

# **Bulletin of Reports**

**Thirty-sixth Annual**

**Northern Illinois Synod Assembly**

**June 14-15, 2024**

**Augustana College, Rock Island**



*Open God's Story*

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All contents can be downloaded from the synod website – [www.nisynod.org/assembly](http://www.nisynod.org/assembly)

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## **Official Notice**

Thirty-Sixth Annual Synod Assembly of the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

To: All Laity Voting Members, Ministers of Word and Sacrament, and Ministers of Word and Service of the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Please be advised that the Thirty-Sixth Annual Synod Assembly of the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will be held in person at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, on Friday and Saturday, June 14 and 15, 2024.

Date of Notice: April 15, 2024

The Rev. Lu Cantrell  
Synod Secretary

# Proposed Rules for the Thirty-Sixth Annual Northern Illinois Synod Assembly

Items indicated with "A" are items not currently covered by any Constitution, Bylaw, or Continuing Resolution and hence require action by the Assembly. Constitution, Bylaw, or Resolution references are indicated following each item.

Key: + = Required Provision found in the Synod Constitution

## **A SA1 CALL OF SYNOD ASSEMBLY.**

SA1.01 Notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be given by the secretary of this Synod. (S7.13.)

SA1.02 The time and place of the Northern Illinois Synod Assembly shall be determined by the Synod Council. The time and place for the next regular assembly normally shall be announced three months prior to the assembly. (S7.11.01.)

## **A SA2 VOTING MEMBERS.**

SA2.01 The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of lay persons, shall be constituted as follows: (+S7.21.a.)

- a. All ministers of Word and Sacrament under call on the roster of this Synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members. (+S7.21.a.)
- b. All ministers of Word and Service under call on the roster of this Synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members. (+S7.21.b.)
- c. 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 at least 45 percent of lay members of the assembly shall be women and 45 percent shall be men. Additional members from each congregation normally shall be equally divided between male and female. (+S7.21.c.)
- d. The lay officers of this Synod shall be counted as additional lay representatives toward establishing 60% of the voting membership of the Assembly composed of lay persons. Voting membership shall include the officers of this synod. (+S7.21.d.)
- e. Retired, On Leave from Call ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, on the official rosters of this Synod, as well as rostered ministers of Word and Sacrament and of Word and Service with disability status, shall be voting members of the Assembly if they have pre-registered by

the date and in the manner provided by the Synod Council. Such guidelines shall provide for pre-registration sufficiently in advance of the Assembly so as to allow the Synod to comply with provisions of Section +S7.21. of the Synod Constitution regarding the percentage relationship of clergy to lay membership at the Assembly. (S7.22.01.)

- f. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit representatives of mission settings formed with the intent of becoming chartered congregations 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. Authorized worshiping communities, acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council for 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. (S7.26.)
- g. A Minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of this synod serving a congregation as an interim pastor or as a pastor under contract shall be a voting member of the Synod Assembly. In addition, those who have been licensed for Word and Sacrament ministry in the Northern Illinois Synod and intern pastors who have been licensed for Word and Sacrament ministry shall also be voting members of the Synod Assembly.
- h. All candidates for ordination at this assembly shall have voice and vote.

SA2.02 The Synod Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) president, or designee, shall be a voting member of the Synod Assembly. (S7.28.A00)

A SA2.03 Voting members are authorized by size of congregation. The listed baptized membership figures of all the Northern Illinois Synod congregations, as reported to the ELCA through each congregation's year-end report (parochial report) as of 12/31/2021, is the basis for determining the number of lay voting members selected to attend the Synod Assembly. The baptized membership formula consists of the top 10% of our congregations receiving four (4) lay voting members, the next 10% of our congregations receiving three (3) lay voting members, and the remainder of our congregations receiving two (2) lay voting members.

SA2.04 In order to implement bylaw +6.04.02, each congregation may elect 1 additional youth (a voting member who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service) or 1 young adult (a voting member between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service). (S7.21.A11)

SA2.05 Every congregation member eligible to vote at the Assembly shall have registered online to vote by May 15, 2023. (S7.21.03.)

- SA2.06 The voting members are required to check-in upon their arrival prior to being allowed to enter the Synod Assembly. (S7.21.04.)
- SA2.07 Compliance with the Constitution lay voting member percentage requirement for Synod Assemblies shall be established for all purposes at an Assembly by certification of the Credentials Committee that at least sixty percent (60%) of registered voting members to the Assembly are lay persons. (S.7.21.05.) Should there be insufficient lay voting members to comprise sixty percent (60%) of the registered voting members, the Bishop may appoint as lay voting members from among members of Northern Illinois Synod congregations to bring the ratio of clergy and lay voting members within the constitutionally prescribed ratio. (S7.21.06.)
- SA2.08 It is the intention of this Synod that normally there shall be no more than one voting member of the Synod Assembly from a single household. (S7.21.A87.)
- A SA2.09 Voting members shall not absent themselves from any Assembly business without good cause.
- A SA3 QUORUM.**
- SA3.01 Fifty percent (50%) of the registered voting members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum. (S7.14.)
- A SA4 RIGHT OF VOICE AND VOTE.**
- A SA4.01 All retired ministers of Word and Sacrament and retired ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, whose names appear on the rosters of this Synod, not pre-registered by the date and in the manner provided by the Synod Council shall have the privilege of voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. (Note: Similar Provision S7.22.01. & S7.23.)
- A SA4.02 All ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, on leave from call or with disability status whose names appear on the rosters of this Synod, not pre-registered by the date and in the manner provided by the Synod Council shall have the privilege of voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. (Note: similar Provision S7.23. and Synod Council ACTION SC-17-09-25)
- A SA4.03 Registered visitors shall not have voice or vote.
- A SA4.04 The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of this church as may be designated from time to time as well as Synod standing committee members, shall also have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. Like privileges shall be accorded to



those additional persons whom the Bishop, Synod Council, or the Synod Assembly shall from time to time designate.

- SA4.05 Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of this Synod. (+S7.31.) Voting shall normally be executed through a digital software platform.
- A SA4.06 Length of time of individual voice may be restricted by the chair to facilitate completion of business on schedule. Three (3) minutes per speaker shall be the standing rule. Challenges to the chair's ruling shall be decided by a two-thirds vote of attending voting members.
- A SA4.07 Identical or similar resolutions (as determined by the Resolutions Committee) received will be shared with the Assembly but will be bundled together as one (1) resolution for debate and vote.
- A SA4.08 Those wishing to speak shall approach a microphone in the aisle of the assembly hall that is either marked with a green card which indicates a speaking in favor of the motion, or a microphone marked with a red card which indicates a speaking against the motion. A microphone with a white card will be available for Point of Order motions.

The privilege to speak on a given issue still must be appropriate to Robert's Rules of Order and the adopted Rules of the Assembly.

Adopted by Synod Council April 2021

**A SA5 ASSEMBLY OFFICERS.**

- A SA5.01 The Bishop of this Synod, the Rev. Stacie Fidlar, shall serve as Presiding Officer of the Assembly (+S8.12.i2.). In the absence of the Bishop or as the course of Assembly deliberations makes appropriate, the Bishop's designee shall serve as Presiding Officer.
- SA5.02 The Secretary of this Synod, the Rev. Lu Cantrell, shall serve as Secretary of the Assembly. (+S8.32.a.)
- A SA5.03 If an officer of the Synod Council, other than the Bishop, is unable to be present at the Assembly, the bishop may appoint an officer pro-tempore from among the Synod Council members to serve in that capacity during the Assembly.

**A SA6 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES.**

- SA6.01 The following shall be the committees of the Synod Assembly:

- SA6.01.01 ***Credentials Committee.*** A Committee on Credentials shall be appointed by the Synod Council, which shall consist of an ordained minister serving a congregation in the city in which the Synod Assembly convenes and a minimum of two other persons. The duties of this committee shall be to approve the credentials of Synod Assembly voting members and to report to the Presiding Officer. (S7.34.01.)
- SA6.01.02 ***Election Committee.*** An Election Committee shall be appointed by the Synod Council to conduct the elections and report the results to the Synod Assembly. (S7.34.02.)
- SA6.01.03 ***Resolutions Committee.*** A Resolutions Committee shall be appointed by the Synod Council and shall consist of five (5) members, of whom one may be appointed the parliamentarian of the Synod Assembly. (S7.34.03.)

Duties of the Resolutions Committee shall be as follows:

- a. Process all resolutions addressed to the Synod Assembly and report thereon with its recommendations.
- b. Provide such assistance to the Bishop as requested during the course of the Synod Assembly.

## A SA7 **RESOLUTIONS, MEMORIALS, AND AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION.**

- A SA7.01 To assure presentation to the Synod Assembly, non-constitutional resolutions must be submitted to the Northern Illinois Synod, ELCA, Resolutions Committee, P. O. Box 443, Moline IL 61266, and emailed to Northern Illinois Synod, ELCA, Resolutions Committee, [finance@nisynod.org](mailto:finance@nisynod.org) by April 15, 2024. Resolutions received subsequent to that date shall not be accepted for consideration at this Assembly, unless the Resolutions Committee judges it to be a matter of sufficient importance and urgency which is not adequately covered by documents already before the Assembly. The Resolutions Committee may receive resolutions relevant to matters on the Assembly agenda during the Assembly. All such resolutions and memorials shall be given by the proposer, in writing over the signature of at least ten (10) voting members, to the Resolutions Committee which shall report thereon to the Assembly with its recommendations.

When a resolution is submitted it shall contain: a) the signature of at least ten (10) Synod Assembly voting members or is channeled through a congregation council, conference meeting, Synod Council or standing committee; b) the date on which the action was taken; c) a resource impact reporting form; d) the address of the group or person authorizing the resolution; and, if possible, e) the author's authority to edit the resolution be assigned to a voting member of the Assembly if the author is not present.

SA7.02 A resolution introduced by other than the Synod Council to amend the Constitution may be adopted by a two-thirds vote at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly after having been presented in writing at the previous regular meeting of the Synod Assembly over the signatures of at least ten (10) members and having been approved by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at such a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. (+S18.13.a.)

A SA7.03 The Resolutions Committee may: a) recommend adoption of the resolution; b) recommend adoption with proposed amendment; c) recommend defeat of the resolution; d) recommend referral to another entity; e) forward without recommendation; f) offer a substitute motion; or, g) return the resolution to the submitter for clarification or editing.

A SA7.04 Memorials to the Churchwide Assembly are not the only route for a Synod to express a concern. Resolutions may be passed that are addressed to a specific churchwide unit or to units that relate to a given concern. Resolutions may receive more immediate attention and follow a more direct route than memorials which await the Churchwide Assembly's response.

#### **A SA8 GENERAL RULES OF PROCEDURE.**

SA8.01 Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly, unless otherwise ordered by the assembly (S7.32.) otherwise provided for in the Constitution or the bylaws of this church or in the Constitution or the bylaws of this Synod.

A SA8.02 The Presiding Officer shall have the privilege of altering the rules of this Assembly as needed to facilitate the flow of action during the Assembly. The chair may be overruled by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly.

A SA8.03 The Presiding Officer shall allow the report from the Election Committee to come to the floor at the earliest convenience and shall do so during the course of the agenda.

#### **A SA9 ELECTIONS.**

SA9.01 The 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. (+S9.01.)

SA9.02 In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for the office of bishop, a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for election. (S9.02.)

A SA9.03 Whenever nominations are in order, the Nominating Committee will provide a minimum of two nominees, when possible, for each elected position. Nominations may be made from the floor of the Assembly for elections. (S9.03.)

- SA9.04 In all elections, except for the office of 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.) When there is more than one vacancy for an elected position on a committee, the ballot shall be constructed in such a manner that each vacant position is elected separately. Each voting member votes for a candidate for each position available. The candidate receiving the majority vote shall be declared elected. If a majority is not achieved, then the two (2) candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be placed on the next ballot (S9.08.01.)
- A SA9.05 Based on Synod Council action of September 11, 1999, the result of each general election ballot will not be announced in detail to the Assembly due to time constraints. However, a written report will be posted to the Assembly website in the Second Plenary Session and, after the second ballot, if a second ballot is necessary, later in the Second Plenary Session of the Assembly. (Note: Similar Provision S9.09.)
- SA9.06 With the exception of ministers of Word and Sacrament rostered in synods other than synod of residence, each voting member of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committee, board, or other organizational unit of this Synod shall be a voting member of a congregation of this Synod. (S9.14.)
- A SA10 DISPLAYS, SPACE, DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS, AND PERFORMANCES (S7.40.A18.)**
- A SA10.01 Display space exists primarily for church-related organizations approved by the Resolutions Committee, Bishop, and/or the Assembly Co-Chairpersons.
- A SA10.02 Display space may be provided to organizations that have no official relationship to this church, but which offer programs or services which the Bishop and/or Assembly Co-Chairpersons deem helpful or useful to congregations and/or leaders of the Synod. No meeting facilities are provided to organizations that have no official relationship to this church.
- A SA10.03 No commercial displays or sales booths are permitted without the approval of the Bishop and/or the Assembly Co-Chairpersons. If approved, these displays are to be clearly marked as outside displays. The Bishop and/or Assembly Co-Chairpersons may set a fee for such commercial displays.
- A SA10.04 Space for meetings or meal functions must be approved by the Bishop and/or the Assembly Co-Chairpersons.

A SA10.05 Individuals and/or groups wishing to appear in relation to or at the Assembly must secure permission from the Bishop and/or Assembly Co- Co-Chairpersons of the Assembly.

# Schedule and Agenda

June 14-15, 2024 • Augustana College, Rock Island, IL

## Schedule Overview

### Friday - June 14

8:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.	Registration	Centennial Lobby
8:45 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	<i>Choir Rehearsal</i>	<i>Centennial Hall Stage</i>
9:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Plenary I	Centennial Hall
	Gathering Hymn	
	Order for Opening of Assembly with Land Acknowledgement	
	Introduction and Welcome	
	Augustana College Greeting	
	Credentials Report	
	General Instructions	
	Approval of Agenda	
	Consent Agenda (Adoption of Rules of Assembly, Committee Appointments, and Minutes)	
	LSSI Greeting	
	Compensation Guidelines	
	Treasurer's Report and Presentation of the Budget	
	LOMC Greetings	
	Portico	
	Stand and Stretch Break	
	Greetings from a Military Chaplain	
	Bishop's Report	
	World Hunger Video	
	Resolutions	
	Nominating Committee Report	
	Election Committee Report	
	Announcements	
	Lunch Prayer	
12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch	Centennial Lawn and Ensemble Room, Bergendoff
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Festival Worship	Centennial Hall
1:45 p.m.	<i>Voting for General Election Closes</i>	
3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	Break	
3:15 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.	Keynote and Discussion by Rev. Miguel Gomez-Acosta	Centennial Hall
5:15 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.	Transportation from Centennial Hall to Gerber Student Center	
5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.	Dinner	Dining Hall, Gerber Student Center
6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Ministry Fair	Gavle Hall, Gerber Student Center
7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Transportation from Gerber Student Center to Centennial Hall	

**Saturday - June 15**

6:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast	Dining Hall, Gerber Student Center
		<i>Only for those staying overnight on campus</i>
7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Registration Opens	Centennial Lobby
8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Plenary II	Centennial Hall
	Prelude	
	Service of Remembrance	
	Credentials Report	
	Vice President Report	
	Election Report of General Ballot	
	Action on Proposed Budget	
	Resolutions	
	Break	
	Resolutions	
	Churchwide Report	
	Courtesy Report	
	Announcements	
	Order for the Closing of Synod Assembly	
12:00 p.m.	End of Assembly	

# Synod Assembly Committees

## Credentials Committee

Rev. Chris Lee (chair) *First, Rock Island (West Conference)*

Rev. Elizabeth Martin *Zion, Belvidere (North Conference)*

Ms. Mary Noe *Grace, Woodstock (Northeast Conference)*

Rev. Julie Monnard *Synod Staff Liaison*

## Election Committee

Rev. Phillip Potacezk (chair) *Trinity, Ottawa (South Conference)*

Mr. Jonathan Adams *St. John, Joliet (East Conference)*

Ms. Barb Stark *First, Mt. Carroll (Northwest Conference)*

Ms. Beth Nelson Chase *St. James, Forreston (Central Conference)*

Rev. Jennifer Beamsley *Synod Staff Liaison*

## Minutes Review Committee

Rev. Denise Rode *Immanuel, Earlville (South Conference)*

Mr. Brandon Graves *Salem, Sycamore (Northeast Conference)*

Rev. Julie Monnard *Synod Staff Liaison*

## Resolution Committee

Ms. Denise Norman (chair) *St. John, Sterling (Central Conference)*

Rev. Ben Ingelson *Resurrection, Channahon (East Conference)*

Ms. Deb Keaschall *Immanuel, Rock Falls (Central Conference)*

Ms. Barb Kromphardt *St. John's, Peru (South Conference)*

Rev. Andrew Kays (Parliamentarian) *Emmanuel, Oregon (Central Conference)*

Ms. Lori Whalen *Synod Staff Liaison*

## Courtesy Committee

Rev. Julane Nease *United, Rockford (North Conference)*

Dn. Laura Gorton *Christ, Belvidere (North Conference)*

Rev. Mike Thomas *Zion, Rockford (North Conference)*

Rev. Amanda Dahlseng-Monroe *Grace, Loves Park (North Conference)*

Rev. Joshua Ebener *Synod Staff Liaison*



# Letter from ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton



“We have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.” (1 John 4:16).

Dear friends in Christ,

Thank you for your faithful and continuing partnership as we work together to help people discover the difference God’s grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.

Because God’s grace and love have made a difference in our daily lives, we want others to experience that same love and acceptance. There are many in our communities who feel alone and are searching for love and connection. Sometimes we feel at a loss to know how to make a difference – what do we say, what can we do, how do we share God’s love?

You share this love every day. When you invite others to join in your faith community, to worship, to participate in service activities, to pray together, to share their story – these are all ways our neighbors experience the love of God in community.

There are examples of God’s love throughout our church as we work for healing, peace, and justice to make a difference in the lives of those around us.

The Spirit is calling us to move together as one church to share the grace and love we experience every day. May God bless your time together.

In Christ,



The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

# Report of Northern Illinois Synod Bishop Stacie Fidler

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

*1 Corinthians 12:4-6*

When I was young (and even now!), one of my favorite activities was to play with kaleidoscopes. With every twist and turn, a new pattern, a new mix of shapes and colors, would appear before my fascinated eyes. Even the slightest tap on the fragile cardboard tube would shift the vision of color before me.

The makeup of those intricate patterns and colors is much simpler than it ever seemed to my young mind. The designs of a kaleidoscope are created by basic chips of glass; their brilliant colors lit through a simple reflection of light. These small pieces of glass come in many different shapes and colors, each with their own particular beauty. When they come together, however, they create an even more wonderful scheme. Each piece retains its own color and integrity, but together they form an even more complete whole.

That individuality of shapes amid an even greater and more beautiful whole is not something exclusive to kaleidoscopes. It is a characteristic of the body of Christ as well. Each individual disciple has something beautiful to give, their own gifts and talents to share with the greater whole. Each individual member comes together in community and forms the body of Christ.

The beauty of that body is always shifting and changing - with the addition of a new member, the discovery of a new gift - but the beauty remains. Like the patterns of a kaleidoscope, as long as we are part of this whole, we are never really sure what will come next. But our faith as individuals and as a community holds us together. We come together as one body, and the light of Christ reflects through that body revealing the beauty and the wonder and the mystery of God. Even the slightest tap or shift could reveal something new and wonderful about who we are as individuals and as a people.

As your synod staff, our continual goal is to find those wonderful images of God at work among you. We join you in your journeys of discernment and ask questions with you and wonder with you. What is God already doing? Where would Jesus be in this world now? How is the Holy Spirit blowing new things into being? What does this mean for our worshipping community?

We are all being called in these days to intentionally examine the pieces that make up our life of faith and what it means to come together as a community centered in Christ. How are we called to serve in our neighborhoods and towns? Is there a shift in the way all these congregations are organized that could reveal a new way of doing ministry? Are there beautiful pieces of the whole that we have stopped seeing or appreciating? Times of change, as difficult and confusing as they can be, are an opportunity for us as a synod to shine more brightly the light and wonder of our faith. Even the slightest effort could reveal some new and wonderful glimpse of who we could be as a people of God.

I hope that you can see how we are working together and walking together with you to explore new places Jesus is calling us and the Holy Spirit is nudging us, even if it's ever so slightly. Sometimes it is those slight nudges that open something completely new.

You will notice one shift in our budget that hits deep in our hearts. It is about Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, which was born in the homes and congregations of this synod. We have walked with its growth and service, with many of the LSSI commitments emerging from our communities. There have been days in the past where congregations, leaders, and bishops would descend on Springfield and plead for the state to pay their back debt and bills so that LSSI could continue to serve the most vulnerable among us. Through continued faithfulness and restructuring, those days are past. LSSI is on solid financial footing and poised well for the future.

As a result, you will see a practical shift in how the synod is encouraging you to relate to LSSI. Instead of supporting them with significant finances in our synod budget, we are asking the congregations of Northern Illinois to develop relationships with the clients and ministries of LSSI. For example, the Tri-Church group in Sterling/Rock Falls serve as Birthday Buddies with the LSSI Sterling Group Home and the Partnership House in Sterling. The impact on these residents is important and the congregation lives out the love of Christ among them. Some of the other relationships are:

<b>LSSI Site</b>	<b>NIS church partner(s)</b>
Anderson Apartments, Stockton (DD)	Christ Lutheran, Stockton
Dixon Group Home, Dixon (DD)	St. Paul, Dixon (WELCA)
Shady Oaks, Homer Glen (DD)	Cross of Glory, Homer Glen Shepherd of the Hill, Lockport, Peace, New Lenox (all work together)
Sterling Group Home (DD)	Tri-Church Partners
Lincoln Manor Senior Housing, Rochelle	<i>NEW!</i> Faith, Rochelle (will start in 2024)
Greenbrier (senior) Apartments, DeKalb	First, DeKalb
Spring Ridge (senior) Housing, Rockford	GPS Faith Community, Machesney Park

Full sites are not available in every community, but there are other ways to live out relationships with LSSI. There are hundreds of families served by LSSI in children's services and substance abuse recovery in Northern Illinois. We are working with Pastor Kelly Nieman-Anderson, manager of Church and Community Engagement, to find ongoing possibilities for relationship for our congregations, from personal needs in foster care to staff support.

This is **NOT** a budget cut. You will see in the agencies and institutions portion of the budget that the dollars previously committed to LSSI have been redistributed to other agencies and institutions we support. They are still there (less the overall 3% reduction), assisting other ministries which need more financial support right now.

As a synod, we are working to do what LSSI has done: establish a solid financial foundation for the future.

At the fall Conference of Bishops meeting, a pilot partnership project with the ELCA Foundation was proposed to all the bishops. This partnership would be an opportunity for synods to work in partnership with the ELCA Foundation and congregations to do intentional work on planned and annual giving. The Foundation head Rachel Wind expected around 5 synods to volunteer. Instead, she received 18 responses. She has worked with her team to develop 4 different levels of engagement with all 18 synods on the hypothesis that all our development efforts will be stronger when done collaboratively rather than in parallel (aka competition).

One synod was selected for the highest partnership level, like the DEM model: a full-time deployed staff person for development, employed by churchwide but working for the synod. Northern Illinois was offered this person for a 3-year experiment. The Foundation is asking for \$150,000 from the synod in partnership, while it provides the other \$250,000 and all the administrative support and back support.

We already have \$50,000 set aside for this work. I will be seeking gifts for the remainder.

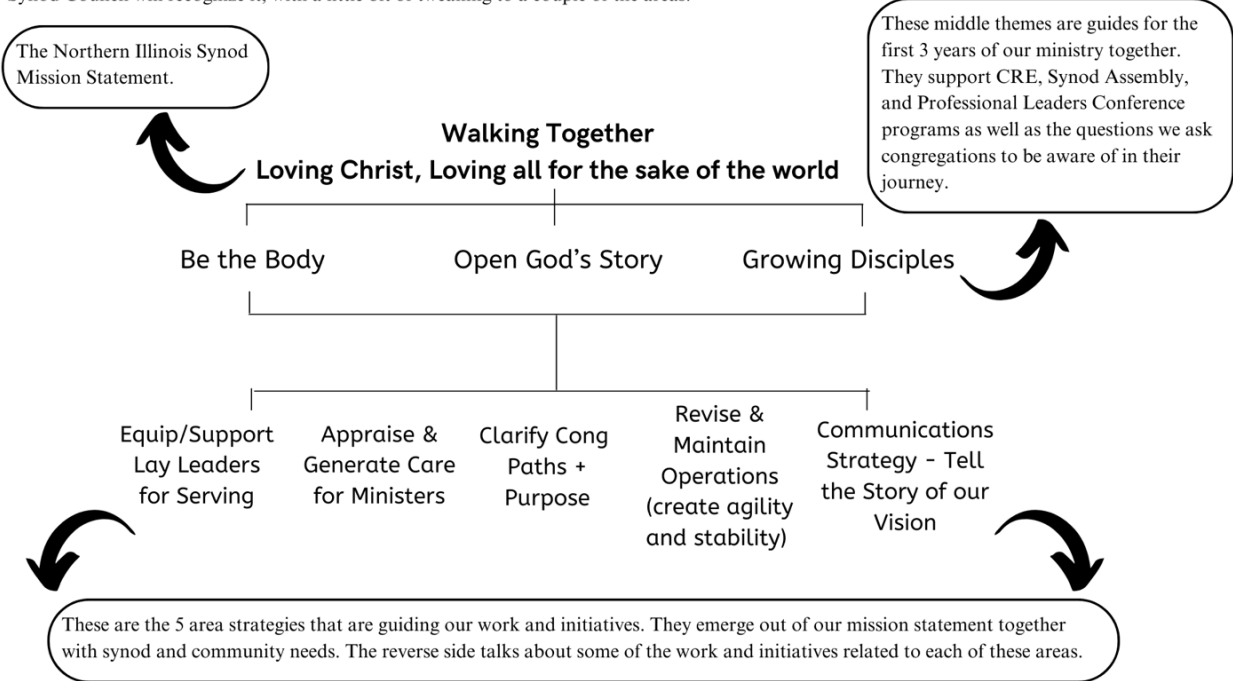
This partnership comes with the possibility of tremendous benefit for Northern Illinois and we were chosen as the synod with the most potential for making this work. When I was called as your bishop, it was clear from the beginning that I would need to do some work on fundraising for the endowment and the funds that make innovation and agility possible in the current climate. This partnership will align us with all the right resources for that work, setting up the synod – and in turn our congregations – for longer term stability.

In addition to the deployed staff person for Northern Illinois, all 18 synods will participate in quarterly educational cohorts, which will include a learning team from each synod. The intent will be to multiply the number of people empowered for the work throughout the church. (This is one of our goals for everything we do in Northern Illinois!) There will also be quarterly bishops' meetings to evaluate, adjust, and learn together.

If you know of someone who would be a good addition for this development team, please let me know! The reorganized Stewardship Committee for Northern Illinois will continue to provide practical, faith-based resources and training for congregational stewardship. The development staff will be doing faith-based work on planned and designated giving.

# 2024 Synod Assembly

This has been a guiding map for NIS staff for a little over a year. It names the 5 strategic area where we have focused our ministry. Members of the Synod Council will recognize it, with a little bit of tweaking to a couple of the areas.



We also have several value filters that guide us. The most frequently referenced is:

(1) Spirit Empowered (2) Lay Led and (3) Rostered Minister Supported

These 3 weave together as we look at the future of the church.



### Equip/Support Lay Leaders

- Supporting deeper lay education (Preaching Among Friends, DIAKONIA)
- Building a lay preaching and lay leadership team (Synod Authorized Ministers - SAMs)
- Supporting current SAMs by a complete bottom up assessment of how SAMs are selected, supported, placed, and mentored.
- Connecting congregational leaders with deeper support (current example: group zooms with congregations in transition)

### Clarify Congregation Paths/Purposes

- Vitality and Visioning consults
- Pathways program (1 year discernment process)
- Creating shared ministry strategy and initiating umbrella conversation in all the conferences
- Nurturing shared ministry opportunities already in process
- Support and equip congregations in transition
- Anti-racism awareness
- Focus on innovation opportunities
- Assist congregations in right sizing ministry to context

### Appraise/Generate Care for Ministers

- Crisis care and ongoing support
- Generate resources for spiritual direction, coaching, and continuing ed opportunities
- Identify and provide places and spaces for connection & collaboration
- Creating 3 year cycle for boundaries training (fall 2024 Region 5 initiative)
- Create and support network of interims
- Seek out new partners/leaders for ministry in NIS

### Maintain and Revise Operations

- Be transparent in our processes AND agile in our implementation
- Utilize database for effective and clear purposes
- Maintain, adapt, and utilize financial goals in ways that adhere with internal controls
- Implement endowment fund committee and goals
- Devise mission support strategy
- Identify grants and funding streams beyond mission support
- Maintain all the necessary lists, rosters, supports and logistical area

## A Glimpse of What's Happening: Synod Strategies

Daily Work

- Lift up abundance of Portico resources
- Build in areas of diversity and inclusion work
- Presence at conference and congregational levels - we want to be with you!

### Devise/Implement Communication Methods to "Tell the Story"

- Twice monthly e-news
- Quarterly bulletin insert
- Video messages and sermons from Bishop Fidler
- Website refresh
- Resources for all aspects of ministry
- Social media channels
- Communicate the work of Synod Council and committees



I shared a version of this map last year; I share it every synod council meeting and frequently when I gather with groups. It is a transparent guide to how we are Walking Together with Northern Illinois. This guiding document has been updated, shifted, and refined regularly to sharpen our view of how we can live and share God's mission among us. The strategies and the way they are being lived out lift up gifts we have often forgotten, like the baptismal call of ALL God's beloved children. They push us to remember our spiritual grounding and our purpose. We are reminded in every area to name the why of what we are doing – that is, to follow Jesus faithfully, we are doing these things in this time and this place. And they remind me, our staff, and you that we are doing all of this together, with the gifts that all of us bring to the one body of Christ.

We will continue to build paths that offer opportunities for discernment and exploring gifts among our lay leaders. A history of clericalism left many of us thinking that ordained pastors were needed to do all the work of the church. That ignores the beauty of all the parts of the body of Christ and the many gifts that Paul reminds us are alive among us.

Growing our sense of discipleship is key to that. How might we Open God's Story in ways that deepen how we follow Jesus AND support one another in ministry AND open our hearts to the work of the Spirit? Can we collaborate more fully? Step out of our comfort zones, knowing the Spirit holds us? Consider that new things can be born from tiny mustard seeds? Grieve and release those systems and expectations that no longer bring life abundant?

These are all tough asks. But the Holy Spirit is nudging. Tapping at us, urging us to see and live and shift in new ways in the Body of Christ. And we create that together, all of us, all the pieces and people and places of Northern Illinois. May the light of Christ shine through us and in us in ways that show Christ's new creation.

I know this is at the end, but **PAY ATTENTION** here.

I am grateful each and every day for synod staff, my co-workers in this ministry. Current staff members include:

**\*The Rev. Jennifer Beamsley**, who is transitioning from Lead Staff Assistant to guru of all things for vacancy and mobility. She will be part-time beginning in August, but this will actually open up more time for her to focus solely on this work.

**\*Laura Bergren**, who encourages, welcomes, keeps my schedule in line (*no Bishop, you cannot be in 5 places in one day*) and brings joy to each day.

**\*Joan Brooks**, our intrepid CPA support, who does remarkable things with numbers and reports and keeps us all on track with a hear for the Gospel.

**\*The Rev. Josh Ebener**, who has been on the run as our Director of Evangelical Mission and helping us to look for new paths of ministry and mission.

\***The Rev. Mark Juliot**, who is part-time coach of the Pathways program, using his gifts and insight to guide congregations through future options.

\***The Rev. Julie Monnard**, who quietly and wisely keeps us on track and thinks of many things before the rest of us have remembered to think of them.

\***The Rev. Mack Patrick**, who has shifted to full-time and keeps reminding all of us of the many ways to tell God's story and has the best facial expressions at the table.

\***Lori Whalen**, Synod Authorized Minister, who builds pretty spreadsheets like the best kaleidoscope creator and explains the complex with elegance.

We give thanks for those who retired from staff in 2023:

\***The Rev. Pat Esker**, who by sheer force of will and amazing questions brought us through transition.

\***The Invaluable, Wise, and Instrumental in all things Julie Lewis**. What more can I say?

Thank you for this ministry we live and do together.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Bishop Stacie Fidler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bishop Stacie Fidler

## **Anniversaries of Rostered Ministers**

<b>5 years</b>	The Rev. Chelsey Olson Weech, The Rev. David Petersen, The Rev. Mack Patrick, The Rev. Paul Gebo
<b>10 years</b>	The Rev. Daniel Wynard, The Rev. Jana Howson, The Rev. Patrick Fish
<b>15 years</b>	The Rev. Catherine Daharsh, The Rev. Elizabeth Mascal, The Rev. Josh Ebener, The Rev. Joy Alsop, The Rev. Sarah Wilson, The Rev. Theresa Wilder, The Rev. Vicki Sauter
<b>20 years</b>	The Rev. David Turner, The Rev. Jonathan Black, The Rev. Pat Esker
<b>25 years</b>	The Rev. Keith Johnson, The Rev. Scott Schmidt, Deacon Karin Graddy
<b>30 years</b>	The Rev. Jose Pilar Alvarez Cabrera, The Rev. Dawn Roucka, The Rev. Marcia Strahl, The Rev. Michael Thomas
<b>35 years</b>	The Rev. David Schweppe, The Rev. Kathleen Burkheimer
<b>40 years</b>	The Rev. Brant Clements, The Rev. Jeffrey King
<b>45 years</b>	The Rev. Denver Bitner, The Rev. Mark Helge, The Rev. Ronald Larson, Deacon Myrna Andersen
<b>50 years</b>	The Rev. David Ufkes, The Rev. Kenneth Storck, The Rev. Paul Johnson
<b>55 years</b>	The Rev. Arlyn Tolzmann, The Rev. Dennis Heaney, The Rev. Norwood Knutson
<b>60 years</b>	The Rev. Loren Nielsen
<b>65 years</b>	The Rev. Donald Lavelle, the Rev. C Frank Samuelson

## **Rostered Ministers Who Have Retired in the Past Year**

The Rev. Barb Otten, *retired June 30, 2023*  
The Rev. Doug Liston, *retired October 1, 2023*  
The Rev. Jill Flynn, *retired January 1, 2024*  
The Rev. Carol Ostrom, *retired January 14, 2024*  
The Rev. Paul Gebo, *retired March 14, 2024*  
The Rev. Ken Gibson, *retired January 1, 2024*  
The Rev. Lu Cantrell, *retired June 1, 2024*  
The Rev. Janet Hunt, *retired June 1, 2024*



# Report of the Director for Evangelical Mission

I want to begin by thanking you all for your partnership. It has been a blessing to work with you all as partners in ministry in the Northern Illinois Synod. It has been a year and a half since I began this role as A2B (Assistant to the Bishop) & DEM (Director for Evangelical Mission). In that time, I have been focused on visiting congregations, listening to and walking with people through the joys and struggles of life and ministry.

I have worked with nearly 20 of our congregations using the congregational vitality survey to get a pulse on the vitality and energy in the congregation, have conversations around mission, and do some dreaming and visioning for the future. It has been a joy to walk with congregations all across our synod as they have these important conversations. I am also doing work around shared ministry, which has included asset mapping with two of our conferences (North and West) to explore potential collaborations.

Another tool we have been using in this vitality work with congregations is MapDash for Faith Communities with FaithX. MapDash is an interactive online, map-based platform for demographics, trends, and analytics, including congregational vitality and sustainability, missional opportunity, and drive-time analysis. This tool allows us to generate a 2-page Neighborhood Insights Report with over 40 key demographic factors in a designated radius (5, 10, or 15 minute drive time) around a church. This tool is available to all of our NIS congregations and is assisting in understanding and walking with our communities.

My role as DEM also involves working with our mission start congregations, or SAWCs (Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities):

- San Jose Obrero (SJO), a predominantly Spanish language worshipping community that started in 2011 and is currently housed at Trinity, Moline. Rev. Jose Pilar Alvarez Cabrera began serving there in July of last year. This was a part of a new coordinated strategy with the Southeastern Iowa Synod for Lutheran Latino ministry in the Quad Cities. During the last year there have been new families participating in the church, and an average of 30 people attending Sunday services. SJO also celebrates baptisms, quinceañeras, and have 9 children in the first communion/confirmation class. They celebrated the Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 10 with dances by Danza Azteca, and over 100 people in attendance.
- Becoming, our newest mission start in Oswego, is exploring new ways of being the church, particularly among people who haven't always been included in the church. The vision is to be "a community who knows they are loved & liberated, who knows their authentic voice & vocation, and who believe they are equipped & empowered to serve their neighbor." Becoming's mission developer, Rev. Pat Fish, started in November of last year, and has been doing 1-on-1 meetings in and around Oswego. They have assembled a diverse launch team (12 leaders). Their first gatherING on April 7 (Holy Humor Sunday) at the Oswego Community Center had 50 people in attendance.

Please pray for our mission starts and invite our mission developers to preach and share about their ministries.

We are excited about these new things God is doing in our synod!

DEM Portfolio:

1. Congregational Vitality
  - a. Conversations with congregations about what gives them life, energy, meaning and purpose; and discerning where God is calling them
  - b. Congregational Vitality Survey ([congregationalvitalitysurvey.com](http://congregationalvitalitysurvey.com))
2. Mission Starts (SAWCs)
  - a. San Jose Obrero Moline
  - b. Oswego Lutheran Mission
3. Committees
  - a. Outreach
  - b. Social Ministry
  - c. Racial Justice
  - d. World Hunger
  - e. Advocacy
4. Boards
  - a. RALM (Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries)
  - b. Grace Place (NIU Campus Ministry)
5. Conferences
  - a. North Conference
  - b. West Conference

**Submitted by: Rev. Josh Ebener**

# **Report of the Northern Illinois Synod Council**

## **Report of Northern Illinois Synod Vice President**

Dear Members of the Synod Assembly,

And just like that another year has passed and it is time for us to gather together again and reflect on the work of our congregations, committees, and the synod for the past year.

As we were coming out of the pandemic, we were optimistic about the time that everything would return to “normal”. I believe that we have figured out that we are not going back to what was normal and familiar to us before, at least not entirely. Many things that were implemented during the pandemic like on-line services and on-line giving are now common. The faithful and dedicated leadership within your congregations and the synod staff, with the support of the council amidst those trying times, ensured that our congregations and synod continued to thrive.

I encourage you to read the reports of the committees, agencies, and other leaders to see all of the wonderful work that is happening within the synod. It really is inspiring to see how the Spirit continues to work in among us and through us as individuals, congregations, the synod, and part of the larger church.

As the church in an ever changing and conflicted world, we will of course continue to have struggles and challenges. I would like to extend a huge word of thanks to Bishop Stacie and to the synod staff for their constant forward and out-of-the-box thinking that allows for quick responses to new challenges, sometimes anticipating the problem and having a solution ready.

I would also like to extend thanks to the synod council for their prayerful diligence in conducting the business of the synod and supporting the Bishop and the staff in their work.

To each of you, the heart and soul of our congregations and synod, I extend my heartfelt thanks. Your unwavering dedication and generosity are what make our collective mission of Walking Together—loving Christ, loving all, for the sake of the world—a reality.

Peace be with you,  
Minnette Willard  
Vice President

## **Report of Northern Illinois Synod Secretary**

Greetings Northern Illinois Synod!

As your synod secretary, it is my job to accurately record all the meetings of our synod, the council, and the executive team. I also serve on the executive team with Bishop Stacie, our Vice President, Treasurer, and two other members of the council as well as relate to other synod secretaries across the country. I also sit in on the Finance Committee to assist with recording minutes. It is my honor and privilege to serve as your synod secretary and all that entails!

During a time in our world of discord and upheaval, I am excited to be part of Christ's Church. Not just for the hope it brings but the opportunity to shine Christ's light in a dark world. The church may not look the same as it did even a decade ago. But my prayer is that we will continue to find new ways to work together to reach the lost, hopeless, oppressed, and marginalized with the love of Christ.

Thank you for your leadership in Christ's church. May God bless you as you continue to be the Body of Christ in both the Northern Illinois Synod and in your own congregations.

Rev. Lu Cantrell  
Secretary

# Minutes of the 2023 NIS Assembly

NORTHERN ILLINOIS SYNOD  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY  
JUNE 16-17, 2023

## **PLENARY SESSION I – Friday, June 16<sup>th</sup>**

### **Opening of the Assembly**

After a note of welcome, Bishop Stacie Fidlar and Rev. Dr. Charlene Rachuy Cox led us in an opening liturgy followed by the Hymn, “Canticle of the Turning” with a procession. Order for the Opening of the Assembly with land acknowledgement was presented by Bishop Fidlar. Bishop Fidlar introduced the purpose of the event followed by introductions of people seated on the platform and guests in the audience. A video greeting was presented by Augustana College President Dr. Andrea Talentino.

### **Credentials Report**

Bishop Fidlar called on Rev. Jennifer Ohman-Rodriguez, Chairperson of the Credentials Committee, to give the credentials report as follows:

213 Lay Members (68%)  
102 Rostered Members (32%)  
Total of 315 Voting Members

A quorum was established.

Bishop Fidlar led us through the procedures for speaking at the microphones and voting followed by a test vote on Slido.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Bishop Fidlar called on Secretary Cantrell to present the agenda.

Bishop Fidlar instructed the assembly that items could be pulled from the agenda and the consent agenda at this time.

**ACTION SA-23-06-01 Secretary Cantrell made a motion on behalf of the synod council that the agenda for the Synod Assembly prepared by the synod council and found in the Bulletin of Reports on the synod website, be adopted, as the agenda for the 2023 Northern Illinois Synod Assembly. The motion was approved.**

### **Approval of Consent Agenda**

Bishop Fidlar called on Secretary Cantrell to present the consent agenda.

**ACTION SA-23-06-02 Secretary Cantrell on behalf of the Synod Council, moved that the Consent Agenda which includes the Rules of the Assembly, Committee Appointments, and the 2022 Synod Assembly Minutes found in the Bulletin of Reports be adopted as the**

**Consent Agenda of the 2023 Northern Illinois Synod Assembly.” The consent agenda was approved.**

### **Keynote Speaker**

Rev. Dr. Charlene Rachuy – Cox shared a message based on Isaiah 43 focusing on, “but now...I love you and you are mine.” She also referred to the poem by Mary Oliver, “A Summer’s Day.”

### **Portico Presentation**

Bishop Fidlar called on Ms. Jennifer Prinz to give a report on Portico.

### **Bishop’s Report**

Bishop Fidlar called on synod Vice President Ms. Minnette Willard to take the chair so she could give us her report with these highlights:

- Pathways Discernment Coach – Rev. Mark Juliot
- Faithful Innovations Lab and Vital Congregational Work – DEM Rev. Josh Ebener
- Introduction of Rev. Jose Pilar, former president of the Lutheran Church of Guatemala. He will oversee a joint Latino ministry in the Quad Cities with the partnership of the Northern Illinois Synod and the Southeastern Iowa Synod. Rev. Pilar greeted the assembly.
  - Bishop asked how we can support Rev. Pilar in his work with these suggestions:
    - Mission Team – one time
    - Mission Partners – reoccurring gift
    - Mission Dreamers – gift to the Innovation Team Fund

The assembly offered its thanks for the Bishop’s report with applause. Vice President Willard returned the chair to Bishop Fidlar.

### **Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center Video**

#### **Synod Treasurer’s Report**

Bishop Fidlar called on Treasurer Ms. Tammie Farley to give her report. The assembly offered its thanks to Treasurer Farley with applause.

#### **Presentation of the Proposed Budget for 2024**

Bishop Fidlar invited Treasurer Farley to introduce the proposed NIS Budget for 2024 which will be voted on in Plenary Session 2.

#### **Resolution R1**

Bishop Fidlar called acting chair of the Resolution’s committee, Rev. Andrew Kayes, to read the “resolved” sections of Resolution 1 – Growing in Faith: The diakonia Program.

**Be it resolved** that this Assembly of the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1. Affirm and celebrate that **Growing in Faith: The diakonia™ Program** is in partnership with NIS for adult faith formation and as a foundational resource for Synodically Authorized Ministers.
2. With the assistance of the Synod, fund special projects for the ongoing ministry of **diakonia™** (e.g., publicity, national website administrator, retreats, scholarships), with the possibly having an annual **diakonia™** Sunday offering.
3. Encourage rostered leaders to invite parishioners to take part in this program of faith formation.”

Bishop Fidlar instructed the assembly that we only discuss the “Resolved” sections of the resolution.

Discussion included:

Ms. Donna Kelly of Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley – speaking in support of R1.

Rev. Scott Benolkin of Shepherd of the Valley, Rockford – speaking in support of R1.

Rev. Jonathan Black of First Lutheran, Plano – Point of Order to increase of budget to support the program if the resolution passes.

Rev. Kayes said the Synod leadership will determine the funding.

The assembly joined in prayer regarding voting on Resolution 1.

**ACTION SA-23-06-03 The motion to approve Resolution R1 was passed.**

## **Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service Video**

### **Introduction of the General Ballot**

Bishop Fidlar called on Ms. Nancy Lillevold to introduce the general ballot and instructions for voting.

Bishop Fidlar called on Rev. Ryan Mackey to read the ballot:

### **Synod Vice President – Elect One**

Ms. Minnette Willard (First, DeKalb- NE Conference)

### **Synod Treasurer (Lay or Rostered Male or Female-4-year term) Vote for 1**

Ms. Lori Whalen (First – Ohio- South Conference)

### **Synod Secretary (Lay or Rostered Male or Female-4-year term) Vote for 1**

The Rev. Lu Cantrell (Peace, Morris, East Conference)

Deacon Laura Gorton (Christ, Belvidere, North Conference)

### **Synod Council Members Elect 6**

Young Adult, 18-30 Years old (Lay or Rostered, Male or Female) 3 Year Term – Vote for 1

Ms. Katie Mehlretter (Shepherd of the Hills, Scales Mound, Northwest Conference)

Youth – Confirmed- 18 Years old. (Lay Male or Female) 1 Year Term – Vote for 1

Mr. Alex Chenoweth (Peace, New Lenox-East Conference)

Lay Female – 3 Year Term – Vote for 1

Ms. Christina King (First, Galesburg- Southwest Conference)

Lay Female – 3 Year Term – Vote for 1

Ms. Rhonda Copeland (Calvary, New Windsor-Southwest Conference)

Ms. Jeana Fors (Bethany, Woodhull- Southwest Conference)

Lay Male – 3 Year Term - Vote for 1

Mr. Jason Gustafson (Cambridge, Cambridge – West Conference)

Mr. Brandon Graves (Salem, Sycamore - Northeast Conference)

Rostered Female – 3 Year Term - Vote for 1

Rev. Joy Alsop (Faith, Rochelle, Central Conference)

Rev. Dr. Jana Howson (Faith, Joliet-East Conference)

### **Congregational Life Committee-Elect 3**

Lay Female (3-Year term) vote for 1

Ms. Jackie Mansholt (St. John, Joliet-East Conference)

Ms. Kelly Van Fleet (Peace, Morris-East Conference)

Lay Male (3-Year term) Vote for 1

Mr. Greg Bruner (Light of Christ-Algonquin-Northeast Conference)

Rostered Male (3-Year term) Vote for 1

Rev. Ryan Mackey (Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley-Northeast Conference)

### **Global Mission Committee – Elect 3**

Lay Female (3-Year term) Vote for 1

Ms. Janet Larson (First, Geneseo-West Conference)

Lay Male (3-Year term) Vote for 1

Mr. Mike Wadle (First, DeKalb-Northeast Conference)

Rostered Female (3-Year term) Vote for 1

Rev. Janet Hunt (First, DeKalb-Northeast Conference)

### **Ministry Support Committee –Elect 3**

Lay Male (3-Year term) Vote for 1

Mr. Jim Cantrell (Peace, Morris-East Conference)

Dr. Randy Mullin (First, Geneseo-West Conference)

Rostered Female (3-Year term) Vote for 1

Rev. Karen Tews (Good Shepherd, Lena-Northwest Conference)

Rev. Julane Nease (United, Rockford-North Conference)

Rostered Male (3-Year term) Vote for 1

Rev. David Russell (Scenic Hills Parish-Northwest Conference)

### **Outreach Committee – Elect 2**

Lay Female (3-Year term) Vote for 1

Ms. Lisa Gerloff-Banker (Grace, Woodstock-Northeast Conference)

Ms. Emily Fredrickson (First, Ohio-South Conference)

Rostered Female (3-Year term) Vote for 1

Rev. Amanda Dahlseng-Monroe (Grace, Loves Park-North Conference)

Rev. Robin Luckey (Lord of Love, Galena-Northwest Conference)



### **Social Ministry Committee-Elect 4**

Lay Female (3-Year term) Vote for 1

Ms. Donna Kelly (Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley-Northeast Conference)

Lay Male (3-Year term) Vote for 1

Mr. Paul Lockwood (Grace, Woodstock-Northeast Conference)

Rostered Female (3-Year Term) Vote for 1

Rev. Carol Soderholm (Trinity, Milledgeville-Northwest Conference)

Rev. Joanna Patterson (Faith, South Beloit-North Conference)

Rostered Male (3-Year term) Vote for 1

Rev. Scott Ralston (Faith, Forreston-Central Conference)

### **Consultation Committee -Elect 4**

Lay Female – 6 Year Term- Vote for 1

Ms. Kearsti-Ray Knowles (Trinity, Mt. Morris-Central Conference)

Ms. Janet Schultz (Zion, Belvidere-North Conference)

Lay Male (6-Year term) Vote for 1

Mr. Melvin Ehrler (Shepherd of the Hills, Scales Mound-Northwest Conference)

Rostered Female (6-Year term) Vote for 1

Rev. Hope Johnson (Bethany, Leland, South Conference)

Rostered Male (6-Year term) Vote for 1

Rev. Zach Baer (Living Waters, Crystal Lake-Northeast Conference)

Rev. Jamie Gallagher (First, Monmouth-Southwest Conference)

### **Committee on Discipline –Elect 4**

Lay Female (6-Year term) Vote for 1

Ms. Grace Heimerdinger-Bakke (St. John, Pearl City-Northwest Conference)

Lay Male (6-Year term) Vote for 1

Mr. Doug Murray (St. Paul, Streator-South Conference)

Mr. David Kromphardt (St. John's, Peru-South Conference)

Rostered Female (6-Year term) Vote for 1

Rev. Gwen Sefrhans-Murphy (St. Paul, Orion-West Conference)

Rostered Male (6-Year term) Vote for 1

Rev. Dr. Jon Pedersen (Shepherd of the Hills, Lockport-East Conference)

Rev. Dave Hedlin (Peace, New Lenox-East Conference)

Bishop Fidlar asked if there were any nominations from the floor. Seeing none, Bishop Fidlar declared nominations closed and voting open with directions on voting.

### **Announcements**

Bishop Fidlar invited Assistant to the Bishop Rev. Jennifer Beamsley to bring us announcements.

### **Lunch Prayer**

Bishop Fidlar led us in a prayer for lunch and the closing of the first plenary session.

## **PLENARY SESSION 2– Saturday, June 17<sup>th</sup>**

### **Gathering Hymn and Opening Ritual of Longing and Hope**

Bishop Fidlar led the assembly in a time of worship, commemoration of the Emmanuel Nine and an acknowledgement of Juneteenth.

### **Credentials Report**

Bishop Fidlar called on Rev. Jennifer Ohman-Rodriguez for the credentials report.

225 Lay Members (66%)

117 Rostered Members (34%)

Total of 342 Voting Members

A quorum has been established.

### **Vice President Report**

Bishop Fidlar called Vice President Ms. Minette Willard to share her report with the assembly.

The assembly received her report and showed appreciation with applause.

### **Mission Investment Fund Video**

### **Resolution R2**

Bishop Fidlar called acting chair of the Resolution’s committee, Rev. Andrew Kayes, to read the “resolved” sections of Resolution R2 – Memorialize Churchwide to Update the Social Statement on Abortion.

**Be it resolved** that the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America requests that Churchwide leaders revise, update, or create a new Social Statement on Abortion; and

**Be it further resolved**, this process should include the partnership of women clergy, women deacons, and lay women of our Synods and congregations.

Discussion included:

Rev. Julane Neese of United Lutheran, Rockford speaking in support of R2.

Mx. Samuel Carrington of 1<sup>st</sup> Lutheran, Galesburg asked how a woman is defined and will there be an emphasis on those who have uteruses or those who identify as women.

Bishop Fidlar described the process of what would happen once the document is submitted to churchwide and that they will seek the broadest group.

Ms. Kearsti-Rae Knowles of Trinity Lutheran, Mt. Morris said we need to be very intentional in the language we use when we present this to churchwide.

Bishop Fidlar asked Ms. Knowles if she was making a motion to write out a suggested amendment and bring it forward.

Mr. Brandon Graves of Salem, Sycamore presented an amendment as follows:

**Be it resolved** that the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America requests that Churchwide leaders **memorializes the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to** revise, update, or create a new Social Statement on Abortion; and

The motion was seconded.

Ms. Lori Dhabalt of St. Paul of Orion asked if there was a copy of the current social statement in the bulletin of reports. Bishop Fidler directed the assembly to the NIS website.

The amendment passed.

Ms. Melanie Chavin of Salem Lutheran, Sycamore and Rev. Makayla Dahleen of St. Paul, Sterling proposed an amendment to include medical professionals.

Bishop Fidler introduced the ELCA Youth Gathering Video and the Global Mission Committee Video as the amendments were being drafted.

Ms. Kearsti-Rae Knowles of Trinity Lutheran, Mt. Morris presented an amendment as follows:

**Be it further resolved**, this process should include ~~the partnership of women clergy, women deacons, and lay women~~ **the partnership of clergy, deacons, and lay people who have uteruses or have had uteruses, and medical professionals including genetic counselors, perinatologist/maternal fetal medicine doctors, NICU providers, fetal palliative care providers, and OBGYNs** of our Synods and congregations.

Motion is seconded.

Further discussion:

Rev. Don Knowles of Calvary, Moline and St. James Lutheran, Rock Island speaking against the amendment.

Ms. Gretchen Sprinkle of Salem, Sycamore speaks in support of the amendment.

Rev. Jacob Gawlik of St. John's, Sterling asked a clarification question.

Rev. Janet Hunt of 1<sup>st</sup> Lutheran, Dekalb speaking in support of the amendment.

Mx. Samuel Carrington of 1<sup>st</sup> Lutheran, Galesburg – speaking in favor of the amendment.

Ms. Lori Whalen of 1<sup>st</sup> Lutheran, Ohio made a correction to the grammar.

Mr. Brandon Graves of Salem, Sycamore made a motion to end debate.

Second was given.

The motion to end debate on the amendment was passed.

The amendment passed.

Further discussion:

Rev. Ron Larson of Trinity of Mt. Morris shared a personal story asking that voices of those whose lives were saved be considered in the conversation of revising the social statement [on abortion].

Rev. Janet Hunt of 1<sup>st</sup> Lutheran, Dekalb stated that the wheels of the Church move slowly. She encouraged us to follow the example of the North Conference as we work with each other.  
Rev. Frank Langholf of Emmanuel, Rockford speaking in support of the resolution.  
Rev. Sarah Wilson of St. Barnabas, Cary speaking in support of the resolution.  
Ms. Christina King of 1<sup>st</sup> Lutheran, Galesburg called the question.

A motion of calling the question and ending debate was made and seconded.

Motion passed.

Bishop Fidler led the assembly in prayer before the vote on R2.

The vote was done by Slido with the results as follows:

Yes – 94%  
No – 6%

**ACTION SA-23-06-04 The motion to approve Resolution R2 as amended was passed.**

### **LSTC Video**

#### **Secretary and Synod Council Report**

Bishop introduced Secretary Cantrell's video report which was received by the assembly and acknowledged by applause. Bishop Fidler noted that Synod Council report was included in the Bulletin of Reports and received by the assembly.

#### **Churchwide Report**

Bishop Fidler introduced Mr. Nick Kiger, the churchwide representative, to present his report. The assembly received his report and responded with applause.

#### **Action on Proposed Budget**

Bishop Fidler called Treasurer Farley to the podium and asked Secretary Cantrell to read the motion from the Synod Council to adopt the 2024 budget.

Discussion as follows:

Rev. Carol Solderholm of Trinity, Milledgeville speaking against the budget specifically cutting social services.

Ms. Christina King of 1<sup>st</sup> Lutheran, Galesburg speaking in favor of the budget.

Rev. Don Knowles of Calvary, Moline and St. James, Rock Island speaking against the budget but instead make an effort to increase benevolence.

Mr. Larry Mine of St. James, Forreston suggest all congregations to find ways to give more to LOMC.

Rev. Bree Truax of Immanuel, Rock Falls speaking in favor of the budget.

Bishop Fidler led the assembly in prayer.

**ACTION SA-23-06-05 Secretary Cantrell on behalf of the Synod Council, moved that the budget prepared by the Finance Committee and adopted by the Synod Council, as it appears in the Bulletin of Reports, to be adopted as the budget for Fiscal Year 2024 for the Northern Illinois Synod.” The motion was approved.**

### **Election Report of General Ballot**

Bishop Fidar invited Ms. Lillevold to present the results of the General Ballot and are as follows:

### **Synod Officers**

Synod Vice President - Ms. Minnette Willard (First, DeKalb- NE Conference)  
Synod Treasurer - Ms. Lori Whalen (First – Ohio- South Conference)  
Synod Secretary - The Rev. Lu Cantrell (Peace, Morris, East Conference)

### **Synod Council Members**

Young Adult, 18-30 Years old - Ms. Katie Mehlretter (Shepherd of the Hills, Scales Mound, Northwest Conference)  
Youth – Confirmed- 18 Years old - Mr. Alex Chenoweth (Peace, New Lenox-East Conference)  
Lay Female - Ms. Christina King (First, Galesburg- Southwest Conference)  
Lay Female – Ms. Rhonda Copeland (Calvary, New Windsor-Southwest Conference)  
Lay Male – Mr. Brandon Graves (Salem, Sycamore - Northeast Conference)  
Rostered Female – Rev. Joy Alsop (Faith, Rochelle, Central Conference)

### **Congregational Life Committee**

Lay Female - Ms. Kelly Van Fleet (Peace, Morris-East Conference)  
Lay Male - Mr. Greg Bruner (Light of Christ-Algonquin-Northeast Conference)  
Rostered Male - Rev. Ryan Mackey (Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley-Northeast Conference)

### **Global Mission Committee**

Lay Female - Ms. Janet Larson (First, Geneseo-West Conference)  
Lay Male - Mr. Mike Wadle (First, DeKalb-Northeast Conference)  
Rostered Female - Rev. Janet Hunt (First, DeKalb-Northeast Conference)

### **Ministry Support Committee**

Lay Male - Dr. Randy Mullin (First, Geneseo-West Conference)  
Rostered - Rev. Karen Tews (Good Shepherd, Lena-Northwest Conference)  
Rostered Male - Rev. David Russell (Scenic Hills Parish-Northwest Conference)

### **Outreach Committee**

Lay Female - Ms. Lisa Gerloff-Banker (Grace, Woodstock-Northeast Conference)  
Rostered Female - Rev. Robin Luckey (Lord of Love, Galena-Northwest Conference)

### **Social Ministry Committee**

Lay Female - Ms. Donna Kelly (Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley-Northeast Conference)  
Lay Male - Mr. Paul Lockwood (Grace, Woodstock-Northeast Conference)

Rostered Female - Rev. Joanna Patterson (Faith, South Beloit-North Conference)  
Rostered Male - Rev. Scott Ralston (Faith, Forreton-Central Conference)

### **Consultation Committee**

Lay Female – Ms. Kearsti-Ray Knowles (Trinity, Mt. Morris-Central Conference)  
Lay Male - Mr. Melvin Ehrler (Shepherd of the Hills, Scales Mound-Northwest Conference)  
Rostered Female - Rev. Hope Johnson (Bethany, Leland, South Conference)  
Rostered Male - Rev. Zach Baer (Living Waters, Crystal Lake-Northeast Conference)

### **Committee on Discipline**

Lay Female - Ms. Grace Heimerdinger-Bakke (St. John, Pearl City-Northwest Conference)  
Lay Male - Mr. David Kromphardt (St. John's, Peru-South Conference)  
Rostered Female - Rev. Gwen Sefrhans-Murphy (St. Paul, Orion-West Conference)  
Rostered Male - Rev. Dr. Jon Pedersen (Shepherd of the Hills, Lockport-East Conference)

### **LSSI Report**

Bishop Fidler invited Mr. Mark Stutrud from LSSI to share his report.

### **Wartburg Seminary Video**

### **Compensation Guidelines**

Bishop Fidler called on Secretary Cantrell to make a motion on behalf of the Synod Council to adopt the Compensation Guidelines for 2024.

Discussion included:

Rev. Jacob Gawlik of St. John's, Sterling asked the chair to speak why family leave and sabbaticals are not considered vacation.

Bishop Fidler called on Rev. Vince Marolla chair of the Ministry Support Committee to address the question.

Rev. Marolla stressed the importance of family leave and is very different from vacation. He mentioned that sabbatical is much the same.

Rev. Katie Gallagher of Faith, Wataga speaking in support of Rev. Marolla's comments.

Bishop Fidler led the assembly in prayer prior to the vote.

**ACTION SA-23-06-06 Secretary Cantrell on behalf of the Synod Council, moved to approve the proposed 2024 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers. The motion was approved.**

### **Constitution Changes**

Bishop Fidler called on Secretary Cantrell to make a motion on behalf of the Synod Council to adopt the Constitution Changes as received from the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

There was no discussion.

**ACTION SA-23-06-07 Secretary Cantrell on behalf of the Synod Council, moved to approve the proposed changes to the Northern Illinois Synod Constitution, as received from the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. The motion was approved.**

#### **Courtesy Committee Report**

Rev. Julane Neese invited Dn. Laura Gorton and Rev. Michael Thomas to present the Courtesy Committee Report.

#### **Announcements**

Bishop called on Assistant to the Bishop Jen Beamsley to present announcements.

#### **Conclusion to the Purpose of the Event**

Bishop Fidler and Rev. Dr. Cox led us through litany for the conclusion of the event.

#### **Order for the Closing of Synod Assembly**

Bishop Fidler asked for a motion and second to close the assembly.  
Motion carried.

#### **Installation of Called Staff and Affirmation of Vocation**

**ACTION SA-23-06-01 Secretary Cantrell made a motion on behalf of the synod council that the agenda for the Synod Assembly prepared by the synod council and found in the Bulletin of Reports on the synod website, be adopted, as the agenda for the 2023 Northern Illinois Synod Assembly. The motion was approved.**

**ACTION SA-23-06-02 Secretary Cantrell on behalf of the Synod Council, moved that the Consent Agenda which includes the Rules of the Assembly, Committee Appointments, and the 2022 Synod Assembly Minutes found in the Bulletin of Reports be adopted as the Consent Agenda of the 2023 Northern Illinois Synod Assembly.” The consent agenda was approved.**

**ACTION SA-23-06-03 The motion to approve Resolution R1 was passed.**

**ACTION SA-23-06-04 The motion to approve Resolution R2 was passed.**

**ACTION SA-23-06-05 Secretary Cantrell on behalf of the Synod Council, moved that the budget prepared by the Finance Committee and adopted by the Synod Council, as it appears in the Bulletin of Reports, to be adopted as the budget for Fiscal Year 2024 for the Northern Illinois Synod.” The motion was approved.**

**ACTION SA-23-06-06 Secretary Cantrell on behalf of the Synod Council, moved to approve the proposed 2024 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers. The motion was approved.**

**ACTION SA-23-06-07**

**Secretary Cantrell on behalf of the Synod Council, moved to approve the proposed changes to the Northern Illinois Synod Constitution, as received from the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. The motion was approved.**



## **Summary of Synod Council**

May 1, 2023 – April 30, 2024

### 2023 Synod Officers:

The Rev. Stacie Fidler, Bishop (2028)  
Ms. Minette Scott, Vice President (2027)  
The Rev. Luanne Cantrell, Secretary (2027)  
Ms. Nancy Lillevold, Treasurer (2024) filling an incomplete term

### Synod Council:

The Rev. Joy Alsop (2026)  
Mr. Alex Chenoweth (2024)  
Ms. Janice Forrest (2025)  
Mr. Brandon Graves (2026)  
The Rev. Brad Haugen (2024)  
Ms. Leann Heimerdinger (2024) filling an incomplete term  
Ms. Christina King (2026)  
The Rev. Shellie Knight (2025)  
Mr. Dave Kromphardt (2024) filling an incomplete term  
The Rev. Frank Langholf (2025)  
Ms. Katie Mehlretter (2026)  
Ms. Rhonda Copeland (2026)  
Mr. George Sanchez (2025)  
Mr. Jim Spring (2024)  
The Rev. Andy Tyrrell (2024)

### Executive Committee:

Bishop Stacie Fidler  
Ms. Minette Willard  
The Rev. Lu Cantrell  
Ms. Nancy Lillevold  
Mr. George Sanchez  
The Rev. Andy Tyrell  
Ms. Lori Whalen, Ex-Officio

### Finance Committee:

Bishop Stacie Fidler  
Ms. Rhonda Copeland (2026)  
Ms. Janice Forrest (2026)  
Ms. Christina King (2025)  
Ms. Nancy Lillevold, Treasurer (2024)  
The Rev. Ryan Mackey (2025)  
Mr. Doug Murray (2026)  
The Rev. John Pederson (2026)  
Ms. Minnette Willard, Vice-President  
Ms. Joan Brooks, Bookkeeper, Ex-Officio

The Rev. Julie Monnard, Assistant to the Bishop, Ex-Officio  
Ms. Lori Whalen, Assistant to the Bishop, Ex-Officio

Meeting Dates and Locations:

5/13/2023 via Zoom  
9/9/2023 Faith Lutheran Church, Rochelle  
10/23/2023 via Zoom (Special Meeting)  
1/13/2024 via Zoom  
4/13/2024 via Zoom

A Summary of Administrative Actions:

1. Received the bishop's report at each meeting – including reports from the bishop's staff.
2. Received and approved Synod Council minutes at each meeting.
3. The 2024 Synod Compensation Guidelines were approved for 2023 Synod Assembly.
4. The General ballot for 2023 Synod Assembly was approved.
5. Approval for Bishop Fidler to extend specialized calls on behalf of the synod until the Synod Council next meets.
6. Approved appointments to NIS Standing Committees, Synod Council, Synod Council Committees, Task Forces, and Synod Assembly Committees.
7. Approved the SAWC in Oswego and to call Rev. Fish was approved.
8. Approved the 2024 Synod Assembly Offering to Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center (LOMC) and ELCA World Hunger in celebration of their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries.
9. Approved the Rules of the 2024 Synod Assembly.
10. Approved The Rev. Andrew Kayes appointment to serve as 2024 Synod Assembly Parliamentarian.
11. Approval of new Congregations' Constitutions and Bylaws
  - a. St. Barnabas, Cary
  - b. St. John's, Sterling
  - c. New Life, Bolingbrook
  - d. Grace, Woodstock
  - e. Living Waters, Crystal Lake
  - f. First, Freeport
  - g. St. Mark's, Polo
  - h. St. John's, Peru
  - i. Zion, Belvidere
  - j. All Saints, Byron
  - k. Cross and Crown, Roscoe
  - l. Alleluia!, Naperville
  - m. First, Geneseo (C12.05.01 and model updates)
  - n. Becoming, Oswego (initial SAWC constitution)
12. Approved Congregation Closing
  - a. Gloria Dei, Rockford
13. Approved partnership with ELCA Foundation for the Synod Development Pilot Project.

#### A Summary of Budget and Finance Actions

1. Regularly received and reviewed the reports of the treasurer, subject to audit.
2. Received the audit report.
3. Received the updated Personnel Policy for Rostered Ministers and Lay Assistants.
4. Approved the amended budget for FY24, ending January 31, 2024.
5. Approved to rescind the Synod Council actions of 2/7/20.
6. Approved to rescind Synod Council actions of 11/15/21.
7. Approved the transfer of the balance from fund 31044 to fund 34052.
8. Approved the establishment of fund 31110 Bishop Transition Fund.
9. Approved including the following within the Notes to the Financial Statements for the audit report, under the Property and Equipment heading – software depreciation is provided using the straight-line method over a 3-year period.
10. Approved the updated name of the Fund 31105 from International Partnerships to Bishop Jeff Clements Fund for International Partnerships.
11. Approval the allocation of up to \$1,000 from the Bishop Jeff Clements Fund for International Partnerships for 2024 Companion Visits.

#### A Summary of Personnel Actions

1. Appointment/Specialized Ministry Committee-Executive Committee
  - a. On Leave from Call-Extended/Status Renewal
    - The Rev. David Petersen (5/29/2023 - 5/28/2026)
    - The Rev. Thomas Ekstrand (9/1/2020 - 8/31/2025) Two-Year Renewal
    - The Rev. Kimberly Riebe (8/14/17-8/13/25) Two-Year Renewal
    - The Rev. Peter Bredlau (07/31/2023 – 07/30/2026)
    - The Rev. Tom Rogers (9/1/2022-8/31/2025) Renewal
    - Dn. Karin Graddy (9/1/2022-8/31/2025) Renewal
    - The Rev. Karen Tews (1/1/2022-12/31/2024) Renewal
    - The Rev. David Turner (10/21/22 – 10/20/25)
    - The Rev. Carol Baumgartner (3/14/24 – 3/13/25)
  - b. Extend/Renew Interim/Term Call through Synod Council
    - The Rev. Elizabeth Martin, Transition Pastor (8/7/23 – 8/6/24)
    - The Rev. Gwen Sefrhans-Murphy, Transition Pastor (10/1/23 – 9/30/24)
    - The Rev. Dawn Rouka, Transition Pastor (10/1/23 – 9/30/24)
    - The Rev. Don Wink, Transition Pastor (12/1/23 – 11/30/24)
    - The Rev. Patrick Fish, SAWC Mission Developer (11/01/23 – 10/31/24)
    - The Rev. Mark Juliot, Transition Pastor (04/10/24 – 04/09/25)
    - The Rev. Keith Johnson, Interim Pastor (3/24/24 – 3/23/25)
    - The Rev. Megan Vaughan, Interim Pastor (3/1/24 – 3/1/25)
  - c. Rostered Call from Synod Council
    - Rev. Thomas Ekstrand, Hospice Chaplain (9/10/23 – 9/9/26)
  - d. Invitation to Extended Service – Renewal
    - The Rev. Carrie Carnes (rostered United Methodist)-Trinity, Galesburg
    - The Rev. Maureen O'Connor (rostered Episcopal)-Light of Christ, Algonquin
2. SAWC renewal
  - San Jose Obrero, Moline – Rev. Jose Pilar Alvarez Cabrera

- Becoming, Oswego – Rev. Patrick Fish
3. Approval of Committee Appointment
    - Dean of Northwest Conference – Rev. Robin Luckey
  4. Approve Retirement Status:
    - The Rev. Pat Esker (June 1, 2023)
    - Deacon Martha Bein (August 15, 2023)
    - The Rev. Jill Flynn (January 1, 2024)
    - The Rev. Kenneth Gibson (January 1, 2024)
    - Deacon Carol Ostrom (January 14, 2024)
    - The Rev. Paul Gebo (March 14, 2024)
    - The Rev. Janet Wold (effective July 1, 2024)
  5. Review of Retired Rostered Minister Status:
    - The Rev. Alfred K Beck
    - The Rev. Dennis L. Heaney
    - The Rev. Wendy Popp
    - The Rev. Lee H. Heibke
    - The Rev. Gerald M. Peterson
    - The Rev. Randall Willer
    - The Rev. Joseph N. Robb
    - The Rev. Christine Stienstra
    - The Rev. William S. Waxenberg
    - The Rev. Ronald Larson
    - The Rev. Gary Wollersheim
    - The Rev. Jeffrey Clements
    - The Rev. Gary Erickson
    - Deacon Cheryl Erdmann
    - The Rev. David Hedlin
    - The Rev. Marilyn Hanson
    - The Rev. Roger V. Asplund
    - The Rev. Arthur Halbardier
    - The Rev. Denver W. Bitner
    - The Rev. Neville B. Kretzmann
    - The Rev. Vicki L. Sauter
    - The Rev. Roger W. Schneider
    - The Rev. John R. Seraphine
    - The Rev. Kenneth Stork
    - The Rev. David J. Ufkes
    - The Rev. William L. Welk
    - The Rev. Timothy Kenyon
    - The Rev. Jane Perkolup
    - Deacon Judith Rooney
    - The Rev. C. Frank Samuelson
    - Deacon Carla Vanatta
    - The Rev. Marcia B. Strahl
    - The Rev. Dorothy Wilcox
    - Deacon Jean Anderson

The Rev. Diane Trudy Foote  
The Rev. Mark P. Helge  
The Rev. Wayne Melaas-Swanson  
The Rev. Paul Uhl  
The Rev. Cordell Strug  
The Rev. Mary Carol Strug  
The Rev. Terri Wilder

6. Approve Rostered Ministers and SAMs requesting to be excused from 2023 Synod Assembly

The Rev. Kendall Koenig  
The Rev. Maureen O'Connor  
The Rev. Kenn Stork  
The Rev. Ken Gibson  
The Rev. JoAnna Patterson  
The Rev. Amanda Dahlseng-Monroe  
The Rev. Eric Lemonholm  
The Rev. Nord Swanstrom  
The Rev. Zach Baer  
The Rev. Josh Ehrler  
The Rev. David Kaul

7. Approve Rostered Ministers and SAMs requesting to be excused from 2024 Synod Assembly

The Rev. Chelsey Weech  
The Rev. Rob James  
The Rev. Christine Schoon  
The Rev. Sarah Wilson  
The Rev. Rakel Evenson

8. Resignation from the ELCA Roster Recognition:

The Rev. Keith Forni

9. Approval of Committee Nominations for Synod Assembly

Credentials Committee

Rev. Chris Lee First, Rock Island (West Conference)  
Rev. Elizabeth Martin Zion, Belvidere (North Conference)  
Ms. Mary Noe Grace, Woodstock (Northeast Conference)  
Rev. Julie Monnard, Synod Staff Liaison

Election Committee

Rev. Phillip Potaczek (chair) Trinity Lutheran, Ottawa (South Conference)  
Mr. Jonathan Adams, St. John, Joliet (East Conference)  
Ms. Barb Stark, First, Mt. Carroll (Northwest Conference)  
Ms. Beth Nelson Chase, St. James, Forreston (Central Conference)  
Rev. Jennifer Beamsley, Synod Staff Liaison

Minutes Review Committee

Rev. Denise Rode, Immanuel, Earlville (South Conference)  
Mr. Brandon Graves Salem, Sycamore (Northeast Conference)

Rev. Julie Monnard, Synod Staff Liaison

Resolutions Committee

Ms. Denise Norman (chair) St. John, Sterling (Central Conference)

Rev. Ben Ingelson Resurrection, Channahon (East Conference)

Ms. Deb Keaschall Immanuel, Rock Falls (Central Conference)

Ms. Barb Kromphardt St. John's, Peru (South Conference)

Rev. Andrew Kayes (Parliamentarian) Emmanuel, Oregon (Central Conference)

Ms. Lori Whalen, Synod Staff Liaison

10. Additional Personnel Items

Housing Allowance Approved

Bishop Stacie Fidler

The Rev. Jennifer Beamsley

The Rev. Julie Monnard

The Rev. Mack Patrick

The Rev. Patrick Fish

Approval of Portico Benefits Plan Selection—Gold+

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Luanne K. Cantrell, Secretary

## **Report of the Northern Illinois Synod Treasurer**

At the 2023 Synod Assembly, Ms. Lori Whalen was elected Treasurer of the Synod. Within a few weeks, recognizing her talents, expertise, and the gifts she could bring to the Synod, Bishop Fidler appointed Ms. Whalen as Assistant to the Bishop.

In September 2023, I was appointed to fill Ms. Whalen's year in office, until the next regular election (June 2024). My role as Treasurer is to conduct the Finance Committee meetings and report to the Synod Executive and Synod Council members the activities of the Finance Committee as well as review the financial reports with both groups.

Activities since the last Assembly include, but are not limited to:

- Reinvestment of a Mission Investment Fund CD which matured in July 2023. The CD is for 3 years, earning 4.523%.
- In October 2023, the FY24 Budget was amended due to lower-than-expected Mission Support giving from congregations. As a result, an 8% reduction in spending was also applied to agencies, institutions, committees, and the administrative team.
- An audit proposal was approved from CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA).
- A new fund was established: "Bishop Jeff Clements Fund for International Partnerships" to be used for international travel and support for our companion synods.
- Members of the Finance Committee are also working to ensure the investments provide a good balance of liquidity and maximization of earnings.
- The FY26 budget recognizes the declining trend of Mission Support while still supporting the programming and assistance offered to congregations, their ministers, and members.

As noted on the financial reports for FY24, we did exceed the amended budget for Mission Support by \$48,545. As always, we are grateful to our congregations for their generosity. We continue to send 52.5% of Mission Support to ELCA churchwide.

Many thanks go out to Pastor Lu Cantrell for volunteering to take minutes at our Finance Committee meetings. I am also extremely grateful for Ms. Joan Brooks, the Synod accountant, and Assistant to the Bishop Ms. Lori Whalen who is responsible for Finance. Their behind-the-scenes work is outstanding. They continue to ensure our Synod remains financially viable in all areas of ministry.

Members of the Financial Committee include Pastor Ryan Mackey, Pastor Andy Tyrrell, Ms. Janice Forrest, Ms. Rhonda Copeland, Mr. Doug Murray, Pastor Jon Pedersen, and Ms. Christina King.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Lillevold, Synod Treasurer

## Consolidated Balance Sheet

Northern Illinois Synod  
 Consolidated Balance Sheet  
 1/31/2024

	<b>PRIOR YEAR</b>	<b>CURRENT</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>	<b>1/31/23</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
Cash	458,408	658,124
Investments	1,858,276	1,872,018
Accounts Receivable	25,000	67,106
Prepaid Expenses	25,943	30,160
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>2,367,627</b>	<b>2,627,408</b>
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Jenny Lind Chapel Assets	483,672	501,720
Fixed Assets	39,577	54,851
Accumulated Depreciation		
<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>497,611</b>	<b>546,611</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>2,865,238</b>	<b>3,174,019</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts Payable	119,921	156,352
Accrued Expenses	8,905	1,793
Deferred Revenue	-	2,669
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>128,826</b>	<b>160,814</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>Without Donor Restriction:</b>		
Current Unrestricted Net Assets	641,891	758,711
Designated - Property Fund	13,939	44,892
Designated - Synod Fund Reserves	116,276	75,587
Designated - Bishop's Discretionary Fund	2,214	7,330
Designated - Bishop's Innovation & Collaboration	43,616	86,552
Designated - By Synod Council	643,813	594,331
Designated for Jenny Lind Chapel	483,672	501,720
<b>With Donor Restriction:</b>		
Temporarily Restricted By Donors	124,603	116,914
Permanently Restricted By Donors	666,388	827,168
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>2,736,412</b>	<b>3,013,205</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>2,865,238</b>	<b>3,174,019</b>



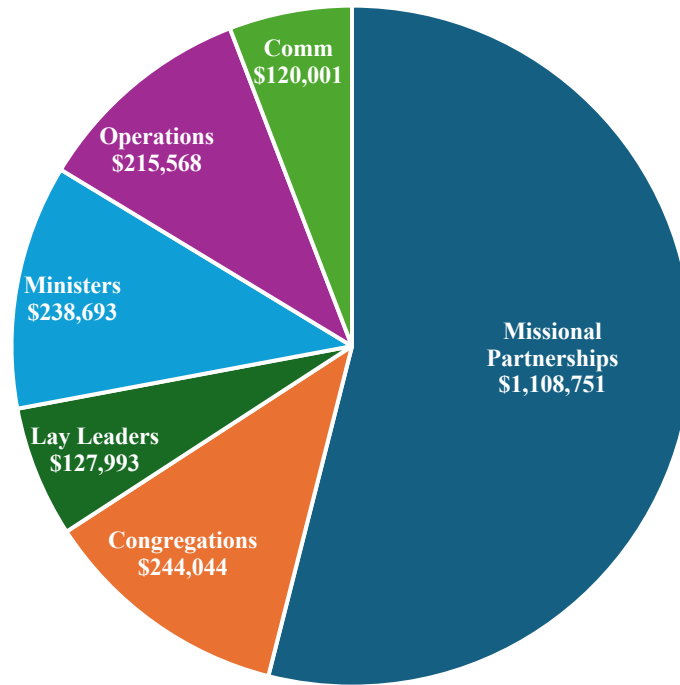
## FY26 Proposed Budget

Fiscal Year 2026 is February 1, 2025 to January 31, 2026

	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
<b>SYNOD MINISTRIES</b>			
<b>INCOME</b>			
Mission Support	2,063,545	2,000,000	1,940,000
Mission Support - Restricted to NIS	28,353	10,000	30,000
Interest, Events, Sale of Assets & Grant Income	84,722	86,450	85,050
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>2,176,620</b>	<b>2,096,450</b>	<b>2,055,050</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
ELCA Mission Support	1,083,351	1,050,000	1,018,500
LSSI	52,363	34,094	1,000
Seminaries	25,455	20,000	33,386
Campus Ministry	18,546	15,000	25,040
LOMC	11,500	8,000	13,355
Regional Ministries	2,950	2,857	4,770
Congregational Life	6,797	13,100	18,300
Global Ministry Committee	8,000	8,700	8,700
Outreach Committee	5,035	25,000	20,125
Candidacy Committee	2,797	19,750	15,400
Ministry Support	15,568	16,500	16,500
Social Ministry	2,539	4,550	5,950
Bishop Discretionary	378	1,000	500
Salaries/Housing	457,008	495,862	487,971
Employee Benefits	166,313	183,407	185,393
Travel - Staff	33,345	36,750	41,700
Auto Replacement	0	20,000	10,000
Synod Assembly & Events	42,995	35,000	36,725
Synod Council / Deans / Interim Prs	157	1300	800
Office Operations	13,266	12,430	16,735
Equipment & Maintenance	3,586	4,000	3,000
Legal, Audit, Accounting & Payroll Service	79,116	71,600	75,100
Insurance	13,551	17,550	16,100
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,044,616</b>	<b>2,288,688</b>	<b>2,055,050</b>
<b>Difference Between Income &amp; Expenses</b>	<b>132,004</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

# Explanation of Budgeted Income and Expenses

## Northern Illinois Synod Funding by Synod Strategy - \$2,055,050



**Missional Partnerships (54%)** includes our support to ELCA Churchwide, Global Missions and travel to ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

Appraise/Generate Care for **Ministers (12%)** includes ongoing support and crisis care for ministers, along with mobility conversations, continuing education opportunities and spaces to collaborate.

Clarify **Congregation** Paths/Purposes (12%) includes those in transition, programs including Pathways, Vitality and MapDash, along with shared ministry and general congregational support.

Equip/Support **Lay Leaders (6%)** includes offering a deeper lay education, building and supporting lay preaching and leadership teams (SAMs) and connecting congregational leaders with each other.

Devise/Implement **Communication** Methods (6%) includes refreshing the website and regular communications via e-news, bulletin inserts, video messages and social media.

Maintain & Revise **Operations (10%)** includes continual improvement and transparency for the finance and operations of the NIS.

<b>Budget Line</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Mission Support</b>	Income	The main source of income for the Synod comes from congregations and individuals within Northern Illinois. The \$1.94M included in the FY26 budget represents a 3% decrease from FY25. The 3% is an average of the year-to-year changes from FY22 to FY25.
<b>Mission Support-Restricted</b>	Income	Some contributions come with instructions that 100% of the income remain at the Synod level (meaning they are not included in the 52.5% allocation to Churchwide).
<b>Interest Income, Events, Offerings</b>	Income	Funds are received from events (i.e., CRE, PLC and Synod Assembly) and interest earned on our operating accounts and investments, including our reserves but not including the Endowment Fund.
<b>ELCA Mission Support</b>	Expense	For every mission support dollar (unrestricted) the Northern Illinois Synod (NIS) receives from congregations, 52.5 cents is sent to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Churchwide) and 47.5 cents remains in the Synod to do ministry in partnership with congregations.
<b>LSSI</b>	Expense	Lutheran Social Services of Illinois is the social service agency of the three Illinois Synods and Churchwide. Through service and advocacy, the agency seeks to bring healing, justice, and wholeness to persons and to enhance the quality of people's lives. Programs which they offer include but are not limited to: Adoption and Foster Care; Treatment for Emotionally Troubled Youth; Alcoholism-Drug Dependence Treatment; Children's Day Care and Head Start Centers; Mental Health Services; Crisis Intervention; Services to Older Adults; Programs for Developmentally Disabled Persons; Prisoner and Family Ministry; Ethnic Ministries. LSSI is on solid financial footing and so monies were shifted in the FY26 budget from LSSI to our other agencies and institutions (less the same 3% reduction estimated for Mission Support income). (Read more about LSSI in Bishop's Assembly Report.)
<b>Seminaries</b>	Expense	By sending dollars to the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, NIS helps to prepare candidates for rostered ministry.

<b>Campus Ministry</b>	Expense	There are seven different campus ministry sites throughout the State of Illinois where Campus Pastors minister to the needs of our youth on such campuses as Northern Illinois University, DeKalb; University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Campus Ministries enable students to gain basic understanding and skills in such areas as worship leadership, Bible study, relating the gospel to the issue of society, service projects, and group leadership.
<b>LOMC</b>	Expense	NIS supports the Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center in Oregon, Illinois. This is a program of the Church operating year-round giving leadership to summer camps, retreats, confirmation camps, and outdoor education.
<b>Regional Ministries</b>	Expense	Region 5 encompasses the twelve synods of Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. A Candidacy and Leadership Manager for Region 5, appointed by the ELCA, works closely with our Synod to raise up Rostered Ministers for the Church and be the link between Churchwide and the synods by assisting in communication and working on tasks between the two expressions, such as the assignment process for seminaries. Region 5 also provides the networking between synods that wish to share a task, vision, event, work group, etc.
<b>Congregational Life Committee</b>	Expense	The Congregation Life Committee is responsible for the annual Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE) held at Sauk Valley Community College, Dixon, Illinois, every March which helps to support and equip congregations to carry out their ministries. It also gives small grants as seed money to congregations for new ministries within the congregation. Sub-committees are supported in the areas of Worship (including organization of worship at Synod-wide events such as Synod Assembly and Professional Leaders Conference), Stewardship and Youth & Young Adult Ministry.
<b>Global Missions Committee</b>	Expense	In 2018, the Global Missions Committee continued NIS work with two Companions, the North Central (formerly “Arusha”) Diocese (ELCT) in Tanzania and the Arcot Lutheran Church (ALC) in Tamil Nadu, India. We also work with ELCA-GM programs and send funds to ELCA missionaries in Tanzania and India. During 2024, members of the Global Missions Committee will be working together with NIS congregations to host visitors from the Kiutu Parish (Tanzania), Daudi & Kellen Msseemmaa (East Africa) and Pastor Seth Sululu (Tanzania).

<b>Outreach Committee</b>	Expense	The Outreach Committee partners with congregations around congregational vitality by providing resources and walking with them as they discern where God is calling them into the future. During the past year, roughly 20 congregations have taken the congregation vitality survey and met with the DEM (Director of Evangelical Mission) to review the results and do some visioning for the future of their congregation. The MapDash for Faith Communities demographic tool is another helpful resource for these congregations. Small grants are available from the Committee to assist new ministry efforts in congregations.
<b>Ministry Support Committee</b>	Expense	Major budget line items include providing resources for: the Professional Leader’s Conference (PLC), retreats, and First Call Theological Education (FCTE). These events help professional leaders meet the yearly requirement of 50 continuing education hours. The yearly PLC draws well-known speakers and musicians to enrich and challenge synod leaders and is the synod’s keystone leadership event. FCTE is supervised by the Bishop and is required by the ELCA for professional leaders in their first three years of service. The goal is to transition leaders from academic study to parish life by teaching the “nuts and bolts” of public ministry. The committee also develops annual Compensation Guidelines and Mutual Ministry resources.
<b>Candidacy Committee</b>	Expense	Our Mission is to enable people of the NIS to realize their call to ministry as both lay and professional workers. Candidacy Committee provides scholarships for those pursuing rostered ministry, assistance with the initial costs of entering candidacy, testing and candidacy retreats.
<b>Social Ministry Committee</b>	Expense	The role of the Social Ministry Committee is to inspire, educate and support congregations of the NIS and ELCA organizations to care for those in need, serve their neighbors, and seek justice for all people. The Committee offers workshops and provides grants to congregations, coalitions and church-based community organizations. Active, independent subcommittees include: World Hunger, Creation Care and Multicultural/Anti-Racism.
<b>Bishop's Discretionary</b>	Expense	This fund is used as urgent needs arise as the Bishop deems necessary but not for the Bishop’s benefit.

<b>Salaries</b>	Expense	Funds are provided to pay for the ministry of the Bishop and staff. This line includes cash salary, housing (where applicable), and Social Security reimbursement (where applicable).
<b>Employee Benefits</b>	Expense	This includes pension, health, continuing education and payroll taxes (where applicable) for Bishop and staff.
<b>Travel - Staff</b>	Expense	Travel and travel related expenses for Bishop and staff.
<b>Auto Replacement/Net Asset</b>	Expense	This line is an allocation of operating funds to one or more net assets. In prior budgets, this line item was dedicated to the replacement of Synod-owned automobiles. For the FY26 budget, the line item is intended to be utilized for any net asset (i.e., auto replacement, international partnerships, Bishop transition, etc.).
<b>Synod Assembly &amp; Events</b>	Expense	This line item encompasses all of the planning, preparation, and activities which produces a meaningful and informative assembly, as well as all Synod events.
<b>Synod Council Deans &amp; Transition Prs</b>	Expense	Provides funds for Synod Council, Conference Deans, and Transition Pastors meetings and functions associated with these three areas of ministry.
<b>Office Operations</b>	Expense	This line item consists of expenses to operate remotely (reimbursement for cell phones and Internet), postage, office supplies, subscriptions, printing, and copying expenses, and other miscellaneous expenses.
<b>Equipment &amp; Maintenance</b>	Expense	This line item provides us with computers, printers, computer software, and maintenance of the equipment.
<b>Legal, Audit, Accounting &amp; Payroll Service</b>	Expense	Covers legal expenses incurred throughout the year, the annual audit of the Synod's finances, an outside accounting firm and a CPA firm which prepares payroll checks and taxes.
<b>Insurance</b>	Expense	Dollars are used to cover NIS's property and equipment, worker's compensation, the Synod-owned automobile, and the Churchwide Travel Plan which covers all staff, council members, committee members, synod assembly voting members, etc.
<b>Difference between Income and Expense</b>		This line item is the difference between income and expenses on a cash basis. Constitutionally, "Except when such procedure would jeopardize current operations, a reserve amounting to no more than 16% 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."

## Schedule of Net Assets

As of January 31, 2024

### RESTRICTED FUNDS (with donor restriction):

#### Permanently Restricted Funds - By Donors:

**#34050, #34052 Endowment/Trust Fund for the Northern Illinois Synod** **\$827,167.69**

Purpose/Use: To enhance the mission of the Northern Illinois Synod apart from the general operation of the Synod; that no portion of the income generated by the Fund shall be used for the annual operating budget of the Synod.

Authorization: At the initial funding of the Endowment Fund, the Bishop and Synod Council shall act as the Endowment Committee. At such time as the Bishop and Council determines that the size and activity of the Fund shall warrant, it shall elect five (5) members to serve as the Committee, all of whom shall be members of the Northern Illinois Synod, but who shall not be sitting members of the Synod Council.

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#### Temporarily Restricted Funds - By Donors:

**#33010 Congregational Life Grants** **\$5,000.00**

Purpose/Use: To be used for supporting congregational vitality

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#33012 Social Justice Grants** **\$7,207.93**

Purpose/Use: To be used for supporting social justice

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#33020 Synod Conference Programs** **11,342.09**

Purpose/Use: Synod Conference bank accounts to be used for programs within the conferences of the synod.

Authorization: Conference Dean or Conference Treasurer.

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**#33025 Retired Rostered Leaders & Spouse Assistance** **\$5,774.50**

Purpose/Use: Special needs for retired rostered leaders and spouses including scholarships to synod functions (PLC, Assembly, etc.).

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#33037 Donor Temporarily Restricted** **\$0.00**  
Purpose/Use: Miscellaneous funds restricted by donors due to time or purpose.

Authorization: Bishop or individual that has been assigned by the Bishop

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**#33038 Diakonia Program** **\$8,241.14**

Purpose/Use: To be used for Diakonia, a two year process of spiritual formation and theological education. Students pay a fee which pays for the class instructors and other costs associated with the classes.

Authorization: Bishop or individual that has been assigned by the Bishop

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**#33041 Equity, Inclusion & Diversity** **\$14,801.40**

Purpose/Use: To fund a team of NIS members trained in diversity, equity and inclusion to assist congregations to be better equipped to receive a non-traditional pastoral candidate, when a congregation wishes to be so equipped.

Authorization: Bishop or individual that has been assigned by the Bishop

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**#33050 Global Ministries NIS Committee** **\$84.59**

Purpose/Use: To support the activities of the Northern Illinois Synod Global Ministries committee.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#33052 Grace, Woodstock Mission Foundation** **\$466.51**

Purpose/Use: To be used for the funding of Synodical Authorized Worshiping Communities (S.A.W.C.).

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#33075 , #33076 Latino Ministry** **\$7,573.69**

Purpose/Use: To be used for expenses incurred for the Latino ministries of our Northern Illinois Synod.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#33080 Men in Mission** **\$967.79**

Purpose/Use: To be used for programs developed by Men in Mission.

Authorization: Recommendation from Men in Mission and approved by Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.



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**#33081 Men in Mission-Reorganization** **\$3,472.38**

Purpose/Use: To be used for reorganization of Men in Mission.

Authorization: Recommendation from Men in Mission and approved by Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#33085, #33086, & #33087 Msseemmaa Memorial Scholarship Fund** **\$19,089.31**

Purpose/Use: Will pay annual tuition and fees at Moringe Sokoine Lutheran Secondary School in Moduli, Tanzania, for a student who could not otherwise afford to attend. One \$500 scholarship, or total cost of the next year's tuition (whichever is greater) will be awarded annually beginning in October of the year following that year in which the balance of this Fund reaches \$15,000. The presiding Chair of the NIS Global Mission will write a letter requesting that the scholarship be electronically transferred to Moringe Sokoine LSS's Scholarship Fund

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#33090 Seminarian Scholarships** **\$8,032.00**

Purpose/Use: Following the Synod's guidelines for seminarian scholarships, this money is to provide funds to seminarians above and beyond what is received from the Synod through Ministry Support Committee budget.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#33090.1 Seminarian Scholarships - Female Identifying** **\$773.76**

Purpose/Use: Following the Synod's guidelines for seminarian scholarships, this money is to provide funds to female identifying seminarians above and beyond what is received from the Synod through Ministry Support Committee budget.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#33103 Stewardship Projects and Resources** **\$2,369.71**

Purpose/Use: To be used for expenses incurred for stewardship resources.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#33107 Vitality Project** **\$17,554.39**

Purpose/Use: This fund is for the continuing development of a Northern Illinois Synod Vitality initiative. The fund covers the costs of meetings,

materials, stipends, honoraria, and other related expenses for the ongoing process of congregational vitality.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#33110 Women's Leaders Retreat/Convention** **\$1,749.17**

Purpose/Use: To nurture, encourage and support relationships between female leaders in the Northern Illinois Synod.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#33125 Worship** **\$363.77**

Purpose/Use: For special worship projects.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#33150 Youth in Mission Grant** **\$2,050.00**

Purpose/Use: Youth discernment events.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**UNRESTRICTED FUNDS (without donor restriction):**

**Funds Designated By Synod Council:**

**#31003 ALC – Friends Program** **\$3,200.00**

Purpose/Use: To provide a scholarship for a student each year (10 years).

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#31004 Synod Auto Sold** **\$51,793.99**

Purpose/Use: To be used purchase an automobile for Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#31008 Rostered Leaders Continuing Education/Sabbatical Leave Fund** **\$15,813.79**

Purpose/Use: To be used for sabbatical grants and continuing education for rostered leaders.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#31009 Bishop's COVID-19 Challenge Fund** **\$5,145.81**

Purpose/Use: To fund technology grants to congregations.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#31020 Capital Development** **\$20,120.34**

Purpose/Use: Revolving loan fund for new congregation site purchases and first unit buildings.

Authorization: Recommendation from the Outreach Committee, approval from Bishop or the Executive Committee, recommendation to the Synod Council for approval.

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**#31021 Capital Development-GPS Community Loan (waiting for repayment in 2028)** **\$25,000.00**

Purpose/Use: Revolving loan receivable made to new congregation site purchases and first unit buildings.

Authorization: Waiting for payment from congregations - not available for disbursement.

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**#31040 Cora Diestelmeier/Youth Ministry** **\$25,473.97**

Purpose/Use: To fund youth ministry initiatives within the Northern Illinois Synod.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#31041 Gary Wollersheim Rostered Leaders Educational Debt Retirement Fund** **\$0.00**

Purpose/Use: For alleviating the educational debt for rostered leaders serving in the Northern Illinois Synod. A task force will oversee expenditures.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#31042 Rostered Leaders Assistance - BOP** **\$3,988.17**

Purpose/Use: For alleviating the medical costs for rostered leaders serving in the Northern Illinois Synod.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#31052 Extra Budgetary Office Expenses** **\$40,986.39**

Purpose/Use: Miscellaneous expenses that are not covered in annual budget.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#31058 Extraordinary Internship Support** **\$1,931.07**

Purpose/Use: To support LGBTQIA+ internships in the synod. To make internship sites in the synod more available, while also enhancing the ministries of the congregations where these interns serve.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#31060 First Call Theological Education** **\$1,573.46**

Purpose/Use: To provide First Call Theological Education experiences and mentoring processes for newly ordained pastors during the first three years of their first call.

Authorization: Bishop or joint recommendation between the chairperson of the Ministry Support Committee and Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#31065 New Mission Starts (formerly Intersections)** **\$27,714.64**

Purpose/Use: This fund is to support the new mission starts in the Northern Illinois Synod.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#31080 Mark & Kathy Helge** **\$128,367.87**

Purpose/Use: To support the ministry work of the Northern Illinois Synod.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#31090 Outreach Mission Fund** **\$186,216.19**

**Mission Partners/Team** **\$1,425.47**

Purpose/Use: Monies designated for outreach ministries (new missions and redeveloping congregations).

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#31094 Rostered Ministers Continuing Education (RMCE)** **\$741.00**

Purpose/Use: Monies designated for continuing education workshops for rostered leaders.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#31095 Polly Wollersheim Fund for Literacy Education** **\$2,000.00**

Purpose/Use: To provide support in helping the Arcot Lutheran Church (India) fulfill the goal of their educational programs to improve literacy and educational skills of youth and adults of the Dalite class

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#31105 International Partnerships** **\$35,465.82**

Purpose/Use: To be used for international travel and support for our companion synods.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#31107 Technology Fund** **\$8,144.01**

Purpose/Use: To be used to upgrade Synod Technology, especially to acquire the technology to provide for easy and efficient online meetings of synod groups

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**#31150 Bishop's Task Force & Boundaries (Wellness Initiative)** **\$9,229.05**

Purpose/Use: Will focus on the physical, social/interpersonal, emotional, intellectual, and vocational well-being.

Authorization: Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop.

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**Funds Designated By Bishop:**

**#30040 Bishop's Discretionary** **\$7,329.95**

Purpose/Use: Used for special/emergency needs within the Synod.

Authorization: The Bishop

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**#30050 Bishop's Innovation & Collaboration** **\$86,552.07**

Purpose/Use: To assist in funding innovative and collaborative initiatives in the Northern Illinois Synod.

Authorization: Bishop and Assistant to the Bishop that has been assigned by the Bishop

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**TOTALS:**

**RESTRICTED FUNDS (with donor restriction):**

Permanently Restricted Funds - By Donors: **\$827,167.69**

Temporarily Restricted Funds - By Donors: **\$116,914.13**

**Total Restricted Funds** **\$944,081.82**

**UNRESTRICTED FUNDS (without donor restriction):**

Funds Designated By Synod Council: **\$594,331.04**

Funds Designated By Bishop: **\$93,882.02**

**Total Unrestricted Funds:** **\$688,213.06**

## 2025 Compensation Guidelines

To view the 2025 Compensation Guidelines up for approval at the 2024 Synod Assembly, please visit [www.niysnod.org/assembly](http://www.niysnod.org/assembly) or [click here](#).

### 2025 Proposed Compensation Guidelines Updates and Changes

The following updates and changes are proposed for the 2025 Compensation Guidelines:

**A. Spreadsheet – Adjusted to reflect language and excel calculator**

We are working with an excel document that will be included as an additional calculator (located on our website) for congregations and ministers to use. The document's spreadsheet will be updated to reflect the calculator and any changes made to the language of the document so it's all in sync.

**B. Base Salary – Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase of 4%**

The NIS took a very conservative approach to COLA increase in the 2024 Compensation Guidelines compared to the national average.

For 2025, we suggest a 4% increase to account for current cost of living expenses, and to adjust for our conservative approach when determining COLA for the 2024 guidelines. We've also been in conversation with area synods, who are also proposing a 4% COLA increase.

**C. Housing Allowance – addressing certain housing markets**

The formula for Housing Allowance works for 99% of NIS congregations. However, in places where the housing market where supply and demand are exceedingly different, a different method may be used to address Housing Allowance. The language addition addresses these contextual situations.

**D. Multiple Rostered Ministers on Staff – Clarifying for equitable compensation**

The language around how to compensation roster ministers on a multi-rostered staff is clarified, including how to determine merit increases. This reflects a desire to guide congregations in equitable compensation in a multi-staff situation.

**E. First Call Compensation – Clarifying expectations**

The implicit expectation for congregations to meet guidelines for ministers in their first call (for at least three years) was clarified. Likewise, first call ministers are expected to commit to serve in that call for at least three years.

**F. Interim ministry – factors in determining compensation**

The compensation for interim ministry is highly contextual, based on location of congregation, years of experience, roster status of interim, ministry needs during time of transition, congregation's budget line items for minister, etc. The language in the document reflects the many factors determining compensation for interim ministers and

directs ministers and congregational leadership to negotiate compensation in partnership with Office of Bishop.

**G. Utilities allowance - clarification on language**

We cleared up the language around the utilities allowance so congregations understand they can pay the basic utilities directly or give additional offsets directly to the minister to pay their utilities.

**H. Pulpit Supply Category - for Pastors who only Preside during worship**

Congregations sometimes schedule a Deacon or Lay Preacher to provide leadership and sermon for pulpit supply. Congregations who desire communion during worship may consider inviting a pastor to preside. This is a new category for our Compensation Guidelines.

**I. Pulpit Supply – to include Lay Preachers**

The NIS recently began administrating a process for adding lay preachers to our pulpit supply list. The remuneration for lay preaching will be the same as roster preaching, and language was adjusted to reflect the change.

**J. Boundary Training – clarifying expectation for ministers and congregations**

The NIS is partnering with other Region 5 Synods to develop a three-year Boundary Training curriculum for ministers, and congregations are expected to support the minister for the time and cost of this training. This is reflected in the language.

**K. Appendix G Added - When to contact the bishop's office**

We wanted to encourage ministers and congregational leadership to contact the Office of Bishop whenever guidance may be needed for their context. The document spells out specific instances as examples of when to contact the Office of Bishop to give users direction for their questions.

**L. Basic Edits**

Every year, the Ministry Support Committee strives to clarify language and use a shared vocabulary throughout the document. Basic editing for clarification (but not change) are throughout this year's Guidelines.

## Report of Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee began the process of reviewing open positions on the Synod Council and Standing Committees in November of 2023. We looked at the skills and experience essential of each of these openings and developed possible candidates for each one; all the while asking the Spirit to guide us as we raised up the names of those who might fill them.

In succeeding meetings, we highlighted names of those we believed had the skill and passion required. Between meetings, we stayed connected via email. Each potential nominee was contacted by a member of the committee.

We offer great thanks to all who prayed for guidance as they considered the call to serve in these positions with the NISynod. We thank all who listened for the Spirit's guidance, whether they decided to stand for election or heard a different call. We are so grateful to all for their faithful leadership in our synod.

The generous and selfless commitment of all who serve is what makes our congregations, our synods, the ELCA, and the Church function at its absolute best as we follow Jesus on The Way. Together, we can do all things "in Christ who strengthens us."

We encourage you to check out [nisynod.com](http://nisynod.com) and take a look at all of the ministries our synod is able to carry out as we care for God's people. If you feel the tug of the Spirit calling you to serve in any of these ways, please consider being part of one of our subcommittees, or standing for election to participate on one of the synod standing committees or on Synod Council at a future Synod Assembly. You can find out more about each committee, subcommittee, and the persons to contact at [nisynod.org](http://nisynod.org) under the *Ministries* tab.

Thank you again to all who considered serving and those who agreed to stand for election this year. The Northern Illinois Synod is grateful for your faithful service to God's church.

Donna Kelly  
Nominating Committee Chair

### Nominating Committee Membership

Mr. Jim Cantrell (*Peace, Morris – East Conference*)  
Mr. Gary Groezinger (*St. Paul, Kent – Northwest Conference*)  
The Rev. Laurie Hensley (*Bethany, Woodhull – Southwest Conference*)  
Ms. Kay Johnson (*All Saints, Byron – Central Conference*)  
Ms. Donna Kelly (*Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley – Northeast Conference*)  
Dr. David Renneke (*St. James, Rock Island – West Conference*)  
The Rev. Kenneth Storck (*Shepherd of the Valley, Rockford – North Conference*)  
Ms. Ann Terry (*Illinois River Valley Parish – South Conference*)  
Ms. Michelle Wandersee (*Faith, Rochelle – Central Conference*)  
Mr. Jeff Whalen (*First, Ohio – South Conference*)



## **Present Membership and 2024 Nominations**

### **Synod Council**

#### Current Membership

**Bishop:** The Rev. Stacie Fidler (*Bethesda, Morrison – Central Conference*) Term expires 2028

**Vice President:** Ms. Minnette Willard (*First, DeKalb – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2027

**Secretary:** Rev. Lu Cantrell (*Peace, Morris – East Conference*) Term expires 2027

**Treasurer:** Ms. Nancy Lillevold (*Prince of Peace, Freeport – Northwest Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024\*

The Rev. Joy Alsop (*Faith, Rochelle – Central Conference*) Term expires 2026

Ms. Rhonda Copeland (*Calvary, New Windsor – Southwest Conference*) Term expires 2026

Ms. Janice Forrest (*Zion, Rockford – North Conference*) Term expires 2025

Mr. Brandon Graves (*Salem, Sycamore – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2026

The Rev. Brad Haugen (*Followers of Christ, Plainfield – East Conference*) Term expires 2024\*\*

Ms. Leann Heimerdinger (*St. John's, Pearl City – Northwest Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024\*

Ms. Christina King (*First, Galesburg – Southwest Conference*) Term expires 2026

The Rev. Shellie Knight (*Prince of Peace, Freeport – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2025

Mr. Dave Kromphardt (*St. John's, Peru – South Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024\*

The Rev. Frank Langholf (*Emmanuel, Rockford – North Conference*) Term expires 2025

Ms. Kathryn Mehlretter (*Shepherd of the Hills, Scales Mound – Northwest*) Term expires 2026

Mr. George Sanchez (*New Life, Bolingbrook – East Conference*) Term expires 2025

The Rev. Andy Tyrrell (*Grace, Richmond – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2024\*\*

Youth Representative: Mr. Alex Chenoweth (*Peace, New Lenox – East Conference*) Term expires 2024\*\*

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\*Term expires in 2024 and standing for re-election

\*\*Term expires in 2024 and not eligible or chooses not to stand for re-election

+Appointed Term expires in 2024 and will be filled by Synod Council.

Election of a candidate for each position along with post-Assembly appointments by the Synod Council, will fulfill the constitution requirement for membership of each committee of a minimum of 45% female/45% male members.

## **Synod Council Officer Nominations List**

**Elect 1**

Treasurer (Lay or Rostered, Male or Female, 4-year term) • Vote for 1

Ms. Nancy Lillevold (*Prince of Peace, Freeport – Northwest Conference*)

## **Synod Council Nominations List**

**Elect 5**

Youth, Confirmed-18 years old (Lay, Male or Female, 1-year term) • Vote for 1

Mr. Trace Gallagher. (*First, Monmouth – Southwest Conference*)

Lay Female (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Ms. Leann Heimerdinger (*St. John's, Pearl City – Northwest Conference*)

Ms. Pat Reynolds (*Trinity, Harvard – Northeast Conference*)

Ms. Kim Halper (*Nativity, Wonder Lake – Northeast Conference*)

Lay Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Mr. Dave Kromphardt (*St. John's, Peru – South Conference*)

Mr. Terrill Johnson, Sr. (*St. James, Rock Island – West Conference*)

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Rev. Chris Lee (*First, Rock Island – West Conference*)

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Rev. John Rothfusz (*Salem, Sandwich – East Conference*)

Rev. Brandon Nelson (*GPS, Machesney Park – North Conference*)

## Nominee Biographies

### Synod Council Officer Nominations

Treasurer (Lay or Rostered, Male or Female, 4-year term) • Vote for 1

**Ms. Nancy Lillevold (Prince of Peace, Freeport – Northwest Conference)**

*+Appointed to fill an incomplete term and eligible for election*

**Occupation:** Retired

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her/hers

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Currently serving on Church Council and employed as Treasurer of my congregation; serving as usher, communion assistant, altar guild, and deliverer of communion to those who aren't able to attend church.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Quota Club member, past Treasurer of Quota; Graduate of NI Synod Diakonia, currently serving as Treasurer of Diakonia.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** Since I enjoy working with numbers and spreadsheets, I believe this is the best area where I can utilize my skills.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Help provide accurate accounting of the Synod's finances as well as reporting of same.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe in Jesus Christ and truly believe I am saved by grace through faith which is a gift from God.

## Synod Council Nominations

Youth, Confirmed-18 years old (Lay, Male or Female, 1-year term) • Vote for 1

**Mr. Trace Gallagher. (First, Monmouth – Southwest Conference)**

**No biography was submitted.**

Lay Female (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Ms. Leann Heimerdinger (St. John's, Pearl City – Northwest Conference)**

*+Appointed to fill an incomplete term and eligible for election*

**Occupation:** Registered Nurse

**Age at Time of Election:** 46-60

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her/hers

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Youth Ministry; Grace Meal; Health Ministry; Woman's Ministry; Council; VBS Coordinator; SS Teacher/Confirmation

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Luminary walk to support first responders; Health Fairs; Blood drives

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I have served on my church council and understand the importance of the business required.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To serve the synod by equipping the congregations optimum ministries, while responding to community needs.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I strive to share Jesus' love to all, while living out my faith from my heart through my actions.

**Ms. Pat Reynolds (Trinity, Harvard – Northeast Conference)**

**Occupation:** Admin Assistant/Income Recorder

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** I have served my congregation as a council member. I have served on the council as the Secretary, Committee Chair and as an Assistant Chair. I am still a member of the Christian Life Committee and am in charge of the yearly hospitality subcommittee. I have also served on the committee for new council members. I also serve on our Generosity Committee.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** I am a Diakonia graduate of 2019. I served as a leader in our church book club and am currently working with 2 other members to start a watching of "The Chosen" TV/Movie series. I am part of our "Little Free Pantry/Tender Loving Care Community Closet. I work in getting Church and Community members to fill our pantry at 2 of our locations. I also work on the Harvard

Christmas Tree Giving Committee where we work with 6 churches in Harvard to supply clothes and gifts to the children from 0-18 in the Harvard School District.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** Since I served on the Trinity Council, I wish to carry on with the Synod. My wish is not only serve the Synod, but to bring Synod information to the communities they serve. I truly believe we are trusted servants.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Since I have not served the Synod before, I'm not sure of my priorities. Only to serve and be part of a changing world and a changing Synod to the best of my abilities, with God's help.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I did not grow up a Lutheran. We were raised in the United Church of Christ. During my early adult life, I pulled away from God and the Church. Then in my Thirties, I came back to God and sought to have a relationship with a "Power Greater than myself". That has led me back to Church. Faith, I have learned is an "action" word. A gift from God, through my Savior Jesus Christ, that I must give away.

**Ms. Kim Halper (Nativity, Wonder Lake – Northeast Conference)**

**Occupation:** Homemaker

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her

**Age at Time of Election:** 46-60

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** I have held 2 terms of being our church council president. I also served two terms of being a non-executive member of our church council. I have been the director of our food pantry for over 15 years. I have led various bible studies. I also have spoken in the community at various events about our congregation and it's ministries.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** I have been the director of the Wonder Lake Neighbors Food Pantry for over 15 years. I have worked with the other churches in our community at organizing events to fundraise food and monetary donations for the food pantry. I am a member of our community Lions Club. I also am an alumni of our local 4-H club.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I enjoy the council positions that I have served in my congregation and would like to serve on the synod council. I enjoy discussing various topics about our synod and help brainstorm how to deal with various situations. I also like meeting a people from all across our synod and working together to make our synod be the best it can!

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** I shall prioritize attending all meeting whether they be in person or via zoom. I will attend all extra events as needed such as CRE. If I am needed to be a part of a sub-committee I have no problem serving that as well. I am just wanting to serve in whatever way is needed.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** My faith is the utmost important to me! From a very young age, my grandfather instilled in me that no matter what your challenge is, the first thing you need to do is go to Jesus in prayer for discernment. My faith has helped me through so many rough times in my life that I don't honestly know if I would still be here if it not for my faith and seeking of the Holy Spirit.

Lay Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Mr. Dave Kromphardt (St. John's, Peru – South Conference)**

*+Appointed to fill an incomplete term and eligible for election*

**Occupation:** Retired Banker

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Currently serving as Church Council President. Have served in the past as Confirmation instructor, Men's Ministry leader, Living Last Supper Chancel Drama leader, Finance Committee member, via de cristo leader and sponsor

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Northern Illinois University Campus Ministry Board, local Commerce Organization President, co-founded community food pantry in 1998, Assistant Director of Spring Valley Walleye Fishing Tournament, Member of St. Margaret's Hospital Foundation Board

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I was appointed to the Synod Council in September 2023 to fill a vacancy. It has been a blessing in my life. My aptitude and experience in congregation governance has helped the congregations I have been a member at, and I have worked with Synod leadership while serving at NIU Campus Ministry. I believe I can provide insights and questions to the Council that will benefit the decision-making of it. I also believe that active Boards best serve every organization and want to serve at the congregational level, and am already on the Synod Pulpit Supply list and lead worship at several congregations.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Smaller congregations are challenged to have ministers or help in determining what is the best way to serve their communities. I believe the Synod staff and council should focus on ways to help congregations self-determine their direction. Developing a pool of lay people to work under the direction of rostered ministers is also needed to help fill this apparently permanent shortage. I also believe we should help congregations reenergize after the pandemic to bring members back into an active role in face-to-face ministries when possible.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** We are saved by Grace alone. Because of God's Grace, we try to lead a Christlike life. However, this is a daily challenge because we are both saints due to Grace and sinners due to our human nature. Our daily task is to preach the Gospel to the world through our actions and then through our words.

**Mr. Terrill Johnson, Sr. (St. James, Rock Island – West Conference)**

**Occupation:** Retired  
**Gender and Pronouns:** Male

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over  
**Primary Language:** English  
**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Chair of Finance and Stewardship, Founder chair of endowment, chair of evangelism, Special Interest “church unification/consolidation”

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Youth support: years of coaching youth baseball and basketball, youth for Christ golf board, Cub Scout Master, taught Junior Achievement. Augustana Planned giving board, President Quad Cities Estate Planning Council, Heart Association Run for Life director.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** Advocate for unification among congregations. Why to pursue. But especially to advance my service to Gods ministry.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Synod to adopt advocacy for closer affiliation and eventual unification of marginal churches and a “play book” on how to progress and achieve.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I celebrate life, faith, forgiveness and salvation daily. God’s gift to us must be accepted and embraced. Faith invites me to be calm and to be kind. Giving back to Gods work is a privilege.

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Rev. Chris Lee (First, Rock Island – West Conference)**

**No biography was submitted.**

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Rev. John Rothfusz (Salem, Sandwich – East Conference)**

**Occupation:** Pastor  
**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Age at Time of Election:** 46-60  
**Primary Language:** English  
**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** I am new this year to this synod and congregation, after serving 26 years in the Central/Southern Illinois Synod. I served two terms as conference dean and on the synod council there. I also served on the Evangelism and Candidacy committees, and on the ISU Campus Ministry Board. I have gifts and interest in administration and finance. I value ways that we can work better together as congregations, conferences and synod to strengthen our common mission in Jesus' name.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** I served for 18 years at Faith Lutheran, Washington, IL. I served a term on the Washington District Library Board, and was actively involved in the school system as my kids grew up.

When a large tornado hit Washington in 2013, I worked with the community and the ministerial association to organize recovery and rebuilding. I also worked with the Faith Lutheran Child Care, both with children and shaping the leadership of the Board.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I enjoy working with others to advance the mission that we share. I believe that we can often do more walking together as a synod than would be possible in isolated congregations. The support and resources of the synod can draw people and congregations together, and provide resources to help ministry thrive across the synod and for the sake of the world. It is exciting and rewarding to be a part of that work on the Synod Council, supporting the leadership of our Bishop.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** I want the Northern Illinois Synod to be focused and effective in carrying out the mission of Jesus Christ for the sake of the world. I want to encourage disciples at every level to see themselves as members of the one body of Christ, working together to bear the living presence of Jesus to the world. I want to be constructive, moving forward to solve problems, and constructively address conflict when it arises. The synod council is able to shape the priorities and effective functioning of the synod, so that we can carry out our mission together.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** God has called me to bear the saving presence of Jesus into broken lives and to preach the life-changing Word. God's grace is our foundation and our source of new life and hope. It is a privilege to lead the church in this ministry of reconciliation for Jesus' sake.

**Rev. Brandon Nelson (GPS, Machesney Park – North Conference)**

**No biography was submitted.**



## **Congregational Life Committee**

### Current Membership

Mr. Gregory Bruner (*Light of Christ, Algonquin – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2026

Mr. Paul Dallgas-Frey (*Immanuel, Dixon – Central Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024+

Ms. Meghan Doyle (*St. John, Joliet – East Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024+

Deacon Laura Gorton (*Christ, Belvidere – North Conference*) Term expires 2025

Ms. Carol Johnson (*Prince of Peace, Freeport – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2024\*

Mr. Kent Kindelsperger (*Swedona, Lynn Center – Southwest Conference*) Term expires 2024\*

Rev. Ryan Mackey (*Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2026

The Rev. Tom Redig (*St. John's, Peru – South Conference*) Term expires 2025

Ms. Melissa Rojas (*Trinity, Mount Morris – Central Conference*) Term expires 2025

The Rev. Chrissy Salser (*Christ, Stockton – Northwest Conference*) Appointed term expires 2025

The Rev. Scott Stolberg (*Our Savior's, Rockford – North Conference*) Appointed term expires 2026

Ms. Kelly Van Fleet (*Peace, Morris – East Conference*) Term expires 2026

## **Congregational Life Committee Nominations**

## **Elect 2**

Lay Female (3-year term) Vote for 1

Ms. Carol Johnson (*Prince of Peace, Freeport – Northwest Conference*)\*

Ms. Cortney Breeden (*Swedona, Lynn Center – Southwest Conference*)

Ms. Carol Schulte (*First, Ohio – South Conference*)

Lay Male (3-year term) Vote for 1

Mr. Kent Kindelsperger (*Zion, North Henderson – Southwest Conference*)\*

Mr. David Crippen (*St. John's, Rock Island – West Conference*)

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\*Term expires in 2024 and standing for re-election

\*\*Term expires in 2024 and not eligible or chooses not to stand for re-election

+Appointed Term expires in 2024 and will be filled by Synod Council.

Election of a candidate for each position along with post-Assembly appointments by the Synod Council, will fulfill the constitution requirement for membership of each committee of a minimum of 45% female/45% male members.

## Nominee Biographies

Congregational Life Committee Nominations Bios

Elect 2

Lay Female (3-year term) • Vote for 1

### **Ms. Carol Johnson (Prince of Peace, Freeport – Northwest Conference)\***

*\*Eligible for re-election*

**Occupation:** Retired

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her/hers

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** I have served as an organist/pianist at our church for over 35 years and have been on our Worship Team for several years. I also served on Church Council, including one year as president and on the Executive Team during “the Covid Years.” I am currently co-chair of our WELCA group and served as chairperson of our preschool board during its eventual closing.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** I am a long-time member of the Quota Club of Freeport, including several years as President. I also volunteer weekly at the Amity’s Attic, a resale store that supports a local day care center. Prior to retiring nine years ago, I was an administrator for Special Education programs for 30 years.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I have served one term on this committee and I really enjoy working with the other team members. While I am a “Snowbird” and frequently out of state during CRE, I feel that this is an important ministry for the churches in the NIS and I try to contribute as much as I can to the committee. I currently serve as the secretary of Congregational Life.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** I feel that the CRE event and the online extensions of that event are our most important contribution to the synod’s members. The provision of scholarships has also supported projects that have touched many lives in a positive way.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe that God loves me in ways that are beyond my comprehension and has showered me with grace through Jesus. My response is to let that love and grace shine through my every action so that others may know God’s love and see God at work in their own lives.

### **Ms. Cortney Breeden (Swedona, Lynn Center – Southwest Conference)**

**Occupation:** Visual Merchandiser

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Sunday School Superintendent, Church Council Member, Church Council Secretary, Church Council Vice President, Church Council President. Member of Ice Cream Social,

Evangelism, Worship and Music, and Christian Education Committees. Live Stream Coordinator.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:**  
Sherrard Music Booster Secretary

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I feel called to pursue ways to support my church by working with and learning from others in the Synod. I've always been interested in developing a deeper understanding of how the Synod supports our churches.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To be a strong representative for my church, Christian women, and develop my skills as a lay leader.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** My faith was instilled at a very young age, but like many people I strayed away from the church after confirmation. I started going back when I was in my late 20s, originally because I felt like I owed it to my mother to give it another try, and because I knew she needed more help with the Sunday School program. Through working with the students, my heart was opened to God again. There is nothing like working with children to make you see the miracles in our everyday lives. I am so grateful that my mother didn't give up on me, and of course, neither did God.

**Ms. Carol Schulte (First, Ohio – South Conference)**

No biography was submitted.

Lay Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Mr. Kent Kindelsperger (Zion, North Henderson – Southwest Conference)\***

*\*Eligible for re-election*

No biography was submitted.

**Mr. David Crippen (Bethany, Woodhull – Southwest Conference)**

**Occupation:** Retired

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Council Chairman at Augustana Lutheran Church Andover IL. 6 years Call Committee for Augustana Lutheran Church Diakonia Graduate 7/12/2014

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Mayor of Andover, IL. 6 years Orion Fall Committee Orion Fall Festival Orion, IL. 3 years . (Raised money for people in need) American Legion Member.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** To help the Synod see issues from a lay person's point of view and to help them in any way I can. Also to help me understand

issues from the Synods point of View. Congregation need to see and understand Synods reasoning on items and issues.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To help bring Christianity back into society. We are losing ground with people. Maybe there is a way to Minister people so they feel and want to discover their faith in God and come to worship. I wish I had the magic answer to reconnect and connect them with God, but I don't but I am willing to try.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** That's easy! I believe in the power of prayer! It has brought me through many of life's tribulations.

## Global Mission Committee

### Current Membership

The Rev. Tammy Anderson (*Bethesda, Morrison – Central Conference*) Term expires 2025  
Mr. Cole Bathje (*Our Savior's, Rockford – North Conference*) Appointed term expires 2025  
The Rev. Jose Cortes (*Messiah, Aledo – Southwest Conference*) Term expires 2025  
The Rev. Makayla Dahleen (*St. Paul, Sterling – Central Conference*) Term expires 2024\*  
Dr. Alan Esker (*Good Shepherd, Lena – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2024\*  
Ms. Johanna Hager (*First, Geneseo – West Conference*) Appointed term expires 2026  
The Rev. Janet Hunt (*First, DeKalb – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2026  
Ms. Janet Larson (*First, Geneseo – West Conference*) Term expires 2026  
The Rev. Michael Neel (*Immanuel, Yorkville – East Conference*) Term expires 2024\*\*  
Ms. Deb Quinn (*First, DeKalb – Northeast Conference*) Appointed term expires 2025  
Mr. Chuck Steinbach (*Immanuel, Yorkville – East Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024+  
Mr. Mike Wadle (*First, DeKalb – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2026

## Global Mission Committee Nominations List

**Elect 3**

Lay Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Dr. Alan Esker (*Good Shepherd, Lena – Northwest Conference*)\*  
Mr. Don Gillingham (*Capron, Capron – North Conference*)

Rostered Female (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Rev. Makayla Dahleen (*St. Paul, Sterling – Central Conference*)\*  
Rev. Sue Hoff (*Salem, Moline – West Conference*)

Rostered Male (3-year term) Vote for 1

Rev. Jonathan Black (*First, Plano – East Conference*)

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\*Term expires in 2024 and standing for re-election

\*\*Term expires in 2024 and not eligible or chooses not to stand for re-election

+Appointed Term expires in 2024 and will be filled by Synod Council.

Election of a candidate for each position along with post-Assembly appointments by the Synod Council, will fulfill the constitution requirement for membership of each committee of a minimum of 45% female/45% male members.

## Nominee Biographies

Global Mission Committee Nominations Bios

Elect 3

Lay Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Dr. Alan Esker (Good Shepherd, Lena – Northwest Conference)\***

*\*Eligible for re-election*

No biography was submitted.

**Mr. Don Gillingham (Capron, Capron – North Conference)**

No biography was submitted.

Rostered Female (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Rev. Makayla Dahleen (St. Paul, Sterling – Central Conference)\***

*\*Eligible for re-election*

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** As a pastor, I feel passionate that we live as Christ's disciples through local and global endeavors and partnerships. Our congregation has participated in many global projects such as LWR quilts, special offerings, hosting international guests from partnering synods, and ELCA World Hunger. We are seeking to renew our companion relationship with our partners in Tanzania. I often share about my trips abroad in teaching and preaching.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** I serve on the leadership board of ecumenical partnerships for community VBS and teen service camps as well as the local FEMA board. I also participate and promote Mom's groups and parent education programs.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I have served on the Global Mission Committee for my first 3-year term and am passionate to continue. Our accompaniment model of mutual ministry is inspiring to my faith and way of doing all aspects of ministry. I want to help create more relationships and connections across the synod and globe.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Connecting more congregations to our companionship synods.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I trust in a God of love that connects and forgives. Our response to this gift of grace is to love our neighbor and all creation.

**Rev. Sue Hoff (Salem, Moline – West Conference)**

**Occupation:** Pastor  
**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over  
**Primary Language:** English  
**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Social justice study; congregational discernment for mission; food insecurity

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Food insecurity; childhood trauma; foster care

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** Primarily as a personal and congregational learning and growth opportunity; secondly because I have worked with and enjoy connecting with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To support the goals of the NIS for this ministry by actively participating in efforts to increase the number of parish relationships in the NI Synod.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I trust deeply that through the life, death and resurrection and of Jesus, and by the power of God's Holy Spirit, God has provided all that I need; and that that God has prepared me for pastoral ministry throughout my life, so that I am able to empathetically encounter others with an open heart and an understanding that this journey of faith is both unique to each of us and significantly better when shared.

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Rev. Jonathan Black (First, Plano – East Conference)**

**Occupation:** Pastor  
**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Age at Time of Election:** 46-60  
**Primary Language:** English  
**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** caring ministry, food pantry, video ministry are primary for my current setting.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Same as above but also adding, mission endowments, mission partnerships, creative ministries, others.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** It is an area where my experience in global missions matches a need.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Connecting congregations to understand and appreciate the global church.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** The accompaniment model for walking with others in faith is an essential understanding for a healthy relationship with others.



## Ministry Support Committee

### Current Membership

Ms. Marianne Barstow (*St. Barnabas, Cary – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2025

Ms. Julie Eshleman (*St. Mark, Rockford - North Conference*) Term expires 2024\*

Ms. Kay Johnson (*All Saints, Byron – Central Conference*) Appointed term expires 2025

The Rev. Andrew Kayes (*Emmanuel, Oregon – Central Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024+

The Rev. Vince Marolla (*First, Galesburg – Southwest Conference*) Term expires 2024\*\*

Dr. Randall Mullin (*Swedona, Lynn Center – Southwest Conference*) Term expires 2026

Mr. Bill Nelson (*First, Geneseo - West Conference*) Term expires 2024\*\*

Mr. Chris Patterson (*Faith, South Beloit – North Conference*) Appointed term expires 2026

The Rev. Dr. Sharon Rogers (*First, DeKalb – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2025

The Rev. David Russell (*Scenic Hills Parish, Elizabeth – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2026

Ms. Barb Stark (*First, Mt Carroll – Northwest Conference*) Appointed term expires 2025

The Rev. Karen Tews (*Good Shepherd, Lena – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2026

## Ministry Support Committee Nominations List

**Elect 3**

Lay Female (3-year term) Vote for 1

Mrs. Julie Eshleman (*St. Mark, Rockford – North Conference*)\*

Lay Male (3-year term) Vote for 1

Mr. Jason Gustafson (*Cambridge, Cambridge – West Conference*)

Mr. Don Anderson (*St. John's, Peru – South Conference*)

Rostered Male (3-year term) Vote for 1

Rev. Matt Kamprath (*First, Geneseo – West Conference*)

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\*Term expires in 2024 and standing for re-election

\*\*Term expires in 2024 and not eligible or chooses not to stand for re-election

+Appointed Term expires in 2024 and will be filled by Synod Council.

Election of a candidate for each position along with post-Assembly appointments by the Synod Council, will fulfill the constitution requirement for membership of each committee of a minimum of 45% female/45% male members.

## Nominee Biographies

Ministry Support Committee Nomination Bios

Elect 3

Lay Female (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Mrs. Julie Eshleman (St. Mark, Rockford – North Conference)\***

*\*Eligible for re-election*

**Occupation:** Director of Christian Education

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Children’s Ministry/Christian Education (previously as a volunteer teacher, now hold Director position on staff), music (choir, handbells, oboe), chairperson of committee to call an Associate Pastor (2015)

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Education Committee for my children’s school, IREAD and other tutoring work with elementary students, volunteer docent at Anderson Japanese Gardens, Data Specialist for Rockford Area Moms Demand Action group (gun violence prevention)

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I would like to continue my service on this committee because I know how crucial it is to support people in leadership. Leaders who have a strong support system and ready access to the information and resources that they need are better able to lead with flexibility and creativity. I think our experiences over the last few years have brought to the forefront the need for broad mutual support across congregations and hope to continue to help the NIS lead in this effort.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Entering a second term with this committee, I am especially focused on the work of discernment in the ways we can support our ministers and lay professionals. The world is in a period of rapid, dramatic change, and the Church is called to respond to that change in generous and creative ways, while steadfastly remaining focused on God’s vision for humanity. This is a very difficult task, and the way forward is not always clear! By supporting and equipping the rostered ministers and other ministry professionals within our congregations, we also support and equip the larger Church to do God’s work in the world. I believe we can reevaluate and improve upon our methods of support to better meeting the changing needs of our ministry professionals.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I strive to express my faith through the pursuit of justice and mercy. I believe that, throughout Scripture, God calls us to respond to God’s love and salvation by bringing mercy and grace to each other in every way possible. Our work at the individual and community level must be driven by mercy and generosity, and our work at the systemic and governmental levels must be driven by justice and equity. Keeping our focus on the twin goals of justice and mercy ensures that our actions remain faithful to God’s call and Jesus’s example.

Lay Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Mr. Jason Gustafson (Cambridge, Cambridge – West Conference)**

**Occupation:** Manager - John Deere  
**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45  
**Primary Language:** English  
**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Currently the Congregation Council Vice President, Sunday School Superintendent, as well as Parish Accountant at Cambridge Lutheran.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Previously served on the board for the Village of Cambridge, both as a Village Trustee (2015-2019) and as Village President (2019-2021).

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I have a passion for leading and helping others. I have gained knowledge, skills, and experience from my years of experience in business, community, and congregational leadership that I feel would be quite valuable in this space.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Use my knowledge and experience, as well as leverage the different and diverse talents of others, to assist in reaching positive, value-added outcomes to committee objectives and goals.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe in God, who created Heaven and Earth, and Jesus Christ, his only Son, who died for my sins. I trust that by believing, proclaiming my faith, sharing the gospel, and also with God's merciful love, there will be salvation.

**Mr. Don Anderson (St. John's, Peru – South Conference)**

**Occupation:** Retired Plant Manager  
**Gender and Pronouns:** Male

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over  
**Primary Language:** English  
**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Sunday School Teacher, Organizer of The Living Last Supper, Building and Grounds Committee, Finance Committee, Church Council Secretary

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Ramp Builder for physically challenged, Serve on team for Living Water Via De Cristo retreats, Work at local food pantry

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I view this as a growth opportunity to learn more about the Synod and experience supporting the Synod.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To support the Synod and work constructively with other Christians.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe that God is in us. We are to serve Him through helping others to learn about Him and helping others to live a better life.

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Rev. Matt Kamprath (First, Geneseo – West Conference)**

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** I serve two congregations. In one setting I serve on a staff team (Geneseo) and the other setting I serve solo (Cambridge). Both churches regularly rely on me to provide Word and Sacrament ministry.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** I have worked with other pastors in Cambridge to provide ecumenical worship services in the area for the last couple of years. In the past, I have served on the Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry and have been involved in a feeding ministry in southern Illinois from the ground up. I also attend Geneseo Ministerial Association meetings. For the last seven years, on and off, I have led a Bible study at a brewery in downtown Geneseo. I have coached soccer for my daughter's team and really liked the whole experience.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I think providing support, resources, and education for congregations and rostered ministers is very important to keep up the health and well-being of all involved.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To be a part of a team that helps congregations and rostered ministers to be all that God created them to be.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** God is Love.

## **Outreach Committee**

### Current Membership

Ms. Sharon Beksel (*United, Rockford – North Conference*) Term expires 2025

Ms. Lisa Gerloff-Banker (*Grace, Woodstock – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2026

Ms. Debra Keaschall (*Immanuel, Rock Falls - Central Conference*) Appointed term expires 2026

Mr. Don Kinney (*Christ, Belvidere – North Conference*) Term expires 2025

The Rev. Robin Luckey (*Lord of Love, Galena – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2026

Mr. Dave Musser (*Shepherd of the Valley, Rockford – North Conference*) Term expires 2025

The Rev. Brandon Nelson (*GPS, Machesney Park – North Conference*) Term expires 2024\*\*

Mr. Andrew Rex (*Salem, Sycamore - Northeast Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024+

The Rev. Bob Stark (*First, Mt Carroll – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2025

The Rev. Randall Swanson (*Zion, Kewanee – Southwest Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024+

The Rev. Sarah Wilson (*St. Barnabas, Cary – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2024

## **Outreach Committee Nominations List**

## **Elect 2**

Rostered Female (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Rev. Sarah Wilson (*St. Barnabas, Cary – Northeast Conference*)\*

Rev. Hope Johnson (*Bethany, Leland – South Conference*)

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Rev. Dr. Eric Lemonholm (*Good Shepherd, Rockford and Trinity, Derinda, North and Northwest*)

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\*Term expires in 2024 and standing for re-election

\*\*Term expires in 2024 and not eligible or chooses not to stand for re-election

+Appointed Term expires in 2024 and will be filled by Synod Council.

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## Nominee Biographies

Outreach Committee Nomination Bios

Elect 2

Rostered Female (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Rev. Sarah Wilson (St. Barnabas, Cary – Northeast Conference)\***

*\*Eligible for re-election*

No biography was submitted.

**Rev. Hope Johnson (Bethany, Leland – South Conference)**

No biography was submitted.

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Rev. Dr. Eric Lemonholm (Good Shepherd, Rockford and Trinity, Derinda, North and Northwest)**

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Age at Time of Election:** 46-60

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Outreach, building bridges in the community, especially with other congregations and non-profits.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Current president of Northwest Neighbors, a Christian Community Development Corp.

We gave our church property to the YMCA, and the building is in the process of renovation into the Good Shepherd YMCA (we will be a 'Church in the Y').

Past member and chair of the Congregational Life Committee of the Synod.

I am also active in the Durand Ecumenical Council with my other congregation, Trinity Lutheran Church in Durand.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** The Outreach Committee has an important role in encouraging innovation and congregational transformation to reach our neighbors with the love of God.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Finding, adapting, and multiplying best practices for outreach.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe in the Triune God who calls us by the Spirit to be passionate, grassroots Jesus communities for the sake of the world.

## Social Ministry Committee

### Current Membership

Mr. Larry Cording (*Lord of Love, Galena – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2024\*\*

The Rev. Katie Gallagher (*Faith, Wataga and Messiah, Galva – Southwest Conference*)

Appointed term expires 2026

The Rev. Jacob Gawlik (*St. John, Sterling – Central Conference*) Terms expires 2024\*\*

Ms. Donna Kelly (*Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2026

Mr. Paul Lockwood (*Grace, Woodstock – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2026

Ms. Marian Myers (*St. Paul's, Dixon – Central Conference*) Appointed term expires 2025

The Rev. Dr. Chuck Olson (*Calvary, Rockford – North Conference*) Term expires 2025

The Rev. JoAnna Patterson (*Faith, South Beloit – North Conference*) Term expires 2026

The Rev. Scott Ralston (*Faith, Forreston and St. Mark's, Polo – Central Conference*)

Term expires 2026

Mr. Ron Simmons (*Zion, Rockford - North Conference*) Appointed term expires 2025

Ms. Joan Soltwisch (*Resurrection, Channahon - East Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024+

Ms. Carol Wahlstrom (*Trinity, Ottawa – South Conference*) Term expires 2025

## Social Ministry Committee Nominations List

**Elect 2**

Lay Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Mx. David Luecht (*St. John, Joliet – East Conference*)

Mr. Jon Gustafson (*Salem, Moline – West Conference*)

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Rev. Patrick Fish (*Becoming, Oswego – East Conferenc*)

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\*Term expires in 2024 and standing for re-election

\*\*Term expires in 2024 and not eligible or chooses not to stand for re-election

+Appointed Term expires in 2024 and will be filled by Synod Council.

Election of a candidate for each position along with post-Assembly appointments by the Synod Council, will fulfill the constitution requirement for membership of each committee of a minimum of 45% female/45% male members.

## Nominee Biographies

Social Ministry Committee Nomination Bios

Elect 2

Lay Male (3-year term) Vote for 1

### **Mx. David Luecht (St. John, Joliet – East Conference)**

**Occupation:** Retired. Entering seminary.  
**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him/his

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over  
**Primary Language:** English  
**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Current Council President, confirmation instructor, choir member, ministry leadership in Prayer Group, Grief Group, RIC

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Member of Plainfield Community Alliance, Becoming Oswego.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I've attended previous Northern Illinois Synod Assemblies, representation of diverse population is necessary (LGBTQIA), seeking candidacy for Word and Service.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** As an assembly member it's important to represent the synod, hear the issues, vote on behalf of the ELCA

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins and was resurrected, showing that love and forgiveness through Christ is a gift from God. We are called to be servants of Christ.

### **Mr. Jon Gustafson (Salem, Moline – West Conference)**

**Occupation:** Free to Retire  
**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over  
**Primary Language:** English  
**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Current Salem Church Council President and Assistant Minister, Personnel Committee chair, past Endowment Committee Secretary, past Call Committee member, past voice & bell choir member, past Sunday School teacher, Property Committee chair & Council member.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Interests in cross-racial adoption, community theater and all arts, Augustana College, and all things Rock Island.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I was asked to serve, and I am willing to answer the call of the Holy Spirit.



**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To promote an active and healthy relationship between our God and our church family and with our entire community.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** Baptized as an infant and raised in the ELCA, I hope to live a life with purpose that embraces, reflects, and grows the love of our Christ Jesus.

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Rev. Patrick Fish (Becoming, Oswego – East Conference)**

**Occupation:** Bivocational pastor

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** I have served in the church for 10+ years. Last year, I became a mission developer of the new mission start in Oswego - Becoming Church.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** As a liberation theologian and faith-based community organizer, I'm regularly out in the community discerning the Spirit and how the church can partner/build bridges/collaborate to better serve our neighbor.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I hope to become more connected within the N. IL Synod. I know my local context and community very well; however, I want the reach of our synod to be widespread throughout N. IL.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Listening and learning what is already happening around our synod. Finding ways to support congregations and leaders to dream BIG. Equipping and empowering congregations to attend to the specific needs of their communities. Encouraging congregations to take seriously our role in being the church of liberation.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** The Trinity models a God who is missional and relational. God sent the Son, the Son sent the Spirit, the Spirit sends us. God is three persons who are in relationship together. It's not a hierarchical relationship - it's about interconnection and togetherness. My faith will always be based on relationship and mission. I believe in an active faith that is seeking to build the Kingdom, bring justice, share love, serve my neighbor, and to do all those things in relationship.

## **Churchwide Assembly**

### **Churchwide Assembly Nominations List**

**Elect 6**

Lay Female (Youth/Young Adult) • Vote for 1

Ms. Clara Solak (*Bethany, Crystal Lake – Northeast Conference*)

Ms. Christina King (*First, Galesburg – Southwest Conference*)

Lay Male (Youth/Young Adult) • Vote for 1

Mr. Kurtis Arndt (*Alleluia! Naperville– East Conference*)

Mr. Luke Snyder (*St. Mark, Rockford – North Conference*)

Lay Female (Person of Color or First Language Other than English) • Vote for 1

Ms. Paula Ebener (*Trinity, Moline – West Conference*)

Lay Male (Person of Color or First Language Other than English) • Vote for 1

Mr. Lavern Allen (*Becoming, Oswego – East Conference*)

Mr. George Sanchez (*New Life, Bolingbrook - East Conference*)

Lay Male • Vote for 1

Mr. Paul Lockwood (*Grace, Woodstock - Northeast Conference*)

Mr. Brandon Graves (*Salem, Sycamore – Northeast Conference*)

Mr. Don Gillingham (*Capron, Capron – North Conference*)

Rostered Male • Vote for 1

Rev. Jacob Gawlik (*St. John, Sterling - Central Conference*)

Rev. Chad McKenna (*St. Mark, Rockford – North Conference*)

### **Churchwide Assembly - Affirm Conference Assembly Elections**

Bishop (Rostered)

Bishop Stacie Fidler (*Bethesda, Morrison - Central Conference*)

Vice President (Lay)

Ms. Minnette Willard (*First, DeKalb – Northeast Conference*)

Northwest Conference (Lay Male)

Voting Member: Mr. Mel Ehrler (*Shepherd of the Hills, Scales Mound*)

Alternate: Mr. Calvin Klopf (*St. John, Massbach*)

West Conference (Lay Female)

Voting Member: Mrs. Rita Gustafson (*Salem, Moline*)

Alternate: Ms. Pam Gross (*Calvary, Moline*)

Southwest Conference (Rostered Male)

Voting Member: Rev. Jamie Gallagher (*First, Monmouth*)

Alternate: Rev. Vince Marolla (*First, Galesburg*)

North Conference (Rostered Female)

Voting Member: Rev. Julane Nease (*United, Rockford*)

Alternate: Dn. Laura Gorton (*Christ, Belvidere*)

Central Conference (Lay Male)

Voting Member: Mr. Bill Wescott (*Immanuel, Rock Falls*)

Alternate: Mr. Larry Kradle (*St. John, Sterling*)

South Conference (Lay Female)

Voting Member: Ms. Merianne Morris (*St. Paul, Streator*)

Alternate: Ms. Lori Whalen (*First, Ohio*)

Northeast Conference (Rostered Male)

Voting Member: Rev. Preston Fields (*Salem, Sycamore*)

Alternate: *None*

East Conference (Rostered Female)

Voting Member: Dn. Shari Simon (*Peace, New Lenox*)

Alternate: Rev. Lu Cantrell (*Peace, Morris*)

## Nominee Biographies

Churchwide Assembly Nomination Bios

Elect 6

Lay Female (Youth/Young Adult) • Vote for 1

### Ms. Clara Solak (Bethany, Crystal Lake – Northeast Conference)

**Occupation:** Store Associate

**Age at Time of Election:** 18-29

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** I work with the youth ministry by helping with Sunday school and VBS. I also am part of the AV team and help with sound during services and events. I also serve in the music ministry by playing in the bell canto ensemble.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** I am a member of the Sons of Norway lodge and serve as hostess and meeting documentation. I am also a son's of Norway district convention delegate. I am also a member of the McHenry County College speech and debate team.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** It is important for the youth to be involved in the Northern Illinois Synod.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** I do not know at this time.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I go to Church every week and enjoy being a part of the church community both young and old. This bible verse always stuck with me, 1 John 4:12. "No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us."

### Ms. Christina King (First, Galesburg – Southwest Conference)

No biography was submitted.

Lay Male (Youth/Young Adult) • Vote for 1

### Mr. Kurtis Arndt (Alleluia! Naperville– East Conference)

**Occupation:** Youth Ministries Director

**Age at Time of Election:** 18-29

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him/his

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Middle School/Confirmation, High School Youth Group, College Ministry (LuMin), Youth Gathering, Service Trips, Music Ministry, Traditional Worship, Contemporary Worship, Camp Ministry

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Camp Councilor LOMC, Ministry Coordinator LOMC, Peer Minister Valparaiso University, Peer

Minister Lead Valparaiso University, Hospitality Manager Chapel of the Resurrection Valparaiso University, Valparaiso University Representative at 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering, Youth Minister Shepherd of the Prairie Lutheran Church, Outreach Program Manager Lutherdale, 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voter, Youth Ministry Director Alleluia! Lutheran Church, Service Trips (Kentucky, Wyoming, Tennessee, Colorado, Kentucky, Indiana)

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** As a 25-year-old man in ministry, I wish to continue to connect myself, my home church, and my job church to the ELCA. My faith, my education, call to service, and call to action has always been thanks to the time I have spent in the NIS. Having experienced the Churchwide Assembly in 2022, I found myself desiring to get even more involved in the next gathering. I feel that from my last experience, I now have a better idea of what to expect, how to better prepare, and how to take greater advantage of my time. It would be an honor to have another opportunity to serve again.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** My priority has always been inclusion and being welcoming. I strive for a ministry where not only people like me, the straight, white, cisgender, Christian, male can exist in ministry, but also the gay black transgender female. This inclusion is created through actively being welcoming, encouraging, and educated on social systems in and outside the church.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** Church was always a part of my life. From a young age, I LOVED singing along to the music at Shepherd of the Prairie, questioning to see if Pastor Mark Boster actually knew my name, and absolutely LOVED every aspect of High School Ministry with my Youth Minister Greg Dowell. I graduated from Valparaiso University with a B.A. in Theology and Ministry with a minor in communications. Thanks to Pastor Charlene Rachuy Cox, I became involved and founded the ELCA Ministry LuMin & Peer Ministry at Valparaiso University, where I then got reconnected with my childhood retreat center, Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center. From there, I fell in love camp ministry. Being invited to write curriculum for both LOMC and Lutherdale was a treat! Through my education, time at two camps, and now involvement in 5 different churches (4 ELCA, 1 Non-Denominational), I feel that God has called me to be witness, learn, and grow with community in an inclusive way.

**Mr. Luke Snyder (St. Mark, Rockford – North Conference)**

**Occupation:** Student

**Gender and Pronouns:** Prefer not to answer,  
he/they

**Age at Time of Election:** Under 18

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** In my congregation, I am currently one of those who runs the av tech room managing the cameras and slides for the livestream. I am an active participant in my congregation's adult forum session and youth group. Formerly, I served as youth delegate for the Northern Illinois Synod council and attended the ELCA Youth Leadership Summit.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:**

I volunteer with my schools NHS chapter. I am an active participant in my school's model United Nations including helping to organize a conference hosting multiple schools. I've written opinion pieces in my local paper, I've written a number of letters to leaders in all levels of government advocating for various policies, and I've served as an election judge.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I believe that it's important for younger voices to be heard in the decision making of the church and that I am well suited to help represent those voices.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To contribute the perspective of the youth of the church and to carefully study all materials involved in the ministry to faithfully execute the former.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe that the most important and comforting aspect of our God is love. The love that led to the descent of Christ to live among us. I believe in the message of radical love taught by Christ, to love thy neighbor and bless those who curse you, however hard it may be. And I believe that it is the role of the church to live out that teaching of radical love by being an incessant voice for justice, compassion, and kindness in society.

Lay Female (Person of Color or First Language Other than English) • Vote for 1

**Ms. Paula Ebener (Trinity, Moline – West Conference)**

**Occupation:** Interpreter

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her

**Primary Language:** Portuguese

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** Hispanic/Latinx

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Taught English classes for Hispanic Adults in our previous church.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Feeding the homeless, food program

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** It would be a new experience for me to see all the different synods coming together to do the work of the greater church.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To learn more about the Church as one body.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe we are supposed to be and live like Christ did and follow his footsteps and my personal motto is, "I want to leave the planet a little better than I found it!"

Lay Male (Person of Color or First Language Other than English) • Vote for 1

**Mr. Lavern Allen (Becoming, Oswego – East Conference)**

**No biography was submitted.**

**Mr. George Sanchez (New Life, Bolingbrook - East Conference)**

**Occupation:** Retired  
**Gender and Pronouns:** Male

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over  
**Primary Language:** English  
**Race and Ethnic Origin:** Hispanic/Latinx

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Worship Assistant, Eucharist Minister, Church Council, Ministry Support, Nominating Committee, Sunday School Teacher, Youth Advisor, Synod Council Member, Synod Anti-Racism Team, Synod Outreach Committee.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** American Legion Chaplain and Adjutant, Youth Baseball, Cub Scouts.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I believe that the ELCA is working toward becoming an all-inclusive church and I would like to be part of the process.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** I have worked for many years in the Synod's Anti-Racism Team and will continue.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe that the church that Jesus brought to us must be open to everyone.

Lay Male • Vote for 1

**Mr. Paul Lockwood (Grace, Woodstock - Northeast Conference)**

**Occupation:** Proposal/technical writer/editor  
**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him/his

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over  
**Primary Language:** English  
**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Past member of Church Council, frequent scripture/prayer reader, singer (choir, solos), co-leader of book study, frequent voting member for Synod Assembly, congregation representative to Lunches for Learning one year.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Member of Northern Illinois Synod Social Ministry Committee (2023-Present); writer of an award-winning monthly column in our city's weekly newspaper; past member/VP of library board; past president, VP, and secretary of local theater group; theatre reviewer for local daily newspaper; past Village Clerk (Bloomington, IL); contest-winning member of Toastmasters; election judge; frequent actor in community theatre.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I have attended many Synod Assembly gatherings, all of which have been meaningful, but the one and only time I was a voting member at Churchwide Assembly - August 2013 in Pittsburgh - was an amazing, never-to-be-forgotten six-day experience. I had the chance to vote on a Bishop and Secretary for the

denomination, carefully consider other statements/resolutions/etc., meet and share worship and choir/singing experiences with fellow ELCA members from all over, get to know our synod's leadership better, successfully propose a rule change at my first plenary session, and step forward to speak when I thought my opinions might be worth sharing in smaller discussions or in plenaries. I listen closely, consider every topic or vote prayerfully, and actively participate at Synod Assembly; I would sincerely ask for the chance to do so again - 12 years later - at Churchwide.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Be the most prepared voting member I can be, but be open to the thoughts of others as I seriously consider each subject up for discussion/vote. I will listen; I will speak; I will pray; I will rejoice in the work of the ELCA.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe that my oral and written communication skills, singing and acting skills, intelligence, wit, and more are all gifts I received from God. Whenever and wherever I can praise Him and use these gifts, I want to do so.

**Mr. Brandon Graves (Salem, Sycamore – Northeast Conference)**

**Occupation:** Hospital Worker

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him/his

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Currently: I serve on the Salem council just starting my second three-year term. I am the property committee chair of Salem. I serve as Usher and assisting minister. I am also on the Ad-Hoc Governance Committee of Salem to draft our new Constitution document by 2025. I also serve on the Finance Committee.

Past: I served on the Salem Call Committee in 2017 to 2018 with the calling of Pastor Preston Fields. I have served on the Nominating Committee at Salem in the past and have been a voting member to Synod Assembly from Salem several times. I have also served as parliamentarian at Congregational meetings.

Synod: Currently, I am a member of the Synod Council, elected in 2023.

Past Synod committees include serving on the Outreach committee from 2013 to 2019. I served on the Congregational Life Committee from 2020 to 2023 serving as chairperson the last year.

I've served on the Synod Nominating Committee twice. I've served on the Assembly Resolutions committee twice. In 2023, I served on the Assembly Minutes Committee.

I love the work and innerworkings of the Church and Synod.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:**

As you could see from the previous question much of my leadership experience has been at the congregation and Synod level. However, I have volunteered at the local Nursing home for 8



years. I am also a Registered Parliamentarian (RP) A member of the National Association of Parliamentarians.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I wish to serve as a voting member to the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly because this churchwide Assembly could be the turning point in the life and history of the ELCA. It's no surprise to many church goers that change is happening, not just at the Congregation level but Synods and the whole Church (ELCA) as well.

I am especially intrigued and a bit fascinated by the work of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church that was approved by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. This Commission could be the turning point for a Renewed Church, and I would LOVE to be a part of that discussion and ultimately a decision maker in that historic work.

I also am interested in the discussion and ultimate vote on the Proposed Social Statement Civic Life and Faith, this Task Force which has been working for 6 years now on how the ELCA responds to Government and how that relates to the ELCA or the whole church.

Having served in numerous positions across the Synod, I feel that I have the much-needed knowledge of the church at large. I feel I could bring a younger perspective but also knowing that I have been an ELCA and Northern Illinois Synod member my whole life. I love the innerworkings of the church.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** My priorities for serving as a Churchwide Assembly voting member are to listen, study the work ahead of us, and put the entire ELCA at mind when making these decisions. I also would bring back what I learned to my local congregation and to the Northern Illinois Synod and discuss with other members about the priorities and commitments that will be made at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. I would ask how the decisions we make effect what we do at the congregation level or the Synod level.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I love this church; I love the Northern Illinois Synod; I love the ELCA. I love to support a mission that I love. There is something for everyone to support or partake. We are all saved by Grace through the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let's share that statement together.

**Mr. Don Gillingham (Capron, Capron – North Conference)**

**No biography was submitted.**

Rostered Male • Vote for 1

**Rev. Jacob Gawlik (St. John, Sterling - Central Conference)**

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Over the past decade in ministry, I've served various congregations and their respective synods in several capacities, including: Dean of the Shawano Area Conference of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin (2014 – 2015); Dean of the Oshkosh Area Conference of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin (2016 – 2017); Partnership in various Ecumenical Text Study Groups while in East Central Synod of Wisconsin and Northern Illinois Synod;

Member of the Northern Illinois Synod Social Ministry Committee (for two terms beginning 2018); Serving as a member of the Northern Illinois Synod Racial Justice Subcommittee (since 2018); Serving as a member of the Northern Illinois Synod Discipline Committee (since 2019)

In partnership with the TriChurch ministry of St. John's – Sterling, St. Paul – Sterling, and Immanuel – Rock Falls; Through shared Confirmation Class and Middle School Youth Ministry with St. John's – Sterling, St. Paul – Sterling, and Immanuel – Rock Falls

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Within the local Sterling – Rock Falls community I have: Partnered with the CommUNITY VBS program; Participated in the CommUNITY Clergy Book Study Group and Pastors United; Involved in the Sterling Public Schools Student Mentoring Program

Worked with local pastors and leaders around social justice issues including matters of housing insecurity, racism, and LGBTQIA inclusion.

Worked closely with a homeschool cooperative that provides alternative learning environments and opportunities for children with ADHD and dietary restriction needs that would prevent regular attendance in traditional classroom settings.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** As a person of faith, and a pastor of the ELCA, I deeply understand that the church is far more than any one congregation. Each person, congregation, ministry site, and organization are each part of the larger body of Christ. As such, however I can offer my gifts and abilities for the service of the whole church I offer what I can.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To be diligent in the tasks to which I'm called. To speak faithfully toward issues of justice and equality for all persons. To promote peaceful dialogue and discernment around difficult issues.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** In the Constitutions, Bylaws, And Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and also within the Constitution for

Synods and then again in the Model Constitution for Congregations a very important responsibility arises. The responsibility is that every ordained minister shall “speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God’s love for the world.” This is risky business and terra incognita all rolled into one. As ordained ministers, persons who have been set apart for the ministry of Word and Sacrament, we have been charged to act as the voice of God’s love for the world. Not just some parts, not just for some people, but the whole world. For me this charge is intimately rooted in the words of Jesus in Matthew 22:37 – 40, “He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.’” (NRSV)

**Rev. Chad McKenna (St. Mark, Rockford – North Conference)**

**Occupation:** Clergy

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** As the head of staff, I see myself as an advocate for the congregation's employees. In committees, I work to empower others to take ownership and pride in our ministries. Through worship, I strive to share the love of God and equip our parishioners to go and do likewise.

I enjoy moments of faith formation, from Confirmation classes to Theology Pub. I love creating meaningful worship, whether in the sanctuary or on our lawn. And, I find fulfillment in walking alongside parishioners during times of joy and sorrow.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:**

I have served as the president of the board for Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries. I regularly give the invocation at Rockford City Council meetings and attend the mayor's monthly Faith Leader meeting. I have been a weekly classroom volunteer at my child's school and a participant in occasional volunteer workdays for Winnebago County Forest Preserves and YMCA Camp Winnebago. I am also a member of the synod's Creation Care committee and a Climate Ambassador through Blessed Tomorrow.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I hope to represent our synod at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly with bold faith. Our synod has a lot to offer the wider church, thanks to our history of collaboration in mission, ministry, and worship.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** The 2025 Churchwide Assembly is poised to hear from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church and consider any actions that the commission may propose. My priority in this important work would be to ensure that we listen first to the voices of women, people of color, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, immigrants, and all who have been historically ostracized, so that our future can be guided by the gifts of the whole Body of Christ and strengthened by our diversity.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe the Christian Church is strongest when we rely wholly on the promise of Resurrection through Jesus Christ. Resurrection is more than a hope in the distance, but rather a freedom that can guide us with each new day. This promise frees us from the fear of failure and death, so that we can embrace the life God has given us now. Instead of working to preserve the past, faith in the Resurrection calls us to follow Christ, who leads us into a future full of life, where all are united and fed through the love of our Creator.

## Consultation Committee

### Current Membership

The Rev. Zach Baer (*Living Waters, Crystal Lake – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2029

The Rev. Lu Cantrell (*Peace, Morris – East Conference*) Term expires 2027

Mr. Melvin Ehrler. (*Shepherd of the Hills, Scales Mound – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2029

Dr. Trenton Ferro (*St. John, Joliet – East Conference*) Term expires 2027

The Rev. Preston Fields (*Salem, Sycamore – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2025

The Rev. Hope Johnson (*Bethany, Leland – South Conference*) Term expires 2029

Ms. Donna Kelly (*Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2027

Ms. Kearsti-Ray Knowles (*Trinity, Mt Morris – Central Conference*) Term expires 2029

The Rev. Eric Lemonholm (*Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd - North Conference*)  
Term expires 2027

The Rev. Elizabeth Martin (*Trinity, Harvard – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2025

Dr. Randy Mullin (*First, Geneseo – West Conference*) Term expires 2025

Ms. Lyn Tubbesing (*Gloria Dei, Rockford – North Conference*) Term expires 2025

*Consultation Committee members are elected in odd-numbered years only and only eligible for one term.*

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\*Term expires in 2024 and standing for re-election

\*\*Term expires in 2024 and not eligible or chooses not to stand for re-election

+Appointed Term expires in 2024 and will be filled by Synod Council.

Election of a candidate for each position along with post-Assembly appointments by the Synod Council, will fulfill the constitution requirement for membership of each committee of a minimum of 45% female/45% male members.

## Discipline Committee

### Current Membership

Mr. Mic Brooks (*Faith, Rochelle – Central Conference*) Term expires 2025

Ms. Karen Dolan (*Shepherd of the Valley, Rockford – North Conference*) Term expires 2025

The Rev. Jill Flynn (*Gloria Dei, Rockford – North Conference*) Term expires 2027

Ms. Susan Gavle (*Bethany, Crystal Lake – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2027

The Rev. Jacob Gawlik (*St. John, Sterling – Central Conference*) Term expires 2025

Ms. Grace Heimerdinger-Bakke (*St. John, Pearl City – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2029

Mr. Dave Kromphardt (*St. John's, Peru – South Conference*) Term expires 2029

Mr. Maurice Nelson (*First, Geneseo – West Conference*) Term expires 2027

Rev. Dr. Jon Pedersen (*Shepherd of the Hill, Lockport – East Conference*) Term expires 2029

Rev. Gwen Sefrhans-Murphy (*Messiah, Port Byron – West Conference*) Term expires 2029

The Rev. Nord Swanstrom (*First, Pecatonica – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2027

*Discipline Committee members are elected in odd-numbered years only and only eligible for one term.*

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\*Term expires in 2024 and standing for re-election

\*\*Term expires in 2024 and not eligible or chooses not to stand for re-election

+Appointed Term expires in 2024 and will be filled by Synod Council.

Election of a candidate for each position along with post-Assembly appointments by the Synod Council, will fulfill the constitution requirement for membership of each committee of a minimum of 45% female/45% male members.

# Resolutions

## **R-1: Resolution for Celebrating and Supporting the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ELCA World Hunger**

**Whereas**, the ELCA World Hunger ministry celebrates its 50 year anniversary in 2024; and

**Whereas**, ELCA World Hunger impacts communities both domestically and internationally; and

**Whereas**, annual gifts to ELCA World Hunger gathered from individuals and congregations within the Northern Illinois Synod have regularly exceeded \$275,000; and

**Whereas**, the Northern Illinois Synod aids in the support of ELCA World Hunger through the Social Ministry Committee and the World Hunger Subcommittee which encourages the generous giving of individuals and congregations here within; and

**Whereas**, the command from Jesus remains to “Feed my lambs” (John 21:15 and 17);

**Therefore, be it resolved**, that congregations of the Northern Illinois Synod which already support ELCA World Hunger will be encouraged to pledge to set a goal to increase this year’s giving to ELCA World Hunger through an additional intentional giving moment; and

**Be it further resolved**, that congregations of the Northern Illinois Synod which have not supported ELCA World Hunger will be encouraged to pledge their support with a giving event this year and intentionality to include ELCA World Hunger for directed giving moving forward; and

**Be it further resolved**, the Northern Illinois Synod World Hunger Subcommittee of the Social Ministry Committee will publish a list of recommendations for fundraising ideas for congregations seeking new ideas for supporting ELCA World Hunger on the Northern Illinois Synod website.

Submitted,  
Northern Illinois Synod World Hunger Subcommittee

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Submitted: 4/12/2024

Action of the NIS Resolution Committee: **Recommend adoption of the resolution.**

## **R-2: Resolution for the Northern Illinois Synod to Consider Becoming Reconciling in Christ**

**Whereas**, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affirms that all people are beloved by God; and

**Whereas**, the ELCA's Social Statement on Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust adopted in August 2009 calls on all congregations and rostered ministers "to reach out in welcome to all in accord with previous Churchwide Assembly actions as reaffirmed by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly [CA05.05.18], and to assist members to understand what it means to be hospitable to all in the name of Christ regardless of sexual orientation"; and

**Whereas**, in 1991 the ELCA Churchwide Assembly declared "gay and lesbian people, as individuals created by God, are welcome to participate fully in the life of the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America"; and

**Whereas**, in 2023, at least 510 anti-LGBTQ bills were introduced in state legislatures across the United States last year, nearly three times the number of such bills introduced in 2022 <sup>[1]</sup>; and

**Whereas**, one in five (21%) LGBTQ youth reported that their religion or spirituality is important or very important to them.; and LGBTQ youth who reported that their religion or spirituality is important or very important to them reported significantly lower rates of symptoms of depression compared to their peers for whom religion and spirituality were not at all or only a little important; and LGB adults who report that they left their religion due to conflict with their sexual identity report higher odds of attempting suicide, compared to their peers who had no conflict between their faith and sexuality <sup>[2]</sup>; and

**Whereas**, beginning in 1983, the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) program recognizes Lutheran congregations, synods, organizations, colleges, and seminaries that welcome people of all sexual orientations and gender identities; and

**Whereas**, the synod cannot speak for the welcome offered by individual congregations, it can ensure the ministries offered by the synod are inclusive and serve as a witness to the wider Lutheran community; and

**Whereas**, as of March 2024, the Reconciling in Christ roster exceeds 1,055 settings, including congregations, synods, campus ministries, colleges, and other organizations in the ELCA, ELCIC, and independent Lutheran <sup>[3]</sup>; and

**Whereas**, the Northern Illinois Synod currently has 13 congregations and ministries that are Reconciling in Christ (RIC); and

**Whereas**, a Reconciling in Christ Synod approves a welcoming statement that includes a specific welcome to members of the LGBTQIA+ communities and People of Color;

**Therefore, be it resolved**, The Northern Illinois Synod Council will appoint a task force to begin a year-long process of exploring what it means to become a Reconciling in Christ (RIC)



Synod. This process may include participation among synod staff, council, conference deans, and congregations; and

**Be it further resolved**, the appointed task force, in consultation with the Synod Council, will generate a Synod Welcome Statement. The proposed Welcome Statement will be presented for adoption to the 2025 Synod Assembly for the purpose of applying for Reconciling in Christ recognition.

Resolution proposed by the Northeast Conference.  
Approved by the Northeast Conference on April 3, 2024

The following RIC Congregations and conferences have also requested to sign on in support of the resolution:

Salem Lutheran Church, Sycamore  
First Lutheran Church, DeKalb  
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, DeKalb  
St. John Lutheran Church, Rock Island  
Living Waters Lutheran Church, Crystal Lake  
Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Rockford  
New Life Lutheran Church, Bolingbrook  
First Lutheran Church, Galesburg  
North Conference

[1] <https://www.aclu.org/legislative-attacks-on-lgbtq-rights-2024?impact=>

[2] Gibbs, J. J., & Goldbach, J. (2015). Religious conflict, sexual identity, and suicidal behaviors among LGBT young adults. *Archives of Suicide Research*, 19(4), 472–488.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13811118.2015.1004476>

[3] <https://www.reconcilingworks.org/ric/findric/> Retrieved March 9, 2024

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Submitted: 4/12/2024

Action of the NIS Resolution Committee: **Recommend adoption of the resolution.**

### **R-3: Resolution to Reject Christian Nationalism**

**Whereas**, the United States is founded upon the principles of freedom of religion and separation of church and state, as enshrined in the First Amendment to the Constitution; and

**Whereas**, Christian Nationalism is “*a cultural framework that idealizes and advocates fusion of certain Christian views with American civic life. This political ideology, whether explicit or not, includes the beliefs that the U.S. Constitution was divinely inspired and enjoys godly status, that Christianity should be a privileged religion in the U.S., that the nation holds a special status in God’s eyes, and that good Americans must hold Christian beliefs.*” From the draft of the social statement: *Civic Life and Faith.*; and

**Whereas**, “*Christian nationalism is a political ideology and is neither faithful to Christ nor patriotic. It idealizes and advocates the fusion of certain Christian views with loyalty to one’s country and encourages enforcing upon the nation a particular and harsh understanding of certain Christian principles*” from The ELCA’s “Study Curriculum on Civic Life and Faith”; and

**Whereas**, history has repeatedly shown the dangers of intertwining religious authority with governmental power, leading to the oppression of minority beliefs and practices; and

**Whereas**, the promotion of any one religion as fundamentally American alienates and marginalizes individuals and communities of other faiths or no faith; and

**Whereas**, “*This church (the ELCA) names racism as sin and affirms that the diversity of cultures throughout history is a God-given gift and a glimpse of the future.*” [ELCA Social Statement: Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture.]; and

**Whereas**, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has endorsed the Christians Against Christian Nationalism statement that reads, in part: “*Christian nationalism seeks to merge Christian and American identities, distorting both the Christian faith and America’s constitutional democracy. Christian nationalism demands Christianity be privileged by the State and implies that to be a good American, one must be Christian. It often overlaps with and provides cover for white supremacy and racial subjugation.*”; and

**Whereas**, St. Paul writes: “*...and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, and barbarian, Scythian, enslaved and free, but Christ is all and in all!* (Colossians 3:10b-11)”; and

**Therefore, be it resolved**, that this Assembly of the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America firmly rejects Christian Nationalism; and

**Be it further resolved** that the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commits to upholding the principles of religious freedom and the separation of church and state; and

**Be it further resolved** that the congregations and people of the Northern Illinois Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are encouraged to use the resources WE ARE CHRISTIANS AGAINST CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM, available from the ELCA Advocacy Network, and curriculum available for the study of the proposed Social Statement: “Civic Life and Faith”; and

**Be it further resolved** that the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will actively work to educate and advocate for a society that values and respects the religious diversity and freedom of all its members.

Written by:

\*Rev. Kenn Storck – Shepherd of the Valley – Rockford, IL  
\*Rev. Frank Langholf – Emmanuel – Rockford, IL

Signatures:

\*Rev. Quentin Fleming – Calvary - Moline, IL  
David Luecht – St. John – Joliet, IL  
Judith Wierman – St. John – Joliet, IL  
Karen Becker – St. John – Joliet, IL  
\*Kim Halper – Nativity Lutheran Church – Wonder Lake, IL  
\*Rev. Robin Caldwell – St. John – Joliet, IL  
\*Rev. Amanda Dahlseng-Monroe – Grace, Love Park, IL  
Rev. Bob Hillenbrand – Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Rockford, IL  
Rev. Pam Hillenbrand – Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Rockford, IL  
Dr. Trenton R. Ferro, St. John, Joliet, IL  
\*Rev. Dr. Eric Lemonholm – Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Rockford, IL  
& Trinity Lutheran Church, Durand, IL  
\*Mindy Lemonholm – Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Rockford, IL  
Brenda Veit Shiloh -Zion Lutheran – Belvidere, IL  
\*Somar Bryson – Immanuel – Dixon, IL  
\*Linda Aldana – Emmanuel – Rockford, IL  
\*Rev. Jay Quinn – Trinity, Rockford, IL  
\* Rev Gregory D. Olson, United Lutheran Church, Gardner, IL  
\*Rev. Paul Carlson

Sent in on behalf of and also endorsed by the North Conference

*\*Asterisk indicates Voting Members of the NIS Assembly, June 14-15, 2024*

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Submitted: 4/13/2024

Action of the NIS Resolution Committee: **Recommend adoption of the resolution.**

# Report of Committees and Subcommittees

## Congregational Life Committee

The Congregational Life Committee (CLC) of the Northern Illinois Synod was created to support and equip congregations to carry out their ministries at the local level. There are four subcommittees which fall under this committee: Safe Church, Stewardship, Worship, and Youth. One of the main events that the CLC puts on every year is the Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE). This year, CRE was held on Saturday, March 16.

CRE was held at Sauk Valley Community College outside of Dixon for a second year. We welcomed Rev. Miguel Gomez-Acosta as our keynote speaker. He spoke on the importance of evangelism in the church today. He emphasized that our job is not to convert others, but rather to plant the seed - the Spirit will take care of the rest.

The theme of the event encompassed the synod's annual theme, "Opening God's Story." There were 23 workshops around four sub-themes: Worship, Education, Leadership, and Outreach. There were 278 registrations with 240 people attending that day. 16 organizations had display tables in the main entryway on the first floor.

One change to CRE that was made this year was the addition of online workshops at a later date, called CRE+. These workshops cover topics that have normally been covered at CRE, such as constitutions, neighborhood demographics, parliamentarian help, a treasurer's workshop, and Portico benefits. These workshops will be held on Zoom and will be recorded so that the information will be available for people who are interested in the topic in the future. They will take place throughout the next year.

The Congregational Life Committee awarded two grants. One was awarded to New Life, Bolingbrook, to support congregational luncheons that will be hosted by their RIC task force. The other was awarded to Zion, Rockford, which will provide scholarships for teenagers to attend the Civil Rights Trip in mid-June.

This committee is made up of a wonderful team of rostered ministers and lay leaders: Mr. Gregory Bruner (Light of Christ, Algonquin), Mr. Paul Dallgas-Frey (Immanuel, Dixon), Ms. Meghan Doyle (St. John, Joliet), Ms. Carol Johnson (Prince of Peace, Freeport), Mr. Kent Kindelsperger (Swedona, Lynn Center), Rev. Ryan Mackey (Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley), Rev. Julie Monnard (synod staff liaison), Rev. Tom Redig (St. John's, Peru), Ms. Melissa Rojas (Trinity, Mt. Morris), Rev. Christine Salser (Christ, Stockton), Rev. Scott Stolberg (Our Savior's, Rockford), and Ms. Kelly Van Fleet (Peace, Morris).

In Christ,  
Deacon Laura Gorton (Christ, Belvidere)  
Chairperson

## **Ministry Support Committee**

Ministry Support Committee Mission Statement: Enabling Christians of the Northern Illinois Synod to realize their call to ministry as both lay and professional workers. To accomplish this mission, we provide resources, support, and continuing education within our synod, in cooperation with other synods, agencies, and institutions within the ELCA and the Church.

The members of the Ministry Support Committee for the 2023-2024 year are: Marianne Barstow, Julie Eshleman, Kay Johnson, Pastor Andrew Kayes, Pastor Vince Marolla, Randy Mullin, Bill Nelson, Chris Patterson, Pastor Sharon Rogers, Pastor David Russell, Barb Stark, and Pastor Karen Tews. Pastor Jen Beamsley is the Committee's staff liaison. We thank them all for their service!

The Ministry Support Committee strives to support those who are invested in ministry, both as lay professionals and as rostered ministers (RMs) or synod authorized ministers (SAMs). To both set and achieve specific goals in this area, the committee members work within working groups that are set at the beginning of the service year. For the 2023-2024 year, the two working groups are Compensation Guidelines Team, and Resources and Communications Team.

The Compensation Guidelines Team has continued the work of developing, updating, and submitting the 2025 Compensation Guidelines. These guidelines address compensation, benefits, expenses, and variations on housing allowances, shared ministry scenarios, interim ministry, and the many other nuances of compensation for a variety of ministry contexts. Discussions have also begun to develop compensation guidelines for SAMs, but there are many complexities to this topic. This work will proceed in the future with continued input and involvement from the synod office.

The Resources and Communications Team has been focused on the work of discerning the needs and priorities of the Synod's ministers and lay professionals as congregations adjust to post-pandemic realities. To that end, they have developed information sheets and referral lists for anyone who may be seeking Spiritual Direction or Coaching resources. These resources were first presented at CRE in March, and are expected to be available on the committee's web page before Synod Assembly.

The Ministry Support Committee greatly appreciates the faithful work of the Synod staff, Synod Council, and Bishop's Office who provide guidance, leadership, and assistance, and we're glad to play a role in supporting the vocational calling of the members of the Northern Illinois Synod and its congregations!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Julie Eshleman, Chair

## Candidacy Committee

Candidacy is the ELCA's process for discernment and preparing individuals for approval for public ministries of the ELCA. Right now this is namely for approval to one of the two rosters—Word and Sacrament and Word and Service. The Candidacy process has three steps: Entrance, Endorsement, and Approval.

The Candidacy Committee of the Northern Illinois Synod nurtures intentional relationships with our synod's candidates and accompanies them on this candidacy journey. This can involve listening, guiding, assisting, affirming, encouraging, reminding, speaking honestly, and more. The committee is responsible for being knowledgeable about Candidacy and its many processes within the process, reading paperwork, conducting interviews, and making decisions about each candidate's journey, which involves more paperwork. The committee meets about 4 times per year and also for interviews as they are needed.

Revived from pre-Covid times was the Candidacy Retreat, held in November 2023 at Immanuel, Dixon. Seven interested and potential candidates, as well as current candidates, gathered for deeper conversation about vocation, call, and candidacy process.

At the end of 2023, the Northern Illinois Synod had 4 candidates who are within the three steps, Entrance, Endorsement, and Approval. The Synod also had 10 individuals currently discerning rostered ministry. This is a decrease to be sure from previous years.

In the fall there was an ELCA-wide Candidacy Summit where among other fantastic tidbits, we learned that since 2019, there's been a 49% decrease in applicants for rostered ministry. Here is how Northern Illinois Synod's specific numbers compared to that national statistic:

### January 2024

9 discerning

1 pre-entrance

2 entranced

2 endorsed

(All recently approved are serving in first calls.)

*14 total on our current list*

### January 2019

0 discerning

3 pre-entrance

10 entranced

5 endorsed

1 approved awaiting seminary graduation and first call.

*19 total on that list*

While we experienced a drop in overall number of candidates, it was roughly only a 25% decrease.

Looking ahead: Concerning the wider ELCA, there has been a Candidacy Re-vamp in the works for some time. There's been the Candidacy and Leadership Working Group that has taken the often-used phrase, "everyone is frustrated with candidacy" and worked to understand exactly "who" is everyone and "what" is frustrating. And, then, what might be a new way to do it. We anticipate changes coming that will affect what work is ours to do, but in the meantime, we seek to do our best with the job that's been given to us.

We are made up of 12 voting members, a staff liaison, and two non-voting members. These include 4 laity, including 1 SAM, 1 Deacon, 1 seminary professor, and 7 pastors.

Candidacy Committee Members:

Sue Bull-Welch, Robert Gieraltowski, Becky Keller, Andrew Koresko, Deacon Shari Simon, Pastor Chris Lee, Pastor Deb Kelly, Pastor Rakel Evenson, Pastor Phil Potaczek, Pastor Jay Quinn, Pastor Chrissy Salser, Pastor Nord Swanstrom

Non-voting member: Pastor Ramie Bakken (Region 5 Candidacy and Leadership Manager), Professor Peter Vetanayagamony (Seminary Professor), Pastor Julie Monnard (synod staff liaison)

## **Outreach Committee**

Dear Siblings of the Northern Illinois Synod,

The stated mission of the Outreach Committee is to "assist congregations of the Synod to learn, think and live Jesus' life, death and resurrection to build faithful and vital Christian communities." Tangibly, the committee seeks to illustrate that mission through:

- **Grants**  
This year we are in the process of updating our application procedures.
- **Promoting Congregational Vitality Work**  
The Vitality Survey is a 36-question survey that scores each question/topic as "high", "medium", and "at-risk." This free program helps congregations have conversations about vitality and goal-setting. The program also uses demographic information so that congregations can compare themselves to their surrounding community. Our goal is to visit congregations who have done the survey or are in the process to help support ongoing work.
- **Helping Synod new starts**  
San Jose Obrero is 10 years old. The new pastor started in July 2023. NIS is partnering with SE Iowa Synod to support this ministry in the Quad Cities which worships at Trinity Lutheran Church in Moline. They worship 30-40 people each Sunday.

A second new start, Becoming in Oswego, started in November. A part-time mission developer is having one-to-one meetings throughout the community. They are not yet worshipping.

Members of our committee will be helping to evaluate these ministries.

- **Helping congregations create outreach ministries**

Some members of our committee were involved in presentations at CRE to provide churches with ideas to create and strengthen their outreach. We are also available for support and questions.

Without the members of the committee none of our work would be possible. I am grateful for the efforts of my fellow committee members: Sharon Beksel, Rev. Josh Ebener (Synod Liaison), Deb Keaschall, Don Kinney, Pastor Robin Luckey, David Musser, Pastor Brandon Nelson, Andrew Rex, Nancy Rex, Pastor Bob Stark, and Pastor Sarah Wilson.

We strive to live up to the words expressed in Mark 16:15 “And he said to them, ‘Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation’.”

Peace be with you,  
Lisa Gerloff-Banker

## **Social Ministry Committee**

Social Ministry Committee submitted a video report for the 2024 Assembly. To view their report please visit [www.nisynod.org/assembly](http://www.nisynod.org/assembly) or by [clicking here](#).

## **Creation Care Subcommittee**

As I write this report on a beautiful spring day, I feel so blessed that God has given us this amazing world! The Creation Care Committee strives to make everyone aware of that fact as we endeavor to be better caretakers of our earth!

A recent highlight of the past year was an Earth Day Celebration in collaboration with LOMC. We also sponsored Earth Church services every three months.

Last June, we had a Stream Walk on Pastor Carol and Paul Soderholm’s land to discover the life found in this small stream which eventually feeds into the Mississippi River. We were glad to learn that this stream was healthy!

In our effort to provide education and discussion, we led two book studies over Zoom. The first was *Speak with the Earth and it will Teach You: A Field Guide to the Bible*. The author, Pastor Daniel Cooperrider, joined our last session. That same theme was part of the second study using material from Gather magazine. Pastor Sara-Olson Smith author of “Scripture and Nature: Teachers of Faith” was able to join our final session.

Our committee (which is a subcommittee of Social Ministry) is open to anyone who is interested. Look for our displays at CRE and Synod Assembly for more information.

Respectfully submitted,  
Becky Keller, Co-Chair



## **Racial Justice Subcommittee**

In November 2022, the entire Racial Justice Subcommittee meet at Trinity Lutheran Church to discuss planning and strategy as we redevelop ourselves after the pandemic. It was an excellent opportunity for us to meet in person, discuss openly our ideas and concerns, and set in motion our three key areas of focus: Education, Advocacy, and Training.

In Spring 2023, Racial Justice was a presence at CRE, held at Sauk Valley CC, and Synod Assembly. We organized tables and made ourselves available as a resource for the synod. In 2022, we held two separate online anti-racism training events, thus our role in the synod was beginning to grow.

The anti-racism training team organized and decided on a few priorities. We would meet in person, we would offer our trainings across two days (each spaced 3-4 weeks apart), and we would move the trainings around the synod in order to better reach participants.

We also, with some conversation with synod staff, decided to focus on rostered and key lay leaders for training, with thoughts of expanding to a wider audience of congregation members later. The synod has emphasized anti-racism training as a critical component for effective church leadership, hence the orientation toward those leaders. One of the goals of anti-racism training has always been to equip participants to take the materials to their home congregations and lead similar trainings locally.

In October/November 2023, we held our first in person anti-racism training series of two days spanning four weeks. This training was at First Lutheran in Dekalb. We had 14 registrants, all either rostered or key church leaders. In March/April 2024, we will hold our next training at First Lutheran in Geneseo.

The racial justice subcommittee will likely meet again in person for a retreat and further planning in 2024. The anti-racism team will also meet in order to coordinate our work alongside the needs of the synod.

The racial justice subcommittee is available to the congregations of the Northern Illinois Synod for resources, education, and possible training options.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pastor Josh Ehrler  
Anti-Racism Training Coordinator  
Racial Justice Sub Co-Chair

Pastor Robin Caldwell  
Racial Justice Sub Co-Chair

## **World Hunger Subcommittee**

World Hunger Subcommittee submitted a video report for the 2024 Assembly. To view their report please visit [www.nisynod.org/assembly](http://www.nisynod.org/assembly) or by [clicking here](#).

## **Women of the ELCA**

Grace & Peace from the Northern Illinois Synod Women's Organization,

This year has gone smoothly. September 2023, our three-member delegation attended the Triennial Convention and Gathering in Phoenix, AZ. The full NISWO contingent was fed and nurtured with inspiring speakers and activities.

In October, we held our NISWO convention at St. John's, Peru where Bishop Stacie Fidler led us in worship. Our Churchwide representative, Laura Krueger, had met us in Phoenix and was pleased with how smoothly the convention proceeded.

November was our first board meeting with the new representatives at St. Paul's, Dixon. Guidelines were reviewed and committees were formed. More importantly, socialization ensued. January 2024, we had a Zoom meeting with the business of reviewing progress of plans for the Spring Retreat and NISWO convention to be held in the SW Conference. I am happy to report that this will take place at Zion, Kewanee on September 21, 2024.

Several board members attended CRE on March 16 at Sauk Valley Community College. We represented several committees including NISWO and Triennial display.

On April 27, 2024 we held our annual NISWO Retreat at LOMC in Oregon. Our Bible Study was Emotional Health Well-being and Faith: Creating Calm in a World Full of Chaos. Genesis 1:1-2 was our focus verse. This was led by Rev. Jennifer Ohman-Rodriguez, pastor at St John's Rock Island. We had 83 participants and a beautiful day to seek calm in chaos.

May 18 will be our 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter meeting in person at St. Paul's, Dixon.

The future holds interchanges with our Sister Synod, Lower Susquehanna of Pennsylvania to include a recipe exchange and other messages of good will. We look forward to Synod Convention at Augustana with you all on Friday, June 14. Stop by our booth for a visit Friday evening.

Finally, our NISWO Synod Convention at Zion, Kewanee Saturday, September 21, 2024, where Rev. Julie Monnard will preside at our morning worship. Speakers this year include a representative from Global Refuge and AMMPARO, ELCA World Hunger.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeana I Fors, NISWO Board President

# Report of Conferences

## Central Conference

In Central Conference, pastors and other leaders continue to engage with one another through regularly scheduled events (monthly meeting and weekly pericope study). Likewise, special events are well attended by spouses, friends, and members of our congregations.

Throughout the year, we gather at a different church in the conference on the second Wednesday. We worship together, then have a meeting, and share a meal. We have been incorporating Zoom as a way to meet during harsh weather and during winter months when road conditions make travel more challenging. It's also been beneficial in regards to attendance and has reduced in-person meetings at times of the year when communicable disease is usually higher.

Our meetings often consist of touching base with each other, talking about the life of our congregations, and sharing personal stories. Occasionally, a speaker or representative joins us to inform us about the work they are doing in our area.

We have a lively text study each Tuesday on Zoom this has made attendance easier for those who live further away, with some joining us from other states. Preachers from a few other denominations join us as well. Together, we have good discussion and share both joys and hardships.

There were a few changes in call. Doug Wood was appointed as a Synod Authorized Minister to Immanuel in Amboy. Pastor Janet Wold announced her retirement as of June this year from All Saints in Byron, IL. Pastor Ken Gibson finished his call at St. James. Pastor Barb Otten retired from ministry at Amboy. Immanuel and St. Paul in Dixon voted in September to share a pastoral team. Immanuel is served by Pastor Mark Juliot and St. Paul is currently served by Interim Pastor Elizabeth Mascal.

Our Conference was grieved this past year at the death of beloved minister and friend "Hank" Henrietta Milner in January.

Central conference is a great place to do ministry. It's also a great place to build collegial relationships. This last year has been a blessing, and with God's, our Synod's, our Bishop's, and our Colleague's love, companionship, and prayers we look forward to next year being even better. So let us go forth each day forever wrapped and forever wrapping this whole world in the loving arms of God. Amen. May God bless you all!

Rev. Scott A. Ralston  
Central Conference Dean

Central Conference submitted a video report for the 2024 Assembly. To view their video report please visit [www.nisynod.org/assembly](http://www.nisynod.org/assembly) or by clicking here.

## **East Conference**

The East Conference met 8 times from August 2023 – May 2024, beginning and ending with our biannual breakfast at the Crispy Waffle in Shorewood. In between, we met at congregations throughout the conference, enjoying refreshments, conversation, worship, and special presentations, while sharing updates and information across the conference. Highlights for the year include having the synod staff join us for our December conference meeting, increased engagement with LSSI in our conference, and the chance to connect as colleagues and friends on a regular basis throughout the year.

This season has marked a number of transitions for the East Conference, with interims completing terms, and new rostered leaders joining our conference. We particularly want to thank Pr. Lu Cantrell, who completed her time as Dean of the East Conference this August, and our synod relator, Pr. Jen Beamsley, who has done such an excellent job keeping us connected with the goings-on in the Synod.

We look forward to the coming year to see what the Spirit will be up to in our midst!

Respectfully submitted,  
The Rev. Jana L. Howson

## North Conference

The members of the North Conference—comprised of Word and Sacrament, and Word and Service Ministers, seminary interns, SAMs and other lay leaders—meet monthly, for worship, fellowship, and edification.

Here’s what the last year looked like:

- *August:* Bishop Stacie and Rev. Josh Ebener came to Rockford for a “check in,” with rostered ministers. It was a productive conversation as we wondered together on the path forward together for conference churches.
- *September:* We gathered with our synod colleagues at the Professional Leaders Conference at Lutherdale.
- *October/November:* With DEM Josh Ebener, we began a process of asset mapping looking at our strengths and beginning to wonder about collaborative relationships.
- *December:* We met at Lucha Cantina in Rockford for a holiday lunch and fellowship.
- *January:* We continued exploration of asset mapping and conversation in small groups about gaps in ministry and pondering how the gaps might be closed. Also, before the meeting, several people gathered with Dr. Alan Runge, Head of School for Rockford Lutheran School. RLS has traditionally been a partnership between LCMS and ELCA churches. During the conversation leaders spoke with Dr. Runge about the future of that partnership.
- *February:* We completed asset mapping and together wondered what’s next. Also in Feb. was Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries’ annual meeting. RALM will be entering a time of discernment as the RALM cabinet, and the conference will look at the future direction and focus of its ministries.
- *March:* The Annual meeting of the conference was held at Bethlehem. Rostered ministers and lay people from our congregations attended.
- *April:* Rev. Amanda Dahlseng-Monroe told us about her curriculum writing business, Faith Fix and the curriculum she worked on for St. Olaf’s Nourishing Vocation Project.
- *May:* The meeting was dedicated to sharing thoughts and concerns about RALM, with RALM Cabinet President, Rev. Katrina Steingraeber.

The North Conference has been a season of *change!*

<u>DEPARTING PASTOR</u>	<u>CONGREGATION</u>	<u>TRANSITIONAL MINISTER</u>
Rev. David Peterson	Zion, Belvidere	Rev. Elizabeth Martin
Rev. Scott Benolkin	Shepherd of the Valley	Dn. Cheryl Erdmann
Rev. Dan Wynard	Alpine	Rev. Don Wink
-----	Christ, Belvidere	(Acting Interim) Dn. Laura Gorton
Rev. Megan Vaughan	Cross and Crown, Roscoe	Rev. Keith Johnson

We also welcomed Zion, Rockford’s latest intern, Rachel Perkins-Gama, LSTC seminarian.

On a personal note, it has been a joy to serve as Dean of the North Conference for six-and-half years; I’ll be ending my term this summer but look forward to continuing the work of collaboration in the conference.

The North Conference is an active, positive, and collegial place to share in ministry in Jesus' name. We are blessed to gather and strengthen one another for service to the Lord.

Servants Together,  
Pastor Julane Nease  
Dean, North Conference

## **Northeast Conference**

Greetings from the Northeast Conference, made up of congregations in McHenry and DeKalb counties. We have monthly gatherings of rostered ministers, both active and retired. The host of each meeting rotates, which we find to be a nice element to our meetings because we are present in many different ministry settings in our conference.

We average around 15 people per meeting. Since the pandemic, our conference has been looking to overhaul the conference meeting experience in some ways and keep other key elements. The biggest mainstay that we longed for was the fellowship and community of our gatherings. This is why we always have time to intentionally check in with one another, worship together and of course, have some snacks to eat during our gatherings, and some continue the fellowship by having lunch afterward!

As for the overhaul, we no longer wanted to meet just for the sake of meeting. As you know, ministry in 2023-2024 is complex and exciting, but also demands a lot of church leaders. Time is precious! Therefore, we wanted our gatherings to bring something purposeful in addition to our time of fellowship. Together we decide what topics are most pertinent to our collective ministries and find ways to engage them together. One way - we have tried a couple of times and found that we really got a lot out of - is finding a recent article or two about a topic, for instance stewardship in the post-covid era, reading it ahead of our meeting so that we come ready with reactions, questions, and the most exciting aspect, new ideas to brainstorm together about.

Some topics we have tackled in this year include: how to start and/or continue in the Reconciling in Christ discernment process, expanding how we can work together with Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, Mental Health in Ministry, Modern Stewardship, and we will be reading a book in preparation for our meeting in the fall when we will have the author come speak with us, very exciting! We are also hoping to organize a service project for our May "meeting" where we can involve lay persons in coming together to help a big need in our counties. In these topics we usually have had a guest speaker or a point person to organize how to proceed through the chosen topic. We can always do more. I look forward to reading the reports of my fellow deans to see what new ideas they are cooking up as well that we can try in our conference!

Finally, there are a couple of openings in the Northeast Conference. If you are searching for a new call, please give these openings your prayerful consideration. We would love to have you as part of our conference! We look forward to being a supportive community to whomever is called to these congregations. Plus, new people bring new ideas!

A big thank you to our synod Bishop and staff, for all of the work they are doing to lead our synod in this new age of ministry! As a conference dean, I get to see some of the behind the scenes work they are doing, and I can tell God has called some great leaders for our synod. Please keep them in your prayers as they lead us in innovating our Church.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pastor Zach Baer  
Dean, Northeast Conference

## **Northwest Conference**

If you're hungry, come to the Northwest Conference!

We are grateful to God that the Spirit has moved many of our congregations to regularly host our neighbors to a free meal! Inspired by First Lutheran in Mount Carroll and the Bridges program in Savannah, Lord of Love in Galena, Christ Lutheran in Stockton, Shepherd of Hills in Schapville/Scales Mound have started, or will soon start, serving meals open to the public. The epidemic of hunger for social connection is apparent in our communities. We pray we can provide hospitality, friendship, and good food to our neighbors in the name of Christ!

Other congregations have begun new ministries as well. St. John's in Pearl City has a thriving backpack program. Christ in Stockton is partnering with LSSI Anderson House, an apartment community for adults with disabilities. Lord of Love now shares space with The Mop Shop which offers cleaning supplies to residents of Jo Daviess County.

As well as ministries in our own conference, many of our congregations are active supporters of LOMC Camp, Bridges in Savannah, and LSSI. Prince of Peace in Freeport supports the local homeless shelter. This is just a small list of ways in which our people are proclaiming God's love in service.

Submitted,  
Rev. Robin Luckey  
Dean, Northwest Conference



## South Conference

The South Conference of our Northern Illinois Synod stretches as far west as Princeton and Ohio, as far north as Mendota and Earlville, as far east as Leland and Somonauk, and as far south as Streator and McNabb.

We currently have 15 congregations in the conference. At this moment, all congregations are being served by a called pastor or have some supply in place and are not in an interim ministry situation.

Ten congregations are being served by their own called pastors,

- Immanuel, Earlville – Pastor Denise Rode
- Bethany, Leland – Pastor Hope Johnson
- Trinity, Ottawa – Pastor Phillip Potaczek
- St. John's Mendota – Pastor Elise Ekland Rothfusz
- St. John's Peru – Pastor Tom Redig
- St. Matthew's, Princeton – Pastor Scott Schmidt
- St. John's, Somonauk – Pastor Chris Schoon
- St. Paul's, Streator – Pastor Bill Callister

Two Congregations share a ministry as the Illinois River Valley parish and are served by Pastor Kris Zierke:

- Immanuel, Marseilles
- Our Savior, Seneca

Five congregations are being served indefinitely by supply pastors and Synod Authorized Ministers (SAMs).

- First, Ohio – Jeff and Lori Whalen (SAMs)
- St. John's Princeton (Church on the Hill) – Various Supplies
- Emmaus, McNabb – Pastor Bob Kinas
- Immanuel, Peru (Countyline) – Kent Terry (SAM)
- St. Paul's, Tonica (Leonore) – Karen Crabtree

First Lutheran Church in Ohio shares a ministry with Trinity Lutheran Church in Manlius.

Within our conference we also have four retired pastors and three widowed spouses of pastors.

This past year we said goodbye to Vicar Anthony Windau who continued to serve at St. John's Mendota as a SAM following his internship.

And this January, we were glad to welcome Pastor Elise Ekland Rothfusz who has been called to serve as Pastor at St. John's Lutheran in Mendota.

Thanks also to retired Pastors Gene Vincent and Wayne Derber for helping out at St. Matthew's in Princeton during Pastor Scott Schmidt's medical leave.

The Pastors and SAMs of our Conference meet once a month in person in October, November, December, January, February, and May. We met Via ZOOM in March due to a Snowstorm. Bishop Stacie joined us in December.

Immanuel Peru participated in an Ecumenical Lenten series with congregations in their area.

In April of 2024, we had our Conference Assembly in person at Our Savior, Seneca.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Pastor Bill Callister  
Dean, South Conference

## **Southwest Conference**

The Southwest Conference is comprised of 16 congregations that stretch from Kewanee to Aledo, and from Knoxville to Stronghurst. We are prairie towns and railroad hubs. We are communities with changing demographics, and we are historic settings. Historic peoples like Abraham Lincoln, Stephen Douglas, and even Wyatt Earp (born in Monmouth, IL) once roamed the same streets where today immigrants and refugees now drive to work alongside century-farm families. This is where our 16 congregations come to life.

Our congregations are led by dedicated rostered ministers and SAMs, and our congregations are full of faithful lay members. The call to ministry that unites us all is the command from scripture to love our God and to love our neighbor. We celebrate our shared call, even as we struggle with how to live this call during times of great societal change. We are filled with hope, even as we deal with the heaviness of overstretched personal lives, over-functioning leaders, uncertainty of tomorrow, and more.

Over the past year, our conference has sought to renew the connection between congregations as a way to share the burden of struggle and heavy hearts. We have sought to strengthen connections to enhance our sense of shared ministry and hope. Two congregations began a new shared ministry; two other congregations just completed a three-year shared confirmation ministry. This year, our conference restarted its annual Spring Assembly with a presentation on shared ministry and giving congregations an opportunity to think about how sharing ministry can enhance ministry within our communities.

As our small towns continue to change around us, how ministry will be accomplished moving forward will be very different from how ministry was accomplished in years past when the then arriving European immigrants built our now historic church gathering places. Today, these gathering places are in the midst of new arriving immigrants from Africa and Latin America. But the ministry that we are dedicated to remains the same: love our God and love our neighbor. What will our ministry look like in one year ... five years? That is a path yet untrodden, and yet a direction we head knowing whose hand leads us, the hand of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rev. Jamie Gallagher  
Dean, Southwest Conference  
Pastor, First Lutheran Church, Monmouth, IL

## **West Conference**

The West Conference clergy have been meeting regularly for worship, mutual support and ministry over the past year. We have prayed together, shared ideas together, and sought to support each other in ministry. Much of our conversation has revolved around what the church and our congregations may look like in the years ahead. Under the direction of Pastor Josh Ebener, we did some asset mapping. We also met recently with Kelly Nieman-Anderson for an update on the work of LSSI.

In the past year we recognized several transitions. We said farewell to Pastors Peter Bredlau and David Efflandt. We welcomed Pastors Sue Hoff (Salem, Moline) and Stacy Christianson (interim, Trinity, Moline). Pastor Sefrhans-Murphy transitioned from St. Paul, Orion to an interim position at Messiah, Port Byron.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pr. Don Knowles, West Conference Dean

# Report of Colleges, Seminaries, and Campus Ministry

## Augustana College - Rock Island, Illinois

**Augustana College**  
Rock Island, Illinois

Dear Friends:

In its mission statement, Augustana College declares itself to be "deeply rooted in the liberal arts and sciences and an inclusive expression of Lutheran higher education." The college's new strategic plan, *Augustana Bold & Boundless*, reaffirms this rootedness. Approved in January by its board of trustees, which includes Bishop Stacie Fidler, the plan has three core goals:

1. Engaged and holistic learning
2. Student success in life and career
3. Serving our neighbors through engagement with our community, region, and world

Strategic plans are all well and good, but if I may borrow from Luther's Small Catechism, *What does this mean for us?*

It means that the purpose of Augustana College is to afford an opportunity for a liberal arts education that speaks to all dimensions of human existence, in a manner consistent with the higher education values of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

It means that as a community dedicated to diversity, equity and inclusion, Augustana prizes interfaith engagement, commitment to justice, spiritual exploration, reasoned examination, vocational discernment, and freedom of academic inquiry and expression.

Since its founding, Augustana College has educated and graduated people of purpose, with deep passions, the skills to accomplish ambitious goals, and extraordinary gifts for leadership. Our graduates possess a way of thinking about, and looking at, the world that equips them with a panoramic view of their community and the world that motivates them to have impact wherever they are. This is what Augustana has done since 1860 and we aspire to continue to shape graduates who make their communities better because of their experience with us.

At a time when many private liberal arts colleges in the Midwest are facing declining enrollments, we are grateful that the steadfast support of alumni and friends of the college has allowed us to keep an Augustana education in reach of families. The Murry Gerber Challenge is a \$40 million match that doubles the impact of any gift to endowed financial aid resources. It's the fuel behind Augustana Possible, the single largest financial aid initiative in the institution's history.

Augustana College stakes its future on the need of society for people whose education is framed by purpose. People who are not daunted by hard decisions because they have a set of values, derived in the context of community, to help them navigate the unforeseen. This future is unreachable without effective partnerships like that with the Northern Illinois Synod and the ELCA, for which my colleagues and I are deeply grateful.

Sincerely,

  
Andrea Kathryn Talentino, President

## Carthage College - Kenosha, Wisconsin



### How Students Build Community

*As the College continues its search for a new campus pastor, we invited a member of the center's student staff to share reflections and updates.*

My name is Amber Janke. I am a junior who transferred to Carthage in spring 2022. I began working in the Center for Faith and Spirituality that fall as a community builder on our service team.

My roles soon expanded to include supporting the office staff, Tuesday worship, and co-leading a Bible study. CFS became the place that I love to call home at Carthage. The family that has been built here is welcoming, engaging, and supportive, which was especially important after the tragic loss of Pastor Kara Baylor to cancer last May.

The energy, enthusiasm, and creativity of our student and professional staff led us into the new school year, as we welcomed Interim Pastor Tom Gaulke. He moved us through the fall term with guidance, support, and a willingness to try new things. Our programming is going strong, with some new student teams!

The faith and justice team is one of those additions. Its goals are to lift up social justice issues on campus and in our communities, and to create opportunities for students to get involved in justice-based work.

We hosted a kickoff event in December where students talked about what justice means to them. In February, we're bringing the Black String Triage Ensemble to campus to discuss its use of music to respond to community trauma.

For our Protestant students, Pastor Tom leads a Tuesday worship that includes a soup and bread lunch. On Reformation Day, we started a six-week series called For All The Saints, where students, faculty, and staff could share reflections on people who have impacted their lives.

Our Catholic team coordinates a weekly Mass with priests, student musicians, and readers while also supporting the student organization Catholics at Carthage. In addition, the team leads field trips to sites like Holy Hill.

Interfaith Lunch features weekly speakers — the more diversity in belief, the better! Guests have opened up about their journeys as part of various faith (and non-faith) traditions and indigenous cultures. Hearing from a female rabbi in a Reform Jewish congregation and a lesbian couple who are practicing Christians shows that, even within a major world religion, believers can have very different experiences.

This invites students into healthy conversations about BIG questions: Why are we here? Why do we believe what we believe? What happens when we die? By having speakers share their stories in a welcoming, celebratory environment, we can encourage students to boldly pursue their own spiritual paths.

The service team plans events for the good of students and the surrounding community. We host biannual blood drives with the Red Cross; the one held this past fall honored Pastor Kara. The new Empty Bowls event, part of a week of service activities to honor Martin Luther King Jr. Day, will raise money for people experiencing homelessness in Racine. Random acts of kindness, such as handing out treat bags, are also planned by this team.

Every semester, we run a program called On Purpose. Students receive a daily email with reflection prompts, and we hold weekly small group meetings to discuss them. The friendships formed in those groups keep students connected long after the meetings end.

Through these and other programs, the Center for Faith and Spirituality provides a space for students to discover who they are, ask hard questions, and explore what faith can mean to them. We thank those who continue to support our ministries!

## **Grace Place Campus Ministry at NIU - DeKalb, Illinois**

### **Where we've been**

While there has been a Lutheran Campus ministry presence at Northern Illinois University since the 1950s, Grace Place Campus Ministry at NIU, a joint Episcopal and ELCA Lutheran ministry, was formed in the wake of the 2008 NIU Shooting out of a desire for a united ecumenical outreach to students. The ministry was headquartered at 401 Normal Road across from the NIU student center. Along with their Wednesday night meals, worship, and fellowship ministries, Grace Place housed a student food pantry that became a vital resource for struggling college students.



In 2016, thanks to the ministry and advocacy of the Grace Place “Hungry Huskies” food bank, NIU took over and expanded the program in a different location. While this was the right move for the campus community, Grace Place went into a time of redefining its ministry. To try and fill the gap, First Lutheran Church in DeKalb launched a “lunches to go” program at Grace Place in which they would hand out readymade lunch bags to students, which, at its height, was distributing around 150 bag lunches each Monday. Still, student numbers began to dwindle as Grace Place worked to reinvent itself. In 2017, Rev. Amy Fallon announced her departure from Grace Place after five years of ministry.

Under the leadership of interim Rev. Bob Hanson, the ministry was faithfully maintained. In the interim year, it became apparent that the building maintenance was significantly deferred, and an effort was made to renovate. However, it became clear that serious structural issues would need to be addressed, including a leaky roof that had plagued the building for years after multiple attempts to remedy the problem.

In August of 2019, Pastor Mack Patrick brought a new sense of excitement through new outreach on campus and social media. Participation increased, and the future of the campus ministry looked promising. Sadly, the pandemic of 2020 and a move to online classes at NIU stunted the growth of the newly energized ministry. Pastor Mack worked hard to stay connected and built a solid online community through social media, zoom meetings, pastoral care phone calls, and the occasional socially distanced one-on-one meeting. However, online classes meant students stayed off campus and home with their parents to save money. Students didn't return to in-person classes until Spring of 2021, still under fairly strict mask mandates and socially distancing precautions. It was not until Fall 2021 that Grace Place could resume a regular schedule after a summer of vaccinations. However, because students had been distant, an interesting demographic shift started to happen in which Grace Place Campus ministry started to attract not just students but local young adults nonaffiliated with Grace Place. The 2021 -2022 school year was another era of steady growth, including a new partnership with the Inclusive Collective, a ministry of the United Methodist church.

In the summer of 2022, the roof again began to leak after significant rainfall and caused considerable damage. After spending tens of thousands of dollars to fix and refix the structure, this was a disappointing outcome. Furthermore, after an inspection, we learned that the slab on which Grace Place sat was cracked and started to shift. Estimates showed that it would be more financially viable to tear down the structure and rebuild than to fix the building. In August of 2023, the HVAC system partially failed, and the Board decided to leave the building and move into St. Paul's Episcopal church. After further review of our financial and fundraising capacity, the Board agreed to sell the building. Finally, in November 2023, Pastor Mack announced he would begin working for the Northern Illinois Synod as the Assistant to the Bishop for communications.

The Board immediately began searching for a new Campus Minister, working with the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago and the Northern Illinois Synod. The Board scrambled to continue the ministries of Grace Place by dividing responsibilities and leaning heavily on St. Paul's Episcopal Church to continue to host. Father Scott Lybrand Zaucha and Vice President of the Grace Place Board filled in for many of the Wednesday night suppers and other pastors in the DeKalb area. At the same time, the task of cleaning out and selling the building was underway.

This period was taxing for all involved. This, combined with the news from various funding sources that their future support might be in doubt, led the Board to pause ministry operations for the Summer/Fall of 2024 while a new course could be determined. In July of 2023, the Grace Place building was sold.

### **The Future**

After some evaluation and conversation with both the Episcopal and Lutheran bishops, we came to some important conclusions:

1. There is still a need for Grace Place Campus Ministry.
2. Evidence has shown us that the need for a young adult ministry goes beyond the students of Northern Illinois and includes local community colleges and young adults not affiliated with a college or university.
3. The traditional funding sources from denominations and affiliated organizations will likely decrease in the coming years.
4. Ecumenical partners in the area are eager to join our ministry to young adults.

With these truths in mind, the Grace Place Board met and revised the constitution to allow board members outside of the ELCA and Episcopal churches and are in the process of reforming a new Board of Directors with ELCA Lutheran, Episcopal, Presbyterian Church (USA), United Church of Christ, and United Methodist representation. Furthermore, we have been in contact with the ELCA Gather network to copy their prayer, service, and fellowship model that will draw participants from young adults from different walks of life into an intentional community. Once the Board is reestablished, we look forward to hiring a part-time coordinator. Although St. Paul's will remain our mailing address, these meetings will float around participating churches and community spaces. And finally, we will be rebranding these small groups as "Faith Now." Our goal is to launch *Faith Now* formally on Pentecost 2024 with a bonfire at Salem Lutheran Church in Sycamore. Faith Now will attend different summer community gatherings, such as DeKalb Pride. In the Fall of 2024, Grace Place will return to the orientation welcome fairs and gatherings



at NIU and community colleges in the area. We sincerely hope the Faith Now model can be replicated in other parts of the region if successful.



**Faith Now**  
**An Ecumenical Young-ish\* Adult**  
**Community**

We are an ecumenical, open and affirming, community for young-ish\* adults in Dekalb County. Our goal for this community is to create space for young-ish\* people to come and explore what faith means today, here and now. We are for the doubters, believers, questioners, the churched and unchurched, the nones and the dones and anyone in between. Through conversations and discussions, service to the community, and worship and prayer opportunities, we will build a community where all feel they belong.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Preston Fields  
Board President

**What does Young-ish\* adult mean?**

We don't know, this category is constantly changing, like the rest of the world. We care less about the category and more about the people. Young-ish\* could include college students, young professionals, parents of young children, Gen X through Gen Z, or anybody who looks around their church and feels "I'm too young for this crowd."

We are for you!



Dear Friends,

Warm greetings on behalf of our faculty, staff, students, Trustees, and alumni! Grand View University engages, equips and empowers learners to explore their vocations, fulfill their potential and serve the world. Informed by our values of excellence, inclusive community, adaptability, faith, global curiosity, agility, and positivity, Grand View aspires to be a leader in innovative education that integrates knowledge, learning, skills, and transformational experiences to ignite curiosity and prepare adaptable, independent, creative and confident people.

Here are some highlights from this past year:

**GV Next** – In May 2023, Grand View University piloted its GV Next program, wherein GV will waive any remaining tuition for all recipients of both the maximum Pell Grant and the maximum Iowa Tuition Grant. This initiative was successfully piloted with Des Moines Public Schools for Fall 2023, and has been opened up to all qualifying Iowa high school graduates for Fall 2024. This initiative is designed to expand the university’s capacity to serve low-income students by removing affordability barriers.

**Faith Life and Campus Ministry** – With the departure of Rev. Dr. Russ Lackey, Grand View split the position into a Director of Faith Life and a separate Campus Pastor/Pastor of Luther Memorial Church position. The Director of Faith Life is responsible for leading Christ-centered formation and discipleship opportunities for Grand View students as well as overall campus engagement for Grand View University Campus Ministry programming, which includes people of many faith traditions. The Director of Faith Life also participates in institution-wide strategic planning, decisions regarding the allocation of resources as well as seeking to acquire resources, and leading projects, events, and initiatives involving a broad range of constituencies both on and off campus. The search for a Campus Pastor is ongoing.

Campus Ministry offers robust programming for students, faculty, and staff including weekly chapel, Bible study groups, prayer groups, PEER Ministry, the student leadership team, and evening worship. We partner across the University for service projects and campus wide activities such as Homecoming events, student leadership, first year experience activities, and conferences. In addition, a collaboration with FCA has allowed many of our student athletes to have team chaplains to help them navigate faith and life.

**Grant Activity** - Grand View has been blessed to receive five Lilly Endowment Inc. grants. We’d love to have pastors from your synod participate. The grants include:

**Nexus Institute:** NEXUS exists to transform the landscape of the Lutheran Church through innovative and intentional development of young adults who want to be more involved in the nexus of faith, life, and the church. In its seventh year of programming, NEXUS is a life-changing opportunity where young adults engage in theological learning, leadership development, and vocational discernment through week long summer programming. For more information, see <https://www.grandview.edu/about/community/camps-clinics/nexus>.

**The Moses Project:** The Moses Project equips rural pastors with a vision of ministry that helps them thrive in congregational leadership and enhance the vitality of their

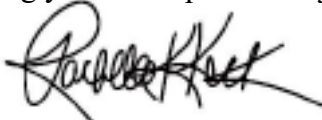
congregation. Through a distinct and exceptional professional development program, pastors receive critical support, develop innovative strategies, and engage in ongoing learning and opportunities for renewal. They build the very network that provides them and those they serve with vitality. The Moses Project is in the middle of Year 5 of programming and has worked with 100 rural pastors from 12 states. We have a 100% completion rate and all pastors who have participated in the program are still serving in ministry (as of March 2023). For more information, see <https://www.mosesproject.org/>.

Faith Forward: Faith Forward is a grant program that aims to empower, equip, and encourage rural and small congregations to more effectively work with parents, grandparents, and faith parents through the normal routines of congregational life to help them hand down their Christian faith and values to the next generation. The program kicks off April 2024, and the first cohort is almost full. For more information, please see <https://www.grandview.edu/faith-forward>.

Compelling Preaching: The Iowa Preachers Project fosters and supports preaching that inspires, encourages and guides people to come to know and love God and to live out their Christian faith more fully. The program will convene cohorts of clergy and lay preachers to sharpen the church's proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Partnering with the University will be 1517 and Mockingbird. The project launches October 2024. Stay tuned for more information.

Thriving Congregations Grant: The Jordan Project will ignite new life and innovation into female-led rural and small-town congregations across the Midwest in the ELCA and other full communion partner denominations. Pastors and leaders from their congregations will explore their congregations' rapidly changing social and cultural contexts, gain clarity about their values and mission, and draw on Lutheran theological practices and traditions to adapt their ministry to the demands of their changing contexts. Partnering with Rev. Sarah Ciavarri and This Whole Hearted Living, the Jordan Project begins August 2024. Additional information coming soon.

Wishing you God's peace and joy,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachelle Keck', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Rachelle Keck, Grand View President

## Luther College - Decorah, Iowa



Greetings from Luther College and from our home in Decorah, Iowa – where river, woodland, and prairie meet upon lands that have been home to the Ioway, Sac, Fox, and Dakota people and their ancestors. We are proud to share with you highlights from this past academic year that reflect our mission to educate minds and develop whole persons equipped to understand and confront a changing society.

During the 2023-2024 academic year, we honored milestones in the college's history, including the 40th anniversary of our Asian Students Association and Allies and the 50th anniversary of our partnership with the TRIO Achievement Program, which provides first-generation and income-eligible students with financial assistance and a strong on-campus support system as they navigate their college careers.

We celebrated our living relationship with our Nordic heritage, including hosting a visit from Anniken Huitfeldt, Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs in September. Similarly, we took the opportunity to reflect upon our continued identity as a college of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, welcoming to campus the Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells, executive director of the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities, to give our Black History Month keynote address and to meet cohorts of students, faculty, staff, regents, and community leaders.

The academic year has also been uniquely focused on future-facing initiatives as we live into our grounded and global campus vision. We have launched a new Strategic Framework, a new core curriculum, a new engineering science major, and a new partnership with the University of Iowa College of Public Health to create a 4+1 bachelor's to master's degree.

We have expanded our Luther College Impact Award, which offers four years of free tuition for qualified students, to include not only students residing in Iowa, but also students residing in Minnesota. We have increased the amount of our academic merit scholarships, added First Generation and Campus Visit Awards, and continue to offer a wide range of merit and need-based financial aid, including the EPIC (Education Partners in Covenant) grant, which matches up to \$1,000 per year in support of students from participating congregations. Annually, Luther students are gifted nearly \$50 million from more than 850 different funds, reflecting our ongoing commitment ensuring that a Luther education is affordable and accessible to students and families.

We celebrate two historic gifts toward the expansion and renovation of our Regents Center, home to Norse athletics and the campus center for sports and recreation: an unprecedented \$10 million gift from Michael and Nicole Gerdin and the Gerdin Charitable Foundation—the largest individual gift in the college's history—and a \$2 million gift from Dennis and Suzanne Birkestrand to support gymnasium renovations. These renovations are part of our Campus Master Plan, which envisions other capital projects, as well.

Other highlights from this year include music ensemble tours across the Midwest, Great Plains, and Southern United States, as well as summer tours to Norway and Brazil. We welcomed more than 600 high school and middle school students for last summer's Dorian music camps, 150

alumni and friends for our adult Dorian band retreat, and more than 1,500 high school students for our annual winter Dorian music festivals - choir, orchestra, band, and keyboard. A number of our Luther sports teams recently claimed American Rivers Conference titles, including men's and women's tennis, men's golf, and men's and women's swimming and diving.

It is with a spirit of gratitude, curiosity, and excitement that we continue to devote ourselves—students, staff, and faculty alike—to the pursuits of learning in community, discerning our callings, and serving with distinction for the common good. We do so ever-mindful of the challenges that face our institutions and our society, and with a deep sense of humility as we work to create a community of faith and learning for all. We are profoundly grateful for you, our partner congregations, and your ongoing support and prayers.

Soli Deo Gloria!

President Jenifer K. Ward

## Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Dear ministry partners in the Northern Illinois Synod:



The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) is grateful to share highlights from our seminary in this 2024 report to supporting synods. Thank you for your continued support of our innovative and thriving seminary. Highlights from this year include:

- In May 2023, LSTC relocated to its new home on the fourth floor of the Rev. Donald P. Senor Academic Center building at 5416 South Cornell Street in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood. Designed as an agile 21st-century seminary offering in person and omnichannel learning opportunities, this strategic move has positioned LSTC to invest in key areas while opening the door for innovation and growth. Leasing space in a building shared with the Catholic Theological Union and McCormick Theological Seminary deepens our commitment to ecumenical collaboration.
- The LSTC Board of Directors appointed a task force to examine and propose a reparations plan for the seminary tied to the sale of our former building at 1100 E. 55th Street. As part of the ongoing communication about this vital initiative, the Reparations Task Force launched a website ([lstc.edu/reparations](http://lstc.edu/reparations)) to keep the community abreast of developments and milestones achieved by the Reparations Task Force. This platform is a comprehensive resource, providing updates and insights gained through research and discussions.
- A new investment area for LSTC is its expansion into asynchronous forms of online learning. This new platform will allow learners to access and complete lectures and readings within their own timeframe utilizing on-demand content such as podcasts and video lectures. In the first phase of this project, the seminary will focus on creating Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) and Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAM) certificates. In its second phase, the seminary will introduce First Call Theological Education (FCTE) courses, professional development courses for rostered leaders, and continuing education courses for those who want to grow in their faith. As we expand, the seminary will continue to offer its existing degree and certificate-based residential and distance learning tracks.
- This spring, we are undergoing our regular cycle of periodic comprehensive reviews by our accreditors, the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), our specialty accreditor, and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), our regional accreditor. These involve the opportunity to research and write a valuable self-study report that summarizes our school's performance and improvements across the whole span of our operations. The reviews culminate in each case with an on-campus visit by accreditation teams, who will later gather their findings into reports shared with us this summer.
- Honoring the 50th anniversary of Christ Seminary - Seminex, LSTC is hosting a conference April 16-18 online and at its new facility in Hyde Park. This event-packed experience combines LSTC's annual Homecoming celebration and features engaging sessions, insightful discussions, and once-in-a-lifetime reunions. A digital version of the conference will be available after the event. Visit [LSTC.edu/Seminex](http://LSTC.edu/Seminex) for information about the conference, Homecoming, and other Seminex-related celebrations.
- Dr. Linda E. Thomas, Professor of Theology and Anthropology and Director of the Albert "Pete" Pero, Jr. and Cheryl Stewart Pero Center for Intersectionality Studies, was recently appointed Interim Dean and Vice President of Academic Affairs for LSTC. In the fall of

2023, Dr. Karri Alldredge joined LSTC as an Assistant Professor of New Testament. Rafael Malpica Padilla was appointed as the inaugural DAMM Chair in Leadership and as the Director of Latin Ministry and Theology. A faculty search for the Braatz Chair in worship is currently underway.

- We look ahead to our 164th commencement at a new location: St. Paul and the Redeemer Episcopal Church, at 4945 South Dorchester in Hyde Park. This spacious, flexible, and fully-equipped facility is well-suited to house our commencement exercises in grand style, with plenty of room for a reception and socializing afterward. This year's commencement speaker will be our own Rev. Dr. Barbara Rossing, Professor of New Testament and longtime faculty member, who will be retiring at the end of this academic year.

To learn more about LSTC and the historic changes happening now, please visit [www.lstc.edu](http://www.lstc.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Nieman".

Rev. Dr. James Nieman, president  
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

## Wartburg College - Waverly, Iowa

2023 Annual Report to the Synods



*Wartburg College is dedicated to challenging and nurturing students for lives of leadership and service as a spirited expression of their faith and learning.*

Guided by our vision, we are answering the call to prepare resilient leaders of positive change for service in a complex world. This will be realized by building on our distinctives and embracing new opportunities to be the leading institution in educating the whole person.

### Enrollment

- Fall 2023 enrollment was 1,472 students from 41 U.S. states and 44 countries, which includes 196 U.S. students of color and 92 international students. More than 20 Christian denominations and several world religions are represented. Our enrollment saw its largest year-to-year percentage increase since 2016.
- The five majors with the highest enrollment are business administration, biology, exercise science, elementary education, and psychology.
- The online Master of Arts in Leadership program enrolled a new cohort of eight students as well as one pursuing the Graduate Leadership Certificate.

### Strategic Positioning

- After almost two years of research and planning, the college announced the Wartburg Commitment, a new pricing model and value proposition designed to help students consider, afford, and experience Wartburg College. Starting in Fall 2024, the comprehensive program includes a new competitive price, reduced financial barriers for lower- and middle-income families, and funding to increase access to immersive experiences.
- A new Wartburg brand, Experience More, was launched in conjunction with the Wartburg Commitment. Extensive research found the distinctive experiences students have at Wartburg involve a nurturing community, connection, and engagement. These common threads of the Wartburg experience resonate with students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

### Academic and Co-Curricular Programs

- The first 15 students to earn a master's degree from Wartburg College graduated in May with a Master of Arts in Leadership. The students came from as far away as Ohio and California and represented an array of work sectors, including business, K-12 and higher education, public administration, the military, and faith communities.
- In January 2023, Wartburg faculty approved a new THRIVE General Education curriculum to be implemented in the 2024-25 academic year. THRIVE stands for Thinking Critically, Human Culture, Reasoning, Information Fluency, Vocation, and Effective Communication.
- Dr. Ethan Blass was inducted into the newly established Herbert and Mildred Kleinfeld Professorship in German Language and Culture. The professorship, provided through the generosity of Gerald Kleinfeld in honor of his parents, will support teaching and learning in the German Department.



- As a member of the Iowa Private Transfer Collaborative, Wartburg received a three-year grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations and Teagle Foundation to make the experience of transferring from an Iowa community college more transparent.
- The college launched Knights to Know, an educational web series that introduces influential alumni to the greater Wartburg community. The first year's theme is Women of Wartburg and has featured women in STEM and leaders in service.
- In 2023, the Wartburg esports team began competing in a new state-of-the-art arena that was created through the renovation of a computer lab and classroom.
- Women's wrestling opened its inaugural season in Fall 2023, bringing the total number of intercollegiate athletics teams to 25.

### Spiritual Life and Campus Ministry

- The Rev. Maggie Falenschek was named the dean of spiritual life and the Herbert and Cora Moehlmann Chaplaincy Chair effective Aug. 7, 2023. She is a graduate of Concordia College and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary with a demonstrated passion for Lutheran higher education and a desire to interpret Wartburg's Lutheran values for an increasingly diverse campus community.
- Spiritual Life equips all students to live into a spirited expression of their faith. As our campus becomes increasingly religiously diverse, we seek innovative ways to holistically support our students as well as build bridges across difference. This work includes partnering across campus with Student Life, Academic Affairs, and Dining Services.
- SLCM has welcomed Kristin Teig Torres in a reimagined position as Director of Student Leadership, Service, and Engagement. Kristin's presence in and in collaboration with SLCM intends to amplify the connection between spirituality and service on our campus.
- Within their roles as Moehlmann Chaplaincy Chair and McCoy Family Distinguished Chair in Lutheran Heritage and Mission, Maggie Falenschek and Caryn Riswold are working to develop a common language set focused on what it means to be a Lutheran college to assist with interviewing and onboarding of new employees and as foundational understanding for our campus community.
- Craig Hella Johnson, a critically acclaimed composer, arranger, educator, and conductor, received the 2023 Graven Award in its 34th year. The annual award for Christian vocation highlights the powerful and positive effect of a strong sense of Christian vocation as it interfaces with service to the community, the church, and the world.

### Recognition

- President Rebecca Ehretsman was the recipient of the 2023 American Association for Hand Surgery Humanitarian Award, which honors special contributions or personal sacrifices for the betterment of humanitarian efforts. Ehretsman has contributed to global medical outreach around the world, including 19 visits to Guatemala and treatment for hundreds of children with congenital limb differences and traumatic injuries.
- Michael McCoy, chair of the Wartburg Board of Regents, received the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Volunteer of the Year Award for his work with the college, which has spanned three decades and includes more than \$7 million in gifts for capital projects, an endowed chair, and numerous other enhancements.
- The Wartburg Medal was presented to Bill Hamm '66, former interim president of the college and Lutheran higher education leader; the Rev. Durwood "Bud" Buchheim '53, a

longtime Lutheran pastor; Hans-Peter Brodhun and the late Günter Schuchardt, retired members of the Board of Regents from Eisenach, Germany; and Tom '68 and Marnie '69 Hubbard, former Wartburg employees. The Wartburg Medal recognizes individuals who have provided significant service to the college over a sustained period and who have a personal commitment to the college's mission, quality, and character.

- Jen Christy Bye '95, a strategic portfolio and program manager for Principal Financial Group, was elected to the Board of Regents.
- Paul Zelle '24 received the Rossing Scholarship in Physics from the ELCA for the second time. Zelle is pursuing a degree in computer science and physics.
- Rabbecca Ndhlovu '24, a Davis United World Scholar from Zambia, received a \$10,000 Projects for Peace grant to carry out a summer humanitarian effort teaching young girls in Lusaka, Zambia, how to make and sanitize reusable menstrual pads.
- Maeve Dunne '23 was selected by the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board for a Fulbright award to Taiwan through the program's English Teaching Assistant Program.
- Andrew Buchheim '23 received the prestigious R.J. McElroy Graduate Fellowship, designed to encourage persons of accomplishment, intelligence, integrity, and leadership ability to pursue challenging academic careers.
- Dr. Duane Koenig '53 received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters at May Commencement for his distinguished career in family medicine and general surgery and medical mission work in Tanzania.

Wartburg continues to deliver on a vibrant mission that transforms the entire college community as together we learn, serve, and demonstrate care for each other. Thank you for your prayerful support of our efforts to strengthen Lutheran higher education and our community of learning.

**Dr. Rebecca Ehretsman, President**

## Wartburg Theological Seminary - Dubuque, Iowa

Dear Partners in the Northern Illinois Synod,



Greetings from your siblings in Christ at Wartburg Theological Seminary, in Dubuque, Iowa. I am pleased to have the opportunity to share with you some of the ways the Holy Spirit is at work in and through your seminary.

First, we are delighted to announce the successful completion of Lead Boldly!, our comprehensive capital campaign. We exceeded our goal of \$28 million, which included enthusiastic support for student scholarships, one of our highest priorities. As a part of this ambitious campaign, we also are very pleased to announce the completion of an extensive remodel of our primary educational and office building, Fritschel Hall. This project came in under budget and on time, thanks to the excellent work of our staff and our local construction partners. We would love to show you the renovated educational space; please know that you are invited to visit anytime!

Second, I want to share with you a new emphasis that Wartburg is placing on TEEM and Certificate Programs, exemplified by the new director of these programs, Pastor Carrie Greenquist-Petersen. I invited Pastor Carrie to share some thoughts with you about this program:

Over the past nine months it has been my privilege and pleasure to help Wartburg welcome and serve TEEM candidates for rostered ministry, lay leaders, synods and partners. I have gotten to know the students through admissions, candidacy processes, contextual education, classes/modules and endeavored to nurture an identity of quality and worth in Wartburg's TEEM and Certificate students. Clear and timely communication can make the difference between feeling forgotten and feeling immensely valued. This is why being available to all partners to hear and address any question or concern is my top priority. It is a true joy to accompany each student along their path of discernment for leadership in Christ's church.

Third, Wartburg Seminary is announcing the launch of a Congregational Accompaniment Project to equip congregations for intercultural competence and to open doors to new mission opportunities with Latine people. This project aims to foster deeper understanding of diversity and to cultivate the development of meaningful relationships that reflect the love of Christ. Upon application, Wartburg staff from the Centro Teológico Luterano Multicultural and the Journey Together program will accompany congregations and their leaders in this process.

Finally, we have a new tagline at Wartburg, which speaks directly to our sense of mission in the current moment in the life of the church: Listen. Wonder. Lead. "At Wartburg Theological Seminary the voices of God and our neighbors call us to listen deeply. In these limestone halls and your local communities, Jesus' love invites us to wonder that transformative power of the Holy Spirit, who inspires our life together. Our graduates lead a changing church with holy curiosity, creativity and joy. In hope, we proclaim God's grace that carries us through death to resurrection life. Listen, wonder, and lead at Wartburg."

We know the church needs leaders, and we are working with you to form them. Please continue to pray for, identify and raise up candidates for public ministry. At Wartburg, they will be equipped to share the good news of Jesus Christ in a world in need of healing and hope.

We give thanks to God for you and for our partnership, through which we participate in God's mission in the world. To learn more about Wartburg Seminary and our strategic, innovative programs, please visit [www.wartburgseminary.edu](http://www.wartburgseminary.edu).

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristin Johnston Lergen".

The Rev. Kristin Johnston Lergen, Ph.D.  
President

# Report of Agencies, Institutions, and Organizations

## diakonia™

Hello I'm Douglas Wood, chairman of the Northern Illinois Synod's diakonia™ Steering Committee. Over the past several months, many of the lessons being preached have pointed out the following to all of us "Have you not seen, Can you not hear, Come and See." This is what these classes can bring to you. A whole new world opens up the Bible and the paths that our Lord wants us to journey on.

If you are looking for answers or to strengthen your faith and move into leadership roles in your congregation as well as the synod's, these courses will help you get a greater insight. If you are contemplating going to seminary, these courses could help you make that decision. We have many rostered ministers serving the Northern Illinois Synod who have been through the program and are serving as instructors for our classes.

Recent enhancements to the curriculum were rolled out in the 2023-24 season of the program. Pastor Kenn Storck and Trenton Ferro, who are on the National diakonia™ Committee, have been instrumental in the development of the new curriculum. On the national level, we are currently working on introducing 6 new classes to the program.

The program is still a 2 year, 12 course, program made up of 6 Faith Formation classes and 6 Foundation classes. Each course is 5 weeks long, meeting for 3 hours one night a week, starting in September and ending in May. Currently all courses are via Zoom.

For the 2023-2024 year, the diakonia™ program was offered 1 night via Zoom, meeting on Thursday nights - Year B Faith Formation. We had on average 8-10 students attending each class. The largest class that we had was Cultural Diversity/Anti-Racism led by Pastor Janet Hunt with 23 students. Many of those students included past diakonia™ graduates as well as a couple of pastors. For the 2024-2025 year we will offer the Year A Foundation Courses. We are hoping to also offer more sites in the Synod and using a combination of Zoom and hybrid. Through the National Committee, we may be able to offer more class options with the other ELCA synods.

At the 2023 at Synod Assembly, a resolution was passed by the attendees recognizing diakonia™ as a stepping stone for those wishing to serve to as Synod Authorized Minister (SAM) or discernment to Seminary and encouraging the program via a diakonia™ Sunday. Pastors are also asked to lift up church leaders to participate. The over-reaching goal is to provide a community of learning and caring for one another as individuals deepen their faith and commitment to Christ. The program offers continuing education for graduates of the program, individuals who are currently serving as SAMs, and past graduates who wish to take new classes or retake to refresh their understanding of a certain course.

Additional special programs included a fall retreat, diakonia™ Sunday, and a free book study program. The fall retreat at LOMC this past October had over 25 in attendance. Our keynote speaker was Assistant to the Bishop Pastor Julie Monnard speaking on biblical story telling. We are gearing up in planning our next retreat in mid-October of this year.

On May 5<sup>th</sup> of this year, we celebrated **diakonia**<sup>TM</sup> Sunday. We made available to all congregations resources for that Sunday. We also asked that each congregation include their **diakonia**<sup>TM</sup> student or graduate in the service. Each congregation was encouraged to receive a freewill offering in support of **diakonia**<sup>TM</sup>. The Committee asked that the offering go to support one or more members, who cannot attend for financial reasons, to participate in the program.

The book study program will be offered again this year on July 11, 18, 25 “The World Is About To Turn: Mending A Nation’s Broken Faith” by Rick Rouse & Paul O. Ingram. This 3-night session will be led by Pastor Kenn Storck and will be offered at no cost apart from the book via Zoom.

You are invited to get more information at the Ministry Fair during Assembly. At last year’s Assembly, we had a drawing for a free **diakonia**<sup>TM</sup> class. We again will be having a drawing for a free class in the Year A Foundation.

If you are a graduate and feel called to serve and assist in the development of the program, please reach out. We are also looking for a pastor and a lay person to fill vacancies on the Steering Committee.

If you have doubts, what better way to find out answers to questions that you have on the Bible and your faith.

**diakonia**<sup>TM</sup> Steering Committee:

Nancy Lillivold	Barbara Stark	Pastor Robert Stark	Trenton Ferro
Pastor Kenn Storck	Pastor Denise Rode	Donna Kelly	Carol Swenson
Jon Petersen	Pastor Julie Monnard		Douglas Wood

Respectfully Submitted,  
Douglas Wood  
**diakonia**<sup>TM</sup> Steering Committee Chairman  
Rockford Site Manager/Zoom Coordinator  
**diakonia**<sup>TM</sup> National Committee  
301 School Street  
Kings, Illinois 61068-4558  
815-742-3901

## **ELCA Foundation**

The ELCA Foundation submitted a full color report for the 2024 Assembly. To view their report please visit [www.nisynod.org/assembly](http://www.nisynod.org/assembly) or by [clicking here](#).

## **Jenny Lind Chapel**

The story of the Jenny Lind Chapel and the hardships of early Swedish settlers in Andover from the 1850’s are well known. Today, the Chapel serves as a historical monument, museum, and

church for selected services throughout the year. The Chapel is open every day from 9am to 5pm, April through October. Please visit the Chapel website at [JennyLindChapel.org](http://JennyLindChapel.org) for latest events.

During the past year, the Chapel hosted the following special events in chronological order...

### **Annual Founders Day Service – Sunday, April 30, 2023**

Pastor Michel Clark spoke at this service celebrating the 163rd anniversary of both the Augustana Lutheran Church in America and Augustana College and Theological Seminary, and the 173rd anniversary of the Augustana Lutheran congregation in Andover. Due to the event size, the service was held in Augustana Lutheran Church in Andover.

### **Birdies for Charity**

The Jenny Lind Chapel annually participates in the John Deere Classic Golf Tournament Birdies for Charity pledge program to provide funds for the Chapel ministry.

### **Special Musical Concert - Sunday, June 4, 2023**

Wild Columbine, a Springfield area quartet, performed at the Jenny Lind Chapel. The group played music from the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, including "*Jenny Lind Medley*." The concert included the stories behind the songs.

### **Summer Vespers**

Brief 7:00 pm Sunday evening worship services were held at the Chapel on the last Sunday of each summer month. Last year's services...

**June 25, 2023** - Pastor Laurie Hensley of **Bethany Lutheran Church, Woodhull** presiding

**July 30, 2023** – Interim Pastor Randall Swanson of **Augustana Lutheran Church, Andover** presiding

**August 27, 2023** - Pastor Laurie Hensley of **Bethany Lutheran Church, Woodhull** presiding

### **Annual Swedish Högmässa Service - Sunday, September 24, 2023**

Rev. Wayne Miller, retired Bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America spoke at the service. The liturgy (in Swedish) was led by Mark Safstrom, Ph.D, Associate Professor of Scandinavian Studies at Augustana College.



### **Annual Andover Christmas Walk - Sunday, December 3, 2023**

Special Christmas music at the candlelit Jenny Lind Chapel was provided as part of the Village of Andover celebration.

### **Annual Joy of Christmas with Augustana College - Wednesday, December 6, 2023**



Students and faculty from Augustana College conducted a beautiful service of worship and music featuring speaker Dr. Alex Jones, Professional Faculty Instructor and Clinical Supervisor, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Augustana College. Service started at Augustana Lutheran Church in Andover where the Christmas story was read in several different languages. Following, the service concluded with a procession to the candle-lit Jenny Lind Chapel where

Holy Communion was celebrated to the strains of familiar Christmas carols.

### **Community Candlelight Christmas Eve Service - Sunday, December 24, 2023**

Traditional Christmas Service conducted at the Chapel beginning at 11pm, and concluding at the start of Christmas day.

Plans are underway for 2024 Events starting with the **Annual Founders Day Service** on Sunday, April 28, 2024 with Bishop Stacie Fidlar scheduled to speak.

### **Jenny Lind Board Members...**

Gordon Rehn, Acting Dean; Ron Peterson, David Renneke, Dr. Randy Mullin, Pr. Michel Clark, Pr. Randy Swanson, Debra Lawyer, Carol Brockhouse, Helene Leaf, John Peterson, and John Norton.

Changes to the board in 2023: Greg Johnson's term expired; Pr. Reed Pedersen accepted a call to Denver, Iowa; and Ron Peterson stepped down after years of faithfully serving as Acting Dean of the Jenny Lind chapel, but continues as a valued board member.

### **Jenny Lind Support Staff**

Jody Nimrick – Custodian

Tim Larson – Museum Curator & Building Maintenance

Kevin Clark – Groundskeeper

Jenny Lind Chapel  
604 Oak Street  
Andover, IL 61233

## **Global Refuge (Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service)**



Dear Partners in Ministry,

Grace and peace to you this synod assembly season. As you may know, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has embraced a new name: Global Refuge. Grounded in Psalm 46:1, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble,” we hope to enter our next 85 years with openness, building a bigger table to meet a growing need. Global Refuge was forged in faith. Our Lutheran heritage has always shaped our work of welcome and will continue to do so in years to come.

With the support of partners and Lutheran communities like yours, in 2023 we were able to...

- Help 17,000+ children reunify with their families or find loving foster homes
- Welcome 11,200+ refugees from countries across the world
- Assist 11,700+ people seeking safety from Central America and beyond

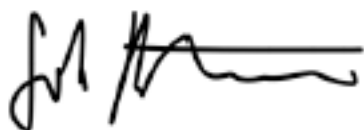


In a political season rife with anti-immigrant rhetoric and messages that villainize newcomers, we have a unique opportunity to change this narrative and refocus on all the gifts newcomers bring to community. We invite you to join us in this work!

- Share about Global Refuge in your church or invite our team to join you.
- Include Global Refuge bulletin inserts about our work in your bulletin.
- Start a Circle of Welcome to support newcomers in your community.
- Pack Fresh Change bags, a partnership with Border Servant Corps, to welcome our neighbors at the border with care and dignity.
- Sign up for our monthly e-newsletters for faith leaders and explore a webpage specifically for congregations which has the latest faith community resources.

Thank you for your continued support. The many ways Lutheran communities embody Jesus' ministry through the work of welcome is truly inspiring.

Go in peace. Welcome the stranger.



Deacon Sarah Kretschmann | Congregational Engagement Specialist [outreach@globalrefuge.org](mailto:outreach@globalrefuge.org)

## **Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center - Oregon, Illinois**

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center submitted a full color report for the 2024 Assembly. To view their report please visit [www.nisynod.org/assembly](http://www.nisynod.org/assembly) or by [clicking here](#).

## **Lutheran Social Services of Illinois**

Dear Valued Partners in Ministry:



Last year, LSSI served 50,291 children, adults, families, and seniors in our state—one out of every 252 people. We provide whole-person care and embrace a generative model of human services that does more than just address challenges: we look at the broader scope of a person's life. Responding to the Gospel, we bring healing, justice, and wholeness to people and communities.

Your support and that of your congregations and members remains critical to our ability to serve our neighbors in Illinois through our residential programs for people with developmental disabilities, programs that help individuals and families impacted by incarceration, traditional and therapeutic foster care, mental health services, alcohol and drug treatment, affordable senior housing, and more.

I'm pleased to share some program highlights from this past year:

- Project LEAD (Leaders Encouraging Abstinence from Drugs) and Youth WORKS (Wellness, Opportunity, and Resources for Key Services) work in 26 elementary, middle, and high schools in Carroll, Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside counties. Project LEAD teaches an

evidence-based substance use prevention curriculum to prevent and reduce the negative impacts of drug and alcohol use. Youth WORKS is a violence prevention program that raises awareness and educates young people, parents, and other invested community members about effective ways to prevent and reduce violence among youth.

- For adults 62+ and people over age 18 with disabilities, LSSI provides affordable housing at 20 housing sites throughout Illinois, including Crystal Lake, Dekalb, Freeport, Joliet, Rochelle, and Rockford. A Social Service Coordinator is available at every site to assist residents. Last year in Illinois, LSSI provided affordable housing for 1,447 residents with an annual income between \$5,000 and \$25,000.
- As the largest provider of foster care services in Illinois, the primary goal of LSSI's Foster Care Program is to help children find their forever home, either by reunification with birth families whenever possible or through adoption or guardianship. Last year, LSSI served 2,607 children statewide through foster care placements across 12 offices in 42 counties.

We express our gratitude to Bishop Stacie Fidler for her leadership of the Northern Illinois Synod, as well as her service on the LSSI Board of Directors.

We are grateful to the trustees of LSSI's Cornerstone Foundation representing the Northern Illinois Synod service area this past year: Pr. Michel Clark, Chair; and Susan Bernardi. LSSI appreciates the generosity of our friends in the Northern Illinois Synod who share in our ministry as we serve our neighbors and follow in Christ's footsteps.

In faith,



Mark A. Stutrud  
President and Chief Executive Officer

### **Lutherdale - Elkhorn, Wisconsin**

Lutherdale submitted a full color report for the 2024 Assembly. To view their report please visit [www.nisynod.org/assembly](http://www.nisynod.org/assembly) or by [clicking here](#).

## Mission Investment Fund



Mission Investment Fund

**The Mission Investment Fund**, a financial services ministry of the ELCA, provides a strong, stable, faith-based way for individuals, congregations and ministries to achieve their financial goals. MIF offers a range of investments for individuals, congregations and ministries. We put those investments to work to fund building and renovation loans for congregations and partner ministries, including outdoor camps, senior housing and social service agencies.



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

### Why is MIF the right choice?

- **MIF has demonstrated expertise in church and ministry financing.** With longstanding experience in congregation and ministry building projects, we're unique among lending institutions.
- **We consistently offer competitive rates and terms.**
- **We offer a full suite of financial services.** MIF offers congregations, ministries and individuals a host of investment options. We work in deep partnership with the ELCA Federal Credit Union to offer a wide range of financial products and services.
- **The faithful stewardship of Lutheran congregations and their members funds our loans.** The money invested in MIF finances hundreds of capital projects across the church.

**MIF has a longstanding tradition of strength and stability.** At year-end 2023, MIF had 811 loans outstanding, totaling \$578.3 million. Investment obligations totaled \$547.7 million. With total assets of \$774.4 million and net assets of \$208.2 million at year-end 2023, MIF maintains a capital ratio of 26.88 percent—positioning MIF in the top tier of well-capitalized church extension funds.

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

### MIF at work in the Northern Illinois Synod (as of December 31, 2023):

- 17 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of \$9,815,394
- \$10,051,314 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 your Regional Manager the Rev. Kent Peterson: 276-698-7970 [kent.peterson@elca.org](mailto:kent.peterson@elca.org)

## Mosaic



Dear Friends in the Northern Illinois Synod, where Mosaic provides services in the Rockford community.

Last year, while taking down a building on our founding campus that was well past its useful era, we found a time capsule from around 70 years ago. One of the items in the capsule was a copy of The Small Catechism of Martin Luther. Many of you probably remember spending time with that catechism as a child—I know I do.

Finding the catechism in the cornerstone time capsule wasn't a big surprise, because since its founding 111 years ago, Mosaic has been affiliated with the Lutheran Church. The values handed down through faith of welcoming the stranger, embracing the poor, acting with compassion and integrity and serving those in need have shaped Mosaic into what it is today.

Mosaic is never shy about sharing that we are a faith-based, ELCA-affiliated organization. As your ministry, everything we do is about empowering people to live the full life God intended for them. In your name, we reach nearly 4,500 people with life-enriching supports.

What does that look like?

- Brenda moved from foster home to foster home (13 in all) until she aged out of the system and had to live on her own without knowing how to care for herself. After years of declining health and hygiene, she came to Mosaic and has transformed from being anxious and scared of life to embracing life and looking forward to what's coming next.
- Alexis came to Mosaic from another service provider whose staff said she was so difficult that we'd be sorry if we brought her in. Through Mosaic staffs' patience and kindness, we learned that all Alexis wanted was to feel loved and safe. We provided both—and more. Today, she is happy and singing through much of her day.
- Siblings Nate and Riri had lived together all of their lives until family could no longer care for them, and they were split up. Mosaic found the right shared living (host home) provider who wanted them reunited in her home, and said, "I see them being a presence in my life forever. I can honestly say, 'I love them.'"

Those are just three examples, but there are hundreds of similar stories across our network of services. It's how we live out our mission statement: *“Embracing God’s call, Mosaic relentlessly pursues opportunities that empower people.”*

We also have an opportunity that can empower your congregation in new ways. Our Rejoicing Spirits program creates welcoming worship opportunities for people with diverse needs. You can learn about it at [rejoicingspirits.org](http://rejoicingspirits.org). We’ve had congregations tell us it brought a renewed sense of mission to their work.

Thank you for being a partner in our mission to love and serve others. I’m thankful our organization was founded in faith and thankful we continue to be a serving arm of the Church.



*God bless you all.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Timmons".

Linda Timmons, President and CEO, Mosaic

## Portico

Portico submitted a full color report for the 2024 Assembly. To view their report please visit [www.nisynod.org/assembly](http://www.nisynod.org/assembly) or by [clicking here](#).

## Region 5, ELCA



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America

Thank you for taking the time to learn about the ministry of Region 5 as you prepare for and engage in the business of your synod assembly. This synod joins with eleven other synods in Wisconsin, Upper Michigan, Iowa, and Illinois to form Region 5: one of the 9 regions across the ELCA. The ministry of region 5 is roughly divided into 3 categories: convening synod ministry leaders; accompaniment of those preparing to become pastors and deacons; and tending to archival records.

As a region, your synod bishop, staff, and other leaders gather with their colleagues throughout the year. These gatherings are a way for them to support and pray with one another; and to share their ideas, experience and expertise with one another to faithfully minister in your synod. The twelve bishops, along with the regional candidacy manager, make up a regional steering committee. Their collegiality is important in establishing great working partnerships for years to come.

The Region 5 steering committee affirmed in 2023 to work together to provide a 3 year cycle of professional ethics education-aka Boundaries Education. This 3 year cycle will begin in 2024 with a basic professional boundaries education event for rostered ministers and synod authorized lay leaders. Subsequent years in the 3 year cycle will focus on racial justice and gender justice. Region 5 continues to gather bishops and staff in the region on an annual basis for shared

support, learning, worship and fellowship. In 2023, we gathered at the ELCA churchwide offices and met with the ELCA Future Directions vision team as well as other ELCA leaders.

As candidacy and leadership manager for region 5, most of my time is spent working alongside synod candidacy committees. “Candidacy” is the term used to describe our process of forming and preparing people to serve as a pastor or deacon in the ELCA. Ministry also includes training for new candidacy staff and volunteer committee members in your synod. ELCA candidacy itself is in a period of review and renewal, to align our process with what the church needs of ministry leaders today. You can find out more information at [www.elca.org/formation](http://www.elca.org/formation).

As members of the ELCA we believe that discernment about vocation is holy work for all people. God calls all of us to live out our vocation in community, in service to God and in love toward the neighbor. An online tool, [www.journi.faith](http://www.journi.faith) is for all who are interested in exploring how their gifts for ministry can be put into service throughout the ecology of the ELCA and beyond. I also welcome and encourage your prayers and invitation to those you know who have gifts for rostered ministry. You can learn more about this at [www.elca.org/Our-Work/Leadership](http://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Leadership).

As a region, we also share in the care of archival records. Region 5 archives are housed at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. Our archivist, Sue Dodd, collects records of and responds to inquiries concerning synods, deceased rostered personnel, and dissolved congregations within region 5. This work both preserves institutional records and documents the historical record of the institution within the context of the larger world. As congregations in the region make decisions to close, Sue is a resource to you in determining what records to save and how to transfer them to the archives.

Thank you for your synod’s participation in this shared ministry and for the privilege to serve among you.

Rev. Ramie L. Bakken, Candidacy and Leadership Manager [ramie.bakken@elca.org](mailto:ramie.bakken@elca.org)  
Sue Dodd, Region 5 Archivist [sdodd@wartburgseminary.edu](mailto:sdodd@wartburgseminary.edu)

In partnership with the Synods of  
Metropolitan Chicago ~ Northern Illinois ~ Central/Southern Illinois ~ Southeastern Iowa ~  
Western Iowa ~ Northeastern Iowa ~ Northern Great Lakes ~ Northwest Wisconsin ~  
East-Central Wisconsin ~ Greater Milwaukee ~ South-Central Wisconsin ~ La Crosse Area

