



Northern Illinois Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Central Conference

Annual Report
2022-2023

Beloved colleagues and friends... in Central Conference Pastors and other leaders continue to actively engage with one another through regularly scheduled events both in person and online. On the second Wednesday of each month currently we gather on zoom. During our online meetings, we start with devotions and prayer, and then move into our conference business followed by an opportunity to share the struggles and joys we've encountered this past month and learn from each other. When we gather for in-person meetings usually during the summer, our meetings follow a similar flow, we worship together, commune together, have our meeting, and then share a meal. These are great opportunities to build friendship and collegiality. Because we are always keeping our eyes on our communities and the social landscape of the world around us, we intentionally work to include representatives from organizations that serve various social causes both local and more broadly giving them time and space to share with us about the important work they are doing.

During the summer, each year, we also engage in a conference play day. Taking the time for intentional fellowship, collegial activity opportunities, and shared food... makes our conference play day a great day, and a great time to be together.

What about text study? In Central Conference if you want text study, we have a great one. With health concerns and travel distances still apart of the fabric of our days, at this time, we are sharing in a lively text study each Tuesday hosted on zoom. An incredible highlight of this time is that preachers from other denominations join us as well. In this ecumenical atmosphere, together, we create a safe environment in which various perspectives can be shared in a respectful way. And frankly it's awesome.

We give thanks to God for enlivening this conference and our whole Synod. It really has been yet another joyous year together to be together.

Respectfully,

Rev. Scott Ralston
Central Conference Dean