for migrants and refugees, transforming communities through ministries of service and justice." With help from Global Refuge, families are welcomed into their new homes with support from our case managers who ensure that adults are enrolled in English language classes, children are enrolled in school, and Global Refuge partners guide newly arrived refugees in using public transportation and accessing community resources.

In early 2025, Global Refuge and the 9 other national resettlement agencies received a **stop-work order** from the U.S. Department of State as it relates to our funding for the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, effectively cutting off vital support to families who have already lawfully resettled in the United States. In the time since then, we have witnessed an incredible increase in the amount of support we receive from faith communities and individuals. This additional financial support and volunteer support has enabled Global Refuge to continue services to our immigrant neighbors that would have otherwise been stopped. We are thrilled to say we continue serving immigrants through nearly all of the programs we had before, albeit at a smaller scale in some cases. Support from faith communities more than doubled in 2025, and new congregations from around the country are responding to the call to welcome. This support has not only enabled us to continue services as mentioned above, but it has also made us less vulnerable to shifts in government funding.

With the support of these new partners and Lutheran communities like yours, in 2025 we were able to...

- Serve **171** people through our new **Post-Arrival Stability and Empowerment (PASE) program** in Baltimore to fill urgent gaps left by stop-work orders and funding freezes.



## Global Refuge

- Empower and support **55 Clients** and **44 Businesses** through personal and business loans, with a total of **\$1.086 million dollars** funded.
- Serve **3,099** participants through the Camino A Casa program through training, case management, mental health services, and educational opportunities.
- Write and distribute **11,000 Hope for the Holidays cards** that provided messages of welcome and hope to newcomers.
- Mobilize the public to pack and ship **1,000 Neighbor Kits** to our clients, totaling a fair market value of **\$17,500**

In a political season rife with anti-immigrant rhetoric and messages that villainize newcomers, we have a unique opportunity to change this narrative and refocus on all the gifts newcomers bring to community. We invite you to join us in this work! [It is needed now more than ever.](#)

- **Join the Faith Alliance** – Global Refuge is proud to offer a new training for communities of faith who seek to safely welcome and embrace immigrants and refugees. This four-module series allows your faith community to learn together and make a commitment to welcome newcomers in your community <https://www.globalrefuge.org/faith-alliance/>
- **Hold a Vigil** – The new Vigil For the Taken resource offers an opportunity to name, recognize, and remember members of the community that are disappeared, detained, or deported. Whenever we lose precious members of our communities, we must stand together and affirm that every person deserves dignity and our support, and that no one should be forgotten. <https://www.globalrefuge.org/vigil-for-taken/>
- **Sing For Your Neighborhood** – *Here I Stand* is an original song written for the Vigil for the Taken mentioned above. It reads “Here I stand where my neighbor stood, holding peace for my neighborhood.” Written as a Taizé-like offering for the times we’re in, it is meant to equip neighbors with a song to “hold a candle” for those who have been harmed or removed from our communities. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TeFtjoSQ\\_FWNd7rQu4UHKELeMpY7e66e/view?fbclid=IwY2xjawQ5BU1leHRuA2F1bQlxMABicmlkETF4N1Z2Smp6Y2NCRllsS1N6c3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHlj3IWmE8EYtDcfE8ozQcoHVvYl5OPYjCXRzSfl4BnKP0vKH7Qk\\_LFCxxa8\\_aem\\_XBFK4jpbwWWU6JnTBkeIlw](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TeFtjoSQ_FWNd7rQu4UHKELeMpY7e66e/view?fbclid=IwY2xjawQ5BU1leHRuA2F1bQlxMABicmlkETF4N1Z2Smp6Y2NCRllsS1N6c3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHlj3IWmE8EYtDcfE8ozQcoHVvYl5OPYjCXRzSfl4BnKP0vKH7Qk_LFCxxa8_aem_XBFK4jpbwWWU6JnTBkeIlw)
- **Support Refugees with a gift** – If you or communities you’re connected with are willing to support financially, please use and share this link: [www.globalrefuge.org/give](http://www.globalrefuge.org/give)
- **Learn more and Advocate** – Explore resources with more information about executive orders and accompanying actions: [www.globalrefuge.org/advocate](http://www.globalrefuge.org/advocate)



## Global Refuge

- **Know Your Rights** - Our partners at AMMPARO have a great resource for communities to read about their rights and those of immigrants in their care. <https://resources.elca.org/ammparo/know-your-rights-2025/>
- **Explore Resources** - Visit our Congregational Resources page to explore all the resources available to you: [www.globalrefuge.org/congregations](http://www.globalrefuge.org/congregations)
- **Sign up for our Monthly E-newsletters** - Get the latest updates for faith leaders by emailing [outreach@globalrefuge.org](mailto:outreach@globalrefuge.org).

Thank you so very much for your support, we look forward to another year of partnership in welcome.

Go in peace. Welcome the stranger.



*Pastor Dan Beirne*

*Director for Mobilization and Faith Relations*

[outreach@globalrefuge.org](mailto:outreach@globalrefuge.org)

# LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

As I reflect upon the past year, I celebrate the richness of campus ministry at Augustana Lutheran Church of Hyde Park. At The University of Chicago, Lutheran Campus Ministry is a congregational ministry. This means that our student ministry is situated within a multi-generational community of faith.

All generations experience the benefits of multi-generational community. Our students regularly see spiritual maturity in older generations and learn what the Christian life looks like after college. Older generations receive the energy and innovation of students, reminding us that the Christian life is an invitation into a countercultural way that reshapes all of life's commitments. Our diversity in age is a strength that I pray we will continue to leverage in the years ahead.

In the past year, we have seen an interesting change in the composition of our student population. Historically, Lutheran Campus Ministry has been comprised almost entirely of graduate students. In some respects, this has reflected UChicago's heavy emphasis upon graduate education. Over the past year, the student population has shifted to a nearly 50-50 split between undergraduate students and graduate students.

While I cannot pinpoint an exact reason for this shift, I have observed that many of our undergraduate students have been inviting their friends to come and participate in LCM. We are seeing the power of personal invitation, when people invite their friends and family to participate in Christian community. Sharing our faith does not need to feel scary or intimidating. Evangelism is not about persuasion or argumentation; rather, it is about inviting people to come and experience the love we share with one another as a community of Jesus.

This year, we are continuing to see the fruit of our ongoing efforts to mentor seminary and divinity students at Augustana. In 2025, I had two students reach out to me about serving as interns at Augustana. Although we are unable to host two students simultaneously, their interest was great enough that one student was willing to postpone his internship for an entire year! For the 2025-26 school year, we are hosting Elizabeth Schoen, a Master of Divinity student from The University of Chicago Divinity School. Lizzy is preparing for pastoral ministry in the ELCA, and I have been delighted to work with her this year. For the 2026-27 school year, we will host Adam Groenke, a Master of Divinity student from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. He too is preparing for pastoral ministry in the ELCA.

Augustana and Lutheran Campus Ministry at UChicago are a learning lab of sorts, a place uniquely positioned in Hyde Park to raise up leaders for the church both locally and globally. One of my greatest joys is to mentor future pastors. I give thanks for my former mentees who are now serving in ordained ministry (Connor Freeman and Kyle Duff), and I look forward to the day when we can send Lizzy and Adam into the wider church.



Our core ministries in LCM remain as vital as ever. Students gather weekly on Wednesdays at 12 p.m. for Brown Bag Bible Study. We invite students to bring their lunch as we study scripture together. This year, we are making our way through the Gospel of Matthew. We also gather weekly on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. for Vespers & Dinner. We sing evening prayer and enjoy a home-cooked meal, graciously provided by a member of the congregation. Last spring, I also took nine students for a weekend retreat at St. Gregory's Abbey in Three Rivers, MI. We look forward to another spring retreat this year at Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center (LOMC) in Oregon, IL.

For all of these many gifts in our life together, I cannot express my gratitude enough. I give thanks for all our many students, whose intellectual curiosity and good humor make this ministry so much fun. I give thanks for our staff, council leadership, and student leaders, who provide fresh vision and wise oversight for our ministries. I give thanks for the support of the Augustana community, including those who generously cook meals for our students. I give thanks for our many partners who provide funding, including the ELCA churchwide organization, the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, and local foundations and congregations who support us. Most of all, I give thanks to God, who continues to fill me with a strong sense of calling to this place.

Submitted by Rev. Matthew Stuhlmuller



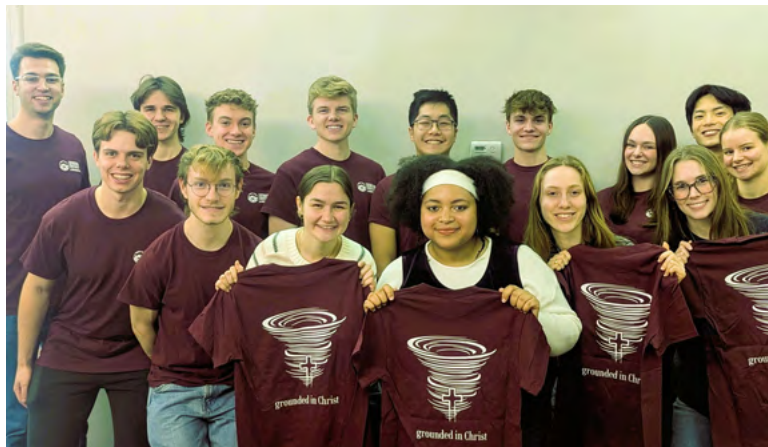
**LUTHERAN  
CAMPUS MINISTRY**  
AT NORTHWESTERN



For more information  
scan the QR code or go  
to:  
[lcmnorthwestern.org](http://lcmnorthwestern.org)  
and  
[facebook.com/NUlutheran](https://facebook.com/NUlutheran)

## GROUNDING IN CHRIST

Amid the disruptions of this past year on campus, in our city, our country, and the world, students have known what they need to hear: that our faith tradition, grounded in love of God and neighbor, in mercy, in justice, and in peace, can tether and guide them in and through the chaos of life. Grounded in Christ, students at LCMNU know God's life-giving story in which they can and do participate in generating through their words and actions.



## 2025-2026 Programming Highlights

- Weekly worship services on Wednesdays and Sundays
- Weekly education hour that includes Biblical study and theological reflection
- Weekly fellowship and community building
- Monthly meal preparation for our neighbors at a local transitional shelter
- Trivia Night Fundraisers for Lutheran Disaster Response, Connections for the Homeless, and Concordia Ministries
- Presence on campus at outreach fairs to undergraduate and graduate students
- A retreat on vocational discernment
- Fostering student leadership, teaching, and preaching
- Student and staff care conversations and support across campus



## THANK YOU!

Thank you for your part in grounding LCMNU through your prayers and financial support which impact the lives of so many young adults!



## Connect a Student to Lutheran Campus Ministry



Scan QR code or go to:  
<https://luminelca.org/refer-a-student/>

## WAYS TO SUPPORT LCMNU

- Financial gifts. (LCMNU receives 27.5% of its funding from ELCA congregational Mission Support and from the Metro Chicago Synod Campus Ministry Endowment. The remaining funds have to be raised by a volunteer Board of Directors.)
- Volunteering
- Bringing or sponsoring a meal

To donate scan the QR code or go to:

<https://www.lcmnorthwestern.org/support-lutheran-campus-ministry>



Scan to DONATE

2204 Orrington Avenue  
Evanston, IL 60201  
847-864-7849  
[lutherancm@u.northwestern.edu](mailto:lutherancm@u.northwestern.edu)



# Metropolitan Chicago Illinois Synod

2026 Annual Report from Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI)

## Mission & GenCare Approach

Responding to the Gospel, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) brings healing, justice, and wholeness to people and communities.

LSSI's GenCare approach to providing services engages, surrounds, and connects people and staff to supports they need while promoting their dignity, enhancing their health and well-being, and helping them reach their full potential.

Last year, LSSI served **62,425** children, adults, and seniors—one in every 203 people in Illinois—and **9%** more than we served in 2024.

In the **Metropolitan Chicago Synod**, **8,879** children, adults, and families were served at 34 sites across 3 counties. The numbers in this report show LSSI's impact within the synod.



## Behavioral Health Services

### Mental Health Services

LSSI offers mental health services where and when they are needed most. Offerings include crisis intervention services, outpatient counseling, case management, school-based services, and adult mental health group homes. Last year, these programs served **17,847** individuals in metropolitan Chicago.

**Three Project IMPACT** hospital-based emergency room sites screened **5,502** individuals experiencing behavioral health crises. **821** people sought care at the Welcoming Center on Chicago's north side, which provides counseling, case management, and psychiatric care particularly for people who are in crisis or need immediate care.

**Step-Up School-Based Counseling**, based in nearly 90 Chicago Public Schools, last year provided **1,800** students with in-school counseling services.



### Alcohol and Drug Treatment

LSSI served **1,693** people with alcohol and/or drug use disorders in inpatient and outpatient programs, as well as recovery and sober living homes in the metropolitan Chicago area.

## Children's Community Services

As the largest private provider of **Foster Care Services** in Illinois, last year LSSI made **332** foster care placements in metropolitan Chicago, offering case management, family counseling, and training and licensing for foster families.

**Intact Family Services** caseworkers serve families who have been reported to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), helping stabilize, strengthen, enhance, and preserve family life (**338** families served in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod).



## Housing that's a Home

Homes for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: In the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, five group homes provide a structured, supportive environment for **21** residents.

Park Ridge Place is LSSI's newest, and our tenth group home for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This home is a partnership with Messiah Lutheran Church, Park Ridge, and is located in the former church parsonage, offering a welcoming setting that supports independent living within the community.



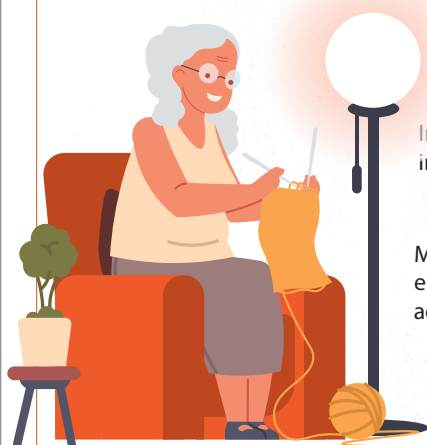
Senior House **689** residents, ages 62+ and those 18+ with physical disabilities, live in eight affordable apartment-style homes.

### Intouch Home Care Services

Intouch last year helped **52** older adults live safely and independently in their metropolitan Chicago homes.

### Church Partners

Metropolitan Chicago Synod congregations have established volunteer support and coordinate regular activities at LSSI's group homes and senior apartments.



## LSSI Earns COA Reaccreditation

LSSI achieved reaccreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA), an independent nonprofit accreditor of human service organizations. COA accreditation demonstrates the implementation of best practice standards. LSSI earned "full implementation" status—the highest possible rating—on **98%** of more than 1,300 standards.

## LSSI President Recognized for Leadership

LSSI President and CEO **Mark Stutrud** received the Paragon Award: The Ken Daly Award for Excellence in Mentorship from Lutheran Services in America, recognizing leaders who help shape the next generation of leadership.

## Special Thanks

Thanks to the leadership of **Interim Bishop Wayne Miller**, and his service on the LSSI Board of Directors, along with LSSI Board Chair **Rev. Kathie Bender Schwich**, Vice Chair **Esther M. Macchione**, Secretary **Rev. Youngshim E. Pitcher**, Treasurer **James E. Harney**, and fellow board members **Susan Boin**, Central/Southern Illinois Synod Bishop **Dr. Greg Busboom**, **Beth Nelson Chase**, **Keisha T. Dyson**, **Donald B. Erickson**, Northern Illinois Synod **Bishop Stacie Fidler**, **Terry A. Goff**, **Ron Kok-Alblas**, **The Rev. Rhonda L. Pruitt**, and **Mark Schwiebert**.

We are grateful to the individuals serving as LSSI **Cornerstone Foundation** trustees, as well as those serving on our **Associate Board**.

 Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

1001 E. Touhy Avenue, Suite 50 • Des Plaines, Illinois 60018 • LSSI.org • 847.635.4600



Spring 2026

Dear Friends in Christ,

I heartened to share that LOMC (Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center) is having incredible renewal. We were entirely booked all weekends this past Fall, with several weekday retreats also. And March-November 2026 is full, with few exceptions. Our bookings are up over 200% from 2023 numbers. We welcomed over 1,500 guests and participants in 2025. Congregations are returning who haven't visited LOMC since 2016-18. New community groups, like the Whitney Young Magnet High School orchestra, are engaging us also for retreat experiences (they rehearsed for 3 days in the Roost). And if you've been on campus in the past year, you've noticed transformation across the property – cabins, Freedom Tree Village, lower camp, and even the Maintenance area. There is SO much to celebrate and to give thanks to God for.



As we realize this incredible growth and renewal, we are still in the midst of an organizational turnaround that will stabilize LOMC for the long term. And that is intensive work of strengthening policies and governance, remapping finances and all manner of resources, thoughtfully shaping strategic directions, developing business models, and increasing our outreach and engagement. On top of that, we've faced some extraordinary

circumstances in areas of insurance overhaul, property damage from one of our property neighbors, lending and other resource pursuits – all which have and continue to involve significant time and energy to manage carefully to improve LOMC's sustainability (both ecological and organizational).

Even more significantly, because of the cost accessibility of our programs (especially church programs), more retreats and programming actually brings more cost... it doesn't pay for itself. It actually requires additional donations to be able to accommodate an increase in retreats and programs.



We are reaching a tipping point in our capacity. To sustain the level of programming that we've reached, and to have any capacity to pursue the tremendous potential that LOMC has, we've needed to expand our staffing. And we're also identifying ways to expand guest capacity. I'm pleased to share that we're increasing Freedom Tree Village capacity from 36 to 44 beds, and we're increasing Meadows cabin village from 32 beds per cabin to 40 beds per cabin plus options for additional capacity, especially during summer season.



I truly believe that LOMC has the potential to be one of the most innovative outdoor ministries in the country – leaning into our rich history of ecological stewardship, faith formation, arts, worship, and community building in ways that meet the world of today and even more fully utilize the incredible potential of our land and our ministry. I really believe this is possible for LOMC. It will take 5-10 years. And it will require incredible partnership to bring about.

We don't take lightly the responsibility of stewarding LOMC's precious and transformative ministry. Thank you for listening. Thank you for praying with and for us. And thank you for your partnership in wider ministry.



As always, we invite conversation. This is big work. We welcome your partnership.

Sincerely,

Clyde Andrew Walter  
**Executive Director**





## Mission Investment Fund

### The Mission Investment Fund: Helping ELCA congregations bring ministry to life



The Mission Investment Fund (MIF), a financial services ministry of the ELCA, has been a **steady and reliable financial partner** for congregations, ministries and individuals for more than 150 years. Through times of growth and uncertainty alike, MIF has remained committed to strengthening ELCA ministries and communities — delivering customer-first- support backed by flexible financing solutions.

In 2025, MIF continued to support ministry growth across the ELCA. Your investments helped expand worship spaces, rebuild congregations after fires and natural disasters, provide spaces for people to age with dignity, start green projects and support accessibility remodeling for community spaces. Each project strengthens ELCA ministries, ensuring that they stay vibrant, inclusive and fully prepared to support the communities they serve.

#### By the numbers:

- **Total Loans Outstanding:** \$614,967,000
- **Total Assets:** \$779,189,000
- **Total Investment Obligations:** \$551,452,000
- **Net Assets & Capital Ratio:** 27.4%

#### What makes MIF unique?

- **Proven stability:** With more than a century and a half of experience, MIF has weathered changing economic and political landscapes, maintaining financial strength for ELCA ministries.
- **Deep expertise in church and ministry financing:** We understand the unique needs of faith communities and have longstanding experience in congregation and ministry building projects.
- **Competitive rates and terms:** Our financial offerings are structured to support ministries of all sizes.
- **A full suite of financial services:** In partnership with the ELCA Federal Credit Union, we provide a range of financial solutions for congregations, ministries and individuals.
- **Faithful stewardship:** Investments in MIF directly support loans that fund hundreds of capital projects across the church.

MIF continues to enhance our tools and financial services to better support ELCA ministries. And even as we look ahead with fresh vision and innovation, our foundation remains the same: enduring trust, time-tested stability and commitment woven through generations. In every chapter, we journey with ELCA members and ministries, united in faith — a steadfast partner supporting God’s work in the world.

#### *MIF at work in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod (as of December 31, 2025):*

- 49 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of \$49,675,370
- \$38,977,070 in Mission Investment Fund investment obligations.

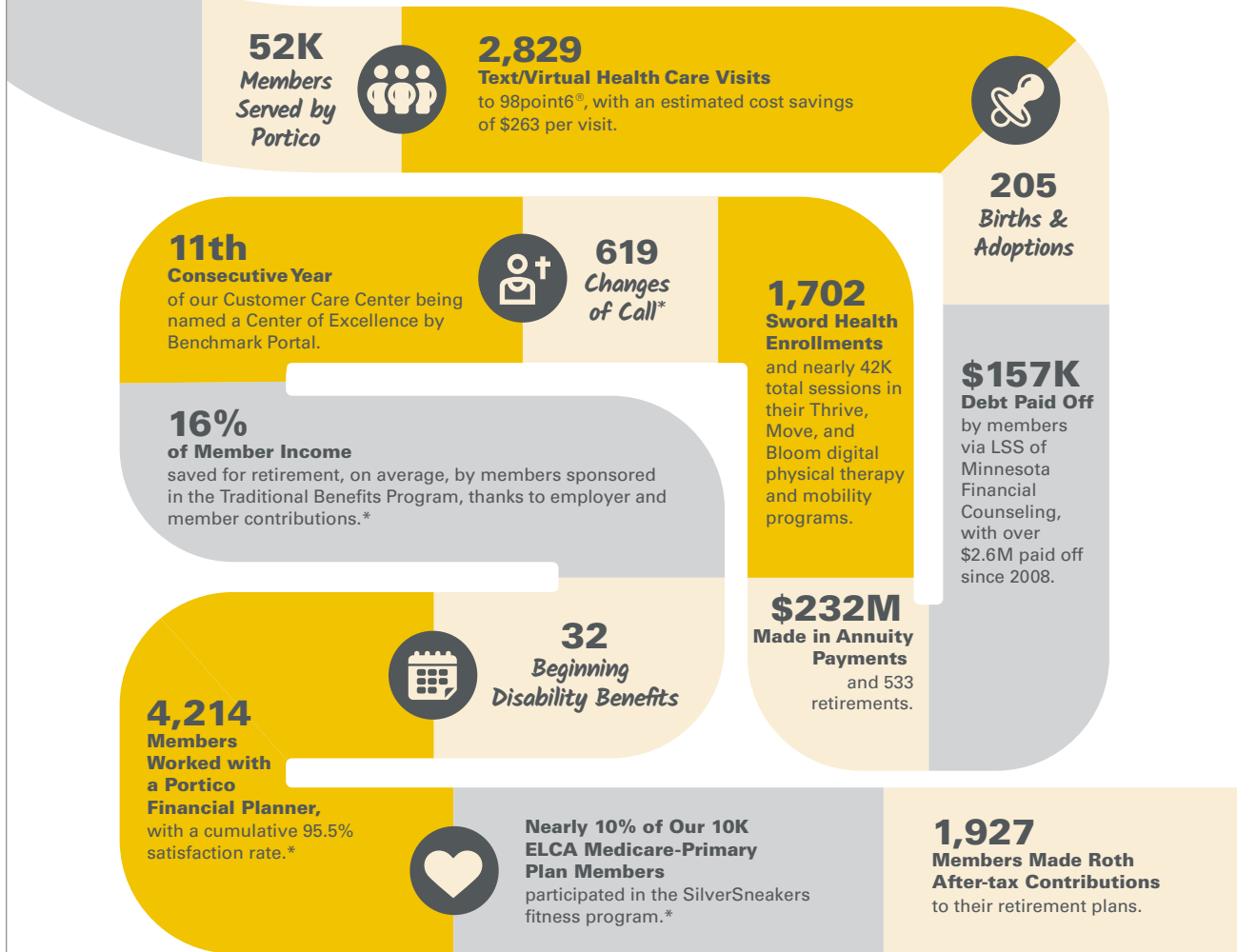
For more information about MIF capabilities, please visit our website, [mif.elca.org](http://mif.elca.org) or contact The Rev. Kent Peterson, Regional Manager: 276-698-7970 [kent.peterson@elca.org](mailto:kent.peterson@elca.org)

MissionInvestmentFund | 8765 West Higgins Road | Chicago, Illinois 60631 | Tel: 877-886-3522 | Web: [mif.elca.org](http://mif.elca.org)

## Your Calling + Our Benefits

### Portico Benefit Services' Report to 2026 Synod Assemblies

Your calling is to serve. Ours is to support you. As the ELCA's benefit ministry, Portico provides benefits that nurture holistic health, so you can live out your calling and serve with confidence and grace. Here's a visual recap of what our community of more than 52,000 plan members experienced in 2025.



We design our benefits to align with the needs of the church, pooling resources through a community benefits plan to deliver stable, sustainable support that enhances everyday life and brings value to those who serve. Follow us on social media @PorticoBenefits.

\*Source: Traditional Benefits Program. All other numbers and percentages are drawn from across Portico's benefit programs.



60-302 (2/2026)

# refugeeONE

ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2025



WITH YOUR SUPPORT, ACROSS  
ALL OUR PROGRAMS WE SERVED...

**3,347** NEWCOMERS,  
FROM **84** COUNTRIES,  
INCLUDING:

MYANMAR | AFGHANISTAN  
SYRIA | D.R. CONGO  
VENEZUELA | ...AND MORE!



CREATING OPPORTUNITY FOR REFUGEES FLEEING WAR, TERROR, AND PERSECUTION  
TO BUILD NEW LIVES OF SAFETY, DIGNITY, AND SELF-RELIANCE.



**Dear Friends,** We just weathered our most challenging year yet. A barrage of harmful policies and hostile rhetoric towards newcomers has inflicted lasting damage to the United States' proud legacy of welcoming the world's most vulnerable.

**Through it all, RefugeeOne endures thanks to supporters like you.**

With your help, we continue to serve thousands of refugees; providing access to employment, therapy, education, and more. This includes the 500+ individuals who arrived near the end of 2024, before the country's welcome mat was effectively removed, as well as the hundreds who've found their way to RefugeeOne since then, including Afghan Allies and referrals from agencies forced to close.

**We're so lucky to see firsthand the many ways newcomers contribute to Chicago: keeping businesses humming, adding unique viewpoints to classrooms, reinvigorating faith groups and neighborhoods.**

Because of you, people like Maria, Shahpoor, and Louise can make their marks here!

For them and countless more, **let's redouble our efforts to show newcomers they are welcome here – and remind others we're all the better for it.**

With heartfelt thanks,



**Melineh Kano**, Executive Director  
Armenian refugee from Iran  
Resettled by RefugeeOne in 1984



## LOOK HOW YOU'VE HELPED REFUGEES SUCCEED!

**416**  
TOOK  
ENGLISH  
CLASSES

**346**  
JOBS  
FOUND OR  
UPGRADED



**924**  
YOUTH  
SUPPORTED &  
EMPOWERED

**232**  
RECEIVED  
FREE DENTAL  
VISITS



**293**  
BENEFITED  
FROM  
THERAPY

**1,466**  
RECEIVED  
LEGAL  
SUPPORT



**141**  
BECAME  
UNITED STATES  
CITIZENS

**750+**  
VOLUNTEERS  
HELPED MAKE  
IT HAPPEN!





Maria, a Guatemalan refugee who'd been a schoolteacher and principal, longed to get back in the classroom to work with children. First, she needed to go to class herself. After we welcomed her to Chicago, Maria completed months of English language classes at RefugeeOne. While Maria studied, RefugeeOne helped her search for work until we found a perfect fit. Maria is now a first grade teacher at a bilingual school – using her years of experience to impact the next generation of children in her new community.

As a teenager, Louise could not picture the person she is today: a college junior and a U.S. citizen! The Congolese refugee credits much of her success to her RefugeeOne mentor, Emily, who boosted her confidence and helped guide her through school and life. Louise is studying social work because she wants to help people – perhaps other young refugees navigating opportunities in their new home.



Shahpoor arrived in Chicago a single father motivated by his daughter's chance at education and freedom. He'd fled the Taliban in Afghanistan, and when he got connected to RefugeeOne he was anxious to contribute to his new community. We helped him find a job, enrolled his daughter in school, and introduced them to volunteer mentors. With his background in the arts, Shahpoor is forming a non-profit to share Afghan music and culture with others.



## Get Involved!

Visit [refugeeone.org](http://refugeeone.org) to learn how you can help refugees thrive in their new home.

**DONATE | VOLUNTEER  
HIRE | ADVOCATE**





**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
As of May 2025

Jennifer Borrell  
*President*  
  
Ilya Sheyman  
*Vice President*  
  
Tom Mitchell  
*Treasurer*  
  
Oj Eng-Crandus  
*Secretary*

Hassen Al-Shawaf  
Anne Brody  
Nathan Brown  
Rebecca Carlins  
Stacy French-Reynolds  
Diana Fulaza  
Julie Grafe  
Alan Greene  
Catherine Guthrie

Dr. Gary Kaufman  
Debbie Kobak  
Evan Moilan  
Michael Petersen  
Kyle Severson  
Kruti Parikh Shah  
Steve Varick  
Hartwig Zakin

**AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES: JULY 1, 2024 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2025**

**SOURCE OF FUNDS**

67%	Government	\$9,956,902
12%	Foundations & Corporations	\$1,829,692
17%	Individuals	\$2,559,100
2%	Religious Organizations	\$250,720
1%	Other Income	\$103,005
<1%	Client Fees	\$149,129

**TOTAL \$14,848,548**

**USE OF FUNDS**

84%	Program Services	\$10,844,759
11%	Management & General	\$1,404,842
5%	Fundraising	\$602,336

**TOTAL \$12,851,937**



Full financials are available upon request by contacting our office.  
\$2M surplus includes purpose/time-restricted funds for FY26 program expenses.

**THANKS TO ALL OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS!**

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR EVERY GIFT, INCLUDING THOSE TOO NUMEROUS TO LIST ON THIS PAGE.

**\$250,000 and Above**

Crown Family Philanthropies  
Schreiber Philanthropy

**\$50,000 to \$74,999 (cont.)**

The Coleman Foundation  
Daniel and Juliette Goldstein Giving Fund  
The Eunice and Joshua J. Stone Foundation (Drew & Carol DePaul)  
Kenilworth Union Church  
David Mathers  
Steve and Maureen Meyer Charitable Fund  
John W. Parmelee Trust  
The Polk Bros. Foundation  
Walder Charitable Fund

**\$20,000 to \$49,999 (cont.)**

Jenn Borrell & Jay Virchow  
David & Rebecca Carlins  
Colonel Stanley R. McNeil Foundation, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee  
The William and Laurie Conroy Fund  
Determan Balk Family Foundation (Peg Determan & Lance Balk)  
Craig Endicott  
The Egerter Family Foundation (Dean & Laura Egerter)  
The Ingeborg Foundation  
Murray and Diana Johnson Charitable Fund  
Kirkland & Ellis LLP

**\$20,000 to \$49,999 (cont.)**

Marc and Jeanne Malnati Family Foundation  
Midland National, a Sammons Financial Company  
Petersen Family Fund (Mike & Laurie Petersen)  
Phoebe R. and John D. Lewis Foundation (John & Thekla Metz)  
Renaissance Charitable Foundation, Inc. (Sara Paretsky)  
Anne Roberts  
James and Christine Speaker Family Foundation  
St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Park Ridge  
Watson Family Charitable Fund (Kristen & Michael Watson)

**\$100,000 to \$249,999**

The Chicago Community Foundation  
VNA Foundation

**\$75,000 to \$99,999**

Paul M. Angell Family Foundation  
Walder Foundation

**\$50,000 to \$74,999**

Anonymous  
Caerus Foundation, Inc.  
Martha Campbell

**TOP FIVE EMPLOYER PARTNERS**



6008 North California Avenue Chicago, IL 60659 773-989-5647 | info@refugeeone.org [refugeeone.org](http://refugeeone.org)

Greetings!

It is a privilege to serve as your Candidacy and Leadership Manager (CaLM) for Region 5 of the ELCA, a call I began in January 2026. This synod, along with eleven others, makes up the whole of Region 5, which covers Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Collegiality is important to the region. The bishops, synod staff, and other synod leaders gather in various ways throughout the year, including online check-ins and an annual retreat for bishops and synod staff. These connecting points provide space for idea-sharing, mutual support, and partnerships that help ministry across the region to thrive. The 2025 Bishop and Staff Retreat took place in Middleton, WI and provided time for worship, learning sessions, affinity groups, and collaboration. This gathering is a vital part of our regional ministry, offering opportunities in formal and informal settings for both bishops and synod staffs to share wisdom and build relationships.

In addition, the twelve bishops and the CaLM form the regional steering committee, whose work it is to dream and vision new ways for our synods to partner together. One of the outcomes of this visioning is a three-year collaborative boundaries education cycle, including the topics of professional boundaries, gender justice, and racial justice. The cycle began in 2024 with professional boundaries and continued in 2025 with gender justice. In this third year we will gather as a region on November 5 for learning around racial justice and boundaries. This event brings together between 800 and 1000 rostered ministers at approximately 40 sites around the region.

The CaLM also works with candidacy committees from all twelve synods. Together we walk alongside individuals who are discerning a call to rostered ministry. I am impressed by the faithful ways each committee works to ensure those who seek a vocation within the church are equipped for the demands and joys that ministry offers. In addition, once candidates move into the first call process, it is part of my work to convene the regional first call consultations, at which the bishops and staff work diligently to match the gifts and needs of candidates with the gifts and needs of the church.

Our region also manages archival records, which are housed at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, IA. Sue Dodd is the regional archivist. Her work includes receiving documents and artifacts from congregations as well as responding to inquiries regarding the information contained within those documents. Sue also serves as a resource to congregations, particularly throughout the holy closure process, in determining which documents are important to preserve. Her work is a loving combination of preserving institutional knowledge and the history and stories of the congregations in our region.

It is a privilege to serve with and among you. I look forward to learning more about your synod and the work you are doing to share the love of Christ with your communities and the world.

In Christ,

Rev. Jen Christenson, Candidacy and Leadership Manager, Region 5 – ELCA

Sue Dodd, Region 5 Archivist

# COLLEGES UNIVERSITIES & SEMINARIES



Luther College

Lutheran School of  
Theology at Chicago

Wartburg Theological  
Seminary

St. Olaf College

# LUTHER COLLEGE®

*Luther College inspires and equips students to courageously serve the common good through a holistic education in the liberal arts.*

Greetings and prayers from Luther College and from our home here in Decorah, Iowa. We are pleased to again share with you some reflections about our campus life and work from this past year.

Last summer, after an intentional period of reflection and discernment, we adopted a new mission statement (included above), an accompanying constellation of vision and identity statements, and a foundational set of core values: Community, Curiosity, Excellence, Inclusivity, Sustainability. We remain in a season of re-engaging our campus, alumni, and community with the essential and profound pieces of our identity as a liberal arts college, founded by Norwegian immigrants, in the Lutheran Christian tradition, with a vocation to serve the common good.

We hosted a series of high-profile events on campus in this past year, each of which connected us in particular ways to our identity and mission. In April 2025, we welcomed travel author and historian Rick Steves to campus for an address that highlighted themes of global citizenship, lifelong learning, and bridge-building through curiosity, compassion, and the value of human dignity.

Homecoming Weekend in October was bookended by two significant campus gatherings. First, a presidential inauguration, themed “For the Common Good” to honor the intersections of faith, learning, and vocation that define our college’s identity. Just a few days later, we hosted a celebration convocation to welcome the visit of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haakon of Norway. His remarks highlighted our Norwegian relationships and emphasized the immense value and power of education to shape societies.

This January, we were thrilled to welcome Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry as our annual Martin Luther King, Jr. day lecturer, and were blessed by his remarks encouraging us to lean into our faith to find the courage to seek justice and to stand with the vulnerable.

We feel blessed and enriched by this year of learning from these key figures in our nation, church, and world. In addition to these significant visits, we continue to take joy and pride in our students, staff, faculty, alumni, and local partners—both for their accomplishments and for their character.

Luther College has been awarded the 2026 Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization from the National Association of International Educators (NAFSA), honoring our long-standing commitment to making global learning opportunities accessible and impactful to students.



The Luther College Concert Band traveled to Japan for a series of performances last June, Luther College Symphony Orchestra alumni and friends gathered for the inaugural Dorian Orchestra Reunion weekend in July, and the Luther College Nordic Choir traveled the Midwest and Southeastern United States for their annual concert tour in early 2026.

The Office for College Ministries received a two-year, \$40,000 grant from the Network for Vocation in Higher Education to establish a new student internship program in fall 2025 entitled *Called Outward: Exploring Skills for Faith-Based Leadership*. This program connects students with area congregations for focused discernment, exploration, and experiential learning around core skills and topics in ministry.

We continue to give thanks for the immense generosity of our Luther College community, across the nation and world. Our 2026 annual Giving Day raised nearly \$1.4 million to support and enhance the Luther experience at the college through the Luther Fund, Luther's unrestricted current fund that supports all students, faculty, staff and community endeavors on campus. This is in addition to our annual One Team day, which raised nearly \$600,000 in a 24-hour span to support student-athletes, as well as all of the donors who have contributed to our \$24 million Gerdin Fieldhouse renovation project, which is in its final stages.

This past year for Luther College has been a time to lean deeply into our calling to seek, serve, and nurture the common good, both in our campus life and in the world beyond. It is a privilege to serve on behalf of this campus community. Together, we share a vision for the power of learning, faith, and service to shape and heal the world.

Soli Deo Gloria!  
President Brad Chamberlain  
Pastor Melissa Bills



Dear ministry partners in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod,

The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago is grateful to share highlights from our seminary in this 2026 report to supporting synods. Thank you for your continued support of our innovative and thriving seminary. As we reflect on the past year and look ahead to 2026–2027, I am pleased to share some key developments and our aspirations for the future:

- This year marked a historic leadership transition as I began service as LSTC’s eighth president on July 1, 2025. [My vision for this new chapter](#) is rooted in accessibility, collaboration, and hospitality: theological education for all who desire it, strengthened partnerships across synods and the wider church, and a community where every learner is seen, valued, and accompanied. My inauguration, held alongside our Seminary Showcase this past November, publicly launched this next era of mission-driven innovation at LSTC.
- LSTC is also [pleased to announce the appointment of The Rev. Robert O. Smith, Ph.D.](#), as our new Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs, effective January 12, 2026. An enrolled citizen of the Chickasaw Nation and an ordained ELCA pastor, Dr. Smith brings deep expertise at the intersections of race, religion, and Indigeneity, along with extensive experience in global mission and ecumenical leadership. In addition to serving as Associate Professor of Authentic Diversity, Justice, and Public Church, he will oversee our academic programs and guide LSTC’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice commitments, including the Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice and the Pero Center for Intersectionality Studies.
- Our 2024–2029 Strategic Plan, [On the Way](#), continues to guide LSTC’s work across four core areas: Asynchronous Education, Philanthropic Campaign, Policy Review, and Staffing Strategy. This past year we celebrated the successful completion of Phase I of our “Time to Re-Imagine, Re-Invent, Reaffirm, and Re-New” campaign, surpassing our initial goal and securing significant scholarship support. Now, we are embarking on Phase II of our Campaign, a two-year journey to support our institution’s programs, pathways, and scholarships.
- [Project Starling](#)—LSTC’s asynchronous digital learning platform—has moved from vision to reality. Under the leadership of Vice President for Enterprise Innovation Keisha Dyson, Project Starling is now in its final user testing phase and provides flexible formation for TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries), Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAMs), and independent learners who seek high-quality theological education beyond traditional degree paths. Through Project Starling, learners can access content at their own pace, engage with LSTC faculty and practitioners, and participate in user-testing cohorts that help shape future offerings. Partnerships with synods continue to inform our design and priorities for this work.

- A central expression of Project Starling is the [SAM Development Training Program](#), an asynchronous, certificate-based training pathway for Synodically Authorized Ministers. Developed by LSTC faculty and aligned with ELCA competency areas, this program helps SAMs:
  - understand and assess ministry contexts using public-church and ethnographic frameworks;
  - engage key themes in church history and Lutheran theology;
  - reflect on identity and vocation through intercultural and intersectional lenses;
  - grow in community organizing, contextual leadership, and pastoral practice; and
  - deepen spiritual disciplines for lay ministry.
 Designed for use in cohorts or as individualized study (with bishop authorization), the SAM program provides synods with a scalable, high-quality resource for forming lay leaders for emerging ministry contexts.
- In 2025, LSTC received a [Pathways for Tomorrow implementation grant](#) from Lilly Endowment Inc. to launch a Public Church Hub and expand accessible, community-designed learning for pastoral and lay leaders. Building on Project Starling, this three-year initiative will co-create short, flexible offerings—modules, intensives, workshops, certificates, and cohorts—with LGBTQ-affirming missional communities and Latiné and African-descent ministries. New staffing funded by the grant will support congregational listening, pilot sites, and iterative program design. The Public Church Hub widens pathways beyond degrees, strengthens recruitment into our degree programs, and advances LSTC’s commitment to form leaders in partnership with the communities they serve.
- Campus life and formation remain central to our mission. Christian worship continues to be enriched by the leadership of the Gordon Braatz Chair of Worship, Dr. Christian Scharen, and our faculty and student leaders. Homecoming and the Queer Symposium will gather alumni, students, and friends for learning, celebration, and reflection on the intersections of faith, identity, and justice. We look forward to welcoming a new class of learners in the coming year and to celebrating our next commencement, when we send graduates into the world as public-church leaders.

To learn more about LSTC, Project Starling, the SAM Development Training Program, and the Public Church Hub, please visit [www.lstc.edu](http://www.lstc.edu). We are deeply grateful for your prayers, financial support, and partnership in forming leaders for the church and the world.

With gratitude,

Rev. Dr. Shauna Hannan, President  
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago





Forming Valued Leaders for God's Mission

The Rev. Dr. Kristin Johnston Lergen

Dear Partners in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod,

Greetings from your siblings in Christ at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. I am excited to share with you some of the ways Wartburg is fulfilling its mission, with your partnership and support.

Last year marked the completion of the first year of The CaSTLE Project, funded by a \$7.4 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., to instantiate a new *baptismal ecclesiology*, focusing not on pastors and programming, but on the formation of Christian discipleship in daily life. To date, we have launched a new website (<https://thecastleproject.org/>), awarded sub-grants to 26 synods, and curated dozens of resources that support leadership formation and thriving congregational life in rural and small town contexts.

This year, we launched *FLOURISH*, a holistic network of support for students and staff in all aspects of life. This program includes coaching, counseling, meditation tools, and financial coaching, all without cost to our community members. We are forming leaders for the long haul, and as a part of their formation at Wartburg Seminary, we seek to include practices that support long-term health and wellness.

Wartburg Seminary is a leader in competency-based education, and our CBE TEEM program, available fully in both English and Spanish, is growing rapidly. Students appreciate the go-at-your-own-pace approach, with a team of advisors and mentors that supports student formation in doing, knowing, and being, a hallmark of the competency-based approach. In fact, this distinct pedagogical model has been so successful that this year, we have launched a pilot SAMs (Synodically Authorized Ministers) formation program. This is a one-year experiment to see how this model might support the distinctive call of a SAM to foster Christian discipleship in daily life, with the congregation as the locus for this transformation.

Let me conclude my report with a genuine expression of gratitude for your prayers, for your crucial financial support, and especially for your partnership in raising up leaders for service to the church and the world in the name of Jesus Christ. Wartburg Seminary forms leaders in intentional Christian community, including in a vibrant residential community, with daily worship as our center. We are a special place, and you are warmly invited to come and see! For more information about Wartburg Seminary, please visit us at [www.wartburgseminary.edu](http://www.wartburgseminary.edu).

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Kristin Johnston Lergen, Ph.D.  
President

333 Wartburg Place | Dubuque, IA 52003 | 563-589-0200 | 800-CALL-WTS (225-5987) | Fax: (563) 589-0333

[www.wartburgseminary.edu](http://www.wartburgseminary.edu)



## Report to the ELCA Synod Assemblies - April 2026

Founded in 1874, the mission of St. Olaf College 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. St. Olaf's current student population of approximately 3050 degree-seeking undergraduates represents 49 states and 100 countries. 21% are first-generation college students, 22% identify as domestic students of color, 11% are international students, and 22% are income-eligible for Pell grants. St. Olaf continues to be one of only a handful of higher education institutions nation-wide that meets the full demonstrated need of all admitted students through a variety of financial assistance programs, [including a new study abroad affordability commitment to be launched in 2027, thanks to the generosity of Louis and Mary Kay Smith](#). Approximately half of our students indicate that they are affiliated with a Christian denomination, with 15% self-identifying as Lutheran and another 5% as members of a denomination in full communion with the ELCA.

St. Olaf's core curriculum engages students with the full array of liberal arts disciplines, including one required course examining Religion, Faith, and Values, one on Christian Theology in Dialogue, and one on Ethical Reasoning in Context. Among our class of 2025 graduates, 97% had participated in a "high-impact educational practice," such as a mentored research experience, a learning community, study abroad/away, or an academic civic engagement course. Over the past three years, an average of 94% of our recent graduates were working, pursuing further education, or engaged in full-time military or other service programs within seven months of graduation.

Under the leadership of president Dr. Susan Rundell Singer, the college is now implementing a six-year strategic plan, focused on elevating vocation, expanding innovation, and sustaining community. Leading the implementation of the strategic plan are three implementation teams and the President's Leadership Team, including our new vice president for academic affairs and provost Dr. Tarshia Stanley and chief of staff Kathryn Lohre '99. Dr. Stanley comes to St. Olaf from Wagner College on Staten Island where she served as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Ms. Lohre comes to St. Olaf after serving for fifteen years in the Presiding Bishop's Office as the Executive for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations and Theological Discernment.

St. Olaf continues to offer [daily Chapel services and Sunday worship](#) throughout the academic year, led by College Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Matthew Marohl, and featuring members and friends of the St. Olaf community as speakers and musicians. Consistent with St. Olaf's identity as a "rooted and open" ELCA institution, the College Ministry team also includes an Associate Chaplain for Jewish Life and an Associate Chaplain for Muslim Life. This year, St. Olaf was ranked #4 on Niche's [Best Christian Colleges in America](#) list, recognizing St. Olaf as an academically strong, faith-based institution.

In the fall of 2025, the College named [Dr. Kiara Jorgenson, Associate Professor of Religion and Environmental Studies, as the Martin E. Marty Chair in Religion and the Academy](#). The [Marty](#)



[Chair](#) fosters ongoing dialogue that explores the intersection between significant religious and cultural issues and St. Olaf's role as a liberal arts college of the church.

The [Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community](#) continues to advance a compelling vision for Lutheranism in the 21st century, foster interreligious engagement, nurture vocational discernment, and provide thought leadership on campus and in the community. A key part of the Lutheran Center's work is to help all the college's constituencies understand the role of Lutheran tradition in supporting the things they value most about St. Olaf. The Center has recently completed or is nearing completion on two projects made possible by grants from the [Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education](#). The Life on Purpose project infused vocational exploration in St. Olaf students' experiences by supporting shifts in advising, classroom projects, and faculty and staff capacity building around vocation. The Honest Storytelling project engaged twenty staff and faculty and one student to research and tell untold and undertold stories from the college's first 150 years, and will result in the publication of a volume in honor of the college's sesquicentennial due out through Fortress Press this fall.

In 2025, grants from [Lilly Endowment Inc.](#) continued to support two complementary initiatives—the [Nourishing Vocation Project](#) and the [Nourishing Vocation with Children Project](#)—advancing congregational leadership, vocational discernment, and intergenerational, arts-enriched worship. The Nourishing Vocation Project, part of the Thriving Congregations Initiative, strengthened congregations and ecclesiastical partners by fostering peer leadership, deepening vocational discernment, and expanding practical ministry tools. Pastoral coaching pilots and adaptable resources enhanced leaders' capacity for contextually grounded discernment, while integration with broader institutional and interfaith efforts extended the initiative's reach and sustainability.

The Nourishing Vocation with Children Project advanced child-attentive, arts-enriched worship through the Nurturing Children through Worship and Prayer Initiative. Resources were refined and expanded, engaging congregations across multiple states and denominational contexts. New liturgies and participatory art experiences nurtured children's faith while strengthening congregational life.

We look forward to an exciting summer 2026 at St. Olaf as we welcome back [Lutheran Summer Music](#) to campus for the first time since 1994 and the national conference of the [Association of Lutheran Church Musicians](#).

We invite lay, professional, and rostered church leaders to the [2026 Conference on Worship, Theology, and the Arts](#), July 20–22, 2026, at St. Olaf College, under the theme “Nourishing Vocation: Every Time + Every Age + Every Place.” We encourage you to take advantage of the many opportunities and resources St. Olaf provides for education, artistic engagement, and spiritual enrichment. We look forward to welcoming you to campus, and to welcoming the prospective students you introduce to St. Olaf.



**Metropolitan Chicago Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
 God's work. Our hands.

**Rules of Organization and Procedure**  
**2026 Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly**

**Introduction**

These “Rules of Organization and Procedure” serve a number of purposes. First, they bring together in one place all of the provisions of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions, as well as “standing” rules that describe the composition, functions, and responsibilities of the Synod Assembly. Constitutional provisions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions are highlighted in gray for convenience. Constitutional references preceded by a “†” are required, unalterable, constitutional provisions.

Synod Constitution S7.32 specifies that parliamentary procedures shall be in accordance with *Robert’s Rules of Order*, latest edition, “unless otherwise ordered by the Assembly.” Experience from past Synod Assemblies has demonstrated that plenary discussion and the conduct of the Assembly’s business are best served by modifying certain parliamentary rules of *Robert’s Rules of Order*. These modifications, as well as numerous other procedural matters not covered by *Robert’s Rules of Order*, are a second purpose of these rules.

A third purpose is to adopt as part of the Rules of Organization and Procedure provisions from continuing resolutions related to the Assembly. When adopted, a two-thirds vote will be required for their amendment or suspension as pertaining to business at this Assembly. Adoption of these rules will follow the procedure required by *Robert’s Rules of Order*. The Synod Council’s recommendation to adopt will be the main motion before the Assembly.

**Outline**

	<b>Page</b>
Part One: <i>Authority and Duties</i>	2
Part Two: <i>Members of Assembly</i>	3-4
Part Three: <i>Quorum and Procedure</i>	4-5
Part Four: <i>Committees of Assembly</i>	5-6
Part Five: <i>Voting Procedures</i>	7
Part Six: <i>Relation of Assembly to Synod Council</i>	7
Part Seven: <i>Resolutions and Motions</i>	7-8
Part Eight: <i>Recommendations of the Reference and Counsel Committee</i>	9
Part Nine: <i>Nominations</i>	9
Part Ten: <i>Election Procedures</i>	9-11
Part Eleven: <i>Status of Reports</i>	11
Part Twelve: <i>Deadlines</i>	11
Part Thirteen: <i>Hearings</i>	12
Part Fourteen: <i>Electronic Devices</i>	12

Recommended for Assembly Action *Two-Thirds Vote Required*  
**It is moved to adopt the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2026 Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly (exclusive of quoted and highlighted constitutional provisions and bylaws that already are in force):**

PART ONE: AUTHORITY AND DUTIES

***Authority of the Synod Assembly***

†S7.01. This synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall be its highest legislative authority. The powers of the Synod Assembly are limited only by the provisions in the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, the assembly's own resolutions, and the constitutions and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

***Duties of the Synod Assembly***

The Synod Assembly shall:

- a) Review the work of the synod officers and for this purpose require and receive reports from them and act on business proposed by them.
- b) Review the work of teams and committees and for this purpose require and receive reports from them and act on business proposed by them.
- c) Adopt a budget for the synod organization.
- d) Elect officers, board members, and other people as provided in the constitution or bylaws.
- e) Have the sole authority to amend the constitution and bylaws.
- f) Fulfill other functions as required in the constitution and bylaws.
- g) Conduct such other business as necessary to further the purposes and functions of the synod.

***Assembly Presiding Officer***

†S8.12.i.2. As this synod's pastor, the bishop shall:  
preside at all meetings of the Synod Assembly

The vice president shall serve as chair at the Synod Assembly in the event the bishop is unable to do so.

***Synod Vice President***

†S8.21. The vice president shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The vice president shall be a layperson. The vice president shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.

***Assembly Secretary***

†S8.31. The secretary shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The secretary shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod. The secretary may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

†S8.32. The secretary shall:  
a. Keep the minutes of all meetings of the Synod Assembly ... be responsible for the distribution of such minutes, and perform such other duties as this synod may from time to time direct.

***Notice of Meeting***

†S7.11. A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held at least triennially.

S7.11.01. Frequency, time-of-year and place of Synod Assembly meetings. The time and place of the Synod Assembly shall be determined by the Synod Council. The time and place for the next regular assembly normally shall be announced 6 (six) months prior to the assembly.

S7.13. Notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be given by the secretary of this synod, consistent with provision S7.11.01 and S7.12.

***Agenda, Program and Worship***

†S8.12.i.2. As this synod's pastor, the bishop shall:



Provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Synod Assembly.....

PART TWO: MEMBERS OF ASSEMBLY

***Assembly Voting Members***

†S7.21. The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:

- a. All rostered ministers under call on the roster of this synod shall be voting members of the Synod Assembly.
- b. A minimum of one lay member elected by each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected by each congregation with 175 or more baptized members related to this synod, typically one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men.
- d. Voting membership shall include the officers of this synod.

S7.24. Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until replaced by the election of new members or until they have been disqualified by termination of membership. Normally, congregations will hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

†S7.25. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution or in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, each voting member of the Synod Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.

S7.32. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly, unless otherwise ordered by the assembly.

***Additional Voting Members Provided***

S7.21.A88 The membership of the Synod Assembly, in addition to the members indicated in †S7.21., shall include the retired minister of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service whose names appear on the rosters of this synod and who are elected by the Council to such membership.

S7.21.B04 The membership of the Assembly, in addition to the members indicated in †S7.21., shall include ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service whose names appear on the roster of this synod and who are serving as interim minister under contract in a congregation of this synod at the time of the assembly.

S7.21.C21 The membership of the Synod Assembly, in addition to the members indicated in †S7.21., shall include those Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service who have been granted disability status, or on leave from call status, on the roster of the synod may be elected by the Synod Council to such membership.

S7.21.D21 Retired rostered ministers, or those designated as disabled, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod must indicate to the bishop's office their desire and intention to serve as voting



members of the Synod Assembly, normally no less than 60 days before the Synod Assembly is seated. Such persons may be elected to membership of the Synod Assembly by vote of the Synod Council where possible consistent with †S7.21..

**S7.22.** This synod may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those granted disability status, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.

**S7.22.A22** The membership of the Synod Assembly, in addition to the members indicated in †S7.21., shall include those Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service who have been granted disability status, or on leave from call status, on the roster of the synod may be elected by the Synod Council to such membership.

**S7.22.B22** Retired rostered ministers, or those designated as disabled, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod must indicate to the bishop's office their desire and intention to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, normally no less than 60 days before the Synod Assembly is seated. Such persons may be elected to membership of the Synod Assembly by vote of the Synod Council where possible consistent with †S7.21.

**†S7.23.** The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of the churchwide organization as may be designated by the presiding bishop shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. Like privileges shall be accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council shall from time to time designate.

**S7.24.** Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until replaced by the election of new members or until they have been disqualified by termination of membership. Normally, congregations will hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

**S7.26.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit representatives of congregations under development and authorized worshipping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.02.03., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.

**S7.27.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant a minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation of this church.



**S7.28.** Duly elected voting members of the Synod Council who are not otherwise voting members of the Synod Assembly under †S7.21. shall be granted the privilege of both voice and vote as members of the Synod Assembly.

**†S7.31.** Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of the Synod Assembly.

#### ***Official Visitors***

Official visitors shall be people invited by the bishop of this synod or the synod council to address the Assembly. They shall not have a vote.

#### ***Resource and Advisory Members***

Resource and advisory members of the assembly may be called upon by the chair during any plenary session to respond to questions regarding a subject matter in which they hold a particular expertise. Unless otherwise elected to such membership, resource and advisory members do not hold voting membership in the assembly. While acting as a resource or advisory member, the member shall provide accurate information to the best of their ability, but refrain from stating opinions which might bias the ongoing debate on the floor of the assembly.

#### ***Access to Seating***

Voting members will be admitted to restricted seating areas only upon display of proper credentials. Restricted seating area will be designated by the “bar” of the Assembly floor and will be explained at the beginning of the assembly.

### **PART THREE: QUORUM AND PROCEDURE**

#### ***Quorum***

**S7.14.** One-half of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.

#### ***Obtaining the Floor***

In plenary sessions of the Assembly, the voting members, including the *ex officio* members, have prior right to obtain the floor, unless the chair determines that it is in the best interests of the Assembly to call upon an advisory member, a resource member, or another individual with voice.

#### ***Questions of Personal Privilege***

Questions of personal privilege are in order when they relate to the Synod Assembly, such as problems with acoustics, lighting, and emergencies. Questions of personal privilege that are not urgent and do not relate to the Synod Assembly are out of order.

Other requests for time in plenary for questions of personal privilege (e.g., personal announcements, comments on matters not on the agenda, reflections on the meaning of votes after they are taken) must be submitted in writing to the secretary. The chair may allow such matters to be addressed at a later time.

#### ***Speeches***

Unless otherwise determined by a majority vote of the Assembly, all speeches during discussion shall be limited to two minutes. No voting member may speak a second time on any item on the floor unless everyone who wants to speak first has done so, unless the Assembly chair grants an exception. A signal



shall be given one minute before the speaker's time ends. A second signal shall be given 30 seconds later. A final signal shall be given 30 seconds later, and the speaker shall then sit down. The time limits on speakers and debate does not include time for language interpretation. Total time limits for speeches relating to resolutions will be established by the Synod Council in consultation with the Committee on Reference and Counsel.

#### ***Alternating Speeches***

As far as is possible during discussion, a speaker on one side of the question shall be followed by a speaker on the other side. To facilitate alternating speeches, Assembly members awaiting recognition at the floor microphones shall approach the appropriate microphone marked as designated by the planning team. Should there be three (3) speeches on one side of debate without any on the other side of debate, debate on the matter shall end and the question shall come before the assembly for vote.

#### ***Purpose and Use of "White Microphone"***

The "white microphone" is to be used to identify a member who wishes to offer an amendment to the pending matter, or some other motion that would be in order. Except when authorized to interrupt a speaker by *Robert's Rules of Order*, voting members seeking to bring a motion shall line up at any microphone and await recognition by the chair.

#### ***Suspending or Revising the Rules***

After the adoption of the Rules of Organization and Procedure and any amendments thereto offered prior to the adoption of the Rules, any further amendment to, revision in, or suspension of the Rules shall always require for adoption a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting.

#### ***Moving the Previous Question***

A member who has spoken on the pending question(s) may not move the previous question(s). A motion to end debate by moving the previous question shall apply only to the immediately preceding motion. A motion to end debate on all matters on the floor or more than the immediately pending question is not in order.

#### ***Applause***

In the give-and-take of debate on issues before the Assembly, members of the Assembly and visitors shall refrain from applause and other signs of partisanship.

#### ***Departing from Agenda***

With the consent of a majority of the voting members, the chair shall have the authority to call items of business before the Assembly in whatever order the chair considers most expedient for the conduct of the Assembly's business. A motion to alter the agenda shall require for adoption a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting.

#### ***Unfinished Business***

Upon adjournment of the Assembly, all remaining unfinished items of business shall be referred to the Synod Council for disposition.

PART FOUR: COMMITTEES OF ASSEMBLY

***Committees***

**S7.01.05.** Synod Assembly committees and officials. The Synod Assembly shall have committees and officials as provided in this bylaw. . . . . Unless the bishop so requires, an Assembly committee or official need not make a formal report covering its or the official's activities.

***Constitution Working Group***

A Constitution Working Group, appointed by the Synod Council, shall review all proposed amendments or additions to the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions submitted to the Assembly.

***Committee on Reference and Counsel***

A Committee on Reference and Counsel, appointed by the Synod Council, shall review all proposed resolutions and memorials submitted to the Assembly.

The Committee on Reference and Counsel reviews, edits, and expedites memorials and resolutions coming to the Assembly. These resolutions and memorials, along with the committee's recommendations, are brought before the synod in Assembly for action.

***Nominating Committee***

A Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for each position for which an election will be held by the Assembly and for which a nominating procedure has not otherwise been designated in the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod.

***Other Committees***

The Council may authorize such other committees as it deems necessary to facilitate the planning for and operation of the Assembly in consultation with the bishop.

***Elections Committee***

The Elections Committee shall oversee the conduct of elections. The Elections Committee shall report the results of balloting in other elections by announcing the name of the person elected or by announcing the names of nominees qualified to remain on the ballot. Vote totals shall be reported to the secretary of the synod and recorded in the minutes of the Assembly. Based on the report of the Elections Committee, the chair shall declare elected those who received the required number of votes. A report showing the results of a ballot shall be distributed to the voting members concurrently with, or as soon as possible after, the announced report of the Elections Committee.

In the election for bishop, vice president, or secretary, the Elections Committee shall report the results of any balloting by announcing the number of votes received by each nominee and the names of those nominees qualified to remain on the next ballot or the name of the nominee who is elected.

***Credentials Committee***

The Credentials Committee shall oversee the registration of voting members and shall report periodically to the Assembly the number of voting members registered.

***Assembly Planning Committee***

The Assembly Planning Committee shall assist officers of this church in planning the agenda, program, worship, and arrangements at the Assembly.



### ***Minutes Committee***

The Minutes Committee shall review minutes of the Assembly prepared under the supervision of the secretary of the synod. The Minutes Committee shall review, make grammatical and spelling corrections, and recommend approval of the minutes to the secretary and Executive Committee of the Synod Council. The Executive Committee shall then have the authority to approve the minutes on behalf of the Assembly and shall deposit in the archives of this church the final copy of the Assembly's minutes.

### ***Additional Appointments***

Additional officials or committees (sergeants-at-arms, parliamentarians, chairs for hearings, etc.) of the Assembly shall be appointed by the bishop.

## **PART FIVE: VOTING PROCEDURES**

### ***Various Methods of Voting***

As directed by the chair, voting may take place by voice, by show of hands, by standing, or by written ballot. Any member who because of physical limitation cannot raise their hand or stand to vote should contact the Elections Committee for assistance. In the case of voting with colored cards, cards should not be folded or torn. Each voting member's registration packet contains a paper ballot to be used if the chair so directs. If a paper ballot is called for by the chair, it should not be folded. The ballot will be collected at the voting member's table in accordance with instructions from the Elections Committee or from the chair.

### ***Division of the House***

When a division of the house is ordered, the vote shall be by standing vote, or by written ballot as directed by the chair. No division of the house is in order when a vote has been taken by a counted standing vote, or by written ballot.

### ***En Bloc Voting***

Amendments to the governing documents may be moved in blocs. Blocs are not debatable. Therefore, any item which a member of the assembly desires to debate must be pulled from the bloc in writing at the secretary's desk by the deadline on the day of the assembly.

## **PART SIX: RELATION OF ASSEMBLY TO SYNOD COUNCIL**

### ***Relationship to Synod Council***

†S10.02. The Synod Council shall be the board of directors of this synod and shall serve as its interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly. It may make decisions that are not in conflict with actions taken by the Synod Assembly or that are not precluded by provisions of this constitution or the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

### ***Status of Synod Council Recommendations***

The recommendation of the Council with respect to any proposal by a committee or any other matter shall be treated as a motion made and seconded, unless the Council shall otherwise determine.

## PART SEVEN: RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS

### ***Written Resolutions and Motions Required***

Substantive resolutions or motions, or amendments to either, must be presented in writing to the secretary either before or immediately after being moved.

### ***Nature of Resolutions and Motions***

#### Council Resolutions and Reported Resolutions

##### **S7.01.B22.b. Synod Council resolutions and reported resolutions**

*Council resolutions and reported resolutions shall be set forth in the Synod Assembly Report. Also, as in the Synod Council's view circumstances warrant, the Synod Council may present revised and additional Synod Council resolutions, and shall furnish each such revised Synod Council resolution and additional Synod Council resolution, if any, to this Synod Assembly in written form and at the earliest practicable time.*

#### Form and Initial Processing of Additional Resolutions

An additional resolution shall be in written form and identified as such, be addressed to the bishop, include the signatures of the voting members or prospective voting members proposing it, and the name of the proposer's Congregation and the proposer's contact information. A prospective voting member may pre-submit an additional resolution prior to this Assembly in accordance with the deadlines set forth by the Council. If a prospective voting member does not register as a voting member on the first day of this Assembly, an additional resolution which was pre-submitted by that proposer will be discarded. The bishop shall resolve under the definition provided, any question as to the status of a matter as an additional resolution, and refer each additional resolution to the Committee on Reference and Counsel or, in case of a pre-submitted additional resolution, for the committee's attention when it convenes.

#### Germane Resolutions and Motions

A germane resolution or motion is one closely related to or having bearing on the matter before the Assembly. A resolution or motion that is germane to the matter before the Assembly may be offered when in order by any voting member from the floor by going to a microphone and being recognized by the chair.

#### Non-Germane Resolutions and Motions

Any resolution or motion not germane to the matter before the Assembly or on the Assembly agenda must be submitted to the secretary in writing prior to the established deadline. Each resolution or motion must be supported in writing by one other voting member. The secretary shall refer such resolution to the Committee on Reference and Counsel, which may:

- a) Recommend approval;
- b) Recommend referral to a unit or office of this church;
- c) Recommend a substitute motion to the Assembly; or
- d) Recommend that the Assembly decline the proposed resolution.

#### Same or Similar Subjects

The Committee on Reference and Counsel may group together in a single recommendation resolutions or motions on the same or similar subjects. A resolution or motion on the same subject as a recommendation already on the agenda of the Assembly will not be submitted to the Assembly for separate action by the Committee on Reference and Counsel. The chair of the committee will inform the voting member of the committee's decision.

### Substitute Motions

When a substitute motion is made, secondary amendments may be offered first to the original motion. After all secondary amendments to the original motion have been disposed of, secondary amendments to the substitute motion may be offered. When all amendments to the substitute motion have been disposed of, the vote shall be taken on whether the substitute motion is to be substituted as the original motion or be rejected.

### Beyond Deadline for Submission

Any resolution or motion not germane to the matter before the Assembly or on the Assembly agenda that a voting member submits because of circumstances that develop during the Assembly and that cannot be submitted to the secretary of this church or the secretary's deputy prior to the established deadline must be submitted to the secretary in writing and supported in writing by one other voting member. The secretary shall refer such resolution or motion to the Committee on Reference and Counsel, which may:

- a) Decline to refer the resolution or motion to the Assembly;
- b) Recommend approval;
- c) Recommend referral to a unit or office of this church;
- d) Recommend a substitute motion to the Assembly; or
- e) Recommend that the Assembly decline the proposed resolution or motion.

Consideration of a resolution or motion submitted beyond the deadline will require suspension of the rules prior to presentation of the matter to voting members by the Reference and Counsel Committee.

### ***Resolutions Deemed Out of Order***

Resolutions and Memorials which are out of order for distribution or action by the Assembly will be referred to the Synod Council (or Executive Committee) for action or referral to the appropriate team or staff member.

## PART EIGHT: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

### ***Status of Committee's Recommendations***

When the Committee on Reference and Counsel has recommended the approval of a resolution or motion considered by the committee, the committee's recommendation and text of the resolution or motion recommended for passage shall be the main motion before the Assembly.

When the Committee on Reference and Counsel has recommended the adoption of a substitute recommendation for the resolution(s) or motion(s) on a subject, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the Assembly.

When the Committee on Reference and Counsel has recommended referral of a resolution(s) or motion(s), the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the Assembly.

When the Committee on Reference and Counsel has recommended that the Assembly decline a proposed resolution or motion without the committee making any other recommendation related to the same or a closely related subject, the voting member's resolution or motion, if then moved by that voting member and seconded, shall be the main motion and the committee's recommendation shall be received as information.

PART NINE: NOMINATIONS (if needed)

***Nominations Desk***

Nominations from the floor at the Assembly shall be made at the Nominations Desk, which shall be maintained under the supervision of the secretary. A nomination from the floor shall be made by using the form provided by the secretary of this church. Nomination Forms may be obtained from the Nominations Desk or at the Metropolitan Chicago Synod website, under the Synod Assembly tab. The deadline for nominations from the floor is 9 a.m. on June 5, 2026.

***Congregation Membership***

With the exception of the office of bishop, each nominee for an elected position in the synod shall be a voting member of a congregation or Synod Authorized Worshipping Community of this synod.

***Nominations Form***

The required form to be used in making nominations from the floor shall include the nominee's name, address, phone number, gender, lay or clergy status, white or person of color or primary language other than English status, congregational membership, and affirmation of willingness to serve, if elected; the name, address, and membership of the voting member who is making the nomination; and such other information as the secretary shall require.

PART TEN: ELECTION PROCEDURES

†S9.01. The Synod Assembly shall elect such officers of this synod and such other persons as the constitution and bylaws may require, according to procedures set forth in the bylaws. The Synod Assembly shall elect members of the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with bylaw 12.41.11 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

S9.01.02. Elections at regular Synod Assembly meetings. The elections described in S9.01.01. shall be held at regular meetings of the Synod Assembly.

***Election Procedures Utilizing the Common Ballot***

The common ballot is used in those elections when the ecclesiastical or nominating ballot is not used. Each ticket for which an election is held will be considered a separate ballot. A voting member may vote for only the number of nominees on each ticket as indicated by the Elections Committee. Failure to vote for a nominee for every ticket does not invalidate a ballot for the tickets for which a nominee is marked. Ballots must be marked in accordance with the instructions presented in the plenary session.

***Majority Required for Election***

In all elections by the Assembly, other than for the bishop, vice president, and secretary, a majority of the votes cast on the first ballot shall be necessary for election. If an election does not occur on the first ballot, the names of the two people receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be placed on the second ballot. On the second ballot, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.

***Ecclesiastical Ballot***

***Election of a Bishop***

S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven



persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.

#### ***Election of a Vice President***

**S9.05.01.** Election of the Vice President shall proceed without oral nominations. The first ballot of the election, unless resulting in election, shall be the nominating ballot. On the first ballot, two-thirds of votes shall elect. On the second ballot, only votes for persons who received votes on the first ballot shall be valid, and a majority of votes shall elect. On the third ballot, voting shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who received the highest number of votes on the second ballot, and a majority of votes shall elect. A person may withdraw from the election prior to the voting on any ballot, and upon such withdrawal, votes for the person on a preceding ballot shall be deemed invalid as to a subsequent ballot. An invalid vote shall not be counted for any purpose.

#### ***Election of a Secretary***

**S9.06.01.** Election of the Secretary shall proceed without oral nominations. The first ballot of the election, unless resulting in election, shall be the nominating ballot. On the first ballot, two-thirds of votes shall elect. On the second ballot, only votes for persons who received votes on the first ballot shall be valid, and a majority of votes shall elect. On the third ballot, voting shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who received the highest number of votes on the second ballot, and a majority of votes shall elect. A person may withdraw from the election prior to the voting on any ballot, and upon such withdrawal, votes for the person on a preceding ballot shall be deemed invalid as to a subsequent ballot. An invalid vote shall not be counted for any purpose.

#### ***Background Checks and Screening***

Background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as bishop, vice president, and secretary prior to election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election. The Synod Council shall determine the specific procedures and timing of background checks and screening.

#### ***Ecclesiastical Ballot Defined***

An “ecclesiastical ballot” for the election of officers (other than treasurer) of the synod is an election process:

- a) in which on the first ballot the name of any eligible individual may be submitted for nomination by a voting member of the Assembly;
- b) through which the possibility of election to office exists on any ballot by achievement of the required number of votes cast by voting members of the Assembly applicable to a particular ballot;
- c) that precludes spoken floor nominations;
- d) in which the first ballot is the nominating ballot if no election occurs on the first ballot;
- e) in which the first ballot defines the total slates of nominees for election on a subsequent ballot, with no additional nominations permitted;
- f) that does not preclude, after the reporting of the first ballot, the right of those nominated to withdraw their names prior to the casting of the second ballot;

- g) that does not preclude an Assembly's adoption of rules that permit, at a defined point in the election process and for a defined period of time, speeches to the Assembly by nominees or their representatives and/or a question-and-answer forum in which the nominees or their representatives participate; and
- h) in which the number of names that appear on any ballot after the second ballot shall be determined in accordance with provisions of the governing documents.

#### PART ELEVEN: STATUS OF REPORTS

##### ***Assembly Reports***

At least 20 days prior to an Assembly the secretary shall prepare and distribute the Book of Reports. Distribution to congregations may be accomplished by posting the report on the webpage of the synod.

##### ***Status of Reports***

All reports published in the Book of Reports shall be treated as having been received by the Assembly without formal vote.

##### ***Distribution of Materials***

Materials may be distributed on the floor of the Assembly only with the written consent of the secretary of this Assembly. In cases where the secretary does not consent, an appeal may be made to the Committee on Reference and Counsel. That committee's decision shall be final.

#### PART TWELVE: DEADLINES

The deadline for resolutions/memorials to be submitted to the Assembly for consideration is March 15, 2026.

Resolutions/memorials after this date must be submitted to the secretary of the synod, for a decision by the Committee on Reference and Counsel or the Synod Council regarding whether the resolution/memorial may be included in the 2026 Synod Assembly Agenda.

The deadline for nominations from the floor is 9 a.m. on June 5, 2026.

The deadline for voting member registration for the assembly is 9 a.m. on June 5, 2026.

#### PART THIRTEEN: PRE-EVENT HEARINGS

Certain proposals that are scheduled for Assembly action or information are the subject of pre-assembly hearings. Prospective voting members, advisory members, other members, resource members, official visitors, and other categories approved by the Synod Council or Committee on Reference and Counsel may attend with voice. Others may attend if space permits and shall not have voice. Hearings have no legislative authority. The chair of the hearing shall endeavor to maintain decorum and order and may call upon the assistance of sergeants-at-arms. As far as is possible during discussion, a speaker on one side of the question shall be followed by a speaker on the other side. It is the expectation of the Assembly that Prospective Voting Members wishing to speak to a resolution, memorial, or budget on the floor of the Assembly or make an amendment thereto attend the pre-assembly hearing to make their position known and allow time for the pre-amendment process in consultation with the Committee on Reference and Counsel.



**PART FOURTEEN: ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Use of computers and other electronic devices, such as cell phones (in texting mode only), smart phones, tablets, and other wireless electronic communication devices is allowed in the plenary hall during Assembly sessions, provided that such devices are in a silent mode and do not disturb voting members. With the exception of translation devices, speaking on any device is prohibited in the plenary hall during Assembly sessions. Members and others are expected to be courteous and respectful and are encouraged to leave the hall if they intend to engage in communication activities that may disturb others or are not related to the work of the Assembly. Use of computers and other electronic devices for non-worship related purposes is precluded during worship.

# The Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Presented & Approved by Assembly Vote at 2022 Synod Assembly of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod; ratified by Churchwide Council November 2022; inclusive of required provisions of the CWA 2025

---

The Constitution of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod (ELCA) -- ratified CW Council 11/ 2022; bylaws 6/2023; Cr 01/2025 **1**

# Introduction to the *Constitution of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

The *Constitution of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, like the other governing documents of this church, is an ecclesial, legal, and missional document that reflects the underlying theology and doctrines of this church as well as its polity and governance structures. As the guiding document of one of the three expressions of this church, it reflects that this synod, while fully the church, is not the whole church; and exists in an interdependent relationship with congregations and the churchwide organization and is part of the one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. As such, the *Constitution of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod* is deeply rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Lutheran Confessions, and the history of this church.

➤ **Required provisions:** Sections of this *Constitution for Synods* that are marked by a dagger [†] are required provisions. These sections, including constitutional provisions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions, are used without alteration or amendment of the text in any manner (i.e., neither additions nor deletions are permissible) and reflect the interdependent relationship that exists between this synod, the ELCA churchwide expression and the various congregations and institutions of this synod.

---

The Constitution of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod (ELCA) -- ratified CW Council 11/ 2022; bylaws 6/2023; Cr 01/2025 **2**



# Table of Contents

---

<b>Chapter Name</b>	<b>Page</b>
Chapter 1 -- Name and Incorporation .....	4
Chapter 2 -- Status .....	4
Chapter 3 -- Territory.....	4
Chapter 4 -- Confession of Faith.....	4
Chapter 5 -- Nature of the Church .....	5
Chapter 6 -- Statement of Purpose .....	5
Chapter 7 -- Synod Assembly .....	8
Chapter 8 -- Officers .....	13
Chapter 9 -- Nominations and Elections .....	19
Chapter 10 -- Synod Council .....	24
Chapter 11 -- Committees.....	26
Chapter 12 -- Conferences, Clusters, Coalitions, or Other Area Subdivisions .....	29
Chapter 13 -- Congregations.....	34
Chapter 14 -- Rostered Ministers .....	37
Chapter 15 -- Financial Matters .....	41
Chapter 16 -- Indemnification.....	43
Chapter 17 -- Adjudication .....	44
Chapter 18 -- Amendments, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions .....	45



# Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

November, 2025

## Chapter 1.

### NAME AND INCORPORATION

- †S1.01. The name of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S1.02. For the purposes of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is hereafter designated as “this synod” or “the synod.”
- †S1.11. This synod shall be incorporated. Amendments to the articles of incorporation of this synod shall be submitted to the Church Council for ratification before filing.
- S1.11.01. Place of incorporation location of office. This synod shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois; its office shall be at Chicago, Illinois, or elsewhere in the territory as the Synod Council may from time to time determine.
- S1.21. The seal of this synod is a circular device with the words “METROPOLITAN CHICAGO SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA” on the margin, and the words “CORPORATE SEAL ILLINOIS” in the central portion.

## Chapter 2.

### STATUS

- †S2.01. This synod possesses the powers conferred upon it, and accepts the duties and responsibilities assigned to it, in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, which are recognized as having governing force in the life of this synod.
- †S2.02. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or “this church”) as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.
- †S2.03. No provision of this constitution shall be inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws of this church.

## Chapter 3.

### TERRITORY

- †S3.01. The territory of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be the Counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, and Lake in the State of Illinois.
- †S3.02. “Determined by the Churchwide Assembly,” as stipulated by †S3.01., is understood to include the reported changes in synod relationship made by any congregation in a border area agreed under ELCA bylaws 10.01.01. and 10.02.02.

## Chapter 4.

### CONFESSION OF FAITH

- †S4.01. This synod confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- †S4.02. This synod confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.
  - a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.

---

The Constitution of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod (ELCA) -- ratified CW Council 11/ 2022; bylaws 6/2023; Cr 01/2025 **4**

b. The proclamation of God’s message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God’s Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God’s revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God’s Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

- †S4.03. This synod accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.
- †S4.04. This synod accepts the Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this synod.
- †S4.05. This synod accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- †S4.06. This synod accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.
- †S4.07. This synod confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scripture and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God’s mission in the world.

## Chapter 5.

### NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- †S5.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this synod are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- †S5.02. This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.
- †S5.03. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. This church, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.
- †S5.04. This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God’s mission in the world.

## Chapter 6.

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- †S6.01. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God’s creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- †S6.02. To participate in God’s mission, this synod as a part of the Church shall:
  - a. Proclaim God’s saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ’s sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
  - b. Carry out Christ’s Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
  - c. Serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations,



caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.

d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.

e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.

f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

†S6.03. This synod, in cooperation with the churchwide organization, shall bear primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of this church in its territory. In fulfillment of this role and consistent with policies and procedures of this church, the synod shall:

- a. Provide for pastoral care of congregations and rostered ministers in the synod;
- b. Plan for, facilitate, and nurture the mission of this church through congregations;
- c. Strengthen interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and foster relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as ecumenical partners.
- d. Interpret the work of this church to congregations and to the public on the territory of the synod.

†S6.03.01. The responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod, including:
  - 1) approving candidates for rostered ministry in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church, which may be done through multi-synod committees;
  - 2) authorizing ordinations and ordaining rostered ministers on behalf of this church;
  - 3) consulting in the call process for rostered ministers.
- b. providing for leadership recruitment, preparation, and support in accordance with churchwide standards and policies, including:
  - 1) nurturing and supporting congregations and lay leaders;
  - 2) seeking and recruiting qualified candidates for the rostered ministries of this church;
  - 3) making provision for pastoral care, call review, and guidance;
  - 4) encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service; and
  - 5) supporting recruitment of leaders for this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and social ministry organizations.
- c. providing for discipline of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service; as well as for termination of call, appointment, adjudication, and appeals consistent with Chapter 20 of this church's constitution.
- d. providing for archives in conjunction with other synods.

†S6.03.02. In planning for, facilitating, and nurturing the mission of this church through congregations, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. developing of new ministries, redevelopment of existing ministries, and support and assistance in the conclusion, if necessary, of a particular ministry;
- b. leading and encouraging of congregations in their evangelism efforts;
- c. assisting members of its congregations in carrying out their ministries in the world;
- d. encouraging congregations to respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society;
- e. providing resources for congregational life;
- f. grouping congregations in conferences, clusters, coalitions, or other area subdivisions for mission purposes.

†S6.03.03. In strengthening interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and in fostering relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as with ecumenical partners, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:



- a. promoting interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and entering into relationships with other synods in the region;
- b. fostering organizations for youth, women, and men, and organizations for language or ethnic communities;
- c. developing relationships with social ministry organizations and ministries, participating in their mission planning, and providing supportive funding;
- d. supporting relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;
- e. maintaining relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers;
- f. fostering supporting relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries;
- g. fostering supporting relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of the synod;
- h. fostering relationships with ecumenical and global companions;
- i. cooperating with other synods and the churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting regions to carry out those functions of the synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the churchwide organization.

†S6.03.04. In interpreting the work of this church on the territory of the synod, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. encouraging financial support for the work of this church by individuals and congregations;
- b. participating in churchwide programs;
- c. interpreting social statements in a manner consistent with the interpretation given by the churchwide unit or office which assisted in the development of the statement, and suggestion of social study issues;
- d. providing ecumenical guidance and encouragement.

†S6.04. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the Synod Council shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of the synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; and that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men; and that, where possible, the representation of rostered ministers shall include both men and women. This synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

†S6.04.01. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be youth and young adults. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, the term “youth” means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term “young adult” means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.

†S6.04.02. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be members of historically underrepresented groups, in addition to the 10 percent representation of persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English in †S6.04. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal.

S6.04.03 This Synod has been designated a "Reconciling in Christ" (RIC) synod with a commitment to welcome, include, and celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) people. As such, it is the goal of this synod to ensure that the membership within all synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards and/or other organizational units include individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+.

S6.04.A25 *The Statement of Affirmation for the Metropolitan Chicago Synod reads as follows: We, the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, welcome you into the fullness of God’s love. You are a beloved child of God, made in God’s image. We welcome you and celebrate all that makes*



*you who you are, including: your gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, race, culture, ethnicity, country of birth, socioeconomic or employment status, physical abilities, political party, immigration status, home address, medical or psychological history, family status, age, and religious/spiritual background. You are accepted and affirmed just as you are—with all your differences and gifts. In our synod’s continued effort to live out this welcome, we are committed to the work of anti-racism, social and economic justice, and environmental care. We seek to dismantle oppression in all its forms—internally, interpersonally, and structurally. We are committed to celebrating and uplifting this diversity in our leadership, policies, practices, and culture. Rather than using our differences to divide us, we pledge to use our differences as gifts for our work together.*

- S6.04.A22** *To best live out its Reconciling In Christ designation, this synod encourages the following:*
- a. *That all buildings utilized for synod events, meetings, assemblies, offices, and the like have the availability of a non-gendered bathroom.*
  - b. *That events, meetings, and the like include the ability for people to self-designate their gender pronouns during registration, introductions, on name tags, and the like, except when made impossible by required designations by the ELCA churchwide unit or required constitutional provisions.*
  - c. *That language at all functions be carefully used to acknowledge the diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities found in this synod.*
- S6.04.B88** *It shall be the goal of this Synod that at least 20% of the membership of the Synod Council, committees, and boards be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English to include but not be limited to American Sign Language and that this goal be attained within four years.*
- †**S6.05.** Each assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body of this synod or any synod units shall be conclusively presumed to have been properly constituted, and neither the method of selection nor the composition of any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body may be challenged in a court of law by any person or be used as the basis of a challenge in a court of law to the validity or effect of any action taken or authorized by any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body.
- †**S6.06.** References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God’s mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

## **Chapter 7.**

### **SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

- †**S7.01.** This synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall be its highest legislative authority. The powers of the Synod Assembly are limited only by the provisions in the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, the assembly’s own resolutions, and the constitutions and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- S7.01.01.** Synod Assembly report. For all regular meetings of the Synod Assembly, the secretary of this synod shall prepare a Synod Assembly report. At least 20 days prior to each such meeting, the secretary shall distribute the Synod Assembly report to all Congregations and voting members elect, and file a copy thereof in the public file. The Synod Assembly report shall include a proposed agenda for the meeting; minutes of the preceding regular meeting of the Synod Assembly and of each special meeting since the preceding regular meeting; reports of the bishop, the Synod Council, related and affiliated organizations, Standing committees, and deans; and, the proposed budget. For meetings at which elections are held, the Synod Assembly report shall also include information concerning such elections.
- S7.01.02.** Arrangements for Synod Assembly meetings. The arrangements for agenda, program, and worship at meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be under the supervision of the bishop. This synod shall be responsible for the costs of the Synod Assembly; such costs shall not include voting members’ expenses.
- S7.01.05.** Synod Assembly committees and officials. The Synod Assembly shall have committees and officials as provided in this bylaw. Generally, eligibility for appointment to a committee of the Synod Assembly is

as provided in S11.01.02. Unless the bishop so requires, a Synod Assembly committee or official need not make a formal report covering its or the official's activities.

- a. The Synod Council shall appoint a Committee on Reference and Counsel consisting of five to ten members. The functions and responsibilities of the committee are to review and advise the Synod Assembly and the bishop (or other person presiding at a meeting of the Synod Assembly) with respect to proposed changes or additions to the constitution and the bylaws and other items submitted to the Synod Assembly which are not germane to items in the agenda of the meeting.
- b. Officials and committees of the Synod Assembly, in addition to the Committee on Reference and Counsel (such as Planning Committee, Credentials Committee, Memorials Committee, Resolutions Committee, convention manager, sergeant-at-arms, tellers, parliamentarian), as deemed necessary by the bishop or the Synod Council, may be appointed by the bishop with the advice of the Synod Council. The specific functions and responsibilities of each such official and committee shall be described in writing before appointment is made.
- c. For special meetings of the Synod Assembly the committees and officials may be the same as for the preceding regular meeting as directed by the bishop.
- d. Committees and officials of the Synod Assembly are accountable to the bishop and the Synod Assembly for due performance of their functions and responsibilities.

**S7.01.A22.** *The secretary of this synod shall review and propose to the Synod Council for recommendation to the Synod Assembly the "Rules of Organization and Procedure for the Assembly" prior to each Synod Assembly. The secretary shall have access to those officials and committees of the Synod Assembly as is necessary to complete this function.*

**S7.01.B22.**

- a. Definitions. *In this resolution --*
  - 1) *"this Synod Assembly" means the next or current meeting of the Synod Assembly.*
  - 2) *"the Committee on Reference and Counsel shall have constitution as described in S11.01.05. and responsibilities as described in S7.01.05*
  - 3) *"Synod Council resolution" means a form of resolution which is presented to this Synod Assembly on behalf of the Synod Council and with the Synod Council's recommendation for adoption.*
  - 4) *"reported resolution" means a form of resolution, other than a Synod Council resolution, which the Synod Council deems worthy of consideration by this Synod Assembly.*
  - 5) *"prospective voting member" means a person who is likely to be a voting member to this Synod Assembly and, as to a lay person, has been selected by the individual's Congregation to be but is not yet registered as a voting member. The prospective voting member remains as such until the assembly is seated*
  - 6) *"additional resolution" means a form of resolution, other than a Synod Council resolution or reported resolution, which a prospective voting member or a voting member intends to propose to this Synod Assembly, and*
    - i. *seeks to amend the constitution or the bylaws, or*
    - ii. *seeks to add an item of new business to the agenda of this Synod Assembly, or*
    - iii. *is not germane to the proposed agenda, the agenda, or the pending question or report before the Synod Assembly.*
  - 7) *"pre-amendment" means a form of amendment which relates to a reported resolution or additional resolution, is endorsed by five voting members and, if the reported resolution or additional resolution were to be the pending question before the Synod Assembly, may be expected to be pertinent thereto.*
  - 8) *"prospective movant" means the prospective voting member or voting member who proposes an additional resolution or is responsible for presenting a reported resolution to the Synod Assembly.*
  - 9) *"registered" means a prospective voting member who is present at the Synod Assembly and who has received their credentials as a voting member for the Synod Assembly.*
- b. Synod Council resolutions and reported resolutions



Council resolutions and reported resolutions shall be set forth in the Synod Assembly Report. Also, as in the Synod Council's view circumstances warrant, the Synod Council may present revised and additional Synod Council resolutions, and shall furnish each such revised Synod Council resolution and additional Synod Council resolution, if any, to this Synod Assembly in written form and at the earliest practicable time.

c. Form and initial processing of additional resolutions.

- 1) An additional resolution shall be in written form and identified as such, be addressed to the bishop, include the signature of the voting member or prospective voting member proposing it, and, if the proposer is a prospective voting member, the name of the proposer's Congregation and the proposer's contact information.
- 2) A prospective voting member may pre-submit an additional resolution prior to this Synod Assembly. If a prospective voting member does not register as a voting member on the first day of this Synod Assembly, an additional resolution which was pre-submitted by the prospective voting member will be discarded. The Committee on Reference and Counsel retains discretion to permit a substitute registered voting member to present a pre-submitted additional resolution, in the case that the prospective voting member who submitted the resolution is unable to register for the Synod Assembly.
- 3) The bishop shall resolve under the definition provided any question as to the status of a matter as an additional resolution, and refer each additional resolution to the Committee on Reference and Counsel or, in case of a pre-submitted additional resolution, for the Committee's attention when it convenes.

d. Further processing and status of additional resolutions

- 1) The Committee on Reference and Counsel will endeavor to consider pre-submitted additional resolutions prior to this Synod Assembly and shall provide a written preliminary report with reference thereto for the bishop and for voting members at the time of registration. Each pre-submitted additional resolution shall be set forth in the preliminary report, but the Committee need not then advise as to any additional resolution. No additional resolution shall afford grounds for delay in presentation to or adoption of any matter (including the proposed agenda) by this Synod Assembly.

e. Form and delivery of pre-amendments.

- 1) A pre-amendment shall be in written form and identified as such, specify the additional resolution or reported resolution to which it relates, set forth the proposed form of amendment, and include the signatures of five voting members as endorsers. An endorser of a pre-amendment shall deliver it to the Committee on Reference and Counsel, but no pre-amendment shall be delivered to the Committee prior to the first business session of this Synod Assembly.

f. Processing and status of pre-amendments.

- 1) The Committee on Reference and Counsel will endeavor to consider pre-amendments with the matters to which they respectively relate. If the endorsers of a pre-amendment and the prospective movant of the additional resolution or reported resolution to which the pre-amendment relates so concur in writing, the Committee may deal with the matter as modified by the pre-amendment. No endorser of a pre-amendment may withdraw or revoke endorsement. No pre-amendment shall afford grounds for delay in presentation to or adoption of any matter (including the proposed agenda, any additional resolution and any reported resolution) by this Synod Assembly.

g. Considerations for pre-amendments

- 1) The Committee on Reference and Counsel shall review actions of previous Synod Assemblies regarding similar proposed actions and resolutions, particularly resolutions or continuing resolutions that may still be in effect.
- 2) The Committee on Reference and Counsel shall search for any similar actions, especially memorials to the Churchwide Assembly or Churchwide Council that are being considered by other synods so as to attempt to coordinate language and action.

h. Limitations.

- 1) *No member of the Committee on Reference and Counsel may propose an additional resolution or endorse a pre-amendment, but this limitation shall not foreclose the Committee from consultation or concurrence with prospective movants and endorsers as to formal revision of additional resolutions, reported resolutions and pre-amendments.*
  - 2) *The Synod Council may prescribe reasonable limitations with reference to additional resolutions, reported resolutions and pre-amendments, including limitations as to --*
    - i. *number and priority of pre-submitted additional resolutions;*
    - ii. *the time for pre-submission of an additional resolution;*
    - iii. *the number of additional resolutions a prospective voting member or voting member may submit;*
    - iv. *the time for submission of an additional resolution;*
    - v. *the number and priority of pre-amendments;*
    - vi. *the latest time for delivery of a pre-amendment;*
    - vii. *the number of words comprising an additional resolution or pre-amendment. The Synod Council shall seek advice from the Committee on Reference and Counsel as to limitations which are to be operative during this Synod Assembly. Limitations as to pre-submitted additional resolutions shall be publicized in pre-assembly materials provided to Congregations and prospective voting members, and other limitations shall be announced to this Synod Assembly not later than the first business session.*
- i. *Advice by the Committee on Reference and Counsel*
- 1) *The Committee on Reference and Counsel, upon reasonable opportunity to consider the additional resolutions, reported resolutions and pre-amendments, shall advise the bishop and this Synod Assembly concerning disposition of those matters, but shall not advise as to disposition of a reported resolution for which there is no pre-amendment. The Committee shall accord priority to the advised disposition of matters which seek to amend the constitution or the bylaws.*
  - 2) *The Committee on Reference and Counsel may advise also as to the order and time for consideration of a reported resolution for which there is a pre-amendment and items of new business arising from additional resolutions. If the Committee advises that an additional resolution not be placed on the agenda, a majority vote of this Synod Assembly is required to add it to the agenda as an item of new business. If the Committee advises unfavorably as to a pre-amendment, the advice is not subject to review but shall not affect an effort to amend an additional resolution or reported resolution which is the pending question before this Synod Assembly.*
  - 3) *The Committee on Reference and Counsel shall have the services of the parliamentarian, synod legal counsel, the churchwide Office of the Secretary, or similar resources in aid of the Committee's work.*

†S7.11. A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held at least triennially.

S7.11.01. Frequency, time-of-year and place of Synod Assembly meetings. The time and place of the Synod Assembly shall be determined by the Synod Council. The time and place for the next regular assembly normally shall be announced 6 (six) months prior to the assembly.

S7.12. Special meetings of the Synod Assembly may be called by the bishop with the consent of the Synod Council, and shall be called by the bishop at the request of one-fifth of the voting members of the Synod Assembly.

a. The notice of each special meeting shall define the purpose for which it is to be held. The scope of actions to be taken at such a special meeting shall be limited to the subject matter(s) described in the notice.

b. If the special meeting of the Synod Assembly is required for the purpose of electing a successor bishop because of death, resignation, or inability to serve, the special meeting shall be called by the Synod Council after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.



- S7.13.** Notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be given by the secretary of this synod, consistent with provision S7.11.01 and S7.12.
- S7.14.** One-half of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.
- †S7.21.** The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:
- a. All rostered ministers under call on the roster of this synod shall be voting members of the Synod Assembly.
  - b. Lay voting members shall be elected by each congregation or its council as follows: A minimum of one lay member elected from each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected from each congregation with 175 or more baptized members, typically one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men.
  - d. Voting membership shall include the officers of this synod.
- S7.21.01.** Voting members shall begin serving with the opening of a regular Synod Assembly and shall continue serving until voting members are seated at the next regular Synod Assembly.
- †S7.21.02.** If a special Synod Assembly is called and voting members at the previous assembly are unable to serve as voting members, where permitted by state law, the congregation or its council may elect new members who shall continue to serve until the next regular Synod Assembly.
- S7.21.03.** The †S7.21.c. formula. Preparatory to regular meetings of the Synod Assembly, the Synod Council shall provide the †S7.21.c. formula, with revisions as from time to time necessary. Prior to each such meeting the Synod Council shall file a written description of the formula's current version and application in the public file.
- S7.21.A88** *The membership of the Synod Assembly, in addition to the members indicated in †S7.21., shall include the retired minister of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service whose names appear on the rosters of this synod and who are elected by the Synod Council to such membership.*
- S7.21.B04** *The membership of the Synod Assembly, in addition to the members indicated in †S7.21., shall include ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service whose names appear on the roster of this synod and who are serving as interim minister under contract in a congregation of this synod at the time of the assembly.*
- S7.21.C21** *The membership of the Synod Assembly, in addition to the members indicated in †S7.21., shall include those Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service who have been granted disability status, or on leave from call status, on the roster of the synod may be elected by the Synod Council to such membership.*
- S7.21.D21** *Retired rostered ministers, or those designated as disabled, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod must indicate to the bishop's office their desire and intention to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, normally no less than 60 days before the Synod Assembly is seated. Such persons may be elected to membership of the Synod Assembly by vote of the Synod Council where possible consistent with †S7.21..*
- S7.22.** This synod may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those granted disability status, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.22.A22** *The membership of the Synod Assembly, in addition to the members indicated in †S7.21., shall include those Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service who have been granted disability status, or on leave from call status, on the roster of the synod may be elected by the Synod Council to such membership.*
- S7.22.B22** *Retired rostered ministers, or those designated as disabled, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod must indicate to the bishop's office their desire and intention to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, normally no less than 60 days before the Synod Assembly is seated. Such persons may*



*be elected to membership of the Synod Assembly by vote of the Synod Council where possible consistent with †S7.21.*

- †S7.23. The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of the churchwide organization as may be designated by the presiding bishop, shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. Like privileges shall be accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council shall from time to time designate.
- S7.24. Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until replaced by the election of new members or until they have been disqualified by termination of membership. Normally, congregations will hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- †S7.25. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution or in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, each voting member of the Synod Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod.
- S7.26. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit representatives of congregations under development and authorized worshiping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.02.03., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.
- S7.27. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant a minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation of this church.
- S7.28. Duly elected voting members of the Synod Council who are not otherwise voting members of the Synod Assembly under †S7.21. shall be granted the privilege of both voice and vote as members of the Synod Assembly.
- †S7.31. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.32. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly, unless otherwise ordered by the assembly.
- S7.33. "Ex officio" as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.
- S7.32A98 **Applying Continuing Positions**
1. *Definition. In this continuing resolution, "continuing position" means the position of this synod with reference to particular subject matter, as set forth in a position resolution during the resolution's period of effectiveness, or as derived from such a resolution; see continuing resolution S10.02.A98.*
  2. *Purpose. The purpose of this continuing resolution is to enable voting members of the Synod Assembly to propose that the Synod Assembly apply already-established positions of the synod in respect of new or additional situations, and so to avoid Synod Assembly action that would be merely duplicative of an established position.*
  3. *Provisions in aid of applying a continuing position. Each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, by an appropriate official or committee, shall provide to its voting members (a) a list or catalogue of continuing positions of the synod, including specific identification of each continuing position; and, (b) a reasonable period of time, but not more than thirty minutes, for voting members to propose and to deliberate Synod Assembly actions so to apply continuing positions.*
  4. *Procedure. For a voting member who seeks Synod Assembly action so to apply a continuing position, the suggested procedure is to present a motion for that purpose to the Synod Assembly. For example, a suitable form of motion is:  
"I move that this Synod Assembly apply the continuing position of this synod, as set forth in (- identify the continuing position-) in respect of (-indicate the new or additional situation-) by (-*

*describe the specific course of action, if any, that movant proposes so to apply the continuing position-).*”

*Each such motion (a) is to be presented during the period of time provided and when the member presenting it is entitled to the floor, (b) may not change the substance of a continuing position, and (c) otherwise, is to be governed by all pertinent rules of parliamentary procedure.*

5. *Records. Synod records of a continuing position shall reflect and include each instance in which the Synod Assembly has acted so to apply the continuing position.*

**S7.33.** “*Ex officio*” as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.

## **Chapter 8. OFFICERS**

†**S8.01.** The officers of this synod shall be a bishop, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer.

### **S8.10. Bishop**

†**S8.11.** The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The bishop shall be a minister of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**S8.11.01.** When authorized by the Synod Council in order to address special circumstances, the synod bishop may be compensated as an employee or contractor for specified services to another expression of this church. Such an arrangement may be terminated by the Synod Assembly or Synod Council if determined to be detrimental to the function of the office or if the special circumstances no longer apply.

†**S8.12.** As this synod’s pastor, the bishop shall:

- a. Preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church.
- b. Have primary responsibility for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this synod and its congregations, providing pastoral care and leadership for this synod, its congregations, its ministers of Word and Sacrament, and its ministers of Word and Service.
- c. Exercise solely this church’s power to ordain (or provide for the ordination by another synodical bishop of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament (and as provided in the bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).
- d. Ordain (or provide for the ordination of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as ministers of Word and Service of this church.
- e. Attest letters of call for persons called to serve congregations in the synod, letters of call for persons called by the Synod Council, and letters of call for persons on the rosters of this synod called by the Church Council.
- f. Install (or provide for the installation of) rostered ministers whose calls the bishop has attested.
- g. Exercise leadership in the mission of this church and in so doing:
  - 1) Interpret and advocate the mission and theology of the whole church;
  - 2) Lead in fostering support for and commitment to the mission of this church within this synod;
  - 3) Coordinate the use of the resources available to this synod as it seeks to promote the health of this church’s life and witness in the areas served by this synod;
  - 4) Submit a report to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly concerning the synod’s life and work; and
  - 5) Advise and counsel this synod’s related institutions and organizations.
- h. Practice leadership in strengthening the unity of the Church and in so doing:
  - 1) Exercise oversight of the preaching, teaching, and administration of the sacraments within this synod in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church;
  - 2) Be responsible for administering the constitutionally established processes for the resolution of controversies and for the discipline of rostered ministers and congregations of this synod;
  - 3) Be the chief ecumenical officer of this synod;
  - 4) Be a member of the Conference of Bishops and consult regularly with other synod bishops;

- 5) Foster awareness of other churches throughout the Lutheran world communion and, where appropriate, engage in contact with leaders of those churches;
  - 6) Cultivate communion in faith and mission with appropriate Christian judicatory leaders functioning within the territory of this synod; and
  - 7) Be *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly.
- i. Oversee and administer the work of this synod and in so doing:
- 1) Serve as the president of the synod corporation and be the chief executive and administrative officer of this synod, who is authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to sign deeds or other instruments and to affix the seal of this synod;
  - 2) Preside at all meetings of the Synod Assembly and provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, and the Synod Council's Executive Committee;
  - 3) Ensure that the constitution and bylaws of the synod and of the churchwide organization are duly observed within this synod, and that the actions of the synod in conformity therewith are carried into effect;
  - 4) direct and guide the work of the other officers;
  - 5) exercise supervision over the work of all synod staff members;
  - 6) Appoint all committees for which provision is not otherwise made;
  - 7) Be a member of all committees and any other organizational units of the synod, except as otherwise provided in this constitution;
  - 8) Provide for preparation and maintenance of synod rosters containing the names and addresses of all rostered ministers of this synod and a record of the calls under which they are serving or the date on which their retired or disability status took effect;
  - 9) Annually bring to the attention of the Synod Council the names of all rostered ministers on leave from call or engaged in approved graduate study in conformity with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church and pursuant to prior action of this synod through the Synod Council;
  - 10) Provide for prompt reporting to the secretary of this church of:
    - a) additions to and subtractions from the rosters of this synod;
    - b) the issuance of certificates of transfer for rostered ministers in good standing who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested, regular letter of call under the jurisdiction of another synod; and
    - c) the entrance of the names of such persons for whom proper certificates of transfer have been received;
  - 11) Provide for preparation and maintenance of a roster of the congregations of this synod and the names of the laypersons who have been elected to represent them; and
  - 12) Appoint a statistician of the synod, who shall secure the reports of the congregations and make the reports available to the secretary of this church for collation, analysis, and distribution of the statistical summaries to this synod and the other synods of this church.

**S8.12.A22.** *Office of ecumenical relations.* Upon recommendation of the bishop, the Synod Council may establish a synodic office of ecumenical relations to assist the bishop with the responsibilities under †S8.12.h.3. and provide for the staffing of such office by employees of this synod. The bishop may appoint a board of six persons to advise the bishop concerning the office; generally, terms and other incidents of service on the board are the same as for members named by the bishop to the Mutual Ministry Committee.

†**S8.13.** The synod bishop may appoint an attorney, admitted to the bar within the territory of the synod or the state where the synod is located, to be Synod Attorney. The appointment must be approved by the Synod Council and reported to the Synod Assembly and to the secretary of this church. The appointment continues until resignation or until a successor is appointed. The Synod Attorney provides legal advice and counsel to the synod officers and the Synod Council. The Synod Attorney is expected to be familiar with the governing documents and policies of the synod and, as necessary, to attend meetings of the Synod Council. The Synod Attorney serves without salary but may be retained and compensated for specific legal services requested by the synod.

**S8.14.** The synodical bishop may have such assistants as this synod shall from time to time authorize.



- S8.14.01.** Associates to the bishop. After consultation with and upon the recommendation of the bishop, the Synod Council may call or engage one or more persons to serve as associates to the bishop in the work and conduct of the bishop's office and of this synod. Such associates may be ministers of Word and Sacrament, ministers of Word and Service, or lay persons, and shall be employees of the synod and perform such work assignments as may be designated by the bishop. Each associate is a minister of Word and Sacrament shall be on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament of the synod, and serve an initial term call of not less than one year and not more than six years. Each associate who is a minister of Word and Service shall be on the roster of ministers of Word and Service of the synod, and serve an initial term call of not less than one year and not more than six years. Each associate who is a lay person shall reside on the territory and shall be employed for an initial period of not more than six years. After the Synod Council receives the bishop's recommendations, the term of each minister of Word and Sacrament, each minister of Word and Service associate's call, or period of each lay associate's employment, and the salary, emoluments and other remuneration to be received by each associate shall be determined by the bishop and approved by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council and incorporated into the provisions of the call or letter of engagement. If the bishop so recommends, any associate may serve successive calls or periods of employment as determined by the Synod Council, but the term of any successive call or length of any successive period of employment shall be not less than one year and not more than six years.
- S8.14.02.** Support staff. Upon recommendation of the bishop, the Synod Council may authorize employment by this synod of support staff, in an appropriate number, for the bishop and the bishop's associates in the work of the synod.
- S8.14.A22.** Number of associates. *The number of associates to the bishop under S8.14.01., at any one time, shall not exceed five.*
- †**S8.15.** The presiding bishop of this church, or the appointee of the presiding bishop, shall install into office, in accord with the policy and approved rite of this church, each newly elected synod bishop.
- †**S8.16.** **Conflicts of Interest**
- †**S8.16.01.** The following procedures shall govern matters of potential conflicts of interest for synod bishops:
- a. Whenever a synod bishop determines that a matter of the kind described in †S8.16.01.b. may require the bishop's determination or action with respect to a related individual as defined in †S8.16.01.c., the synod bishop shall withdraw from personal involvement in such matter and shall so notify the presiding bishop. The presiding bishop shall then appoint another synod bishop from the same region to handle the matter to conclusion. In dealing with such matter, the appointed bishop shall exercise all of the functions and authority to the same extent as if the appointed bishop were the elected bishop of the withdrawing bishop's synod.
  - b. Matters include any proceedings under Chapter 20, proceedings under provisions 7.46. and 7.75 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (†S14.18. and †S14.43), candidacy, reinstatement, and similar matters where determinations or actions by the synod bishop could change, limit, restrict, approve, authorize, or deny the related individual's ministry on one of the official rosters of this church.
  - c. A related individual is one who, with respect to the synod bishop, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).
- S8.20.** **Vice President**
- †**S8.21.** The vice president shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The vice president shall be a layperson. The vice president shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod. The vice president shall not receive a salary for the performance of the duties of the office.
- S8.22.** The vice president shall chair the Synod Council.
- S8.24.** The vice president shall be ex-officio a member of the Churchwide Assembly.
- S8.30.** **Secretary**
- †**S8.31.** The secretary shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The secretary shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod. The

- secretary may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.
- †S8.32. The secretary shall:
- a. Keep the minutes of all meetings of the Synod Assembly and Synod Council, be responsible for distribution of such minutes, and perform such other duties as this synod may from time to time direct.
  - b. Be authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to attest all instruments which require the same, and which are signed and sealed by the bishop.
  - c. In consultation with the bishop, classify and arrange all important papers and documents and deposit them in the archives of this synod.
  - d. Submit to the secretary of this church at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly.
- S8.32.01. The public file. This synod shall have a public file as the place of filing, as required by the bylaws, and reference for certain documentary materials, including, but not limited to, the Constitution, Book of Reports, Synod Assembly actions/minutes, Synod Council actions/minutes.
- S8.32.02. Responsibilities for filing. Where a bylaw or a continuing resolution of this synod requires material to be filed in the public file (a) by an officer of the synod, the individual shall be responsible to make the filing, or (b) by the Synod Council or a committee of the synod, the vice-president of this synod or the committee chairperson, as the case may be, shall be responsible to make the filing.
- S8.32.03. Access to public file. The public file is open to the people of the synod. The bishop may make regulations for orderly access such as the requirement for prior appointments and reasonable limitations on time allowed. No document currently required to be in the file may be removed, but, upon request and subject to a reasonable charge, the synod office will provide a copy of any such document to any interested person.
- S8.33. The secretary shall be ex-officio a member of the Churchwide Assembly.
- S8.40. **Treasurer**
- †S8.41. The treasurer may be elected by the Synod Assembly or may be appointed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshipping community of this synod. The treasurer may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.
- S8.41.01. The Synod Council shall appoint a treasurer following a process guided by the nominating committee, in consultation with the bishop, to provide for a treasurer who can best fulfill the duties as outlined in S8.42.
- S8.42. The treasurer shall provide and be accountable for:
- a. Management of the monies and accounts of this synod, its deeds, mortgages, contracts, evidences of claims and revenues, and trust funds, holding the same at all times subject to the order of this synod.
  - b. Investment of funds upon the authorization of the Synod Council.
  - c. Receipt and acknowledgment of offerings, contributions, and bequests made to this synod, collecting interest and income from its invested funds, and paying regular appropriations and orders on the several accounts as approved and directed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall transmit each month to the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the funds received by this synod for the general work of this church.
  - d. Maintenance of a regular account with each congregation of this synod and informing the congregation, at least quarterly, of the status of this account.
  - e. Rendering at each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly a full, detailed, and duly audited report of receipts and disbursements in the several accounts of this synod for the preceding fiscal year, together with the tabulation, for record and publication in the minutes, of the contributions from the congregations.
  - f. Obtaining a fidelity bond in the amount determined by the Synod Council for persons handling synod funds, which bond shall be in the custody of the secretary. The premium for the bond shall be paid by this synod. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.
- S8.42.A91. Funds-keeping and Investment Policy
1. *This resolution sets forth the funds-keeping and investment policy of this synod. In this resolution—*

- *“its purposes” means a purpose indicated in the Statement of Purpose of this synod (Chapter 6 of the constitution).*
  - *“current funds” means, at any time, the funds held by this synod for its purposes in an amount appropriate for a period of up to the next forty-five days, but not petty cash*
  - *“other financial resources” means the funds and other assets of money-equivalent or ready market value, including reserves, held by this synod for its purposes which would, if invested, yield a return in aid of its purposes, but not current funds.*
2. *This synod shall keep current funds, until disbursement, in one or several accounts of one or several banking institutions or in other financial obligor in accordance with this policy. Each account in a banking institution shall be covered by FDIC insurance to the extent consistent with sound financial practices. Such an account may be, for example, a checking account or a certificate of deposit, and may but need not be interest-earning.*
  3. *Normally, this synod shall hold at least the greater portion of other financial resources in deposit or debt obligations that afford the highest safety in preservation of value, suitable liquidity and reasonable return. Such obligations may be, for example, interest-earning accounts, including certificates of deposit, of one or several banking institutions, with each account covered in full by FDIC insurance, and shorter-term U. S. Treasury obligations.*
  4. *This synod may have a portion of current funds and other financial resources in obligations of worthy obligor related to this church. Such obligations may be, for example, Mission Investments as described in the current ELCA Mission Investment Fund’s Offering Circular.*
  5. *Normally, this synod shall have other financial resources only in a form described in paragraphs 3 or 4 of this resolution; however, seeking prudently to minimize or avoid loss in the value of an asset of other financial resources, this synod may hold the asset for a reasonable time in some other form. Such an asset might be, for example, a gift or bequest received in kind.*

**S8.43** The treasurer shall be ex-officio a member of the Churchwide Assembly.

**S8.50. General Provisions**

†**S8.51.** The terms of office of the officers of this synod shall be as follows:

- a. The bishop of this synod shall be elected to a term of six years and may be re-elected.
- b. The vice president and secretary of this synod shall be elected to a term of four years and may be re-elected. The officer shall serve until a successor takes office.
- c. The treasurer of this synod shall be appointed to a term of four years and may be re-appointed. The treasurer shall serve until a successor takes office.

†**S8.52.** The terms of the officers shall begin on the first day of the third month following election or, in special circumstances, at a time designated by the Synod Council.

†**S8.53.** Each officer shall be a voting member in a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod, except that the bishop need not be a member of a congregation of this synod at the time of election.

†**S8.54.** Should the bishop die, resign, or be unable to serve, the vice president, after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall convene the Synod Council to arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the bishop until an election of a new bishop can be held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the bishop is able to serve again. Such arrangements may include the appointment by the Synod Council of an interim bishop, who during the vacancy or period of disability shall possess all of the powers and authority of a regularly elected bishop. The term of the successor bishop, elected by the next Synod Assembly or a special meeting of the Synod Assembly called for the purpose of election, shall be six years with the subsequent election to take place at the Synod Assembly closest to the expiration of such a term and with the starting date of a successor term to be governed by constitutional provision S8.52.

**S8.55.** Should the vice president, secretary, or treasurer die, resign, or be unable to serve, the bishop, with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, shall arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the officer until an election of a new officer can be held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the officer is able to serve again. The term of the successor officer, elected by the next Synod Assembly, shall be for the remainder of the unfulfilled term of that officer. If the treasurer is



appointed by the Synod Council, the Synod Council shall appoint a new treasurer to a the remainder of the unfulfilled term of that officer.

- †S8.56. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall determine whether an officer is unable to serve; the officer may appeal the decision of the Executive Committee by requesting a hearing before the Synod Council. A meeting to determine the ability of an officer to serve shall be called upon the request of at least three members of the Executive Committee and prior written notice of the meeting shall be given to the officer in question at least 10 calendar days prior to the meeting.
- †S8.57. The recall or dismissal of an officer and the vacating of office may be effected for willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church; for such physical or mental disability as renders the officer incapable of performing the duties of office; or for such conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action as a rostered minister or as a member of a congregation of this church.
- a. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of a synod bishop shall be instituted by written petition by:
    - 1) the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
    - 2) the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting;
    - 3) at least 10 synod bishops; or
    - 4) the presiding bishop of this church.
  - b. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of an officer of a synod, other than the synod bishop, shall be instituted by written petition by:
    - 1) the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
    - 2) the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting; or
    - 3) the synod bishop.
  - c. The petition shall be filed with the chair of the Committee on Appeals (in care of the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631) and shall set forth the specific charge or charges.
  - d. Upon the filing of a written petition, the Executive Committee of the Synod Council may temporarily suspend the officer from service in the synod without prejudice, but with continuation of compensation, including benefits, if the officer is a salaried employee of the synod.
  - e. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of an officer of the synod, the procedures outlined in †S8.56. shall be followed, and such officer shall comply with the decision of the Synod Council. If such officer fails or refuses to comply, the Synod Council may proceed to petition for recall or dismissal as follows:
    - 1) the Synod Council will submit a written report of their findings and the basis of their decision to the Committee on Appeals.
    - 2) the Committee on Appeals, exclusive of any members who are disqualified, shall review the findings and decision of the Synod Council and by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting may adopt the findings and grant the petition.
  - f. If the synod officer is a minister of Word and Sacrament, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.22.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.21. and 20.22. as grounds for discipline. If the officer is a minister of Word and Service, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.23.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.21. and 20.22. as grounds for discipline.
  - g. If the officer is a layperson, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.41.01. as grounds for discipline.
  - h. If the case of alleged willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions or of alleged conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action, the following procedures shall apply:
    - 1) the petition shall be referred to the Committee on Appeals, which shall function as the discipline hearing committee that shall conduct a hearing in accordance with the rules provided for

in ELCA bylaw 20.22.14. except to the extent that those rules are in conflict with the provisions of this bylaw; and

2) the members of the Committee on Appeals, other than those who are disqualified, may grant the petition by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting.

i. Written notice of a decision by the Committee on Appeals that the charges have been sustained shall be given to the affected officer and to the Synod Council, and the office shall be vacated.

†S8.58. If the bishop is to be temporarily absent from the synod for an extended period not to exceed 90 days, the bishop, after consultation with the presiding bishop and with the consent of the Synod Council, may appoint as acting bishop for such period a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church. Except as limited by action of the Synod Council, an acting bishop shall possess all of the powers and authority of a regularly elected bishop other than authority to ordain or to authorize the ordination of properly approved candidates for ordination.

## Chapter 9.

### NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

†S9.01. The Synod Assembly shall elect such officers of this synod and such other persons as the constitution and bylaws may require, according to procedures set forth in the bylaws. The Synod Assembly shall elect members of the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with bylaw 12.41.11. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

S9.01.01 Elections by the Synod Assembly. In addition to elections prescribed in the constitution to be made by the Synod Assembly, the Synod Assembly shall elect

- a) voting members of the Churchwide Assembly allocated to this synod.
- b) the Synod Council Members-at-large and the youth who is a member of the Synod Council.
- c) the members of the Consultation Committee and the synod's component of the Committee on Discipline.

In each election for a position described in this bylaw, the Nominating Committee shall slate one nominee for the position. With the exception of the situations noted below, the Synod Assembly shall permit nominations from the floor for the position provided that any person nominated from the floor must be eligible for election, have affirmed willingness to serve if elected, and meet each specification pertaining to the position, including that, for an elective position within the purview of paragraph (a) of S9.03.02. Nominations from the floor for positions in which nominees have been chosen by conferences must be of people who are voting members of a congregation of the same conference as the conference of the slated nominee. If there are slots that are not filled by a nominee from a conference, or through other constitutional provisions, nominees from the floor may come from any conference, provided the provisions of †S6.04 and S6.04.C88 are fulfilled. Such positions having a term of service of four years or longer shall be arranged so equal or approximately equal numbers of the positions are elected biennially.

S9.01.02. Elections at regular Synod Assembly meetings. The elections described in S9.01.01. shall be held at regular meetings of the Synod Assembly.

S9.01.03. Elections for Churchwide Assembly. At least one-third of the ministers of Word and Sacrament or ministers of Word and Service and at least one-third of the lay persons elected by this synod as voting members of each Churchwide Assembly shall be persons who have not been elected by this synod to be voting members of a previous Churchwide Assembly.

S9.01.04. Reelection of Council Members-at-large. Normally, Synod Council Members-at-large may be reelected once; however, if an expiration of the term of an incumbent Synod Council Member-at-large the incumbent does not meet a specification for the position according to S9.03.04. or otherwise, the individual is ineligible to reelection. If an Synod Council Member-at-large was first appointed to fill an interim vacancy and serves for more than half of the current term of the position reckoned from date of appointment, then, for the purpose of determining eligibility for reelection, the individual shall be deemed to have served the full term.

- S9.01.06.** Interim elections and appointments. In the context of this bylaw “interim vacancy” means a position that is vacant because the incumbent died, resigned, or became unable to serve. Should an interim vacancy occur, the vacancy is to be promptly filled in accordance with these provisions:
- a. An interim vacancy in a position appointed by the bishop shall be filled by a successor appointment by the bishop, under the same conditions, if any, as applied to the original appointment.
  - b. An interim vacancy in an elective position or a Synod Council-appointed position shall be filled by interim appointment by the Synod Council. The Synod Council may have the Nominating Committee’s recommendation, but need not consider more than one candidate for an appointment. Current specifications for the position under S9.03.04. apply and the term of service shall be for the remainder of the term during which the interim vacancy occurred.
- S9.01.A22.** *The Synod Council, having regard to the provisions of †S7.21. and S7.21.A88., shall elect to the membership of the Synod Assembly, with voice and vote, the ones of the retired ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service whose names appear on the rosters of this synod and who make timely written application for such election. Each such application shall indicate the applicant’s intention to attend the Synod Assembly, bear the applicant’s signature, and be deemed timely if received in the synod office during the month of November or the month of December of the year next preceding the year during which the Synod Assembly is to be held; each such election shall be only for such Synod Assembly. For purpose of †S7.21., retired ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service elected under this Resolution shall be counted as ministers of Word and Sacrament or ministers of Word and Service.*
- S9.02.** In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for the bishop, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- S9.03.** There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of eleven members who shall be appointed by the Synod Council to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee.
- S9.03.01** Nominating Committee
- a. Generally, eligibility for appointment to the Nominating Committee is as provided in S11.01.02., and positions on the Committee may be subject to a specification under S9.03.04. Members of the Consultation Committee, the Committee on Discipline, or a committee convened under S14.13.b would be ineligible for appointment. Synod Council members, other than those eligible to reelection at the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, may be appointed. A member of the Committee may be consecutively reappointed twice.
  - b. The Synod Council is to complete appointments to the Nominating Committee for the meeting of the Synod Assembly for which the Committee is to serve by January 1 of the year of the meeting.
- S9.03.02** Participation of Conferences in electoral processes.
- a) Each Conference is to select, for each meeting of the Synod Assembly at which the Nominating Committee is to slate nominees, one person for appointment to a respective one of positions on the Nominating Committee; and, for each such meeting which is to elect voting members of the Churchwide Synod Assembly, one person for nomination to a respective one of those voting member positions.
  - b) A Conference may not select the same person for more than one position of those to be selected for a meeting of the Synod Assembly described in paragraph (a) of this bylaw, and should endeavor to avoid concentration of the selections with reference to a limited number of Congregations.
  - c) A Conference may not elect the same person to more than one position of those to be elected at an electoral meeting described in paragraph (c) of this bylaw, and should endeavor to avoid undue concentration of the elections with reference to a limited number of Congregations.
  - d) Each person selected pursuant to paragraph (a) or elected pursuant to paragraph (c) of this bylaw shall be a voting member of a Congregation of the Conference which selects or elects the individual, otherwise be eligible for the position for which the individual is selected or elected, have affirmed willingness to serve in the position, and meet each specification under S9.03.04, if any, pertaining to the position.
  - e) If a selection under paragraph (a) or an election under paragraph (c) of this bylaw fails for any reason -- for example, if a person becomes unable to accept appointment, nomination, or election -- or is in



default, then, as the case may be, the Synod Council shall appoint an affected position on the Nominating Committee and shall elect an affected position on a team board; and, the Nominating Committee shall slate a nomination for an affected position of voting member of the Churchwide Assembly or of Synod Council Members-at-large.

- S9.03.03** Adoption of selections under S9.03.02. Normally, the Synod Council, in making appointments to the Nominating Committee, is to adopt the selections of Conferences under sentence (1) of paragraph (a) of S9.03.02; and, the Nominating Committee, in slating nominees for positions of voting member of the Churchwide Assembly and of Synod Council Members-at-large, is to adopt the selections of Conferences under paragraph (a) of S9.03.02.
- S9.03.04** Specifications for Nominating Committee and Synod Council Members-at-large positions. So the Synod Council and the Nominating Committee, as nearly as practicable and in terms of their full complements, meet inclusivity criteria and/or have members residing in areas throughout the territory, the Synod Council may establish specifications for at least some Nominating Committee and Synod Council Members-at-large positions, and, for that purpose may have the advice of the Nominating Committee. If such a specification applies to any position for which a Conference is to select a person under paragraph (a) of S9.03.02, the Synod Council shall notify the Conference well in advance of the affected electoral meeting.
- S9.03.05** Previously-selected or-elected incumbents. A Conference may, but need not, select for reappointment or nomination for reelection, or reelect, an incumbent of a position who was previously selected for or elected to the position by the Conference under S9.03.02 and, otherwise, is eligible to reappointment or reelection, and meets each specification, if any, pertaining to the position.
- S9.04.** The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.
- S9.04.01.** Election of the Bishop. In addition to the provision of S9.04., procedures for election of the bishop include—
- a. Prior to a meeting of the Synod Assembly at which an election for the office of bishop is to be held, the Synod Council shall appoint a Committee on Pre-election Canvass consisting of five members. Each member of the committee shall meet the same general qualifications as in S11.01.02., shall not be eligible for nomination or election to the office of bishop, and may, but need not be a voting member of the Synod Assembly.
  - b. The duties of the Committee on Pre-election Canvass shall be
    - 1) to mail directly to each voting member of the Synod Assembly, at least sixty (60) days but not more than seventy (70) days prior to the Synod Assembly, a canvass instrument and instructions for identification, by means of the instrument, of one person for the office of bishop;
    - 2) to receive those of such instruments bearing postmarks no later than forty-five (45) days prior to the Synod Assembly;
    - 3) to obtain, on a uniform basis, and to mail to each voting member of the Synod Assembly at least twenty-one (21) days prior to the Synod Assembly, biographical information about the six (6) persons (plus ties) who receive the highest numbers of identifications, and are willing to be nominated for the office of bishop, together with a full report concerning the canvass.
  - c. The Committee on Pre-election Canvass, on behalf of the Synod Council, may arrange and conduct a pre-assembly forum where those of the six (6) persons identified in clause 3, paragraph b, of this bylaw, who desire so to participate, may -- all on a uniform basis -- be introduced to, address, and respond to questions from voting members of the Synod Assembly and others in attendance. The



forum, if and when arranged and conducted, is to be suitably publicized and held at a convenient place on the territory approximately two (2) weeks prior to the Synod Assembly.

- d. The report concerning the canvass and the forum are to be information resources about the election, and shall have no other purpose, status and effect.

**S9.04.A22.** *In each meeting of the Synod Assembly at which an election for the office of bishop is held, and the election is to include a fourth ballot, and as an order of business following the report of the results of the third ballot, the Synod Assembly shall conduct Assembly-wide introductions of persons who are to be on the fourth ballot, in accordance with the provisions of this continuing resolution.*

- a. *Generally, introductions of persons who are to be on the fourth ballot shall be on a uniform and impartial basis, and the introduction of each such person is to include aspects of (i) an address by the person to the Synod Assembly and (ii) spoken answers by the person to propounded questions, provided that if the person is not in attendance or otherwise so desires, the person may designate a spokesperson to participate instead. During introduction of one such person, the other such persons shall not be present. If such a person opts not to participate in an introduction, that circumstance shall not affect the person's position or status on the fourth or any later ballot. When such a person participates in one aspect of an introduction, the person is expected also to participate in the other aspect. The official presiding at the election shall likewise preside during the introductions.*
- b. *Each such person, in any aspect of the introduction to the Synod Assembly, shall not utilize or authorize any kind of ancillary material or special effects. The assembly, including members and all others in attendance, shall refrain from any kind of demonstration of support or opposition with reference to such a person during the introduction and otherwise in connection with the election.*
- c. *The address of each introduction is expected to deal with the person's candidacy for the office of bishop; otherwise, content of the address is wholly a matter for the person's discretion. The time provided for an address shall be an undivided period of ten minutes, but the address need not consume the full period.*
- d. *The propounded questions of the introductions shall normally comprise a series of five questions pertaining to the work the Synod and the office of bishop, and shall be prepared by the Elections Committee of the Synod Assembly. The Elections Committee shall consult with the official presiding and other appropriate resources, and shall endeavor to formulate questions that are succinct, suitable for answer in the time provided, and widely representative of interests and responsibilities of voting members of the Synod Assembly, as, for example, by soliciting exemplary questions or topics from voting members and otherwise. The official presiding shall propound the questions to each such person in the same manner and order. An answer to a propounded question is expected to be responsive. The time provided for answering a question shall be an undivided period of two minutes, but an answer need not consume the full period.*

**S9.05.01.** Election of the Vice President shall proceed without oral nominations. The first ballot of the election, unless resulting in election, shall be the nominating ballot. On the first ballot, two-thirds of votes shall elect. On the second ballot, only votes for persons who received votes on the first ballot shall be valid, and a majority of votes shall elect. On the third ballot, voting shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who received the highest number of votes on the second ballot, and a majority of votes shall elect. A person may withdraw from the election prior to the voting on any ballot, and upon such withdrawal, votes for the person on a preceding ballot shall be deemed invalid as to a subsequent ballot. An invalid vote shall not be counted for any purpose.

**S9.05.A99** *In each meeting of the Synod Assembly at which an election for the office of vice president is held and the election is to include a third ballot, and as an order of business following the report of the results of the second ballot, the Synod Assembly shall conduct introductions of persons who are to be on the third ballot. These introductions shall be on a uniform and impartial basis, and the introduction of each such person is to include an address by the person to the Synod Assembly. Such an address is expected to deal with person's candidacy for the office of vice president; otherwise, the content of the address is wholly a matter for the person's discretion. The time for an address is an undivided period of three minutes, but the address need not consume the full period.*

**S9.06.01.** Election of the Secretary shall proceed without oral nominations. The first ballot of the election, unless resulting in election, shall be the nominating ballot. On the first ballot, two-thirds of votes shall elect.

On the second ballot, only votes for persons who received votes on the first ballot shall be valid, and a majority of votes shall elect. On the third ballot, voting shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who received the highest number of votes on the second ballot, and a majority of votes shall elect. A person may withdraw from the election prior to the voting on any ballot, and upon such withdrawal, votes for the person on a preceding ballot shall be deemed invalid as to a subsequent ballot. An invalid vote shall not be counted for any purpose.

- S9.06.A99** *In each meeting of the Synod Assembly at which an election for the office of secretary is held and the election is to include a third ballot, and as an order of business following the report of the results of the second ballot, the Synod Assembly shall conduct introductions of persons who are to be on the third ballot. These introductions shall be on a uniform and impartial basis, and the introduction of each such person is to include an address by the person to the Synod Assembly. Such an address is expected to deal with person's candidacy for the office of secretary; otherwise, the content of the address is wholly a matter for the person's discretion. The time for an address is an undivided period of three minutes, but the address need not consume the full period.*
- S9.07.** If the treasurer is elected, the Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for treasurer; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.08.** In all elections, except for the bishop, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of legal votes, but not elected by a majority of the legal votes cast on a preceding ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled. On any ballot when only two names appear, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- S9.08.A22** *A person who is nominated for election by the Synod Assembly (a) for Synod Council Members-at-large position, or (b) to the position of voting member of the Churchwide Assembly, is to provide, prior to the election in which the individual is a nominee, a written statement with regard to the individual's candidacy for the position. The Nominating Committee or the Elections Committee of the Synod Assembly, as appropriate, may receive the statement from the person. The statement is for distribution to voting members of the Synod Assembly as an information resource; it is not to exceed forty (40) words in length; and, otherwise, its content is wholly a matter for the person's discretion.*
- S9.09.** The result of each ballot in every election shall be announced in detail to the assembly.
- †**S9.10.** When notified by the secretary of this church, on behalf of the Nominating Committee of the Churchwide Assembly, the Synod Assembly shall nominate two persons in the specified categories for possible election by the Churchwide Assembly to the Church Council.
- S9.11.** The Synod Council shall elect or appoint representatives to the steering committee of its region.
- †**S9.12.** Background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as synod officers prior to their election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election. The specific procedures and timing of background checks and screening shall be determined by the Synod Council.

## **Chapter 10.** **SYNOD COUNCIL**

- †**S10.01.** The Synod Council, consisting of the four officers of the synod and 10 to 24 other members, at least one young adult and with a goal of at least one youth, shall be elected by the Synod Assembly.
- a. Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise provided shall be specified in the bylaws. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.
- b. The term of office of members of the Synod Council, with the exception of the officers and the youth member, shall be four years.
- S10.01.01.** The terms of service of members of the Synod Council shall begin on the first day of the third month following their election.

- S10.01.02. Youth member.** The term of service of the youth shall be two years and shall begin on the first day of the third month following election. The youth shall be at least 16 years of age when the youth's term begins and not more than 19 years of age when the term ends, and is not eligible to reelection.
- S10.01.03. Young adult member.** The term of service of the young adult member shall be two years and shall begin on the first day of the third month following election. The young adult shall be at least 18 years of age when the young adult's term begins and not more than 30 years of age when the term ends, and is not eligible to reelection.
- S10.01.04. Synod Council meetings.** The Synod Council shall hold regular meetings at least four times a year and, normally, once in each calendar quarter. The place of meetings of the Synod Council shall be determined by the Executive Committee. Special meetings of the Synod Council may be called by the Executive Committee as provided in S10.01.07., and shall be called by the bishop upon the written request of ten Synod Council members. The secretary of this synod shall give written notice of each meeting of the Synod Council to Synod Council members.
- S10.01.05. Committee liaison.** The Synod Council shall maintain liaison with Synod Program committees, Advisory committees, and any Task Forces and Temporary committees of this synod. For this purpose (apart from the bishop ex officio) members of the Synod Council may attend and have voice at meetings of such committees.
- S10.01.06. Synod Council committees--generally.** The Synod council shall have an Executive Committee and such other committees as it may from time to time determine. The Synod Council shall appoint the members of its committees. No one other than a member of the Synod Council may serve on a Synod Council committee. Subject to the Synod Council's directions concerning purpose, procedure, and record-keeping, a Synod Council committee develops its own agenda and sets its own procedure. Unless the Synod Council so requires, a Synod Council committee need not make a report to the Synod Assembly covering its activities.
- S10.01.07. Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee shall comprise the officers and five Synod Council Members-at-large; at least one of the Synod Council Members-at-large shall be serving a term with an expiration date different than the expiration date of the terms of the other Synod Council Members-at-large. Normally, the period of appointment for Synod Council Members-at-large on the committee is two years, with no limitation on reappointment to an available position. The committee shall perform those functions of the Synod Council assigned to it by the Synod Council, and, subject to other or additional directions from the Synod Council, the committee shall oversee preparation of the agenda for Synod Council meetings, and shall set the salary of the bishop. The committee -- by the action or with the common approval of a majority of its members, and, normally, with at least five days' notice -- may call special meetings of the Synod Council. In appropriate circumstances, so recognized by a majority of its members, and provided that all committee members have a reasonable opportunity to participate, the committee may deliberate and do committee work by telephone conferences.
- S10.01.09. Accountability of Synod Council and Synod Council-appointed committees.** Synod Council committees and the Nominating Committee are accountable to the Synod Council for due performance of their functions and responsibilities.
- †**S10.02.** The Synod Council shall be the board of directors of this synod and shall serve as its interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly. It may make decisions that are not in conflict with actions taken by the Synod Assembly or that are not precluded by provisions of this constitution or the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- S10.02.A98 Positions Process**
- a. *Definition.* In this continuing resolution, "position resolution" means an action of the Synod Assembly which expresses the synod's position as to indicated subject matter, but is not and is not connected with another action of the Synod Assembly such as an amendment of the constitution, adoption or amendment of a bylaw, a continuing resolution or an annual budget of the synod, an election conducted pursuant to the constitution or the bylaws, or, approval of a report.
  - b. *Applicability.* This continuing resolution applies in respect of each position resolution and without regard to the date of the resolution.
  - c. *Period of effectiveness.* The period during which a position resolution may be deemed effective, having regard for the purpose and subject matter of the resolution, and for other pertinent circumstances,



should be of reasonable length and not continue after the purpose has been accomplished or the subject matter has substantially changed. In any case, but subject to Paragraph 4 of this continuing resolution, the period of effectiveness of a position resolution is to expire at the end of a specific period set forth in the resolution, or, absent such specific period, three years from the date of the resolution.

d. *Subsequent status.*

(a) Normally, after the period of effectiveness of a position resolution has expired, as provided in Paragraph 3 of this continuing resolution, the status of the resolution is as an historical record. Nevertheless, if the Synod Council considers the subject matter or purpose of an expiring position resolution to be of continuing interest to the synod, the Synod Council may adopt the substance of the resolution as a continuing position or an operational policy of the synod.

(b) The period of effectiveness of a position resolution with a date prior to this continuing resolution shall not be deemed to have expired until the Synod Council has taken action concerning subsequent status of the resolution or unless the resolution provides for its own expiration.

5. *Resolutions and Positions Review Committee.* The Executive Committee in consultation with the bishop may appoint a Resolutions and Positions Review Committee of not more than five members, including Synod Council members and others. The duties and responsibilities of the committee are to include annual review of (a) expiring position resolutions and (b) continuing positions and operational policies which derive from position resolutions, and making recommendations to the Synod Council concerning subsequent status of such position resolutions, continuing positions and operational policies. The committee is to accord priority to review of any recommendations as to position resolutions with dates prior to this continuing resolution.

**S10.03.** The functions of the Synod Council shall be to:

- a. Exercise trusteeship responsibilities on behalf of this synod.
- b. Recommend program goals and budgets to the regular meetings of the Synod Assembly.
- c. Carry out the resolutions of the Synod Assembly.
- d. Provide for an annual review of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and the roster of Ministers of Word and Service, receive and act upon appropriate recommendations regarding those persons whose status is subject to reconsideration and action under the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and make a report to the Synod Assembly of the Synod Council's actions in this regard.
- e. Issue letters of call to rostered ministers as authorized by Chapter 7 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- f. Fill vacancies until the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, except as may otherwise be provided in the constitution or bylaws of this synod, and determine the fact of the incapacity of an officer of this synod.
- g. Report its actions to the regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- h. Perform such other functions as are set forth in the bylaws of this synod, or as may be delegated to it by the Synod Assembly.

**S10.04.** Any proposal to appropriate funds, whether by amendment to the budget or otherwise, which is presented to a meeting of the Synod Assembly without the approval of the Synod Council, shall require a two-thirds vote for adoption.

**S10.05.** No elected member of the Synod Council shall receive compensation for such service.

**S10.05.01** A member of the Synod Council may receive mileage compensation consistent with IRS mileage guidelines currently in force for participation in Synod Council business, as approved by the bishop of this synod.

**S10.06.** If a member of the Synod Council ceases to meet the requirements of the position to which she or he was elected, the office filled by such member shall at once become vacant.

**S10.07.** The composition of the Synod Council, the number of its members, and the manner of their selection, as well as the organization of the Synod Council, its additional duties and responsibilities, and the number of meetings to be held each year shall be as set forth in the bylaws.

**S10.08.** *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of the Synod Council.

†S10.08.01. To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held through electronic means such as the Internet or by telephone, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

## Chapter 11.

### COMMITTEES

#### (Task Forces, Working Groups)

†S11.01. There shall be an Executive Committee, a Consultation Committee, a Committee on Discipline, an Audit Committee, and such other committees as this synod may from time to time determine. The duties and functions of such committees, or any other organizational units created by this synod, and the composition and organizational structure of such units, shall be as set forth in this constitution or in the bylaws or continuing resolutions, and shall be subject to any applicable provisions or requirements of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**S11.01.01.** Committees of this synod. Committees of this synod are:

1. The Executive Committee, the Consultation Committee, the Committee on Discipline, the Mutual Ministry Committee as provided for in †S11.01.;
2. Committees relating to the office of bishop, as provided for in S11.01.16
3. Synod Assembly committees, as provided for in S11.01.05.
4. The Nominating Committee, as provided for in S11.01.06.
5. Synod Council committees, as provided for in S11.01.07

**S11.01.02.** Eligibility/qualifications for committee service. Other than the bishop ex officio, no person shall concurrently be a member of more than one of the Standing Committees. as defined in S11.01.10. The standing committees are the Consultation Committee, the Committee on Discipline, and committees relating to the office of the bishop: the Ministry Committee and the Constitution Review Committee. This provision is also subject to the provisions of S11.02.01 (Consultation Committee), and S11.03.01 (Committee on Discipline). Unless otherwise designated by the bishop, persons who are members in good standing in a congregation of this synod are eligible for committee service.

**S11.01.03.** General provisions pertaining to committees. Except as the bylaws may otherwise provide or require with reference to committees of the Synod Assembly, the Nominating Committee, Synod Council committees, the Consultation Committee, the Committee on Discipline, and any Task Force or other Temporary Committee, the provisions of this bylaw apply to the committees of this synod.

- 1) A committee develops its own agenda with reference to its function and responsibilities, determines its own procedures, and establishes appropriate sub-committees and working groups.
- 2) A committee shall elect and have a chairperson and a secretary. The chairperson presides at committee meetings. The committee secretary is responsible to keep minutes and give notice of meetings. The committee secretary is also responsible to provide such minutes to the synod office, through a process defined in the continuing resolutions.
- 3) The synod shall fund the work and activities of a committee through the synodic budgetary process and the committee shall participate in that process.

**S11.01.A22** *Committee secretaries shall provide electronic copies of all committee minutes to the bishop's executive assistant within one week following their approval by the committee.*

**S11.01.04.** Expenses. Members serving on the committees of this synod or of any other committee or similar body established pursuant to the constitution or the bylaws of this synod shall not receive compensation for such service, but the synod may reimburse them for necessary travel and out-of-pocket expenses while serving.

**S11.01.05.** Synod Assembly committees. Committees of the Synod Assembly include: a Committee on Reference and Council and other Synod Assembly committees (such as Planning Committee, Credentials Committee, Memorials Committee, Resolutions Committee, convention manager, sergeant-at-arms, tellers, parliamentarian), as deemed necessary by the bishop or the Synod Council. Synod Assembly committees have status, composition, appointment process, and functions and responsibilities as described and provided in S7.01.05.

- S11.01.06.** Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee has the status, composition, appointment processes, and functions and responsibilities as described and provided in Chapter 9.
- S11.01.07.** Synod Council committees. Synod Council committees include the Executive Committee; and any other committee established pursuant to S10.01.06. Such committees have status, composition, appointment process, functions and responsibilities as provided in the constitution and the bylaws and continuing resolutions pertaining to them.
- S11.01.08.** Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall comprise the officers and five Synod Council Members-at-large; at least one of the Synod Council Members-at-large shall be serving a term with an expiration date different than the expiration date of the terms of the other Synod Council Members-at-large. Normally, the period of appointment for Synod Council Members-at-large on the committee is two years, with no limitation on reappointment to an available position. The committee shall perform those functions of the Synod Council assigned to it by the Synod Council, and, subject to other or additional directions from the Synod Council, the committee shall oversee preparation of the agenda for Synod Council meetings, and shall set the salary of the bishop. The committee -- by the action or with the common approval of a majority of its members, and, normally, with at least five days' notice -- may call special meetings of the Synod Council. In appropriate circumstances, so recognized by a majority of its members, and provided that all committee members have a reasonable opportunity to participate, the committee may deliberate and do committee work by telephone conferences or by other electronic means.
- S11.01.09.** Mutual Ministry Committee. The Mutual Ministry Committee has the status, composition, appointment processes, and functions and responsibilities as described and provided in S11.04.01.
- S11.01.10.** Standing Committees. The Standing Committees are the Consultation Committee, the Committee on Discipline, the Ministry Committee, and the Constitution Review Committee, as stipulated in S11.01.16 and S11.01.17.
- S11.01.11.** Reports by Standing committees. The Standing committees shall make annual written reports to the Synod Assembly. Each report shall cover the committee's activities since the preceding report. Such reports by the Consultation Committee and the Committee on Discipline shall not provide indemnificatory particulars with respect to any matter or case pending on the date of any such report.
- S11.01.16** The Ministry Committee. The Ministry Committee and its functions and responsibilities are as from time to time provided in the bylaws and continuing resolutions of the synod. The bishop appoints members of this committee, with the approval of the Synod Council, and, generally, for terms of service of four years arranged, with reference to an election cycle, in the same manner as terms of Synod Council Members-at-large positions. Members of these committees are eligible to reappointment.
- S11.01.B22.** Ministry Committee. *The functions and responsibilities of the Ministry Committee pertain to pastoral care of Congregations and to ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service. The committee, as appropriate for this synod, develops, guides, supports and oversees programs of ministry in daily life; programs and activities for development of professional leaders (including recruitment, encouragement and evaluation, and subsequent certification of candidates); policies and standards for compensation and benefits for professional leaders; and, programs for the care of and the continuing education for professional leaders. Members of the committee, selected by the candidacy committee, may participate in multi-synodic committees for certification of candidates for ordination and in the certification or accreditation processes for other professional leaders.*
- S11.01.17** The Constitution Review Committee. The Constitution Review Committee and its functions and responsibilities are as from time to time provided in the bylaws and continuing resolutions of the synod. The bishop appoints members of this committee, with the approval of the Synod Council, and, generally, for terms of service of four years arranged, with reference to an election cycle, in the same manner as terms of Synod Council Members-at-large positions. Members of these committees are eligible to reappointment.
- S11.01.F99.** Constitution Review Committee. *The functions and responsibilities of the Constitution Review Committee are to review the constitutions of Congregations and organizational documents of Conferences of this synod to determine whether the documents conform with apposite provisions of the constitution, the bylaws and the continuing resolutions of the ELCA (including the Constitution for*

*Congregations); to report to the bishop and the Synod Council concerning such determinations; and, where a document appears deficient, to indicate necessary revision to the Congregation or the Conference. The committee may also advise the bishop and the Synod Council with regard to constitutional matters. The committee shall have six members including, normally, the secretary of the synod.*

- S11.01.18. Task Forces and Temporary committees.** The Synod Council shall, as directed by the Synod Assembly, and may, by its own action as it from time to time finds necessary, establish task forces and temporary committees of this synod. Normally, a task force or temporary committee shall have a specific assignment not duplicative of a function or responsibility of another committee established pursuant to the constitution, and the Synod Council shall describe the assignment in reasonable detail. The Synod Council shall appoint the members of a task force or temporary committee and may appoint the chairperson or convener. Generally, eligibility for appointment is as provided in S11.01.02. Members of the Synod Council may be appointed, but no member of the Consultation Committee, the Committee on Discipline or a committee convened under †S14.13.b. or pursuant to S14.13.08. is eligible to serve on a task force or temporary committee. A task force or temporary committee may have up to twenty members, and shall normally complete its assignment and submit any required report within a period of not more than 18 months.
- S11.01.19. Accountability.** The Standing committees and Task Forces and Temporary committees of this synod -- together with their members -- are accountable to the Synod Council and the Synod Assembly for due performance of their respective functions and responsibilities. Normally, the oversight of such performance -- which may encompass a committee's policies, programs, activities and work-product-- shall be by the Synod Council.
- †**S11.02. The Consultation Committee** of this synod shall consist of at least six persons and not more than 12 persons, of whom half shall be rostered ministers and half shall be laypersons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive re-election. The functions of the Consultation Committee are set forth in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and in Chapter 17 of this constitution. The size of the Consultation Committee, in accord with this provision, shall be defined in this synod's bylaws.
- S11.02.01.** The Bishop shall be a member of the Consultation Committee ex officio except in instances when the Bishop brings charges against an ordained minister.
- S11.02.02.** The terms of service of members of the Consultation Committee begin on the first day of the third calendar month following election.
- †**S11.03. The Committee on Discipline** of this synod shall consist of 12 persons, of whom six shall be rostered ministers and six shall be laypersons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive re-election.
- a. The functions of the Committee on Discipline of this synod are set forth in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- b. The Synod Council shall fill vacancies on the Committee on Discipline for any unexpired term.
- S11.03.01.** The Bishop shall not be a member of the Committee on Discipline.
- S11.03.02.** The terms of service of members of the Committee on Discipline begin on the first day of the third calendar month following election.
- S11.04.** A Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council to provide support and counsel to the bishop.
- S11.04.01. Mutual Ministry Committee.** The Mutual Ministry Committee consists of seven members, and its function is to provide support and counsel to the bishop. Two members are named by the bishop and serve for the period the bishop may determine, and five members are appointed by the Synod Council and serve for the period the Synod Council may determine; in any case, the period of service of each member shall expire not later than the expiration of the bishop's current term of office. The bishop may seek the counsel and support of any member of the committee at the bishop's pleasure, and may convene meetings of the committee, or of any of its members, to seek their counsel and support on any matter which she/he deems necessary or desirable. Meetings of the committee or consultation between the bishop and any member shall be informal, and votes, minutes or other written memorials or reports not required unless requested by the bishop.

†S11.05. The Audit Committee of this synod shall consist of three to six persons, none of whom is a member of the synod staff. Up to half of the committee members may be Synod Council members. The Audit Committee members shall be elected by the Synod Council for a term of three years and be eligible for re-election to a second consecutive three-year term. The terms of the Audit Committee members shall be staggered. The Audit Committee shall be responsible for assisting the Synod Council in fulfilling its general oversight of the synod’s accounting, financial reporting, internal control systems, and external audit processes as provided in †S15.31.

**S11.10. General Provisions**

†S11.11. This synod shall in its bylaws or by continuing resolution establish a process to ensure that the members of its committees and other organizational units will be persons possessing the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of such units, and to meet the requirements of †S6.04. With the exception of ministers on the rosters of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of a committee of this synod, or any other organizational unit created by this synod, shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshipping community of this synod.

**Chapter 12.**

**CONFERENCES, CLUSTERS, COALITIONS, AREA SUBDIVISIONS, AND NETWORKS**

†S12.01. This synod may establish conferences, clusters, coalitions, area subdivisions, and networks as appropriate within its territory and in collaboration with other synods and entities, as specified in the bylaws and continuing resolutions. The purpose of such groupings shall be to foster interdependent relationships for missional purposes among congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and other affiliates.

S12.01.01. Conferences. Groupings of Congregations of this synod, under Chapter 12 of the constitution, are “Conferences.”

S12.01.A24 Number/names/description of Conferences.

- a. *This synod and its Congregations shall comprise eight Conferences, to be known as the “Central,” “Near West,” “North,” “Northeast,” “Northwest,” “South,” “Southwest,” and “West” Conferences. Normally, a Congregation belongs to the Conference within whose boundaries its place of worship is located. The Council may change or adjust such boundaries.*
- b. *The current rosters of Congregations in each Conference are as follows:*

**CENTRAL (All in the City of Chicago)**

*Bethel (West), Chicago  
Edgebrook, Chicago  
Edison Park, Chicago  
First Evangelical, Chicago  
Iglesia Luterana De La Trinidad, Chicago  
Mosaic, Chicago  
Tumaini Swahili Chapel  
Shepherd’s Heart SAWC, Chicago  
St. Luke’s Lutheran Church of Logan Square, Chicago  
St. Timothy, Chicago  
United in Faith, Chicago  
Wicker Park, Chicago*

**NEAR WEST**

*Acacia Park, Norridge  
Ascension, Riverside  
Christ, Clarendon Hills  
Community United, Berwyn  
Epiphany, Elmhurst  
Gethsemane, Cicero  
Gloria Dei, Downers Grove*



*Good Shepherd, Oak Park*  
*Grace, La Grange*  
*Holy Trinity, Lombard*  
*Lord of Life, Darien*  
*Mision Luterana Unidad, Berwyn*  
*Prince of Peace, Addison*  
*Redeemer, Hinsdale*  
*Resurrection, Franklin Park*  
*St. Paul, Villa Park*  
*St. Paul Thai, Forest Park*  
*United, Oak Park*  
*Unity, Berwyn*

**NORTH**

*Christ, Vernon Hills*  
*Evangelical Lutheran Church of All Saints, Fox Lake*  
*Grace, Libertyville*  
*Holy Cross, Libertyville*  
*Holy Spirit, Lincolnshire*  
*Hope, Long Grove*  
*Joy!, Gurnee*  
*Lutheran Church of the Atonement, Barrington*  
*Messiah, Wauconda*  
*Parroquia Luterana Sagrado Corazon, Waukegan*  
*Peace, Lake Zurich*  
*Shepherd of the Lakes, Grayslake*  
*St. Andrew, Mundelein*  
*St. James, Lake Forest*  
*St. Mark's, Waukegan*  
*St. Paul, Waukegan*  
*Trinity Evangelical, Ingleside*  
*Trinity United, Waukegan*  
*Zion, Deerfield*

**NORTHEAST**

*Christ, Chicago*  
*Concordia, Chicago*  
*Ebenezer, Chicago*  
*Evangelical Church of St. Luke, Chicago*  
*First Immanuel, Chicago*  
*Gloria Dei, Northbrook*  
*Grace, Evanston*  
*Holy Family, Chicago*  
*Holy Trinity, Chicago*  
*Holy Trinity, Glenview*  
*Immanuel, Chicago*  
*Immanuel, Evanston*  
*Irving Park, Chicago*  
*Lake View, Chicago*  
*Luther Memorial, Chicago*  
*Lutheran Church of the Ascension, Northfield*  
*Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Niles*  
*Messiah, Park Ridge*



*Pilgrim, Chicago*  
*Redeemer, Park Ridge*  
*Resurrection, Chicago*  
*St. John's, Wilmette*  
*St. Luke's, Park Ridge*  
*St. Paul's, Evanston*  
*St. Philip, Glenview*  
*St. Timothy's, Skokie*  
*Trinity, Evanston*  
*Unity, Chicago*  
*University, Evanston*

**NORTHWEST**

*All Saints, Palatine*  
*Bethlehem, Elgin*  
*Christ, Palatine*  
*Christ the Lord, Elgin*  
*Christus Victor, Elk Grove Village*  
*Grace, Mount Prospect*  
*Holy Trinity, Elgin*  
*Lord of Life, Schaumburg*  
*Lutheran Church of Martha & Mary, Mount Prospect*  
*Lutheran Church of the Cross, Arlington Heights*  
*Lutheran Church of Good Shepherd, Prospect Heights*  
*New Light Chinese, Palatine*  
*Our Saviour, Arlington Heights*  
*Prince of Peace, Schaumburg*  
*St. Mark, Mount Prospect*  
*St. Matthew, Itasca*  
*Trinity, Rolling Meadows*  
*Trinity, Des Plaines*  
*True Light, Streamwood*  
*Zion, Elgin*

**SOUTH**

*Augustana, Chicago*  
*Bethany, Chicago*  
*Chosen Bethel SAWC, Chicago*  
*Bethlehem Evangelical, Chicago*  
*Christ the Mediator, Chicago*  
*Come Alive Ministry of Faith, Chicago*  
*Iglesia de la Santa Cruz, Chicago*  
*Lebanon, Chicago*  
*Love, Faith, and Hope SAWC, Chicago*  
*Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit, Chicago*  
*St. James (on Michigan), Chicago*  
*St. Mark, Chicago*  
*St. Stephen, Chicago*  
*St. Thomas, Chicago*  
*Windsor Park, Chicago*  
*Zion Lutheran Church of Avalon Park, Chicago*

**SOUTHWEST**



*Bethany, Lemont*  
*Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Palos Heights*  
*Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church, Palos Heights*  
*Faith, Homewood*  
*First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Blue Island*  
*Good Shepherd, Robbins*  
*Jubilee Faith Community, Country Club Hills*  
*Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Oak Forest*  
*Mount Zion, Oak Lawn*  
*Our Savior, Burbank*  
*Our Saviour Evangelical, Lansing*  
*Redeemer, South Holland*  
*Redeemer's, Oak Forest*  
*Savior Divine, Palos Hills*  
*Shekinah Chapel, Riverdale*  
*St. Andrew's, Glenwood*  
*St. Mark, Worth*  
*St. Stephen, Midlothian*  
*Trinity Evangelical, Oak Lawn*  
*Trinity, Park Forest*  
*Zion, Tinley Park*

**WEST**

*Bethany, Batavia*  
*Bethlehem, St. Charles*  
*Faith, Glen Ellyn*  
*Faith, Aurora*  
*Geneva, Geneva*  
*Good Shepherd, Naperville*  
*Grace Lutheran Church of Lily Lake, St. Charles*  
*Grace, Glen Ellyn*  
*Holy Cross, Wheaton*  
*Living Lord, Bartlett*  
*Lutheran Church of the Master, Carol Stream*  
*Naperville Yuhllin, Aurora*  
*New Hope, Aurora*  
*Our Savior, Aurora*  
*Our Saviour's, Naperville*  
*Prince of Peace, Woodridge*  
*The Table Church, Geneva*  
*St. Andrew, West Chicago*  
*St. Luke, Glen Ellyn*  
*St. Mark's, Aurora*  
*St. Paul, Wheaton*  
*St. Timothy, Naperville*  
*Trinity, Warrenville*  
*Truth, Naperville*

c. *The Synod Council may transfer a congregation from one Conference to another. Normally, such a transfer shall be based upon an application by a congregation proposing to be transferred. The application shall be in writing, addressed to the Synod Council, and include rationale in support of the proposed transfer.*



- 12.01.02** Purposes of the Conferences. The purposes of the Conferences are --
- a. to foster clustering of Congregations within one Conference and with those of other Conferences; to encourage gatherings among Congregations for worship; programming, nurture and support; and, to provide monthly meetings of ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service of a conference for education, nurturing and fellowship.
  - b. to participate in this synod's electoral processes -- that is, processes for nominations and elections - - in accordance with the bylaws and continuing resolutions of the synod.
- 12.01.03.** Organizational principles. Various organizational forms are available to Conferences. A Conference shall define its own organization by means of an appropriate organizational document. The initial organization and any re-organization of a Conference shall reflect principles in this bylaw and be subject to approval by the Synod Council. Individual leadership of a Conference shall be the dean. The dean shall be elected according to a Conference's process for such election and for a term of service of not more than four years; there may, but need not, be a limitation on reelection of the dean. After the organizational meeting, and apart from the process for electing the dean, the voting constituency of a Conference shall include the ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service of the Congregations of the Conference and at least one lay person from each Congregation. A Conference shall hold an annual meeting including its voting constituency, and have a planning council elected by the voting constituency. The planning council shall have at least five members, including the dean, who are voting members of different Congregations of the Conference. The terms of service of planning council members shall not exceed four years, and should be staggered to different expiration dates; there may, but need not, be limitations on reelection of planning council members. A Conference may have funds in reasonable amount for which its planning council shall be accountable.
- 12.01.04** Electoral meetings.
- a) Each Conference shall hold electoral meetings of its voting constituency in order, pursuant to S9.03.02, to select persons for appointment or nomination for meetings of the Synod Assembly.
  - b) Each electoral meeting is subject to these requirements: An electoral meeting shall be at the meeting of the conference at the Synod Assembly or at a meeting held before December, upon due notice to members of the voting constituency, for the purpose of selecting persons for appointment or nomination. Each selection and election of a person shall be by majority vote of the voting constituency and with a quorum of at least one member of the voting constituency from each of Congregations comprising 30% of Congregations of the Conference, and shall be the subject of a written record. Proxy or absentee voting shall not be permitted.
  - c) A Conference, by its Dean, is promptly to report each selection and election by an electoral meeting to the Synod Council. The Synod Council is promptly to advise the Nominating Committee of each such selection and election.
- S12.01.05.** Dean The dean of a Conference shall --
- a) aid the Conference and its planning council in setting and achieving Conference objectives,
  - b) arrange the monthly meetings of ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service,
  - c) maintain personal contacts with the ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service of the Conference,
  - d) serve as a communications link between the synod office and the ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service of the Conference,
  - e) make an annual written report to the bishop -- including a summary of Conference activities and advising with respect to the conditions and needs of this church within the Conference -- to be part of the reports to the Synod Assembly, and
  - f) perform such other duties as the bishop may from time to time assign.
- The deans may attend meetings of the Synod Council as spokespersons and observers for their Conferences, with voice but not vote at such meetings.

### Chapter 13.

#### CONGREGATIONS

- †S13.01. Each congregation, except those certified as congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the uniting churches, prior to being listed in the roster of congregations of this synod, shall

adopt the *Model Constitution for Congregations* or one acceptable to this synod that is not in contradiction to the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

a. **New congregations.** A congregation newly formed by this church and any congregation seeking recognition and reception by this church shall:

1) Accept the criteria for recognition and reception as a congregation of this church, fulfill the functions of the congregation, and accept the governance provisions as provided in Chapter 9 of the constitution and bylaws of this church.

2) Adopt governing documents that include fully and without alterations the Preamble, Chapter 1, where applicable, and all required provisions of Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* consistent with requirements of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church. Bylaws and continuing resolutions, appropriate for inclusion in these chapters and not in conflict with these required provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, the constitution of this synod, or the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be adopted as described in Chapters 16 and 18 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

3) Accept the commitments expected of all congregations of this church as stated in \*C6.01., \*C6.02., and \*C6.03. of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

b. **Congregations from another church body.** If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should contact the ELCA synod bishop or staff where the congregation is located. The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with this church.

c. **Recognition and reception.** Recognition and reception of additional congregations into this church is based upon the judgment of the synod that the congregations satisfy the criteria of 9.21. and 9.25. The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the roster of congregations.

1) Recognition and reception of congregations newly formed by this church is accomplished by action of the Synod Council.

2) Recognition and reception of transferring or independent congregations is accomplished by the action of the Synod Assembly upon the recommendation of the Synod Council.

a. If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should contact the synod bishop or synod staff in this church where the congregation is located.

b. The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

†S13.02. It shall be the responsibility of each congregation of this synod to elect from among its voting members laypersons to serve as members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. Normatively, congregations should hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. The number of persons to be elected by each congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by this synod..

S13.11. When a rostered minister resigns, the Congregation Council shall receive the letter of resignation, report it to the congregation, and at once notify the bishop of this synod.

S13.12. A congregation under financial obligation to its former rostered minister shall make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling a successor.

†S13.20. A congregation considering a relocation shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.

- †S13.20. A congregation considering development of an additional site to be used regularly for worship shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.
- †S13.21. A congregation considering development of an additional site to be used regularly for worship shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.
- †S13.22. Each congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America within the territory of this synod, except those which are in partnership with the Slovak Zion Synod, shall establish and maintain a relationship with this synod.
- †S13.23. Provision 9.71. of the constitution of this church shall govern the relationship of this synod and a congregation of this synod regarding the property of the congregation. This synod may transfer or convey property to a congregation of the synod, subject to restrictions accepted by the congregation, including provision that if the Synod Council, in its sole and exclusive discretion, determines (1) that the property is not being used to serve the mission and ministry needs of this church, or (2) that the congregation has transferred, encumbered, mortgaged, or in any way burdened or impaired any right, title, or interest in the property without the prior approval of the Synod Council, then title to the property shall revert to the synod, and the congregation, upon written demand, shall reconvey the property to the synod.
- S13.23.01. Property of congregation terminating relationship with this church. This bylaw is subject to provision 9.52. of the ELCA constitution concerning the governing documents of Congregations recognized at the establishment of this church, and does not provide for action inconsistent with the said provision 9.52. Whenever a Congregation has initiated action to terminate its relationship with this church under provision 9.62. of the ELCA constitution and requested to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, the synod's process set forth in steps a. through e. of this bylaw is established for the consultation concerning title to property of the Congregation, under provision 9.71.e. of the ELCA constitution, by the Synod Council with the Congregation prior to the Synod Council's decision on whether to approve the Congregation's request to retain their property.
- a. The Congregation shall, after having submitted the certified copy of the resolution to terminate to the bishop and, in the case of congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America (as constituted prior to January 1, 1988), after the termination is approved by this synod (as required for such congregations by provision 9.62. of the ELCA constitution), deliver to the bishop a written request stating whether the Congregation desires to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body and, if the latter, such request shall identify the non-Lutheran church body and describe any and all action the Congregation has taken or which it intends to take in order to accomplish such relationship.
  - b. Within 30 days from receipt of such written request from a Congregation, the bishop shall present the request to the Synod Council.
  - c. After the Synod Council receives the request, the bishop shall be afforded opportunity by the Congregation for a meeting with it, at a mutually-agreed time and place, for the purpose of discussing the request. Such meeting shall be informal, and any member of the Congregation and any member of the Synod Council may attend and be given voice. However, no such meeting shall be held unless the pastor or pastors of the Congregation and at least a majority of members of the Congregation Council (or, if such body is identified by a different designation, to the equivalent congregational authority) are also present.
  - d. Within 10 days after the said informal meeting, the Congregation shall deliver to the bishop true, complete and correct copies of all documents, papers, letters and records in the possession of the Congregation, as may be requested by the bishop or by any member of the Synod Council who attended the meeting, which pertain to the requested termination.
  - e. Within 45 days after the informal meeting, the bishop shall convene a meeting of the Synod Council for the purpose of making the final determination concerning the Congregation's request. Any member of the Congregation may attend such meeting and be afforded reasonable time and opportunity to address the Synod Council on matters pertaining to the requested termination. The Synod Council need not announce the determination at such Synod Council meeting, but as soon as practicable after the meeting, the Synod Council will give written notification to the Congregation



by sending copies of the determination to the pastor or pastors, to each member of the Congregation Council (or equivalent authority), and to the secretary of the Congregation. The Synod Council in its sole discretion, may decide whether it would be appropriate or desirable for the notification to set forth the basis or reason for the determination.

†S13.24. The Synod Council, itself or through trustees appointed by it, may take charge and control of the property of a congregation of this synod to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of this synod, if any of the following apply:

- a. The congregation has disbanded, ceased to worship, or otherwise ceased to exist as a congregation.
- b. The congregation has abandoned its property.
- c. The remaining members of the congregation decide that it is no longer possible to function as a congregation or that they are unable to provide required governance.
- d. The Synod Council determines that the membership of a congregation has become so scattered or so diminished in numbers that it cannot provide required governance or that it has become impractical for the congregation to fulfill the purposes for which it was organized.
- e. The Synod Council determines that it is necessary for this synod to protect and preserve the congregation's property from waste and deterioration.

The congregation shall have the right to appeal any such decision to the next Synod Assembly.

S13.25. This synod may temporarily assume administration of a congregation upon its request or with its concurrence. Such synod administration shall continue only so long as necessary to complete the purposes for which it was requested by the congregation or until the congregation withdraws consent to continued administration.

**S13.30. Discipline**

†S13.31. Congregations and members of congregations are subject to discipline in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The synod's involvement in and responsibility for such disciplinary processes shall be as set forth in that chapter.

S13.40. Synod Authorized Worshiping Communities

S13.41. Authorized worshiping communities, acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

**Chapter 14.**

**ROSTERED MINISTERS**

†S14.10. **Ministers of Word and Sacrament**

†S14.11. The time and place of the ordination of those persons properly called to ministry in this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.

†S14.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
  - 1) preach the Word;
  - 2) administer the sacraments;
  - 3) conduct public worship;
  - 4) provide pastoral care;
  - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
  - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
  - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and abroad; and
  - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.



- b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
  - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
  - 2) relate to all schools and organizations of the congregation;
  - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
  - 4) with the council, administer discipline;
  - 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of this synod; and
  - 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- S14.13.** The pastor (a) shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, (b) shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod, and (c) shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- S14.14.** Whenever members of a congregation move to such a distance that regular attendance at its services becomes impractical, it shall be the duty of the pastor to commend them, upon their consent, to the pastoral care of a Lutheran congregation nearer to their place of residence.
- S14.15.** Each minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of this synod shall submit a ministry report to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- †**S14.16.** When a congregation of this church desires to call a pastor or a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church:
  - a. Each congregation of this synod shall consult the bishop of this synod before taking any steps leading to the extending of a call to a prospective pastor.
  - b. For issuance of a letter of call to a pastor or candidate by a congregation of this synod in accord with ELCA constitutional provision 7.41., a two-thirds vote shall be required of voting members of the congregation present and voting at a meeting regularly called for the purpose of issuing such a call.
  - c. When the congregation has voted to issue a call to a prospective pastor, the letter of call shall be submitted to the bishop of this synod for the bishop's signature.
- S14.17.** No minister of Word and Sacrament shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Sacrament shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the chair of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.
- †**S14.18.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and a congregation shall be as follows:
  - a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:
    - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
    - 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
    - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;
    - 4) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the pastor;
    - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
    - 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
    - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
    - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
    - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
  - b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective



conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,

1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or

2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.

- c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. In the bishop's sole discretion, the bishop's committee may also present, as may be appropriate, either a report or report summary to the pastor and to the congregation together with the recommendations. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, the congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

†S14.19. Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the pastor, or if there is no duly called pastor, then by the interim pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council.

†S14.21. The records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members transferred or dismissed, members who have become inactive, or members excluded from the congregation shall be kept accurately and permanently. They shall remain the property of each congregation. At the time of the closure of a congregation, such records shall be sent to the regional archives. The secretary of the congregation shall attest to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in the secretary's hands in good order by a departing pastor before:

- a. installation in another call, or  
b. approval of a request for change in roster status.

†S14.22. The pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:

- a. installation in another call, or  
b. approval of a request for change in roster status.

†S14.23. During service to a congregation, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The interim pastor may delegate the same in part to an interim supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of this synod. The interim pastor and any rostered minister who may assist shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Upon completion of service, the interim



pastor shall certify to the bishop of this synod that the congregation records, for the period for which the interim pastor was responsible, are in order.

†S14.24. With the approval of the synod bishop expressed in writing, which sets forth a clear statement of the purpose to be served by such a departure from the normal rule of permanency of the call as expressed in †S14.18., a congregation may call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop of this synod or a representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of †S14.18.

S14.25. All ministers of Word and Sacrament under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the pastors of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

†S14.30. **Ministers of Word and Service**

†S14.31. The time and place of the ordination of those persons properly called to ministry in this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.

†S14.32. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every Minister of Word and Service shall:

- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
- b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;
- d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
- e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
- f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
- g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel, and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

S14.33. The minister of Word and Service shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the minister of Word and Service shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

S14.34. Each minister of Word and Service on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

†S14.41. When a congregation of this church desires to call a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the ministry of Word and Service of this church:

- a. Each congregation of this synod shall consult the bishop of this synod before taking any steps leading to the extending of a call to a prospective minister of Word and Service.
- b. For issuance of a letter of call to a minister of Word and Service or candidate by a congregation of this synod in accord with ELCA constitutional provision 7.71., a two-thirds vote shall be required of members of the congregation present and voting at a meeting regularly called for the purpose of issuing such a call.
- c. When the congregation has voted to issue a call to a prospective minister of Word and Service, the letter of call shall be submitted to the bishop of this synod for the bishop's signature.

S14.42. No minister of Word and Service shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Service shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the chair of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

†S14.43. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and a

congregation shall be as follows:

- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a minister of Word and Service, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:
  - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
  - 2) resignation of the minister of Word and Service, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
  - 3) inability to conduct the office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;
  - 4) inability to conduct the office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the minister of Word and Service;
  - 5) suspension of the minister of Word and Service through discipline for more than three months;
  - 6) resignation or removal of the minister of Word and Service from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church;
  - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
  - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
  - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the ministry of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
  - 1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
  - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the minister of Word and Service's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the minister of Word and Service to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the minister of Word and Service and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee address whether the minister of Word and Service's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the minister of Word and Service, if appropriate. If the minister of Word and Service and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the minister of Word and Service's call, the congregation may dismiss the minister of Word and Service only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.



- †S14.44. Ministers of Word and Service shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the Congregation Council.
- †S14.45. The minister of Word and Service shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:
- a. installation in another call, or
  - b. approval of a request for change in roster status.
- †S14.46. With the approval of the synod bishop expressed in writing, which sets forth a clear statement of the purpose to be served by such a departure from the normal rule of permanency of the call as expressed in †S14.43., a congregation may call a minister of Word and Service for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop of this synod or a representative of the bishop shall meet with the minister of Word and Service and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of †S14.43.
- S14.47. All ministers of Word and Service under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the ministers of Word and Service of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

## Chapter 15.

### FINANCIAL MATTERS

- †S15.01. The fiscal year of this synod shall be February 1 through January 31.
- †S15.11. Since the congregations, synods, and churchwide organization are interdependent expressions that share in God’s mission, all share in the responsibility to develop, implement, and strengthen the financial support of the whole church. The gifts and offerings of the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are given to support all parts of this church; thus the unity of this church should be evidenced in determining each part’s share of the gifts and offerings. Therefore:
- a. The mission of this church beyond the congregation is to be supported by such a proportionate share of each congregation’s annual budget as each congregation determines. This synod shall develop guidelines for determining “proportionate share,” and shall consult with congregational leaders to assist each congregation in making its determination.
  - b. This synod shall receive the proportionate share of the mission support from its congregations, and shall transmit that percentage or amount of each congregation’s mission support as determined in consultation with the churchwide organization and approved by the Synod Assembly as part of its budget consideration.
  - c. Should the Synod Assembly not approve the proportionate share of mission support determined in consultation with the churchwide organization, a new consultation with the churchwide organization shall take place. The Synod Council is authorized to amend the budget adopted by the Synod Assembly to reflect the results of this consultation.
- †S15.12. The annual budget of this synod shall reflect the entire range of its own activities and its commitment to supportive funding with other synods and the churchwide organization.
- S15.13. On the basis of estimated income, the Synod Council shall authorize expenditures within the budget for the fiscal year. Expenditure authorizations shall be subject to revision, in light of changing conditions, by the Synod Council.
- S15.14. Except when such procedure would jeopardize current operations, a reserve amounting to no more than 16 percent of the sum of the amounts scheduled in the next year’s budget for regular distribution to synodical causes shall be carried forward annually for disbursement in the following year in the interest of making possible a more even flow of income to such causes. The exact number of dollars to be held in reserve shall be determined by the Synod Council.
- S15.21. No appeal to congregations of this or any other synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for the raising of funds shall be conducted by congregations or organizations related to or affiliated with this synod without the consent of the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council.

- S15.21.01. Intermediaries.** A Congregation or organization related to or affiliated with this synod may not utilize an intermediary to avoid the consent required in **S15.21.**
- S15.21.02. Fund-raising.** Generally, for purposes of **S15.21.**, consent by this synod for an appeal for raising funds shall be based upon an application for such consent. The process set forth in steps a. through e. of this bylaw is established for such applications and their disposition.
- a) The application shall be in writing and addressed to the Synod Council. The application shall identify, as applicant, all Congregations or organizations seeking the consent, describe the purpose and scope of the proposed appeal, and include all supporting information applicant believes pertinent.
  - b) The Synod Council may summarily deny an application whereof applicant includes a Congregation which is not current in providing proportionate share support according to Chapter 15 of the constitution or an organization which is not fulfilling requirements of its affiliation or relationship.
  - c) Before deeming an application complete, the Synod Council in its discretion shall have a reasonable opportunity to ask applicant for additional information (allowing a reasonable period for applicant's reply) or otherwise to develop such additional information.
  - d) Within 180 days after the Synod Council deems an application complete, it shall act on the application, with written notice of the action to applicant. Such action, in the Synod Council's discretion, may include any of the following:
    - i. consent or conditional consent for the appeal.
    - ii. denial of consent which may, but need not, recite a particular reason for the denial.
    - iii. referral of the application, with or without recommendation, to the Synod Assembly.
  - e) The Synod Council's disposition of the application is final. An application referred by the Synod Council to the Synod Assembly, may be disposed of in any manner the Synod Assembly deems appropriate.
- S15.21.03. Consent not required in certain circumstances.** Consent by this synod under S15.21. is not applicable to and is not required for—
- a. reasonable funding of activities of a Conference by Congregations of the Conference.
  - b. reasonable funding for a period of not more than one year of specific educational, charitable or benevolence projects within the Statement of Purpose of this church by a Congregation provided
    - i. such funding may not supplant the Congregation's proportionate share support for this church beyond the congregation under Chapter 15 of the constitution,
    - ii. during the period of funding the Congregation is current in providing such support, and
    - iii. the Congregation has invited a proposal for such funding.
  - c. reasonable funding for a period of not more than one year of specific joint educational, charitable or benevolence projects within the Statement of Purpose of this church by or on the part of several Congregations provided
    - i. such funding shall not supplant the Congregations' proportionate share support for this church beyond the congregation under Chapter 15 of the constitution,
    - ii. during the period of funding each such Congregation is current in providing such support, and
    - iii. the funding is provided by all or some of such Congregations.
- †**S15.31.** This synod shall arrange to have an annual audit of its financial records conducted by a certified public accountant firm recommended by the synod Audit Committee and approved by the Synod Council. The audited annual financial report shall be submitted by this synod to the churchwide Office of the Treasurer and to the congregations of this synod.
- †**S15.32.** This synod shall maintain adequate, continuous insurance coverage in accordance with standards recommended by the churchwide organization. Insurance programs offered or endorsed by the churchwide organization shall be deemed to fulfill this obligation.

**Chapter 16.**  
**INDEMNIFICATION**



- †S16.01. Subject to the limitations and duties imposed by law, each person who is or was made or threatened to be made a party to any proceeding by reason of the present or former capacity of that person as a Synod Council member, officer, employee, or committee member of this synod shall be indemnified against all costs and expenses incurred by that person in connection with the proceeding. Indemnification of any person by reason of that person’s capacity as a director, officer, employee, or committee member of any other organization, regardless of its form or relationship to this synod, is subject to the provisions of †S16.02.
- a. The term “proceeding” means a threatened, pending, or completed lawsuit, whether civil or criminal, an administrative or investigative matter, arbitration, mediation, alternative dispute resolution, or any other similar legal or governmental action. Except as otherwise required by law, the term “proceeding” does not include (a) any action by this synod against the individual seeking indemnification, or (b) subject to †S16.04., a disciplinary hearing or related process described in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
  - b. The term “indemnification” includes reimbursement and advances of costs and expenses for judgments, penalties, fines, settlements, excise taxes, reasonable attorneys’ fees, disbursements, and similar required expenditures.
- S16.01.A87.** Indemnification for members of certain committees.
- a. *Members of the Consultation Committee, the synod component of the Committee on Discipline, the Ministry Committee of this synod, and of each committee convened under †S14.13.b. or S14.13.08., within the scope and proper conduct of the functions and responsibilities of such committees and with reference to certain third persons, are agents of the synod and eligible to be indemnified under †S16.01. of the constitution. “Certain third persons” means only persons who are members of this church and with whom such a committee deals on behalf of this church or this synod, but not persons who are indemnified under †S16.01.*
  - b. *As from time to time appropriate for purposes of indemnification according to †S16.01., the Synod Council may designate members of committees of the synod, other than the committees identified in provision a. of this resolution, as agents of the synod.*
- †S16.02. Whenever a person who, while a Synod Council member, officer, committee member, or employee of this synod, is or was serving at the request of this synod as (or whose duties in that position involve or involved service in the capacity of) a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or agent of another organization, is or was made or threatened to be made a party to a proceeding by reason of such capacity, then such person shall be entitled to indemnification only if (a) the Synod Council has established a process for determining whether a person serving in the capacity described in this section shall be entitled to indemnification in any specific case, and (b) that process has been applied in making a specific determination that such person is entitled to indemnification.
- †S16.03. This synod may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of itself or any person entitled to indemnification pursuant to this chapter against any liability asserted against and incurred by this synod or by such other person in or arising from a capacity described in †S16.01. or †S16.02.
- †S16.04. When written charges against a rostered minister of this church are made in disciplinary proceedings under Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* by the synod bishop or when written charges against a congregation are made in disciplinary proceedings by the Synod Council or the synod bishop, and the discipline hearing committee determines that no discipline shall be imposed, then if such determination is not reversed or set aside on appeal, indemnification shall be made by the synod to the accused for reasonable attorney’s fees and other reasonable expenses related to the defense of the charges. The determination of the reasonableness of such fees and expenses shall be made by the Synod Council.

**Chapter 17.**  
**CONSULTATION AND ADJUDICATION**

- †S17.01. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall be available to give counsel when disputes arise within this synod.

- †S17.02. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall receive expressions of concern from rostered ministers, congregations, and organizations within this synod; provide a forum in which the parties concerned can seek to work out matters causing distress or conflict; and make appropriate recommendations for their resolution. When a concern relates directly to the synod bishop, the synod vice president will lead the Executive Committee’s efforts at resolving the matter. When the matter at issue cannot be resolved in this manner, applicable procedures for investigation, decision, appeal, and adjudication shall be followed. Allegations or charges that could lead to the discipline of a rostered minister shall not be addressed by the Executive Committee but shall be resolved through the disciplinary process set forth in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- †S17.03. When there is disagreement between or among congregations of this synod on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, the council of an affected congregation may petition the synod bishop for a consultation after informing the other affected congregation(s) of its intent to do so. If this consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee’s efforts fail to resolve the issue(s), the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the council deems necessary. The decision of the Synod Council shall be final.
- †S17.04. When conferences, clusters, coalitions, or area subdivisions of this synod have a disagreement on a substantive issue that they cannot resolve, the aggrieved party or parties may petition the synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council requesting a consultation after informing the other affected parties of their intent to do so. In this case the decision of the Executive Committee shall prevail, except that, upon the motion of a member of the Synod Council, the decision shall be referred to the Synod Council for final action.
- †S17.10. **Adjudication in a Congregation**
- †S17.11. When there is disagreement between or among factions within a congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of the congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president of the Congregation Council of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in †S14.18.d. In all other matters, if the bishop’s consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee’s efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the council deems necessary. The Synod Council’s decision shall be final.

**Chapter 18.**

**AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

†S18.10. **Amendments to Constitution**

- †S18.11. Certain sections of this constitution incorporate and record therein required provisions of the constitution and bylaws of this church. If such provisions are amended by the Churchwide Assembly, corresponding amendments shall be introduced at once into this constitution by the secretary of this synod upon receipt of formal certification thereof from the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S18.12. Whenever the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially informs this synod that the Churchwide Assembly has amended any non-required provision of the *Constitution for Synods*, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the Synod Assembly without presentation at a prior Synod Assembly. An amendment that is identical to a provision of the *Constitution for Synods* shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption by this synod. The Church Council, through the secretary of this church, shall be given prompt notification of its adoption.
- †S18.13. Other amendments to this constitution may be adopted by this synod through either of the following procedures:
- a. Introduced with the support of at least 100 voting members and having been approved by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, an amendment may be ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote at the next regular meeting of the Synod



Assembly.

b. The Synod Council may propose an amendment, with notice to be sent to the congregations of this synod at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Such an amendment shall require for adoption a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at such a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

All such amendments shall become effective upon ratification by the Churchwide Assembly or by the Church Council.

†S18.20. **Amendments to Bylaws**

†S18.21. This synod may adopt bylaws not in conflict with this constitution or with the constitution and bylaws of the churchwide organization. This synod may amend its bylaws at any meeting of the Synod Assembly by a two-thirds vote of voting members of the assembly present and voting. Newly adopted bylaws and amendments to existing bylaws shall be reported to the secretary of this church.

†S18.30. **Amendments to Continuing Resolutions**

†S18.31. This synod may adopt continuing resolutions not in conflict with this constitution or its bylaws or the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the churchwide organization. Such continuing resolutions may be adopted or amended by a majority vote of the Synod Assembly or by a two-thirds vote of the Synod Council. Newly adopted continuing resolutions and amendments to existing continuing resolutions shall be reported to the secretary of this church.





Metropolitan Chicago Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

# 2026 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Metropolitan Chicago Synod  
1420 West Dickens Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60614-3004  
773-248-0021  
[www.mcselca.org](http://www.mcselca.org)

# Table of Contents

Part I	Determining the Cash Salary .....	4
	Step 1: Base Salary .....	4
	Step 2: Merit Adjustment .....	4
	Step 3: Total Cash Salary .....	4
Part II	Determining Housing Allowance	
	Option 1: Allowance if pastor is a homeowner or renter .....	5
	Option 2: Allowance if parsonage is provided.....	5-6
Part III	Social Security .....	7
Part IV	Retirement and Other Benefits.....	8
	Retirement .....	8
	ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits .....	8
	Disability and Basic Group Life.....	8
	Additional Benefits .....	8
Part V	Reimbursable Expenses .....	9
	Automobile Allowance.....	9
	Continuing Education .....	9
	First Call Theological Education.....	9
	Publications and Other Resource Expenses .....	9
	Official Meetings .....	9
	Other Expenses .....	10
	Total Salary Package.....	10
Part VI	Other Considerations .....	11
	Workweek .....	11
	Vacation.....	11
	Holidays.....	11
	Parenting Leave.....	11
	Sick Leave .....	12
	Compassion Leave .....	12
	Temporary Disability .....	12
	Military Leave.....	12
	Other Benefit Programs .....	12
	Spiritual Renewal .....	13
	Spiritual Guidance.....	13
	First Call Pastors.....	13
	Moving Expenses.....	13
	Sabbatical Leave .....	13



Appendix A: Guidelines for Ministers of Word and Sacrament ..... 14

Appendix B: Guidelines for Ministers of Word and Service ..... 15-16

Appendix C: Sample Resolutions for Congregation Councils ..... 17  
 Pastor's Estimate of Housing Expense ..... 18

Appendix D: Guidelines for Sabbatical Leave ..... 19



## Part I Determining the Cash Salary

### Step 1 Base Salary

Base salary is that portion of compensation that is provided to sustain the rostered minister who is called to lead ministry through the congregation or another organization. Base salary does not include housing, social security allowance, or professional expenses.

Please refer to Salary Guidelines on page 11.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Step 2 Merit Adjustment

**Education:** Further education enriches ministry. Modest reimbursement for advanced degrees is appropriate. The suggested amount added to base pay for this component is a multiplier in the range of 1% to 5% of base pay.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Responsibility:** Each call is unique to the situation in each congregation. Things to consider in this area include solo parishes, multiple staff parishes, and specialized ministries. When there is a unique measure of leadership or workload, additional compensation is appropriate. The suggested amount added to base pay for this component is a multiplier in the range of 1% to 5% of base pay.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Previous Work Experience:** Previous experience in the church and/or secular workforce that enhances a person's skills for ministry should be taken into consideration. Such experience prior to ordination should be calculated at a rate of 1/3 to 1/2 year for each year of prior experience, not to exceed 5 years of ministry credit.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Step 3 Total Cash Salary

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ (1)



**Part II Determining Housing Allowance (choose Option 1 OR 2)<sup>1</sup>**

**Option 1: Allowance if pastor is a homeowner or renter**

If your congregation provides a housing allowance for your pastor and family, this amount should be sufficient to provide adequate housing as well as care for the related expenses of upkeep and utilities (e.g., electricity, fuel, trash removal, water/sewer, internet, and basic telephone service). Your pastor may exclude the housing allowance from taxable income up to the *Fair Rental Value* of a furnished home plus utilities to the extent that the housing allowance is actually spent for housing. Expenses that qualify for the housing allowance include payments on purchase, mortgage payments (principal and interest), taxes, insurance, utilities, maintenance, repairs, furnishings, landscaping, etc.

Housing expenses vary greatly across our geographical area. While we recognize these variances, we find that the typical amount of housing allowance, for a full-time call, should be a minimum of \$25,000 annually. This is generally a good starting point for the conversation, realizing that there can be significant adjustments based on specific communities and circumstances.

The amount discussed in this section is not necessarily equal to the amount that the pastor elects for their annual housing allowance for tax reporting purposes. That designation is made to reflect their actual property expenses, often in consultation with their tax preparer. \$ \_\_\_\_\_(2a)

**Option 2: Allowance if parsonage is provided**

Portico Benefit Services determines 30% of Total Cash Salary is to be added to the Defined Compensation. This is its value only, not an amount paid to the pastor. Value \$ \_\_\_\_\_(2b)

**Utilities**

Congregations are encouraged to pay utilities directly, but may instead add an allowance estimating the actual cost.

Paid Directly \$ \_\_\_\_\_(2c)  
**OR** Allowance

<sup>1</sup> Only Word and Sacrament Ministers are eligible for a housing allowance. Please see Appendix C for Internal Revenue Service housing resolution.



**Furnishings Allowance**

Congregations may add a portion to the cash salary called “furnishing allowance.” Purchases made with this allowance are the property of the pastor.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ (2d)

**Housing Equity**

When a church-owned or rented parsonage is provided as part of the pastor’s compensation, the pastor does not have the opportunity to build equity, as do homeowners. Some congregations choose to compensate for this lack of equity with a housing equity allowance. These funds are vested in the pastor. The congregation pays a predetermined amount in monthly installments directly to Portico (preferred) or to another depository agreed upon by the pastor and the parish or directly to the pastor. If paid directly to the pastor, it becomes taxable income. It is recommended that the housing equity allowance be placed in a tax-deferred account with Portico. The housing equity allowance is intended to assist the pastor or the pastor’s family to provide housing that would be available when the pastor decides to purchase a home, retires, becomes disabled, dies, or when the congregation disposes of its parsonage and begins paying a housing allowance. When the pastor resigns, the assets accumulated in the depository (if not Portico) are transferred to another congregation or paid directly to the pastor, at the pastor’s discretion. Our recommendation would be to pay a housing equity allowance of at least \$3,600 per year.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ (2e)

Total Housing Compensation [2a or 2b+2c+2d+ (2e, if amount is paid directly to the pastor)] \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (2)



### **Part III Social Security**

#### **Social Security Allowance**

Pastors are required to pay 15.3% Self-Employment (SE) Tax (Social Security/Medicare). The 15.3% is comprised of 7.65% employee portion and 7.65% employer portion.

It is recommended that the congregation reimburse the employer portion of the Social Security Tax that the pastor must pay.

This reimbursement is taxable income to the pastor and is subject to SE tax. Therefore, to include the amount of that tax in the reimbursement, the following calculation is used:

$$7.65\% \times 7.65\% = 0.00585\% + 7.65\% = 8.235\%$$

To complete the final portion of defined compensation, multiply the sum of lines (1 + 2) x 8.235%.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ (3)

#### **Defined Compensation<sup>2</sup>**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

---

<sup>2</sup> Defined Compensation: *Defined Compensation* is the sum of Total Cash (line 1), Housing (line 2a OR 2b+2c+2d), and Social Security (line 3).



**Part IV Retirement and Other Benefits**

**Retirement**

Under the ELCA Retirement Plan, the congregation is required to pay the minimum retirement contribution percentage of 10%. The congregation may choose to pay a retirement contribution percentage that is higher than the minimum.

Defined Compensation X \_\_\_\_\_%

**Retirement Contribution**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits**

Calculate benefit costs by using Portico calculator found at <https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/Resources/Calculators/Benefit-Costs-Calculator/>

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Disability and Basic Group Life**

Contribution is set by Portico Benefit Services at .50% of Defined Compensation in 2026. See link for calculator above.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Benefits**

The congregation may also provide Supplemental Medical Insurance.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Retirement and Other Benefits**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_(4)



## Part V Reimbursable Expenses

### Automobile Allowance

There are three ways to handle auto expenses (choose one):

- a. Congregation purchases or leases an auto \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Reimburse miles driven at 70 cents (in 2025) per mile<sup>3</sup> \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Pay monthly allowance (taxable as income) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Continuing Education

It is recommended that \$1,500 per year be spent on the continuing education of a rostered minister.

A minimum of 50 hours per year of intentional continuing education is strongly encouraged. To meet this requirement, it is recommended that two weeks (14 days, including two Sundays) be given annually. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### First Call Theological Education

First Call Theological Education (FCTE) is a requirement of the ELCA for a pastor in the first three years of ministry. This program helps pastors transition from seminary to congregational ministry. The FCTE requirement is in addition to the above recommended continuing education for the first three years of the pastor's ministry. Currently FCTE is four to six days per year. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Professional Expenses

Congregations are encouraged to reimburse for publications, resource materials, clergy vestments, organizational dues and other professional expenses at a minimum level of \$500 annually. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

---

<sup>3</sup> The reimbursement amount is the Standard Mileage Rate for business set by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and announced annually. Anytime the IRS revises this rate, the revised rate will become the current rate to use for reimbursements. This information is available at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), search phrase – *standard mileage rates*.



**Official Meetings**

All rostered ministers under call are expected to attend the synod assembly and other meetings called by the bishop, including the Rostered Ministers Gathering. It is recommended that the expenses for these meetings be budgeted and paid for by the congregation. In situations where the congregation does not prepay these meeting expenses, the pastor should be reimbursed.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Expenses**

Congregations are encouraged to reimburse other expenses incurred by the pastor that are related to the ministry of the congregation.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Reimbursable Expenses**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ (5)

**Total Salary Package**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_



## **Part VI Other Considerations**

### **Compensation Guidelines**

The 2026 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod are provided to assist in establishing appropriate compensation packages, both for the initial call and in subsequent years. For 2026, a 2.90% cost of living increase is recommended for rostered ministers. The Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index for the 12 months ending August 2025 reflected an increase of 2.90%. While we acknowledge the reality of rising prices, we also recognize the financial burden of imposing the full increase on all congregations of our synod. Those congregations that are fiscally able to provide the full 2.90% to their leaders are encouraged to do so. As always, these guideline salaries are recommendations that can be adapted to your congregation's individual situation.

Appendix A contains salary guidelines for full-time rostered Word and Sacrament Ministers on page 14. The combined recommendation is comprised of the cost-of-living increase discussed above, along with an experience factor that begins at 2% and declines in subsequent years. Appendix B (pp. 15-16) contains similar guidelines for rostered Word and Service Ministers based on their education level.

### **Workweek**

Because of the "on-call" nature of ministry, consideration needs to be given to the minister's self-care. A minimum of one day off per week is a necessity. It is suggested that the minister should have two consecutive days off whenever possible, at least once per month.

### **Vacation**

The need for annual vacation is self-evident. Four weeks of paid vacation time per year, encompassing four Sundays, is considered the minimum. The congregation should consider granting additional vacation time based on the length of service in ministry. The length of vacation time, including the number of Sundays off and when vacation time is to be taken, are all matters which need to be discussed openly with your pastor and are an important part of compensation.

A written agreement regarding vacation time and days off should be approved by the minister and the church council.

### **Holidays**

Appropriate time off for general holidays should be provided. If the actual day cannot be taken, another day should be designated to compensate for the holiday.

### **Parenting Leave**

The number of weeks leave before and after the birth or adoption of a child should be negotiated and specified in advance. A specific parenting leave plan should be carefully drawn up in open consultation with your pastor. Parental leave should include eight (8) weeks' full salary, housing, and benefits. Any other specific conditions should be clearly defined in a written document. The congregation is responsible for compensating a substitute pastor.

Parental leave may be granted by the congregation at other times, such as during times of severe illness, trauma, or death of a child. The length of the leave and the salary and benefits that the congregation will provide should be mutually negotiated. It is recommended that at a minimum the congregation provide full benefits for the pastor during the leave granted.



**Sick Leave**

The recommended allowance for sick time is one day per month, cumulative to 30 days. Full compensation should be paid during the illness. The congregation is responsible for compensating a supply pastor during the illness.

**Compassion Leave**

Compassion leave for a death in the rostered minister's immediate family (spouse, child, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, grandchild, parent-in-law, or legal guardian) should be offered. This list is descriptive, not exhaustive. It is understood that there are many non-traditional relationships that are equally important to the employee. Therefore, this definition may also apply to any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship.

While circumstances vary, three to seven days of paid leave, potentially including a Sunday, is recommended as a compassionate first step.

**Temporary Disability**

In the event of temporary disability of a full-time rostered minister, full compensation should be paid for the first 60 days of disability.

After approximately the first 60 days of disability, the ELCA disability plan, if approved, becomes effective and will pay 2/3 or 66.67% of the monthly defined compensation. Congregations should consider paying the remaining 1/3 or 33.33% of the monthly defined compensation. Contact Portico Benefit Services for more information.

The congregation is responsible for compensating a supply pastor during the disability.

If a full-time rostered minister, because of the disability, receives compensation from some source other than the ELCA disability plan, such as Workers Compensation, then compensation should be mutually negotiated so that the total does not exceed the usual monthly compensation.

**Military Leave**

It is expected that any rostered minister interviewing for a call who has commitments to the National Guard or a reserve component of the military will disclose this information. Time off for these commitments should be mutually negotiated prior to extension and acceptance of call.

**Other Benefit Programs**

Additional benefits are available through Portico in the form of Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) and Health Savings Accounts (HSA). These are all ways for the rostered minister to save money while gaining tax advantages. Details about these programs can be found at [www.porticobenefits.org](http://www.porticobenefits.org).



**Spiritual Renewal**

It is recommended that all rostered ministers under call be given three days to one week or more per year for spiritual renewal which is not classified as vacation or educational leave. It is suggested that the rostered minister spend this time at a retreat center or facility where they are able to fully focus on "renewal." Therefore, the pastor should designate a colleague who can cover emergencies during this time away.

**Spiritual Guidance**

It is recommended that all rostered ministers under call have a spiritual director or guide during their time of call.

**First Call Pastors**

Congregations are asked to give serious consideration to making a gift of up to \$5,000 to help pay off any first call pastor's educational loans. The money should be repaid directly to the lending organization.

**Moving Expenses**

The congregation is responsible for relocating a rostered minister to the community. All reasonable expenses should be covered by the congregation and negotiated with the incoming pastor. Moving services need to be performed by a professional moving company. If other arrangements are made, they must be mutually agreeable.

**Sabbatical Leave**

It is recommended that the congregation consider Sabbatical Leave for their pastor. See Appendix D for Guidelines for Sabbatical Leaves.

Appendix A

Salary Guidelines for  
Ministers of Word and  
Sacrament

Service yr. beginning in 2026	Base Salary from 2025	Experience factor	Inflation factor	Combined % increase	Recommended Salary 2026
1					\$48,114
2	\$46,758	2.00%	2.90%	4.90%	\$49,049
3	\$47,927	1.96%	2.90%	4.86%	\$50,257
4	\$48,928	1.92%	2.90%	4.82%	\$51,288
5	\$50,080	1.89%	2.90%	4.79%	\$52,477
6	\$52,526	1.85%	2.90%	4.75%	\$55,020
7	\$53,489	1.81%	2.90%	4.71%	\$56,008
8	\$54,461	1.77%	2.90%	4.67%	\$57,005
9	\$55,429	1.73%	2.90%	4.63%	\$57,998
10	\$56,391	1.70%	2.90%	4.60%	\$58,983
11	\$57,350	1.66%	2.90%	4.56%	\$59,964
12	\$58,305	1.62%	2.90%	4.52%	\$60,940
13	\$59,254	1.58%	2.90%	4.48%	\$61,910
14	\$60,200	1.54%	2.90%	4.44%	\$62,875
15	\$61,141	1.51%	2.90%	4.41%	\$63,835
16	\$62,078	1.47%	2.90%	4.37%	\$64,790
17	\$63,008	1.43%	2.90%	4.33%	\$65,736
18	\$63,803	1.39%	2.90%	4.29%	\$66,541
19	\$64,594	1.35%	2.90%	4.25%	\$67,342
20	\$65,378	1.32%	2.90%	4.22%	\$68,134
21	\$66,162	1.28%	2.90%	4.18%	\$68,926
22	\$66,940	1.24%	2.90%	4.14%	\$69,711
23	\$67,717	1.20%	2.90%	4.10%	\$70,495
24	\$68,488	1.16%	2.90%	4.06%	\$71,271
25	\$69,256	1.13%	2.90%	4.03%	\$72,044
26	\$70,019	1.09%	2.90%	3.99%	\$72,811
27	\$70,779	1.05%	2.90%	3.95%	\$73,575
28	\$71,405	1.01%	2.90%	3.91%	\$74,198
29	\$72,026	0.97%	2.90%	3.87%	\$74,816
30	\$72,646	0.94%	2.90%	3.84%	\$75,433
31	\$73,262	0.90%	2.90%	3.80%	\$76,044
32	\$73,875	0.86%	2.90%	3.76%	\$76,653
33	\$74,485	0.82%	2.90%	3.72%	\$77,257
34	\$75,093	0.78%	2.90%	3.68%	\$77,859
35	\$75,697	0.75%	2.90%	3.65%	\$78,457
36	\$76,301	0.71%	2.90%	3.61%	\$79,054
37	\$76,896	0.67%	2.90%	3.57%	\$79,641
38	\$77,363	0.63%	2.90%	3.53%	\$80,095
39	\$77,828	0.59%	2.90%	3.49%	\$80,547
40	\$78,291	0.56%	2.90%	3.46%	\$80,997

2026 Compensation Guidelines—Rostered Ministers  
Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the ELCA



Appendix B

Ministers of Word and Service – Bachelor’s

Service yr. beginning in 2026	Base Salary from 2025	Experience factor	Inflation factor	Combined increase	Recommended Salary 2026
1					\$47,888
2	\$46,548	2.00%	2.90%	4.90%	\$48,829
3	\$47,712	1.96%	2.90%	4.86%	\$50,032
4	\$48,708	1.92%	2.90%	4.82%	\$51,058
5	\$49,613	1.89%	2.90%	4.79%	\$51,987
6	\$52,037	1.85%	2.90%	4.75%	\$54,508
7	\$52,990	1.81%	2.90%	4.71%	\$55,486
8	\$53,952	1.77%	2.90%	4.67%	\$56,473
9	\$55,763	1.73%	2.90%	4.63%	\$58,347
10	\$56,755	1.70%	2.90%	4.60%	\$59,363
11	\$57,741	1.66%	2.90%	4.56%	\$60,373
12	\$58,724	1.62%	2.90%	4.52%	\$61,378
13	\$59,699	1.58%	2.90%	4.48%	\$62,375
14	\$60,673	1.54%	2.90%	4.44%	\$63,369
15	\$61,641	1.51%	2.90%	4.41%	\$64,357
16	\$62,604	1.47%	2.90%	4.37%	\$65,339
17	\$63,561	1.43%	2.90%	4.33%	\$66,313
18	\$64,379	1.39%	2.90%	4.29%	\$67,142
19	\$65,193	1.35%	2.90%	4.25%	\$67,966
20	\$66,002	1.32%	2.90%	4.22%	\$68,785
21	\$66,808	1.28%	2.90%	4.18%	\$69,599
22	\$67,610	1.24%	2.90%	4.14%	\$70,409
23	\$69,353	1.20%	2.90%	4.10%	\$72,198
24	\$70,145	1.16%	2.90%	4.06%	\$72,996
25	\$70,934	1.13%	2.90%	4.03%	\$73,790
26	\$71,718	1.09%	2.90%	3.99%	\$74,578
27	\$72,364	1.05%	2.90%	3.95%	\$75,222
28	\$73,007	1.01%	2.90%	3.91%	\$75,863
29	\$73,647	0.97%	2.90%	3.87%	\$76,500
30	\$74,283	0.94%	2.90%	3.84%	\$77,132
31	\$74,916	0.90%	2.90%	3.80%	\$77,761
32	\$75,545	0.86%	2.90%	3.76%	\$78,385
33	\$76,173	0.82%	2.90%	3.72%	\$79,008
34	\$76,797	0.78%	2.90%	3.68%	\$79,626
35	\$77,417	0.75%	2.90%	3.65%	\$80,240
36	\$78,034	0.71%	2.90%	3.61%	\$80,849
37	\$78,785	0.67%	2.90%	3.57%	\$81,598
38	\$79,533	0.63%	2.90%	3.53%	\$82,342
39	\$80,278	0.59%	2.90%	3.49%	\$83,083
40	\$81,019	0.56%	2.90%	3.46%	\$83,819

2026 Compensation Guidelines—Rostered Ministers  
Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the ELCA



Appendix B  
(Cont'd)

Ministers of Word and  
Service - Master's

Service yr. beginning in 2026	Base Salary from 2025	Experience factor	Inflation factor	Combined % increase	Recommended Salary 2026
1					\$55,400
2	\$53,839	2.00%	2.90%	4.90%	\$56,477
3	\$55,185	1.96%	2.90%	4.86%	\$57,868
4	\$56,338	1.92%	2.90%	4.82%	\$59,056
5	\$57,385	1.89%	2.90%	4.79%	\$60,131
6	\$60,189	1.85%	2.90%	4.75%	\$63,047
7	\$60,991	1.81%	2.90%	4.71%	\$63,864
8	\$62,098	1.77%	2.90%	4.67%	\$64,999
9	\$63,891	1.73%	2.90%	4.63%	\$66,852
10	\$65,026	1.70%	2.90%	4.60%	\$68,015
11	\$66,156	1.66%	2.90%	4.56%	\$69,171
12	\$67,281	1.62%	2.90%	4.52%	\$70,322
13	\$68,400	1.58%	2.90%	4.48%	\$71,466
14	\$69,514	1.54%	2.90%	4.44%	\$72,603
15	\$70,622	1.51%	2.90%	4.41%	\$73,734
16	\$71,726	1.47%	2.90%	4.37%	\$74,859
17	\$72,826	1.43%	2.90%	4.33%	\$75,979
18	\$73,762	1.39%	2.90%	4.29%	\$76,928
19	\$74,693	1.35%	2.90%	4.25%	\$77,870
20	\$75,621	1.32%	2.90%	4.22%	\$78,809
21	\$76,544	1.28%	2.90%	4.18%	\$79,742
22	\$77,462	1.24%	2.90%	4.14%	\$80,669
23	\$78,377	1.20%	2.90%	4.10%	\$81,592
24	\$79,285	1.16%	2.90%	4.06%	\$82,507
25	\$80,191	1.13%	2.90%	4.03%	\$83,419
26	\$81,092	1.09%	2.90%	3.99%	\$84,326
27	\$81,989	1.05%	2.90%	3.95%	\$85,228
28	\$82,726	1.01%	2.90%	3.91%	\$85,962
29	\$83,462	0.97%	2.90%	3.87%	\$86,695
30	\$84,194	0.94%	2.90%	3.84%	\$87,424
31	\$84,920	0.90%	2.90%	3.80%	\$88,145
32	\$85,644	0.86%	2.90%	3.76%	\$88,864
33	\$86,364	0.82%	2.90%	3.72%	\$89,578
34	\$87,081	0.78%	2.90%	3.68%	\$90,289
35	\$87,794	0.75%	2.90%	3.65%	\$90,995
36	\$88,503	0.71%	2.90%	3.61%	\$91,696
37	\$89,209	0.67%	2.90%	3.57%	\$92,394
38	\$89,760	0.63%	2.90%	3.53%	\$92,930
39	\$90,310	0.59%	2.90%	3.49%	\$93,465
40	\$90,856	0.56%	2.90%	3.46%	\$93,996

2026 Compensation Guidelines—Rostered Ministers  
Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the ELCA



## APPENDIX C

### Resolutions Regarding Housing

The Internal Revenue Service requires congregations and agencies to pass a resolution annually designating a specific amount of compensation to be used toward housing. The amount to be designated should be decided with the ordained minister based on his or her anticipated housing costs. This amount is one of three factors affecting the amount of housing a minister can claim on their taxes.

### Draft Language for Church Council Action on Housing Allowance

(This wording may be used to officially describe the Council's action on a housing allowance.)

The \_\_\_\_\_ Committee advises the church council that under the U.S. income tax laws outlined in the Internal Revenue Code (IRC), enacted by Congress in Title 26 of the United States Code (26 U.S.C.) an ordained minister of the Gospel is not subject to Federal Income Tax on the amount of his or her compensation that the employing church designates in advance as a housing allowance, to the extent that the allowance represents compensation for ministerial services, is used to pay housing expenses, and does not exceed the fair rental value of the home including furnishings and appurtenances such as a garage, plus cost of utilities.

The council, after considering the request of the Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ to designate an amount of compensation as a housing allowance for the amount expected to be spent to rent or otherwise provide a home during the period \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_, and in light of the Federal Income Tax law and of the established salary level, on motion duly made and seconded, voted to adopt the following resolution:

Resolved that the Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ is to receive a total cash salary of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the year 20\_\_, of which \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is hereby designated as *housing allowance* in response to his/her request and acknowledgement. While Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ is called to serve this congregation (\_\_\_\_\_ ) in his/her current position, the above amount of designated housing allowance shall apply to all future years until modified.

Secretary's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Draft Language for Notification of Housing Allowance by Congregation

(This may be used to officially notify a pastor of the approved housing allowance.)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Rev. \_\_\_\_\_,

This is to advise you that at a meeting of the church council held on \_\_\_\_\_, your housing allowance for the year \_\_\_\_\_ was officially designated and fixed in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_. Accordingly, \$ \_\_\_\_\_ of the total compensation payable to you during the year \_\_\_\_\_ will constitute housing allowance and the balance will constitute "salary" (as interpreted by the U.S. income tax laws outlined in the Internal Revenue Code (IRC), enacted by Congress in Title 26 of the United States Code (26 U.S.C.)).

Secretary's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX C (continued)

**Pastor's Estimate of Housing Expense**

(This form may be used to help the pastor determine an estimate of expenses qualifying under the pastor's housing allowance. The form may be but does not have to be given to the congregation council in requesting housing allowance amount.)

To: (Name of Congregation)

From: (Name of Pastor)

Date:

Re: Housing allowance for year extending from \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

The amounts set forth below are the amounts I expect to spend during the period \_\_\_\_\_  
(as above) to rent or otherwise provide a home for my family and me.

Item

- 1. Rent on leased property.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Payments on purchase of a home (including down payment, acquisition costs, mortgage payments [principal and interest])..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Garage rental (if not included above)..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Real estate taxes.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Utilities (gas, electricity, water, sewer, oil, trash pickup, telephone, TV Cable/Satellite, Internet).....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Insurance (rental, homeowner's, fire, extended coverage, liability, contents, flood).....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Repairs and maintenance.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Improvements and remodeling.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Furnishings and appliances.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Maintenance items (household cleansers, light bulbs, pest control, etc.)... \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. Yard maintenance and snow removal.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. Other housing expense.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX D

### **Guidelines for Sabbatical Leave**

It is important for both ordained rostered ministers and the congregation/organization to realize the importance of the pastor's continuing education through workshops, seminary courses, and personal study. Lutheran congregations have long been encouraged to provide time and financial assistance to enable pastors to maintain and improve their knowledge and skills. However, a pastor may periodically benefit from an extended period of time for study, personal growth, and reflection without the responsibilities of regular service – in other words, a sabbatical leave. The Synod Council recommends that congregations and organizations consider sabbatical leave as a “privilege to be granted.”

The following guidelines should assist pastors and congregations/organizations in the contemplation of sabbatical leave.

1. Ordained pastors and congregations/organizations should consult with the bishop early in the planning.
2. Sabbatical leave is intended for in-depth study on one or two topics directly related to the regular call of the pastor and should include time for personal and familial reflection.
3. Sabbatical leave will normally be for a period of not less than three months, nor more than 12.
4. Pastors with a minimum of seven years in the active ordained ministry and who have served in their current call for five or more years may present proposals for sabbaticals. The proposal should include:
  - a) A rationale for the sabbatical, including personal goals, and potential value for the congregation or organization.
  - b) A detailed outline of the intended courses of study and the use of the time.
  - c) An outline of the financial implications of the sabbatical.
  - d) An indication of the use of vacation time during the sabbatical. In sabbaticals of three to six months, at least half of the period normally granted as annual vacation leave shall be so designated. In proposals for sabbaticals of seven to 12 months, the entire annual vacation shall be included.
5. Proposals for sabbatical leave shall be presented to the governing body of the congregation or organization not less than six months prior to the beginning of the leave.
6. Careful consideration shall be given to all aspects of the proposal and implications for the congregation or organization and the ordained minister.
7. Congregations or organizations may give sabbatical leave as “merit” benefits.
8. Normally, the financial considerations for the sabbatical shall be negotiated by the pastor and the congregation/organization. It is suggested, however, that base salary, housing allowance, and ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program be maintained at the current budget level, with the pastor assuming responsibilities for all other personal and family expenses.
9. When a sabbatical is granted, a pastor shall normally agree to serve that congregation or organization for a minimum of two years following the return from leave.
10. Realizing the congregation or organization will be without the services of its regularly called pastor during the sabbatical, the pastor and the congregation/organization shall seek the consent of the bishop before finalizing the agreement.
11. Within six weeks of the completion of the sabbatical leave, the pastor shall present to the congregation/organization and to the bishop a detailed reflection on the experiences of the leave.



**Design** Maribel Lopez and Edith Perez, Vision Starts

**Editor** Julie Sevig

END OF REPORT

METROPOLITAN CHICAGO SYNOD / BOOK OF REPORTS 2026

