



Metropolitan Chicago Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Synod Publications, Communications, and Media Policy

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Policy

Preface

In the ELCA, we speak of having three expressions of the church. These include churchwide offices, synods, and congregations, the MCS-FB (in harmony with other communications) will serve to highlight our interconnectedness, in a way that is contextually and seasonally relevant. It will do so with an eye toward and focus upon both the congregational and synodical level work and mission which is constantly taking place in our faith communities, as well as through our camps, schools, and other organizations and agencies. It will highlight how the work, play, and missions of all of these are both unique to each site, and simultaneously a part of a greater whole. Each of these individual bodies shares one mission in Christ, even as Christ calls each uniquely

¹ This document reflects the standards for the publications, social media, and website of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, as expressed by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It applies to Facebook, Instagram, the Metro Word and e-Word, YouTube, and the MCS Website.

and contextually to faithful works of love and liberating justice in the world. We are one body with many members.

To foster a sense of interconnectedness and shared mission, we will regularly profile a congregation, neighborhood of congregations, or church members, in the synod, being careful that the profile is most often *not* about the pastor, but about our communities, and how this work is shared in other communities, as well. We will be intentional about spanning the whole synod and intentionally highlight and celebrate the diversity of communities, cultures, and geographic regions that make up the synod. If we did a congregational profile once/month, it would take more than a decade to highlight all of the churches, however sharing each one will illicit comments and other interactions (likes, shares, etc.) from church members in other congregations, who will be inspired to share something about their own churches, as well. This use of FB becomes a sort of “contagious” outreach and evangelism.

Of course, the page will need to include somewhat regular communications from the bishop (preferably occasionally these will be video messages), and other relevant postings, coordinated with the synod staff, where this is advisable. This includes post re: tragedies or emergencies in the metro-Chicago area and official responses to national/international tragedies or atrocities (i.e., natural disasters, shootings, migration emergencies, racist and antisemitic events, war, etc.). The communications director/team may help craft these posts, as advised/requested by the bishop and other synod staff. In times when a response is urgent and in need of response, the team will prioritize and initiate this work, as appropriate. We will take caution not to have our message hijacked by the news cycle, and we will do this by heavily focusing on the good occurring in our communities, and inviting people into that work and to become a part of those communities.

Always we will operate with an eye toward connecting seekers with leaders and faith-communities, and connecting the church with itself, keeping in mind the mission of the page, “To connect people with people, to connect people with the church, and to connect the church with itself.”

Mission of Publications, Communications, and Media Team

The mission of the MCS communications and media team is “To connect people with people, to connect people with the church, and to connect the church with itself.” As a result of pursuing this mission, communications will feed the ongoing mission of the synod: “In Jesus’ Name. Proclaim the Gospel--Make Disciples--Do Justice.”

- To connect people with people, to connect people with the church

- Reach those seeking a church in the territories of the synod by highlighting the work of local congregations, schools, camps, and agencies of the MCS.
- Connect seekers to local leaders and faith-communities.
- To connect the church with itself
 - Foster a sense of interconnectedness, shared mission, and healthy pride and joy in the work that God is doing through God’s people and organizations in our synod.
 - Depict and highlight the reality that we are members of one connected body which is Christ with the use of images, photographs, videos, stories/narratives, and news.
 - Help churches who feel isolated to be seen and affirmed.
 - Celebrate the beauty of the synod and its congregations, in all of the synod’s diversity.

Target Audience

Faith & faith-community seekers

Congregational community members

Synod leaders

Diversity

The communications team will strive to present the diversity of the church, paying particular attention to the diversity of races, ethnicities, geographies, sexual orientations, gender identities, and abilities that make up the church and this synod.

Throughout a year, especially in stories and highlights, publications and posts will include voices, images, and narratives from these different spaces and intersectional locations. As publications are brief, this inclusion will be more noticeable over the arc of a year than in any given issue or individual communication.

What’s Included? What’s not?

In addition to the content generated to connect people and churches, and to highlight local ministries, we will also:

- Publicize events that will inform, teach or provide tools – including:
 - a. Synod events
 - b. ELCA events
 - c. Congregational events
 - d. Ecumenical events

- e. Partner ministry events
- Offer general resources that are specific to our mission and faith, i.e. links, documents
 - a. Synod resources
 - b. Region 5 resources
 - c. ELCA resources
 - d. Congregational resources
 - e. Ecumenical resources
 - f. Partner ministry resources
- Share articles that promote specific ministries
- Provide congregations and partner organizations the ability to advertise for specific needs.

How Can I Submit a Feature or News Item?

All information needs to be submitted by email to the person responsible for communications by the publication deadline. The current deadline for the monthly publication is the 15th of each month. It is up to the newsletter editor to determine priority and editorial content. All submissions will be edited for content, accuracy, and consistency. Images and posters should be sent in JPEG/JPG format.

Posters and Inserts: Requests for inserts to be placed in the newsletter, or posters to be posted on social media, may be submitted by partner institutions, or teams of the synod. It is up to the person responsible for communications, in consultation with the staff person relating to the team or ministry area, to determine whether a request for an insert will be honored. Non-partner institutions, if approved, will be charged a copying and postage fee to offset the additional cost of the insert.

Specifically On the Website

- Information about the Lutheran faith, the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the mission and ministry of the MCS.
- Publicity for special events:
 - a. Synod events
 - b. Congregational events
 - c. ELCA events
 - d. Ecumenical events
 - e. Partner ministry events
- General resources that are specific to our mission and faith, i.e. links, documents, etc.
 - a. Synod resources
 - b. Region 5 resources
 - c. ELCA resources

- Resources for congregational leaders (rostered leaders, congregational presidents, congregational treasurers, youth leaders, et cetera) that will aid them in their work

Information to be placed on the Web site will be reviewed by the person responsible for synod communications, and members of the communications team. Information of a specific nature, such as youth materials, evangelism information, stewardship information, et cetera, will also be reviewed by the associate to the bishop responsible for relating to that specific area of ministry. This review is to ensure accuracy, focus on mission, and consistency.

Website Calendar: The synod will maintain an online calendar of synod events. Because of the amount of information, individual congregational events will not be posted.

Links to Congregation Web pages: The churchwide office maintains a listing of all congregation websites. A link to the churchwide office listing will be maintained.

Synod Teams: Synod teams will have pages on the website. These pages will have a consistent look with the rest of the synod website. Teams may produce their own webpages if desired. Information about events, including dates, times, and locations of events will be forwarded to the synod office – it is not enough for the team to post the information. The synod will not be responsible for the cost or maintenance of off-site Web pages.

Each synod team will:

- Provide information in an agreed upon schedule
- Provide information in an electronic format
- Acknowledge that some editing/reformatting may be necessary.

Each team page will have:

- Opening descriptive paragraph
- Contact names and email addresses

Each synod team page may contain:

- Links to ELCA resources
- Links to pdf files, i.e. team newsletter
- Links to outside resources. (It is up to the synod team to demonstrate to the Communications Committee that all non-ELCA links fit with the mission and faith values of the ELCA. Links failing this test will not be included.)

Job postings: The synod webpage will post job listings for congregations, the churchwide offices, and partner institutions. Rostered positions will not be posted on the synod webpage.

Postings will remain online for three months and then they will be removed. Requests may be made to keep the information posted for a longer period. Listings are removed after three months to keep the information timely and accurate.

Links: Links will be maintained to partner institutions.