



Building Learning Growing



South-Central Synod of Wisconsin Synod Assembly 2024

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Welcome Letter from Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe

John 16:13. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

Welcome to First Lutheran church and welcome to Janesville, Wisconsin. We are grateful to Rev. Michael Mueller, the staff, and members of the congregation for welcoming us back to your congregation, this time for a synod assembly. We are grateful for the many, many volunteers who have made this assembly possible. We are especially thankful for the synod assembly planning team led by our assembly manager Mr. Trevor Thom.

I am excited to welcome The Rev. Dr. Lorenzo Lebrija to our assembly. The Rev. Dr. Lebrija is the Executive Director of TryTank Research Institute which focuses on advancing theological research to meet the evolving needs of the modern world. The Rev. Dr. Lebrija will be our keynote and challenge us as we engage our theme: "Building, Learning, Growing."

We also welcome Ms. Rachel Wind, Executive for Development with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as our churchwide representative this year. Ms. Wind will share remarks on behalf of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and offer updates and perspectives on our work as church together.

I am excited to see you all together again. We are the church together. I look forward to sharing time together for worship, fellowship, learning, electing, and discussing.

In John chapter 15 we are reminded of the promised Holy Spirit being sent for us. The Holy Spirit comes to accompany us and to teach us all that we need to know. May this Assembly be an opportunity for great building, learning, and growing together with the Holy Spirit.

Welcome to the 2024 Assembly! Building, Learning, Growing!

Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe

Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe

Welcome Letter from Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe (Español)

Juan 16:13. Cuando venga el Espíritu de verdad, él os guiará a toda la verdad; porque él no hablará por sí solo, sino que hablará todo lo que oiga, y os anunciará las cosas que han de venir.

Bienvenidos a la Primera Iglesia Luterana y bienvenidos a Janesville, Wisconsin. Agradecemos al Reverendo Michael Mueller, al personal y a los miembros de la congregación por darnos la bienvenida nuevamente a su congregación, esta vez para una asamblea sinodal. Estamos agradecidos por los muchísimos voluntarios que han hecho posible esta asamblea. Estamos especialmente agradecidos por el equipo de planificación de la asamblea sinodal dirigido por nuestro director de asamblea, el Sr. Trevor Thom.

Estoy emocionado de darle la bienvenida al Rev. Dr. Lorenzo Lebrija a nuestra asamblea. El Rev. Dr. Lebrija es el Director Ejecutivo del Instituto de Investigación TryTank, que se enfoca en promover la investigación teológica para satisfacer las necesidades cambiantes del mundo moderno. El Rev. Dr. Lebrija será nuestro discurso de apertura y nos desafiará a medida que abordamos nuestro tema: "Construir, aprender, crecer".

También damos la bienvenida a la Sra. Rachel Wind, Ejecutiva de Desarrollo de la Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en Estados Unidos, como nuestra representante de toda la iglesia este año. La Sra. Wind compartirá comentarios en nombre de la Obispa Presidenta Elizabeth Eaton y ofrecerá actualizaciones y perspectivas sobre nuestro trabajo conjunto como iglesia.

Estoy emocionado de verlos a todos juntos de nuevo. Somos la iglesia juntos. Espero compartir tiempo juntos para adorar, tener compañerismo, aprender, elegir y discutir.

En Juan capítulo 15 se nos recuerda que el Espíritu Santo prometido fue enviado para nosotros. El Espíritu Santo viene a acompañarnos y a enseñarnos todo lo que necesitamos saber. Que esta Asamblea sea una oportunidad para una gran edificación, aprendizaje y crecimiento junto con el Espíritu Santo.

¡Bienvenidos a la Asamblea de 2024! ¡Construyendo, aprendiendo, creciendo!

Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe

Obispa Joy Mortensen-Wiebe





April 8, 2024

“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

8 de abril de 2024

“Y nosotros hemos llegado a saber y creer que Dios nos ama. Dios es amor. El que permanece en amor, en Dios permanece y Dios en él” (1 Juan 4:16).

Estimados(as) amigos(as) en Cristo:

Gracias por su fiel y continua colaboración en tanto que trabajamos juntos para ayudar a la gente a descubrir la diferencia que la gracia y el amor de Dios en Cristo hacen en todas las personas y la creación.

Debido a que la gracia y el amor de Dios han marcado la diferencia en nuestra vida diaria, queremos que otros experimenten ese mismo amor y aceptación. Hay muchos que se sienten solos en nuestras comunidades y andan buscando amor y conexión. A veces nos es difícil saber cómo marcar la diferencia: ¿qué decimos, ¿qué podemos hacer?, ¿cómo compartimos el amor de Dios?

Ustedes comparten este amor todos los días. Cuando invitan a otros a unirse a su comunidad de fe, a adorar, a participar en actividades de servicio, a orar juntos, a compartir la historia de ellos –todas estas son maneras en que nuestro prójimo experimenta el amor de Dios en comunidad.

Hay ejemplos del amor de Dios en toda nuestra iglesia cuando luchamos por sanidad, paz y justicia para marcar la diferencia en las vidas de quienes nos rodean.

El Espíritu nos está llamando a movernos juntos como una sola iglesia para compartir la gracia y el amor que experimentamos todos los días. Que Dios bendiga el tiempo que pasarán juntos.



En Cristo,
La Rvda. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Obispa Presidente
Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en América

Introduction to the Synod Assembly

Responsibilities of the Synod Assembly

This synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall be its highest legislative authority. The powers of the Synod Assembly are limited only by the provisions in the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, the assembly's own resolutions, and the constitutions and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Assembly vocabulary is Intentional

It is important to note and remember that no *delegates* will be present for this assembly. Voting members are not delegates, as that term is understood or used in some political contexts. The voting members, elected by congregations to serve in the Synod Assembly, come together as representatives not only of their own congregations and synods but also serve on behalf of all the people of the ELCA. These words both recognize certain legal requirements and also reflect an ecclesial (that is, churchly) understanding, an understanding grounded in Scripture, reflected in the Lutheran confessional writings, and established as part of this church's polity upon the formation of the ELCA. Within the ELCA, there are three primary expressions of this church, congregations, synods and the churchwide organization. Each one is fully the church, but none is the whole church. They exist and serve within this one church.

In the case of the Synod Assembly, voting members carry out their duties on behalf of all members of the congregation that elected them. Nourished by word and sacrament, they are called into assembly to seek the well-being of this whole church. As stated in ELCA bylaw 19.21.05.: "All persons elected to any position . . . shall strive to represent this church and not just a particular geographic area."

Voting members carry a heavy responsibility. They must study conscientiously the issues on the agenda of the assembly; listen thoughtfully to the debate throughout plenary sessions; examine carefully possible amendments to proposals; consider with insight resolutions or new business submitted by voting members; elect with care capable people to serve on Synod Council, boards and committees; seek prayerfully the guidance of God's Spirit in all matters; and act in all things for the sake of the unity and well-being of this synod and the whole Church.

The vocabulary that we use within the ELCA both *shapes* and *reflects* our understanding of this church. When we recognize and understand that our "congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations" (ELCA constitutional

provision 3.03.), then our awareness of the significance of being voting members in a given assembly grows. After all, as we declare in regard to the “Nature of the Church,” the ELCA “derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful” (also ELCA constitutional provision 3.03.). We need to understand more clearly and embrace more completely the conviction that the ELCA “shall seek to function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, all of which shall be interdependent. Each part, while fully the church, recognizes that it is not the whole church and therefore lives in a partnership relationship with the others” (ELCA 8.11.). Our challenge is to appreciate and practice interdependence!

Assembly procedures

The Rules of Organization and Procedure cite the applicable constitutional provisions, bylaws and continuing resolutions that relate to the work of the assembly. In addition, various rules intended to facilitate the work of the voting members in assembly are provided. The rules provide a primer for the tasks ahead, as well as specific guidance on how voting members together shall proceed. One of the first actions the assembly will take in plenary session is adoption of its Rules of Organization and Procedure.

Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly unless otherwise ordered by the assembly.

Voting and debate procedures

Multiple microphones will be available for those who wish to speak in favor of a proposal and those who oppose a proposal. If you are speaking in favor, you bring your green card that is in your welcome info, opposed bring and hold up your red card. This arrangement contributes to balanced debate.

2024 Assembly Committees

Under the governing documents of the ELCA, certain committees are charged with responsibilities in relation to the Synod Assembly.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee must nominate at least one person for each position, other than for officers, to be elected by the assembly. Nominations from the floor can be made for some positions.

- Chair: Cindy Wuttke (Christ, Sharon)
- Rev. Kalen Barkholtz (Christ, Sharon)
- Brian Johnsrud (Castle Rock, Fennimore)
- Todd Long (Bethlehem, Brodhead)
- Rev. Ken Schaub (Bethel, Madison)

Reference and Counsel Committee

The Reference and Counsel Committee is charged with reviewing and evaluating resolutions submitted by voting members. The committee then brings recommendations and advice to the assembly for possible action.

- Chair: Gus Knitt (Lakeview, Madison)
- Rev. Dennis Cresswell (St. Stephen's, Monona)
- Ross Larson (Good Shepherd, Madison & Verona)
- Rev. Joy Mortensen-Wiebe, Bishop (Lakeview, Madison)
- Rev. Jasmine Tesdahl (Lutheran Church of Peace, Platteville)
- Trevor Thom, Synod Assembly Manager (Immanuel Evangelical, Watertown)

Credentials Committee

The Credentials Committee oversees registration of voting members and reports periodically regarding the composition of the assembly.

Synod Assembly Planning Committee:

The Synod Assembly Planning Committee assists the officers of this church in planning the assembly's agenda, program, worship, and arrangements. The planning committee are here to help you if you have any questions.

- Chair: Trevor Thom, Synod Assembly Manager (Immanuel Evangelical, Watertown)
- Rev. Gus Barnes (Peace, Belmont & Faith, Cuba City)
- Rev. Jen Christenson, Associate to the Bishop for Candidacy & Community
- Tricia Clason, Executive Assistant for Synod Administration (New Heights, Mazomanie)
- Rev. Heather Hayward (St. Matthew's New Life, Madison)
- Rev. Julie Krahn (St. Luke's, Middleton)
- Marie Leafblad, Associate to the Bishop for Leadership Support
- Rev. Kathi Matthews-Risley (St. John-St. Paul, Mazomanie)
- Rev. Joy Mortensen-Wiebe, Bishop (Lakeview, Madison)

Assembly Overview Schedule

This schedule is subject to change.

8:00 A.M.	Registration Opens
9:00 A.M.	Gathering Music
9:15 A.M.	Worship
10:15 A.M.	Break
10:40 A.M.	Keynote
12:00 P.M.	Lunch
1:00 P.M.	Opening of the Assembly Business Session 1
2:30 P.M.	Break
2:45 P.M.	Business Session 2
3:30 P.M.	Keynote Sending
4:15 P.M.	Closing of the Assembly

General Information and FAQs

Is there an offering and are attendees encouraged to bring a donation?

Yes! This year we are collecting Lakeview Lutheran Church Food Pantry. See the *In-Kind Offering* section on page 17 for more information.

When should I arrive?

For all attendees, including voting members, visitors and displayers, event registration begins at 8:00 A.M and end around 9:00 A.M. Please give yourself enough time to register and make your way to the Sanctuary for worship.

Will there be display tables?

Yes! Be sure to visit the Ministry Teams and other partners at display tables. These partners are eager to share information and stories about their work.

Are we worshipping during the Assembly?

Yes! The Assembly will open with worship at 9:15 A.M. Worship is open to visitors as well as voting members. Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe will preach and preside at this Service of Holy Communion. If you are attending with children, they are welcome to join you for worship.

What do I need to know about childcare?

Childcare is not available this year.

What food and beverages can I expect?

Each attendee will receive a boxed lunch with a sandwich, chips, and a dessert. We will also have water, coffee/tea, and other snacks at hospitality tables around the church. You are encouraged to bring a refillable water bottle and are welcome to bring other snacks if you'd like.

Am I able to distribute materials during Assembly?

Once the business portion of the Assembly is in session, permission to distribute materials must be secured from the Executive Committee.

Can I bring my cell phone, laptop, or other wireless devices?

Yes, you may, but cell phones, laptops, and other wireless devices must be on silent mode in the Sanctuary. Calls are not allowed in Sanctuary; please take calls elsewhere in the church.

Once the Assembly begins, am I able to sit wherever I'd like?

In the morning during worship and the keynote address, you may sit wherever you'd like in the Sanctuary. After lunch once the Assembly is opened, there will be a

section for guests and section for voting members. Guests must sit in the designated guest section which will be clearly marked.

How should I speak/participate in the Assembly?

Speaking to the Assembly is only for voting members and those given voice by the assembly rules or the chair. All speaking to the Assembly must be done at a microphone. Microphones will be in the aisles of the Sanctuary. Please speak only when you are recognized. Begin by giving your name and congregation.

Will Assembly be live streamed?

No, the Assembly will not be live streamed this year.

About our Keynote

The Rev. Dr. Lorenzo Lebrija internationally noted as an expert in the innovation field, is the chief innovation officer of Virginia Theological Seminary and the executive director of TryTank Research Institute, which focuses on advancing theological research to meet the evolving needs of the church in the modern world.



Before launching TryTank, Fr. Lorenzo was the Chief Development Officer for the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles. He also served as the Pastor on behalf of the Bishop at St. John's Episcopal Church in San Bernardino, CA, and as priest associate at St. Athanasius Episcopal Church at the Cathedral Center of St. Paul in Los Angeles. He studied at the General Theological Seminary in New York City and earned his Master of Divinity degree. He is also currently finishing the doctoral program at Virginia Theological Seminary.

Before entering seminary, Fr. Lorenzo was president and CEO of Seraphic Fire & Firebird Chamber Orchestra, Miami's professional choral and orchestral ensemble. He was also the Miami Program Director for the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation responsible for a substantial grant portfolio and the launch of the Knight Arts Challenge. Having been General Manager for RadioActiva Hispanic Radio and Editor/Director of Operations for Miami's Community Newspapers, Fr. Lorenzo has vast media and marketing experience.

Beyond the MDiv degree, he also has an MBA and a B.A. from Florida International University, has completed the full training at the Fundraising School at Indiana University, is a Certified Foresight Practitioner from the Institute for the Future in Palo Alto, CA, has a certificate in Design Thinking from IDEO in Palo Alto, CA, and is a graduate of Rice University's Executive Education Program.

About our Churchwide Representative - Rachel Wind

Rachel Wind serves as the Executive for Development for the ELCA Churchwide Organization. In this role, she stewards the incredible generosity that members of this church share in support of the work of the denomination. Through Mission Support sharing, congregational special projects, direct individual giving, and planned giving, members of this church are incredibly generous in their support of the work we do as church together – programs like ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, Missionary Sponsorship, and much more.

Rachel has been fulfilling her vocational calling to work at the intersection of faith and money for the entirety of her career, exploring that passion in secular and faith-based nonprofits alike. An alumna of St. Olaf College and the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Rachel resides in the suburbs of Chicago with her husband, two children, and a very anxious dog named Pancake.



In-Kind Donation Information

The South-Central Synod of Wisconsin office is now up and running at Lakeview Lutheran Church and we couldn't be more excited. In support of our new partnership, this year's in-kind donation will benefit Lakeview's food pantry.

Please bring an item from the list below to the Assembly:

Canned soup/chili/stew
Canned fruit
Canned vegetables
Canned tuna fish or chicken
Peanut butter
Spaghetti or egg noodles
Spaghetti sauce
Shampoo
Dish soap
Laundry detergent
Diapers



Thank you for your generosity!



Vision Statement of the ELCA

A world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.

Values of the ELCA

Our values are grounded in faith, in our biblical and Lutheran confessional sources and our love of God and neighbor. They speak to the way this church lives and practices our faith, and they will guide how we journey forward in Christ as church together.

Forgiveness and reconciliation – We are reconciled to God by God's forgiving mercy. Forgiveness and reconciliation flow from what God has made us to be in Jesus Christ and what God is doing with us in the world. As a people of God, we embody forgiveness in speech, action and relationships, and our ministry in reconciliation is foundational.

Dignity, compassion and justice – Each person is created in God's image. We respect this God-given right to dignity and, inspired by the life of Jesus, show love and compassion for all people. Through proclamation of the gospel, through worship and as servants of God working for healing and justice in the world, we uphold and seek to protect the dignity and human rights of all people.

Inclusion and diversity – As Christ's church, we value the richness of God's creation and offer a radical welcome to all people, appreciating our common humanity and our differences. We are a church that does not view diversity as a barrier to unity. We recognize and will challenge dynamics of power and privilege that create barriers to participation and equity in this church and society – for women, people of color, minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities, people who are marginalized or living in poverty, and the LGBTQ community.

Courage and openness to change – Because we trust in God's promise and understand faith to be a living, daring confidence in God's grace, we are emboldened to embrace learning and change in our spiritual and institutional journey as church. This means we are open to new ways and willing to take risks to discover God's plan for this church.

Faithful stewardship of God's creation and gifts – As church together, faithful stewardship is about holding to God's purpose and ensuring the responsibilities and resources that God has entrusted to us are used with great care and with accountability to God, to each other and those served by this church.



Mission Statement of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin

We care for, connect, and equip our congregations to be the heart and hands of Jesus.

Vision Statement of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin

We **Care** for the people of this church to grow together in the love of Christ.

We **Connect** the people of this church to be the church together in the world.

We **Equip** the people of this church to live out the gospel together for the sake of the world.

2024 Synod Council Roster

*Designates member of Executive Committee

^Designates Youth Councilmember

Bishop

***Rev. Joy Mortensen-Wiebe**

Mary Nervig

St. Stephen's, Monona

Rev. Tim Hansen

Our Savior's, Sun Prairie

Vice President

***Kevin Oppermann**

St. John's, Oregon

***Cindy Wuttke**

Christ Evangelical, Sharon

^Claire Johnson

St John's, Oregon

Secretary

***Rev. Wendy Moen**

Covenant, Stoughton

***Todd Long**

Bethlehem, Brodhead

Ross Larson

Good Shepherd, Madison

Treasurer

***Rev. Naomi Garber**

McFarland, McFarland

Derek Blume

St. John's, Evansville

Rev. Sally Williams

St. John's, Prairie du Sac

Sandra Ballesteros

San Jose, Beloit

Rev. Jack Way

Redeemer, Rio

Donna Peterson

Women of the ELCA

Juan Carlos Cabrera

Santa Maria, Madison

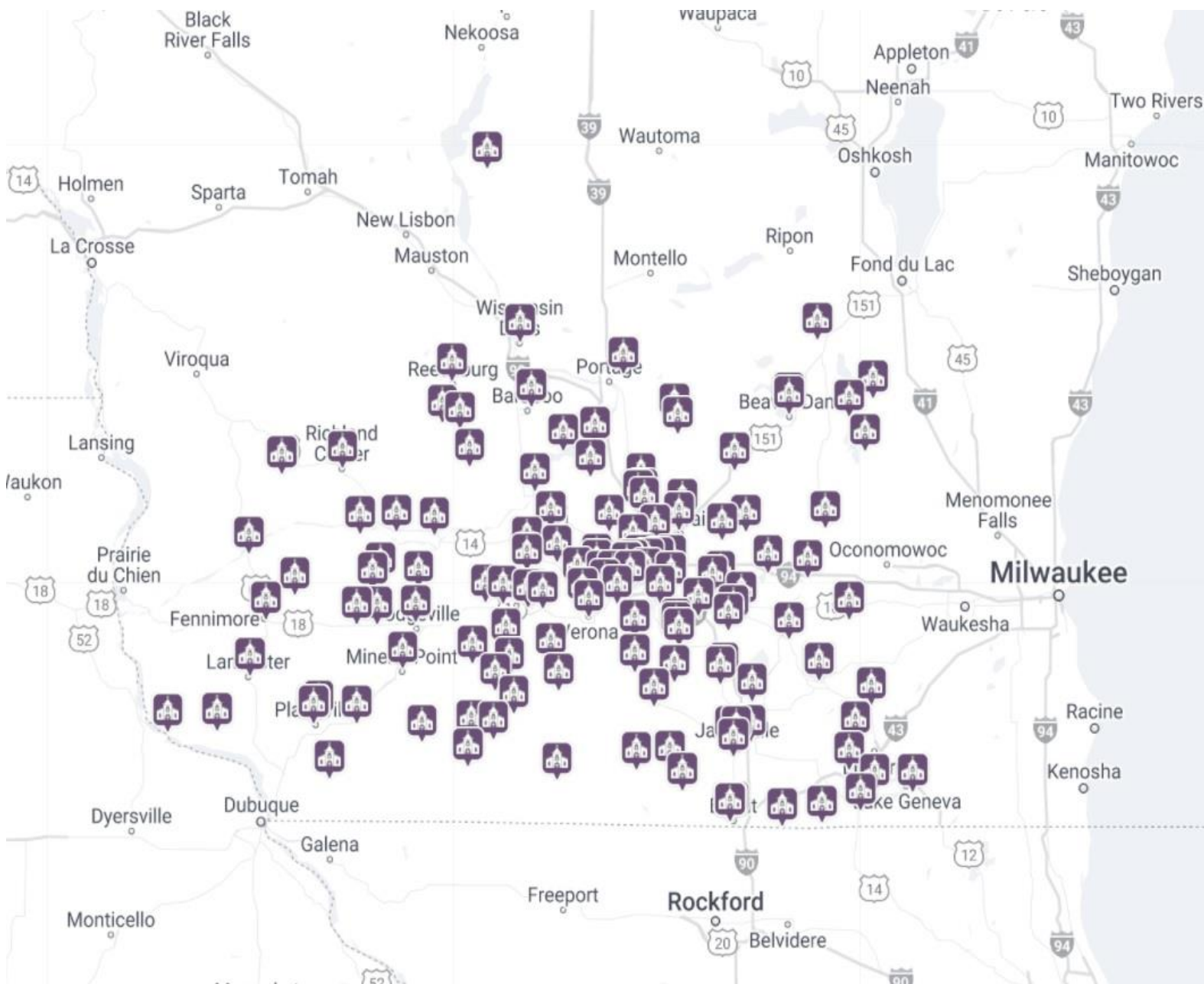
Jim Schieble

Lutheran Men in Mission
Faith, Columbus

South-Central Synod of Wisconsin Map of Congregations

The South-Central Synod of Wisconsin consists of 133 congregations & worshipping communities in twelve counties:

Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Grant, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Lafayette, Richland, Rock, Sauk, Walworth & one congregation in Adams County.



Partners in Ministry, Synod Teams, & Task Forces

Partners in Ministry

ASSIST- Counseling for Wellness

Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin (LOPPW)

Lutheran Planned Giving of Wisconsin (LPGW)

Seminaries - Wartburg, LSTC

Lutheran Social Services (LSS)

Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC)

Synod Teams and Task Forces

Global Ministries

- Companion Synod

Partners with Synod Team

- Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM)
- Lutherans United Assisting After Disasters (LUAD)
- Women of the ELCA (WELCA)

Youth & Family Ministry Team

- Alive
- Youth Gathering
- Youth Advocacy
- Leadership Development

Finance Committee

- Endowment
- Compensation Guidelines
- Stewardship Committee

Social Ministry Team

- Care for Creation
- Reconciling in Christ (RIC)
- Racial Equity Team

Campus Ministry Team

- Lutheran Campus Ministry
UW Madison
- Lutheran Campus Ministry
UW Platteville
- Lutheran Episcopal
Campus Ministry at UW
Whitewater

2024 Conference Deans Roster

West Dane

Rev. John Twiton, ELC, Mt Horeb

Southeast Dane

Rev. Jennifer Jelinek, Grace Lutheran,
Cambridge

East Madison

Rev. Justin Dittrich, Lake Edge, Madison

Central/West Madison

N-NE Dane/North Madison

Rev. Sue Beadle, Christ, DeForest

S. Jefferson /Walworth Counties

Rev. Lily Brellenthin, Faith Evangelical, Walworth

South Rock County

Rev. Tony Dusso, Our Saviors, Beloit

North Rock County

Rev. Matthew Pooch, St. John's, Evansville

Iowa/Richland/Grant Counties

Rev. Michelle Elfers, St. John, Richland Center
Rev. Mark Williamson, Grace Lutheran, Dodgeville

Columbia/Dodge/N. Jefferson Counties

Sauk/Columbia Counties

Rev. Michael Lee, Common Ground, Lodi
Rev. Karen Hofstad, St Paul's, Baraboo

W. Green/Grant/Lafayette Counties

Rev. Brenda Crossfield, First English-Platteville

Retired Rostered Leader Group

Rev. Anne Andert
Rev. Joel Xavier

Committees of the Assembly

Consultation Committee

(6-year term)

***Term ends 2024**

*Rev. Mae Jean Zelle 2024
*Jane Cahill Wolfgram 2024
Rev. Karen Hofstad 2025
Ross Larson 2026
Rev. Matthew Pooch 2026
Rev. Holly Slater 2026
Rev. Jerry Tews 2028

Discipline Committee

(6-year term)

***Term ends 2024**

*Carl Anderson 2024
*Deacon Bonnie Vize 2024
Carolyn Butts 2025
Rev. David Nelsestuen 2025
Rolfe Nervig 2025
Rev. Ann Walsvik 2025
Rev. Erik Jelinek 2026
Mary DeYoung 2028

Finance Committee

Rev. Peter Beeson
Rev. Naomi Garber
Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe

Compensation Guidelines Task Force

(Subcommittee of Finance)

Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe
Rev. Naomi Garber

2024 Synod Staff



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Becky Johnson, Financial Consultant
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Roster Changes in the Synod Since 2023 Synod Assembly

Roster Change Moves Into our Synod Since 2023 Assembly

Rev. Collete Broady Grund - From SE Minnesota to Faith, Janesville

Rev. Charlotte Eversoll - From Nebraska Synod to Christ, Lancaster & St. Paul's, Burton

Rev. Lauren Wrightsman - From St. Paul Synod to Bethel, Madison

Rev. Peter Erickson - From Montana Synod to McFarland Lutheran Church

Roster Changes Moves From our Synod Since 2023 Assembly

Rev. Robb Kosky - Transfer to Greater Milwaukee Synod

Rev. Jane Crawford - Transfer to Greater Milwaukee Synod

Rev. Chris Enstad - Transfer to Minneapolis Area Synod

Rev. Tim Maybee - Transfer to Southeast Minnesota Synod

Rev. Leif Kratzke-Nelson - Transfer to Northeast Minnesota Synod

Roster Leaders Who Retired

Rev. David Froemming

Rev. Kurt Billings

Rev. Fred Rilling

Deacon Meg Nielsen

Rostered Leaders Under Call-Interim Ministry

Rev. Naomi Garber - St. Luke's, Middleton

Rev. Julie Krahn - St. Luke's, Middleton

Rev. Jack Way - Redeemer, Rio

Rev. Chris Farrow - Primrose, Belleville

Rev. Brent Walsworth - Holy Trinity, Marshall

Rev. Mark Peters - St. Peter, Fennimore/St John's, Boscobel

Rev. Erich Hartenberger - Shepherd of the Hills/Adams Lutheran Church

Rev. Jason Hill - Our Savior's, Prairie du Sac

Roster Changes Moves Within our Synod Since 2023 Assembly

Rev. Marilyn Lange - From Synod Call to St. Luke's Middleton

Rev. Carrie Greenquist-Petersen - From St. Luke's Middleton to ELCA Churchwide

Rev. Jason Hill - From Agrace Hospice to Interim Ministry Call

Rev. Emily Tveite - From Lutheran Campus Ministries to ELCA Churchwide Council Call

Rev. Donald Glanzer - From on Leave from Call to St. John's, Reedsburg

Rev. Jennifer Kuhnert - From Synod Council Call to on Leave from Call

Rev. Peder Johanson - From Synod Council Call to on Leave from Call

Rev. Mike Brown - From Bethel, Madison to Removed from Roster

Roster Changes Ordinations in our Synod Since 2023 Assembly

Rev. Joseph Doegen- Called to Bethany, Wisconsin Dells

Rev. Callie Arendt - Called to Bethlehem, Brodhead

Deacon Jessica McCarthy - Called to Oakwood Lutheran Homes

Rev. Daniel O'Brien - Called to Messiah, Madison

Deacon Jennifer Watson - Called to Hope Lutheran, Milton

Known Deceased in our Synod Since 2023 Assembly

Rev. Dr. Stephen Fossum - November 29, 2023

Rev. Allen Wahl - January 16, 2024

Rev. Charles W. Miller - January 16, 2024

Rev. Daniel Vojta - January 28, 2024

Rev. Harold Landers - February 27, 2024

Rostered Leaders Under Specialized Call & Other Ministry Settings

Rev. Joy Mortensen-Wiebe – Bishop, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Madison

Rev. Ramie Bakken – ELCA Churchwide, Region 5 Candidacy and Leadership Manager, Chicago, IL

Deacon Judy Nolde – Central Wisconsin Center, Madison

Rev. Carolyn Schneider – ELCA – Churchwide, Missionary Guyana – Chicago, IL

Rev. Nicole Espe – Oakwood Lutheran Homes, Madison

Rev. Cindy Crane – Lutheran Office for Public Policy, Madison

Rev. Dan Feaster – Samaritan Counseling Center, Madison

Rev. Walter Baires – ELCA, DEM South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Madison

Rev. Derek Rosenstiel – Agrace Hospice, Madison

Rev. Gina Sterk – Meriter Hospital, Madison

Rev. Emily Tveite – ELCA Churchwide, Program Director of Campus Ministries, Chicago, IL

Rev. Jen Christenson – South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Associate to Bishop for Candidacy and Community, Madison, WI

Rev. Ulrich Rosenhagen – Director – Center for Religion & Global Citizenry – UW Madison, Madison

Rev. Tracy Polzin – Lutherdale Bible Camp

Rev. Carrie Greenquist - Peterson – Director of TEEM Program, Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, IA

ELCA Rostered Leaders/Full Communion

Deacon Berkley Guse - Grace Episcopal Church, Madison

Rev. Marc Ehrets - First Presbyterian Church, Waunakee

Deacon David Schipper - Windsor United Church of Christ, Windsor

Non-ELCA Leaders serving ELCA Congregations

Rev. Rebecca Clancy (UCC) - Vermont Lutheran, Vermont

Ramona Orton (PCUSA) - Trinity Parish of Highland, Highland

Rev. Beth Voigt (Presbyterian) - St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Reedsburg

Federated Congregation

Common Grace is a Federated Congregation of Lakeview Moravian Community Church & Zion Lutheran Church.

Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities

Parroquia Luterana San Jose, Beloit

Parroquia Luterana Santa Maria, Madison

2024 Ordination and Congregational Anniversaries

Rostered Minister Anniversaries

Congregational Anniversaries

20th

Rev. Collette Broady-Grund
Rev. Jared W Parmley
Rev. Nick Utpfall

25th

Rev. Elisa Brandt
Rev. Marsha Swenson
Rev. Steven Kottke

30th

Rev. Douglas Locken
Rev. John Swanson
Rev. Karen Locken
Rev. Mae Jean Zelle
Rev. Margo Martens
Rev. Steven Schneider
Rev. Walter Baires

35th

Rev. Daniel Dibbert
Rev. Barry Hoerz
Rev. Peter Narum
Rev. Richard Inglett
Rev. Tina Koenig Ray

40th

Rev. Lynn Peterson
Rev. Mark Teslik
Rev. Roger Elliott
Rev. Thomas Groth
Deacon Bruce Bengtson

45th

Rev. James Koza
Rev. Larry Froemming
Rev. Richard Dowling
Rev. Steven Ekblad

50th

Rev. Bruce Engebretson
Rev. David Andert
Rev. David Berggren
Rev. Joel Olsen
Rev. Karl Otto
Rev. Robert Voss
Rev. Sande Nelson

60th

Rev. James Schwarz
Rev. Ronald Mach

65th

Rev. Ronald Massen
Rev. Vern Holtan

70th

Rev. J Philemon Anderson

50th

Hope Lutheran, Milton

75th

Norway Grove Memorial Lutheran Church, DeForest

Williams Bay Lutheran Church, Williams Bay

125th

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Lake Geneva

150th

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Elkhorn
Christ Lutheran Church, Beloit

175th

Sugar Creek Lutheran Church, Elkhorn

Report of the Bishop, Joy Mortensen-Wiebe

It was exciting on February 22nd to begin unboxing my long-forgotten office possessions as they were left in the new synod office space. I found things I forgot I owned. A llama anyone? An assortment of water bottles? In addition, I found long forgotten notes and files and pictures and precious mementos from past ministries and communities. I was filled with nostalgia. After more than 15 months of not seeing any of these items I had certainly changed and left much of this behind.

One thing that I unpacked and spent some time with was my letter of call to serve as the bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin dated 10/01/2020. The opening paragraph states:

With prayers for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to do God's will... upon decision of the synod assembly call you to serve as bishop. Recently, I was sitting with a group of colleagues and one of them asked me if I had gotten used to or accepted to my calling as a bishop yet. It is a question that I have been pondering ever since. I do not take this office lightly. I thank God each day for who God is, for what God provides and for the vision that God has for the people of the SCSW. We are God's witnesses in the world, and I give thanks for you, for your communities and for your mission of sharing the love of Jesus out into the world. We have also been though a lot together. The pandemic, coming out of a pandemic, being without a synod office, a brand-new executive committee and synod leadership, and now a new synod office home inside of Lakeview Lutheran church.

This is also a consuming call. It is easy to get lost in it. A different colleague said to me while we out walking, "I sense that this call is very different than you imagined." That is not the case. What has changed immensely in the years between my last call within a synod and this call as the Bishop of the SCSW is the context we live in. It has been crucial for me to keep centered in what the constitution lays out as my responsibilities in the face of all of this. Many of you have heard me say I see my work in your midst as both the "care for rostered leaders" and the "care for congregations." That is only part of it. My letter of call gives additional framing:

We call you to exercise among us the ministry of Word and Sacrament which God has established and which the Holy Spirit empowers. To preach and teach the Word of God in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran confessions; to administer Holy Baptism and Holy Communion; to lead in worship; to proclaim the forgiveness of sins; to provide pastoral care.

I love Sunday mornings with you. It is an absolute joy to preach and lead worship in your midst. Twenty congregations invited me to be with you for "normal" Sunday

services. Thank you. It is a delight to be with you in partnership. We have a diversity across our synod in terms of our worship practices even as we are united in the same Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I have also had the opportunity to lead worship for installations and ordinations, at our Fall theological gathering for rostered leaders, the annual WELCA gathering of the SCSW, as a guest of the Metro Chicago synod, and in various other gatherings. It is a great gift to meet the many talented musicians, worship leaders, and colleagues across this synod.

I am honored to be in relationship with rostered leaders and congregations and to be trusted to provide pastoral care during times of crisis, transitions, illness and death. I am grateful for our conference deans and other colleagues around the synod who make me aware of pastoral care needs. I also give thanks to God for the rostered leaders of this synod who engage with one another in mutually accountable relationships where pastoral care and accountability are real. This past year I have worked with the Conference Deans to clarify our working together in partnership for sake of the whole synod.

We call you to encourage persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

It is a gift to walk in discernment with those who are contemplating a call to ministry. Shortly after I was elected in 2020 the churchwide process for approved candidates for ministry who are awaiting their first calls changed. We as a synod and a Region are living into those changes in a reality where fewer persons overall are preparing for ministry. Our synod does continue to prepare and support a significant number of candidates for ministry. The SCSW currently has nearly 20 candidates active in the candidacy process. It is a joy to be in conversation with them as they are formed as leaders for our church.

We call you to impart knowledge of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its wider ministry; to endeavor to increase support for the work of the whole church.

A significant piece of the work of a synod is that of interpretation. Through the Office of Bishop staff, we carry out this call through various programs, communications, and resource sharing. It is our work to translate the role of the churchwide expression to congregations and to help the churchwide expression to understand the work and needs of our local congregations. Often, this looks like education around how our church is structured constitutionally, how we make decisions, and how rostered leaders and congregations can be supported in various ways. This also takes shape as we encourage companion synod and domestic partner synod relationships. You may recall that we are planning a trip to our companion church, the Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church in India in January of 2025. Many of our synod congregations also support our domestic companion the Caribbean Synod.

Then, my letter of call states:

In accepting this call to the Office of Bishop you have agreed to fulfill this pastoral ministry in accord with the criteria, standards, and policies for the ordained ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Further, you have committed yourself to fulfill the responsibilities of oversight in conformity with the requirements of the churchwide and synod governing documents.

I learned a long time ago to appreciate and value constitutions and governing documents. I have further learned that the weight of this office often comes from carrying out the responsibilities of oversight. Oversight takes many forms from how we form committees to call process to how rostered leaders and congregations are disciplined. Our governing documents are not perfect. No governing documents are. Our 2022 churchwide assembly asked that they be reviewed, and a commission has been put together for that very reason. The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church will bring recommendations regarding possible changes to the church council in advance of the 2025 churchwide assembly. In the meantime, while that work is being done my call is to oversight to the existing governing documents of our church. Misconduct and discipline processes are time consuming parts of this call. Misconduct, on the part of rostered leaders, has been on the rise since the pandemic. This past year our synod has seen a rise in misconduct as well. I also serve on the advisory committee for Region 5 as we prepare a comprehensive boundary training for use across our Region. I am also the bishop liaison to an ELCA group charged with developing a framework to potentially be used by the whole church as they develop boundary trainings.

Finally, my letter of call reminds me that I have promised to diligent in the study of the Holy Scriptures, the use of the means of grace, in prayer, in faithful service, and in holy living. This is a reminder from ordination. It is, I believe, a good reminder for all of us as we gather in Assembly. Building on the firm foundation of God's Word revealed in Christ Jesus, we seek to learn with and from one another and to grow communities of faithful disciples who share God's love and compassion with the world around us.

Thank you for the trust that you have placed in me for this ministry of overseeing our work together. I pledge to you the most responsible and careful care in the conduct of this office with God's help.

Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe

Report of the Vice President, Kevin Oppermann

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ –

Time sure flies. As I reflect on this past year, it shocks me that I'm already through the first half of my term as your Synod Vice-President. It's been a joy to connect with many people throughout our synod. Our synod council is a strong group of leaders and I have thoroughly enjoyed spending time getting to know everyone, sharing fellowship, and doing the work of our Synod.

I'm overjoyed to share that we have a new office space for our Synod staff. After what seems like ages of working remotely, in coffee shops, church basements, and anywhere else that would accommodate us, we finally have a permanent space within Lakeview Lutheran Church on Madison's north side. Over the last year, we have worked and reworked with architects, builders, church, and synod staff, and more to develop a space that accommodate both the needs of the Synod and Lakeview. Construction began at the end of the year and the moving trucks arrived mid-February with desks, chairs, and boxes that had been in storage.

Many thanks to a great group of volunteers and the Synod and church staff who helped on move in day and the days and weeks that followed sorting, donating, and organizing all the items to help make this a successful transition. We couldn't do it without you! As staff settles into the new space, initial reports are very positive, and we look forward to a wonderful partnership with Lakeview Lutheran Church.

This year also brought about some lay staff changes to the Office of the Bishop with the addition of Tricia Clason who took over for Johnny Hufford. Tricia has done a wonderful job getting up to speed and is a welcome addition to the office. She started shortly before the office move and has been very helpful in getting things organized in the new space. Welcome Tricia!

There are so many wonderful things happening in congregations across our Synod: festivals, food trucks, Earth Day celebrations, fellowship, music, and so much more. I encourage you to share those exciting events with your neighbors, friends, and others in our Synod. The world can be a dark place as we've seen over the last year with the war in Ukraine, the horrific terrorism on October 7 in Israel and the ongoing hostage crisis of innocent women, children and elderly people, and the many people across our great nation who are suffering. Our churches and congregations are a bright light in our communities, and I encourage you to reach out to others to join in fellowship.

It continues to be a great joy to serve as Vice-President of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin.

Soli Deo Gloria! Kevin Oppermann

Report of the Secretary, Rev. Wendy Moen

Siblings in Christ of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin,

It is a blessing and honor to serve as your secretary. I am grateful for the Synod staff, the Executive Committee, and members of the Synod Council as we strive to support the work and mission of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin.

As secretary of the Synod, my role is to take the minutes and, as accurately as possible, provide documentation for the work of the Synod Council. Congregations also look to the secretary of the synod when updating their constitutions.

The main body of this report relates to the actions of the Synod Council since the last meeting of the assembly in May 2023. Please note that minutes of synod council actions March 21, 2024, having yet to be approved by the synod council as this report was written, are preliminary only and are subject to revision by the council at its next council meeting.

Included in this report are links to the current S-CSW Synod Constitution and a document with a side-by-side comparison of the S-CSW 2020 Synod Constitution and the required and recommended changes from Churchwide Assembly 2022. The required provisions must be adopted without change. According to our current constitution, Section †S18.12., adoption of the recommended amendments requires a majority vote at our Synod Assembly.

Finally, thank you to Bishop Joy and the synod office staff, our synod council members, the synod executive team, Lakeview Lutheran Church for welcoming and partnering with the Synod Office to begin a new chapter with our offices at Lakeview Lutheran Church. It is an honor to serve with and for the South-Central Synod of WI, ELCA.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Wendy Moen
S-CSW Synod Secretary

Synod Council Actions

Following is a list of action items the Synod Council has approved since the 2023 regular Synod Assembly and through the March 21, 2024, Synod Council meeting.

Action items are numbered with a specific code. The first set of numbers represents the year, and the second set represents the month of the council meeting. The third set is the consecutive numbering of actions beginning in January. For example: SC23.08.28 was an action taken in 2023 at the August meeting and was the 28th recorded action of the year.

“Housekeeping” actions such as approval of minutes and agenda adoptions have been omitted as well as standard compensation actions. Actions generally fall into four main categories: constitutional (which includes appointments to boards and committees), financial, roster, and policy. Although the Council actions are divided into these categories some actions could be listed in more than one category. The complete set of approved minutes is available in the Synod office or from the secretary.

Constitutional Actions

SC23.08.28 Candidacy Committee Addition

VOTED to approve the Rev. Fred Rilling as chair of the Candidacy Committee

24.01.07 SAWC - Synod Authorized Worshiping Communities in 2024:

**VOTED to approve
[Parroquia San Jose] (Pastor Dan Gonzales)
[Parroquia Santa Maria] (Pastor Kirsten Worzala-Dumke)**

24.03.10 Dates for Synod Assembly 2026

VOTED to approve May 15-16, 2026, as Synod Assembly dates.

24.03.14 Seasonal Membership in Congregations

VOTED to approve seasonal membership category in the S-CSW

Financial Actions

SC23.08.26 Youth Gathering Travel Arrangements

VOTED to approve working with Fox Travel for arrangements to the 2024 Youth Gathering

SC23.08.27 to approve Salesforce as a Customer Relationship Management provider for Synod Office

VOTED to approve initial setup fee of up to \$7500 and annual fee of \$2500 to have Salesforce maintain a central database for the Office of the Bishop.

SC24.01.03 Resolution for Santa Maria

VOTED to approve request to submit a grant request to the Siebert Foundation

SC24.03.12 2025-26 Spending Plan

VOTED to present a 2025-26 Spending Plan to the Synod Assembly.

SC 24.03.13 2025 Compensation Guidelines

VOTED to approve the 2025 Synod Compensation Guidelines as presented.

Roster Actions

SC23.06.22 Roster Changes

VOTED to approve the following roster changes:
Addition to Supply List Rev. Wolfgram and Laura Jasiczek

SC23.08.29 Roster Changes

VOTED to approve the following roster changes.
Addition to Supply List Rev. Elizabeth Wilder Platts
Rev. Kim Peterson

SC23.08.30 Roster Change

VOTED to approve:
Synod Call- Synod authorized call to Wartburg Seminary as
Director of TEEM and Certificate Programs Rev. Carrie
Greenquist-Petersen

SC23.08.31 Roster Change

VOTED to approve:

**Synod Call - Synod Call to Interim ministry at Christ Lutheran in
Lancaster/St Paul's in Burton** **Rev. Charlotte Eversoll**

SC23.10.36 Roster changes

VOTED to approve:

**Rev. Jason Hill SC- Synod Call to Interim ministry at St John's Sauk
Prairie**

**Rev. Naomi Garber SC- Synod Call to Interim ministry at St Luke's
Middleton**

**Rev. Peter Bredlau To pulpit supply, currently OLFC Northern Illinois
synod**

SC 23.10.37 Denial of OLFC request

VOTED to deny On Leave From Call request from Rev. Mike Brown

SC24.01.06 Roster Changes

VOTED to approve

**Deacon Jessica McCarty SC- Synod Call to Oakwood Senior Ministries,
Ordained and Installed at Good Shepherd, 12/9/23**

Rev. Julie Krahn SC- Synod Call to Interim ministry at St Luke's Middleton

Rev. Gina Sterk Added to Pulpit Supply

24.03.10 Roster Changes

VOTED to approve

Rev. Craig McMahon UCC Full Communion Partner Contract Interim to Good
Shepherd, Madison 5/13/2024

Rev. Lauren Wrightsman SC to Interim/Transition Ministry at Bethel Lutheran
4/3/2024

Rev. Kristen Mueller OLFC- year 2

Rev. Anne Wicklund OLFC- year 1

Rev. Tim Dean OLFC-year 3

Wesley Isbener Add to pulpit supply

Policy Actions

SC24.01.05 Endowment Committee Policy Adoption

**VOTED to approve the revisions presented to the policies of the Endowment
Committee as presented by the Endowment Team.**

Synod Council Actions

Following is a list of action items the Synod Council has approved since the 2022 regular Synod Assembly and through the March 11, 2023, Synod Council meeting.

Action items are numbered with a specific code. The first set of numbers represents the year, and the second set represents the month of the council meeting. The third set is the consecutive numbering of actions beginning in January. For example: SC22.11.36 was an action taken in 2022 at the November meeting and was the 36th recorded action of the year.

“Housekeeping” actions such as approval of minutes and agenda adoptions have been omitted as well as standard compensation actions. Actions generally fall into four main categories: constitutional (which includes appointments to boards and committees), financial, roster, and policy. Although the Council actions are divided into these categories some actions could be listed in more than one category. The complete set of approved minutes is available in the Synod office or from the secretary.

Constitutional Actions

SC22.09.32 Elections to synod Exec Committee
VOTED to elect Cindy Wuttke and Todd Long to serve on the synod executive committee.

SC23.03.11 Appointments to the Endowment Committee
VOTED to approve the following to the Endowment Committee:
Rev. Seth Hecox, Our Savior, Sun Prairie
Vicki Adkins, Norway Grove Lutheran Church

SC23.03.12 Approval of Sale
VOTED to approve the sale the New Heights building and move of their ministry to The Grove.

SC22.06.21 Anti-Racism Training
VOTED to approve the office of Bishop to coordinate and manage the anti-racism training as required by the resolution approved by the synod assembly in 2022.

Financial Actions

SC22.06.22 Campus Ministry Funding

VOTED to approve \$3,000 from the synod dedicated campus ministry funds be used for program expenses at UW-Whitewater campus ministry. (Trinity Lutheran, Fort Atkinson will manage these funds as fiscal agent until a board of directors is reconstituted at UW-Whitewater campus ministry.)

SC23.03.10

VOTED to approve \$350,000 is the maximum amount the council would approve to spend on synod office relocation.

Roster Actions

SC22.06.20 Roster Changes

VOTED to approve the following roster changes:

On-leave from call (1 st year)	Rev Don Glanzer
	Rev Erich Hartenberger
Addition to Supply List	Rev Kristin Rice
Retirement	Rev Ken Schaub

SC22.08.26 Roster Changes

VOTED to approve the following roster changes.

Specialized Ministry	Rev. Derek Rosenstiel to Agrace Hospice
Specialized Ministry	Rev. Tracy Polzin to Lutherdale Bible Camp
Specialized Ministry	Rev. Gina Sterk to chaplaincy at Meriter Hospital
Addition to Disability Roster	Rev. Denise Anderson
Addition to Retirement Roster	Rev. Rich Collier
On-leave from Call (1 st year)	Rev. Jen Johnson

SC22.11.37 Roster Changes

VOTED To approval to add these pastors to the Synod Supply List:
Rev. Rich Collier

Rev. Ken Schaub
Rev. Brenda Lovig
Rev. Peder Johannsen
Rev. Joel Xavier

SC22.11.38 Roster Changes

VOTED

To approve the following roster changes

Installation	Rev. Rick Bursh, Spring Prairie, DeForest
On-leave from Call	Rev. Julie Krahn
On-leave from Call	Rev. Bryan Lagerstam
Removed from Roster	Rev. Jennifer Johnson
Retired Roster	Rev. Mark Teslik
Retired Roster	Rev. Denise Anderson
Retired Roster	Rev. Mae Jean Zelle
SC Interim Ministry	Rev. Erich Hartenberger
Transfer In	Rev. Traci Maas, St. Paul's, Mayville
Transfer In	Rev. Jasmine Tesdahl, Lutheran Church of Peace, Platteville
Transfer Out	Rev. Richard McLeer, to LaCrosse Synod

SC23.01.04 Roster Changes

VOTED

to approve the following roster changes:

Ordination/Installation	Rev. Jacob Greenway called to Christ Lutheran - Spring Green
On-leave from Call	Rev. Kirsten Mueller, Year 2

SC23.03.13 Roster Changes

VOTED

to accept rostered leaders report as updated:

On-Leave from Call	Rev. Peder Johansen - Year 1
Supply List	Rev. Shelly Nelson
Transfer Out	Rev. Kristin Rice
Installed	Rev. Don Glanzer, St. Johns-Reedsburg
Synod Call to Interim	Rev. Erich Hartenberger, Shepherd of the Hills/Adams
Synod Call to Interim	Rev. Julie Krahn, St. Peters-Loganville

Policy Actions

SC22.09.31 Synod Office Move

VOTED to empower executive team to negotiate new space and to develop an interim plan for logistics.

SC23.01.05 Parroquia San Jose

Bishop Joy put forward a motion from Pastor Baires:

MOTION

I (Rev. Baires) recommend the following motion, which encompasses several aspects of this ministry:

- a. To change Parroquia San Jose nomenclature from Congregation Under Development to Synod Authorized Worshiping Community (SAWC),
- b. To Authorize Parroquia San Jose, SAWC for the fiscal year 2023;
- c. To approve the appointment of Pastor Dan Gonzales- Ortega as Mission Developer for the years 2023 and 2024; (appointments for Mission Developers are usually done for a 2-year term. After that the Synod Council extends the appointment year to year as necessary.
- d. To acknowledge this new start as an Ecumenical SAWC with the Presbyterian Church USA as partner, and
- e. To acknowledge the local Presbytery to serve as the Fiscal Agent for this ministry.
- f. To acknowledge the ELCA commitment to support this ministry with Synodical and Churchwide grants.

VOTED to approve the motion from Pastor Baires.

SC23.03.13 Synod Assembly

VOTED to hold synod assembly on the following dates:

May 17-18, 2024

May 16-17, 2025



South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
2023 Regular Meeting of the Synod Assembly

The 2023 Regular Meeting of the Synod Assembly of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin was May 20, 2023 at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mt. Horeb, under the theme, BUILDING, REBUILDING. Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe welcomed the assembly.

The day opened with worship led by Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe, Sharon Irving as worship music and song leader and the ELC Choir. Assembly offering has been designated Amextra. Worship was followed by a keynote by Peter Tan on the theme of Building, Rebuilding and then attendees broke for lunch.

Assembly Session I

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe led the assembly in the Order of Service for the Opening of a Synod Assembly and called the 2023 Regular Meeting of the Synod Assembly to order at 1:09pm.

Assembly Overview

The Bishop welcomed the voting members and visitors and official visitors. She thanked the assembly planning team for their work. Attendees were reminded to wear their name badges at all times to help the pages know that people are seated in the appropriate area as either a voting member or a visitor. Many thanks to all of the volunteers from ELC, Mt. Horeb, the Synod Assembly Planning Team. Bishop

Mortensen- Wiebe remind the assembly that our offering to Amextra, a ministry in Mexico. The Bishop also welcomed other guests present: Jodi Slattery ELCA representative.

Credentials Report #1

Helen Troutman (St. James, Verona) presented the first and only report of the Credentials Committee.

Lay

Lay Male - 82

Lay Female - 106

Rostered - 104

Voting Members - 292

Visitors - 19

Parliamentary Overview

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe introduced Rev. Brad Pohlman (Luther Memorial, Madison) the Assembly parliamentarian. Synod Attorney, Mr. David Moore had a conflict and was unable to join us for the Assembly. Rev. Pohlman reminded the assembly that he advises the chair. Rev. Pohlman provided a parliamentary overview and explained the importance of the rules used for good order at the Assembly. He stated that Robert's Rules of Order are used subject to the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Synod. A reminder that synod assembly voting member terms continues until the next synod assembly.

Adoption of Consent Agenda

Rev. Pohlman presented the consent agenda as recommended for approval by the Synod Council. He explained that since the Synod Council recommended the agenda it is moved and properly brought before the body. The consent agenda includes approval of the Rules of Organization and Procedure, and the 2023 Compensation Guidelines. For a consent agenda there is no discussion so if any voting member wishes to discuss an item, they may request that it be extracted from the agenda for discussion later in the schedule. Rev. Pohlman asked the Assembly if

there were any items that anyone wished to be removed from the Consent Agenda and discussed individually. No items were removed.

SA23.05.01 Adoption of the Master Agenda

VOTED to adopt the Master Agenda.

ADOPTED

SA23.05.02 Adoption of Consent Agenda

VOTED to adopt the Consent Agenda items: Rules of Organization and Procedure of the Assembly, and the 2024 Compensation Guidelines.

ADOPTED

Rev. Pohlman made one note for the assembly regarding the 2024 Compensation guidelines. There was a typo in the published guidelines. The correct retirement contribution percent for rostered leaders is 12%.

Report of the Nominations Committee

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe called on Todd Long (Bethlehem, Brodhead) from the Nominating Committee to read the positions open and the names of the nominees received for that position. The Bishop will then call for nominations from the floor. This will be the only time that nominations will be accepted from the floor. If there are more nominations than positions open, voting on those positions will occur later in the Assembly.

Todd Long reported there are two positions open on the Synod Council. The slate of nominees is:

Synod Council - Lay Male (3-year term, 1 position to be filled)

No nominees

Synod Council - Clergy Male (3-year term, 1 position to be filled)

The Rev. Jack Way (Rio, Redeemer)

Todd Long reported there are five positions open on synod committees. The slate of nominees is:

Consultation Committee (6-year term, 3 lay male position to be filled)

Dale Holmen (St. John's, Evansville)

Consultation Committee (6-year term, 3 lay male position to be filled)

John Dyar (Lakeview, Madison)

Consultation Committee (6-year term, 1 lay female position to be filled)

Julie Pankow-Helland (Covenant, Stoughton)

Discipline Committee (6-year term, 1 position to be filled)

Rev. Jasmine Tesdahl (Lutheran Church of Peace, Platteville)

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe asked for nominations from the floor for additional nominations for synod council lay male.

Synod Council Lay Male

Carolyn Butts (St. John's, Evansville) nominated Derek Blume (St. John's, Evansville)

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe asked for nominations from the floor for additional nominations for synod council clergy male.

Rev. John Twiton (ELC, Mt. Horeb) nominated Rev. Chris Strom (New Hope, Blanchardville and Hollandale)

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe asked for nominations from the floor for additional nominations for Consultation Committee.

No nominations from the floor.

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe asked for nominations from the floor for additional nominations Discipline Committee.

No nominations from the floor.

Nominations were closed. Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe asked those nominated from the floor to fill out nominations paperwork during the break to be distributed to the Assembly.

Report of the Treasurer

Rev. Naomi Garber (McFarland Lutheran, Interim, McFarland), Synod Treasurer, brought the Treasurer's Report to the floor of the Assembly. Rev. Garber thanked the assembly for their faithfulness and generosity. Thank you to Becky Johnson of Johnson accounting the synod CPA Accountant. The SCSW Mission support was below budget by \$31,220 or 4%. Deducting the Mission Partners (ELCA 47%, Seminaries 5.2%, Lutheran Campus Ministry 6.2%) commitments of \$710,502, a total of \$589,379 was available for operations. The expenses were below budget by \$66,414 or 6%, primarily due to unfilled staff positions. Our cash position is positive. A deposit was made to the Oak Bank Money Market account from proceeds from building sales. Investment losses were around 67,000.

We have money in reserve approx. 569,000 in an Oak Bank Money Market, a CD with Mission Investment Fund, a CD as State Bank of Cross Plains and a CD at Oak Bank.

Almost 135,000 of our reserves is restricted spread over 21 accounts. Working to reduce number of restricted accounts.

Goals for the coming year:

Keep attentive to 2023 spending plan changes – so far in 2023, we are not paying rent but only storage fees for office furniture and higher mileage rates for staff until the office is relocated.

Finance committee would like to get this committee up and running.

Wants to use some of the reserve funds to support the mission and ministry of the synod.

Endowment committee is starting up again.

SA23.05.03 Reception of the Treasurer's Report

VOTED **to receive the Report of the synod Treasurer**

ADOPTED

Bishop's Report

Rev. Garber invited Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe to present her report to the Assembly. Her written report is available in the assembly booklet, pages 33-34. What does a bishop do: ordination, confirmations, installations at 25+ congregations; attends conferences, churchwide assembly, and a renewed a relationship with the Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church in India through the Becoming Conference. One outcome of the Churchwide Assembly is the Committee for a Renewed Lutheran Church of 35 ELCA members whose report is asked for 2025 Churchwide Assembly. In November 2022, the synod office moved due to demolition of the building by owner. It has been challenging to work remotely, but excited to partner with a local Madison church to share space with them as the synod office. Conference of bishops met twice this last year, HLIC and Amextra. Focus has been on building and rebuilding relationships with trust. Words of gratitude to the congregations and leaders of S-CSW for your work and service as we are called to be the church in this time and always. God is building and rebuilding us in new ways.

She introduced and thanked the synod staff for their work: Marie Leafblad (Associate for Leadership Support), the Rev. Jen Christenson (Associate to the Bishop for Communication and Relationship), the Rev. Walter Baires (Associate to the Bishop and Director of Evangelical Mission), the Rev. Peter Beeson (Associate to the Bishop for Generosity), and two new staff Johnny Hufford (Director for Administration and

Events) and Shane Reich (Director for Operations and Candidacy). Adjunct staff include the Rev. Jason Poole-Xiong (webmaster) and Becky Johnson (accountant and financial consultant). Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe invited rostered leaders new to our synod in the last year, newly ordained rostered leaders and current seminary students working in area congregations to stand and be recognized.

SA23.05.04 Reception of Bishop’s Report

VOTED to receive the Report of the Bishop.

ADOPTED

Report of the Synod Vice-President

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe welcomed the report of the Office of the Vice-President, Mr. Kevin Opperman (St. John’s, Oregon) via recorded video to the Assembly. The printed report of the Vice President can be found in the assembly booklet, page 35.

Report of the Secretary

The Rev. Wendy Moen (Covenant, Stoughton), Synod Secretary, brought the secretary’s report to the assembly. The printed report can be found on pages 36-40 in the assembly book. The printed report included the constitutional, policy, financial, and roster change actions of the Synod Council since the May 2022 regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Goal for the year is to form a constitution review committee.

SA22.05.05 Reception of the Secretary’s Report

VOTED to receive the Report of the synod Secretary

ADOPTED

SA23.05.06 Approval of Minutes

VOTED to approve the minutes from the May 6-7, 2022, synod assembly meeting.

ADOPTED

Report of the ELCA

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe welcomed Ms. Jodi Slattery, ELCA churchwide staff and. Ms. Slattery then greeted the assembly and spoke of the ministry impact of mission support to the ELCA and how these gifts were shared and used to be church together and for our collective ministry. S-CSW sent \$616,772 to the churchwide organization to support ministry together. Ms. Slattery expressed gratitude for those financial gifts. She reported the formation of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church of 35 people appointed (out of 402 nominations) to serve to reconsider the statement of purpose for each expression of the ELCA. Ms. Slattery offered that there were 311 SAWCs, 33 new starts - 18 new starts, 15 explorations across the ELCA. Ms. Slattery lifted up two new starts in S-CSW - San Jose in Beloit and Santa Maria in Madison. She also lifted up two Strategic Ministry Partnerships - Common Ground in Lodi and Common Grace in Madison. She expressed gratitude for Lutheran Disaster Relief and ELCA World Hunger support by the S-CSW. Seven seminarians received Fund for Leaders Scholarship. Young Adults in Global Ministry and ELCA Federal Chaplains were lifted up as well. The 2023 Rostered Ministers Gathering and the 2024 Youth and Young Adult Gathering in New Orleans were highlighted. Thanks to Rev. Walter Baires for his work as the Director of Evangelical Mission and thanks to Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe. Ms. Slattery ended her report sharing a video from Presiding Bishop Eaton for the Assembly.

Break

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe announced a 15-minute break.

Elections

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe walked the assembly through the preparation of the ballot for the position of Synod Council Lay Male.

A brief prayer was led by Sharon Irving before elections.

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe asked for consent election of the nominees for uncontested elections for Synod Council Lay Male, Constitution and Discipline Committees.

SA23.05.07 Unanimous consent elections

VOTED **to approve the unanimous consent election of nominees for Synod Council Lay Male, Consultation and Discipline Committees**

ADOPTED

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe invited the assembly to vote for Synod Council Clergy male

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe moved to close the election.

Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee

Gus Knitt (Christ, DeForest), chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee, read the resolutions before the assembly.

Resolution #1 Creation Care

RESOLVED that the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin in Assembly recommends that Synod congregations encourage their members to care for God's creation in every way they can, e.g. planting trees, starting pollinator gardens, recycling, discontinuing the use of Styrofoam products, installing solar panels, doing an energy audit, and finally be it resolved

RESOLVED that in order to raise awareness of the urgency of the Climate Crisis and actively participate in justice for God's creation, the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin in Assembly recommends that all synod congregations submit a Congregational Care for Creation Plan to the synod Care for Creation team by the end of 2023. (Note: This plan should be no longer than one page and can be as short as a few sentences.)

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe opened the floor for discussion.

Deacon Meg Nielson (St. Stephen's, Monona), member of the Synod's Care for Creation Team urges adoption of this resolution. Synod Care for Creation's Team will take care of coordinating the plans/resources of each congregation.

SA23.05.08 Adoption of Resolution #1 Creation Care

VOTED **to adopt the resolution in support the request for congregations to submit a Care for Creation Plan**

ADOPTED

Resolution #2 Updating Reconciling in Christ Commitments

RESOLVED that this synod use the coming year to understand how we can faithfully update our commitments through workshops, conversations, and communications facilitated by the synod Reconciling in Christ team and in consultation with the Racial Equity team; and be it further

RESOLVED that we strive to affirm the updated Reconciling in Christ commitments with the 2024 synod assembly; and be it finally

RESOLVED that the synod Reconciling in Christ and Racial Equity teams assist our Reconciling in Christ congregations in updating their own commitments, as well as assisting those looking to become Reconciling in Christ congregations.

Rev. Nick Uptall (Advent, Madison) from the Synod RIC Team rose to speak in favor of the resolution. Thanked the synod congregation who are welcoming congregations, others for being on the journey. Reconciling Works has asked for 4 commitments as an RIC congregation. How does the synod also follow the required commitments?

SA23.05.09 Adoption of Resolution #2 Updating Reconciling in Christ Commitments

VOTED **to adopt the resolution to update Reconciling in Christ**

ADOPTED

Resolution #3 Updating Land Acknowledgment

Resolution in support of anti-racism training for leaders in the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin.

RESOLVED that the Synod Council appoint a Land Acknowledgement Task Force to begin the work of repudiation by developing a land acknowledgement for use in the synod, in conversation with the first nations who historically lived in the area of our synod; and be it finally

RESOLVED that the synod encourage the use of that land acknowledgement in our congregations, or for congregations to develop their own land acknowledgement.

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe invited discussion on this resolution. Rev. Andy Twiton (Trinity, Madison) member of the Synod Anti-Racism team. He spoke of undertaking this work grounding this acknowledgment and work in relationship with members of the First Nations.

Craig Pynn (St. Luke's, Middleton) acknowledged the noble effort of acknowledgments and questioned the need for a task force for this effort, no matter how noble, and if this would be seen as a high priority for some congregations.

Ross Larson, (Synod Council member, Good Shepherd, Verona/Madison) Repudiation is a big word, would appreciate breaking it down smaller.

Nick Uphall (Advent, Madison) Repudiation language comes from work of the ELCA and the Doctrine of Repudiation. Repudiation is a rejection of the dominating and harmful ways the church has treated our Native siblings. And, rejecting colonialism and efforts to remove native tribes from their land, break up families and send children to orphanages.

Linda Considine, (Grace, Darlington) In support but not sure how to contact tribes, especially if the tribe no longer

Heather Hayward (New Life, Madison) one of authors of this resolution. Questions like this are why this task force is being requested. A task force can advise congregations wanting to do this work and not knowing where to begin.

Carolyn Butts (St. John's, Evansville) Question: Is there any financial responsibility to the synod with this?

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe responded that Reference and Counsel did not see any financial responsibility to the synod or they would have made a different recommendation.

Jane Crawford (Peace, Columbus) This synod is not the first organization to look at developing land acknowledgments. Simply, an acknowledgment is just that: acknowledgment that we are not the first people to live on this land.

Pastor Libby Howe, Wisconsin Council of Churches, works with a lot of congregations who are developing these statements, they are willing to help and have connections with all 11 tribes currently active in WI.

Seeing no others wanting to speak, the Bishop called for a vote.

SA23.05.10 Adoption of Resolution #3

VOTED **to adopt the resolution on Land Acknowledgment**

ADOPTED

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe gave the Elections Committee Report
Report of Elections

Synod Council Lay Male

The Rev. Jack Way 168

The Rev. Chris Strohm 76

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe declared the election of the Rev. Jack Way.

2025 Spending Plan

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe invited synod treasurer Rev. Naomi Garber to return for the 2025 Proposed Spending Plan.

Rev. Naomi Garber referenced the Compensation Guidelines as Rev. Pohlman announced earlier and said that they were simplified greatly this year. Retirement contribution is 12% will be corrected. Also, based on recommendation of retired pastors there is an increase in the compensation for pulpit supply pastors for 2024 starting January 1 or earlier.

Update on Synod Office Move - 100% remote since December 2022. This affects rent and mileage of budgets. In conversation with LLC working with an architect to get plans for appropriate space for both church and synod.

Fiscal year is Feb. 1, 2024-Jan 31, 2025. Spending Plan is based on the best information we have now.

Spending Plan proposes that Mission Support Income remain stable at \$1,320,000.

Changes:

1. Moving Synod Assembly, Bishop's Convocation and LEAD have previously held outside of the spending plan. Proposing to move within the spending plan. Rationale for moving into the spending plan is that these are ministries of the synod and if we go above or below the income/expenses, it's up to the synod to cover these events. Income and Expenses for both.
2. We receive \$10,000 DEM income from ELCA to use for Rev. Baires' work and moving forward there are income and expense line items in the spending plan for easier tracking.

Projected total income for Operations available = \$618,020

Projected total expenses for Operations = \$614,745

Expected income = \$3275

Rent of \$40,000 left in as a placeholder.

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe opened the floor for discussion on 2025 Spending Plan

Question about no money in the spending plan for a financial commitment as a RIC synod based on our commitment as an RIC synod.

Clarifications that there are some restricted funds for use for RIC work in the synod. Reconciling Works is flexible on how synod's make their meaningful financial contributions - either for work in the synod or a contribution to Reconciling works.

SA22.05.11 Adoption of 2025 Spending Plan

VOTED to adopt the 2025 Synod Spending Plan.

ADOPTED

Outgoing Synod Council Members

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe thanked Trevor Thom and Rev. Andy Twiton for their work on Synod Council as their terms are ending.

Closing of the Assembly

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe closed the Assembly at 3:15pm with the Order for Closing of an Assembly.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Wendy Moen, Secretary

South-Central Synod of Wisconsin

Protocol Documents

2023 Synod Assembly Book

2023 Credential Report (1)

South Central Synod of Wisconsin

Treasurer's Report

Fiscal Year 2023-2024 was an unusual year financially for the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin!

Here are some of the factors contributing to the differential between the Spending Plan and the Actual:

- The office being 100% remote which increased mileage, office supplies, candidacy, and travel and a decrease in rent.
- The staff changes impacted the personnel expenses particularly in regard to benefits.
- Income received was 5% below the previous year thus Ministry Partner support was reduced as it is based on a percentage of mission support income.

All of these contributed to a \$41,700 expenses over income for the end of the year.

All bills are paid and current. Most weeks and months money management has been the focus.

In addition, the costs of the office renovation have been paid, including a loan to Lakeview Lutheran for \$40,000, with a \$35,000 transfer of funds from the Money Market account to the checking account.

Looking to the future, we are living into the 2024-2025 Spending Plan knowing some expenses may not be accurate based upon moving into the newly renovated office space. In addition, during this year, an assessment of on-going technology support will be completed. This past year a goal was to decrease the restricted account---this was not achieved. This will be a priority for this current year. As a heads up, a Synod Council conversation will be centered on appropriate and sustainable ministry partner support.

The year has been full of unique challenges. I am thankful for the support of the congregations of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin to the mission and ministry of the synod. Without you, all this would not be possible.

In gratitude,
Naomi Garber, Synod Treasurer.

Report of Rev. Peter Beeson, Associate to the Bishop for Generosity

Friends in Christ,

"Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, ... it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over."

(John 12:24, The Message paraphrase)

It is good to worship and celebrate with you at Synod Assembly.

As the Associate to the Bishop for Generosity I **work with congregations in our synod around stewardship, generosity and celebrating all the gifts God has given us**. It's an honor to accompany congregations in our synod in uncovering the gifts in your midst and coaching you to discern the best ways to use the gifts, skills, and resources God has given us to manage, so together we can be part of God's mission in the world.

I am happy to preach and teach in your congregations about generosity and whole life stewardship, and work with the Rev. Walter Baires, Associate to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission around discerning your congregation's mission and vision, and how you invite members of your community to be part of living our God's work in the world.

To equip congregations and foster relationships, our Synod Stewardship Team held our first in-person Fall Stewardship Kick-off since the pandemic. **A big thank-you** to Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Portage and Faith Lutheran Church in Walworth for hosting two concurrent Fall Stewardship Kick-off events on September 16, 2023.

The synod's Endowment Committee has also been hard at work refreshing the endowment policies and preparing to resume grant-making to congregations and other ministries in our synod. Look for more information on both of those ministries in their respective committee reports.

As you continue to embark on your ministry remember that we are given resources, not to preserve it, but so it can be planted in the ground and grow to bear much fruit. (*John 12:24 & Matthew 25*)

It is a joy to be on this journey with you, with Bishop Joy and my colleagues on the synod staff, and with the whole church as we continue to trust in the God who is

calling us to be part of God's mission in the world, serving others as a way of showing God's love.

The Rev. Peter Beeson
Associate to the Bishop for Generosity

Report of Rev. Walter Baires, Associate to the Bishop, Director of Evangelical Mission

It has been a privilege to continue walking alongside you as we together discover how to be the church in an ever-changing world.

Holy Currencies for Incubation and Stewardship. This year we were able to host the Holy Currencies cohort, provided in partnership with the Kaleidoscope Institute. Four congregations participated in this training event. *Holy Currencies is a model for developing congregational ministries created by the Kaleidoscope Institute (KI). This model has been used internationally to strengthen the impact and sustainability of community-oriented ministries. It includes six "currencies", or resources that, when combined, can lead to a more transformational ministry.*

The Latinx Strategy continue to thrive in Madison and Beloit. The outreach ministry to the Latinx community in Madison and Beloit is made possible thanks to your prayers and your mission support. We continue to focus on lay leadership development and outreach ministry with the Immigrant community. This year Parroquia Santa Maria lifted and affirmed one of its leaders to be considered as a TEEM candidate for rostered ministry. Leaders of both ministries attended the on-line KI Spanish track for Gracious leadership. I feel privileged to accompany these Synodical Authorized Worshipping Communities.

Strategic Ministry Grant. Common Grace in Madison has been supported with a Strategic Ministry Grant, to strengthen their outreach work with communities in need in the Madison area. This grant is being made possible thanks to your mission support. I am grateful for our partnership with the ELCA Congregational Vitality team in Chicago.

Six congregations took their Vitality Assessment. The Congregational Vitality Assessment is a simple 36 question survey tool to gain input from both leaders and participants on how they see key areas for both vitality and sustainability. Questions use a 3-point scale to ask people to assess their understanding of 36 key issues in congregational life and mission. It also helps show how leaders see the ministry in comparison to how regular participants see it - a great help in seeing how perceptions and communication are happening. This ministry tool is available to any congregation willing to learn about its vitality strength to make informed decisions that can impact their local ministries.

Faithful Innovation. We continue to offer the Faithful Innovation process. "Faithful innovation" is a process in which a group of congregations forms an intentional

learning community. committed to one another in a nine-month learning experience. Through prayer, skill-building, action, and reflection they addressed pressing questions about the future of God's church. Twelve rostered leaders attended the book study on "Leading Faithful Innovation" offered by the Synod's Faithful Innovation team.

A retreat was held during last summer to cultivate the collaboration spirit among congregations doing shared ministry. Overall, it has been a year of life giving moments in our journey together.

I enjoyed serving as the Synod's liaison for the Racial Equity team, and the World Hunger Taskforce. I felt very privileged to be able to preach at some of our congregation's anniversaries and at the installation of your new pastors. It has been a blessing serving with you.

Thank you for your ministry and for your partnership in doing God's mission in this corner of the world.

Blessings

Rev. Walter Baires

Report of Rev. Jen Christenson, Associate to the Bishop for Candidacy and Community

Greetings Siblings in Christ,

It is a gift to continue to walk with congregations and rostered leaders in my role as Associate to the Bishop for Candidacy and Community. Astute readers of synod staff reports might note that my position title has changed since last year, from “Communication and Relationship” to “Candidacy and Community.” At the end of July 2023, my position was changed from half-time to full-time and I took on candidacy-related and other administrative responsibilities. This change has certainly provided many opportunities for building, learning, and growing.

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to get to know and to walk alongside our candidates for rostered ministry. The SCSW currently has nearly 20 candidates actively engaged in the process. It is a blessing also to work with the compassionate, wise, and discerning group of rostered and lay leaders who serve as our synod’s candidacy committee. I have learned a great deal in the first few months of taking on these new responsibilities – perhaps first and foremost that candidacy has gotten a great deal more complex than it was when I went through the process over two decades ago. The changes are good, however, because they represent our church figuring out ways to better meet the needs of those discerning a call to ministry, as well as to meet the needs of the congregations and ministry sites who will eventually call these individuals as pastors and deacons. I look forward to continuing to grow in my understanding of the nuances of the ELCA’s candidacy process and to building stronger relationships with our candidates and other candidacy partners.

I continue to produce and refine synod communication, including the twice-monthly newsletter, the synod’s social media pages, and special communications regarding synod events and other information to help our congregations and leaders stay connected and engaged. I am grateful for the partnership of Rev. Jason Poole-Xiong, our synod webmaster, in keeping our synod website updated and for all the vital assistance and technical expertise he offers throughout the year. I have also continued with creating a simple Lenten worship and devotional resource for synod congregations, as well as crafting the worship services for the Fall Summit, LEAD, and other synod events.

Getting to spend time in worship and at other special events at congregations around our synod is also a highlight of my role. I remain available to preside over official events such as installations and celebrations of ministry milestones, but also to simply be present for the everyday ministry our congregations are engaged in. All

of us on the synod staff treasure the time we get to spend witnessing ministry in action! It is always a delight to hear the stories about how our synod is sharing the love of Christ with our communities and world.

Once again, it is an honor and a privilege to work alongside the congregations and leaders of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin. My prayer is that we will continue to build strong relationships, learn from God and one another, and grow in our faith in this year to come.

In Christ,

The Rev. Jen Christenson
Associate to the Bishop for Candidacy and Community

Report of Marie Leafblad, Associate to Bishop for Leadership Support

As I reflect on this year's theme for the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, I find myself filled with pride and joy over the progress and achievements we've made. The imagery of building, learning, and growing paints a vivid picture of the journey we've undertaken, complete with its peaks and valleys.

Having served in this position for a little over three years, I am continually grateful for the ministry to which I've been called. When I consider our focus on building, I'm reminded of the dedication of the congregations I've worked with during the call process. Together, we've delved deep into their identities, understanding their mission, and discerning God's call in their communities. It's natural during times of transition to yearn for the past, to reminisce about days with more people, resources, and volunteers. Yet, the Spirit beckons us forward, urging us to embrace tomorrow, the next day, and the day after that. It's heartening to witness congregations and councils undertaking profound explorations of their identity and purpose, charting an exciting path forward.

Our commitment to learning has been evident in our gatherings, and conferences, Fall Summit, LEAD event, and numerous trainings. It has been a privilege to join you and your leaders in exploring your missions and cherished values. As we continue to grow and evolve, I am reminded that learning is a lifelong journey. While the challenges we face might be daunting, they also present opportunities for growth and transformation. God isn't done with us yet.

I am thrilled to acknowledge the remarkable efforts of many congregations in preparing for the Youth Gathering. This Summer, over 350 youth from across our Synod will head to New Orleans. The dedication and passion poured into nurturing our youth and preparing them for this transformative event is truly inspiring. The Youth Gathering serves as a beacon of hope and renewal for our entire Church, reminding us of the vitality and amazing gifts our young ones. I am beyond grateful for my colleague, Rev. Jason Poole-Xiong, as our synod's Youth Gathering Champion who has done an outstanding job helping our congregations prepare. This Synod's Children, Youth and Family Team goes beyond just the prep work for the Youth Gathering-our leader, Heather Greenley, and others continue to provide resources, and opportunities for connection for ministry. I am so glad to have a team of people who care deeply for our younger ones.

Lastly, our collective growth is apparent each day. While it's a common refrain that the Church is changing, we're all discovering fresh and innovative ways to evolve. Growth within a congregation extends beyond mere membership numbers; it's

about adapting to our surroundings and nurturing a sense of belonging and shared purpose. Your efforts in your congregations do not go unnoticed; you're accomplishing remarkable things. I am deeply thankful for you and our collaborative efforts.

Together, let us embrace the lessons of the past year and carry them forward with courage and conviction. Your dedication and commitment to our shared mission is a gift to the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin. We are the Church together.

With Gratitude,

Marie Leafblad
Associate to the Bishop for Leadership Support

Report of Rev. Jason Poole-Xiong, Webmaster

I have served in my primary role of managing our synod website since July 2019. I have also supported the synod staff when needs arise including assisting with event registration, communications, youth ministry, and other projects. I am blessed and continue serve the ministry of the synod in these ways while concurrently serving as a called pastor at United in Christ Lutheran Church in Morrisonville, WI.

In 2020 our synod website was redesigned and relaunched in partnership with our host Makin' Hey Communications of Madison and it continues to be a strong communication tool for our congregations, leaders, and the public.

In 2023 I worked collaboratively with the synod staff to make updates to the website to streamline the experience for users and align with our vision and goals for how we communicate. These changes reduced the number of pages we maintain on our site, removed redundant and outdated information, made more direct links to the ELCA website vs. maintaining the same content on our own site, and made design changes that aligned with the new logos and branding guidelines of the ELCA.

On average our website experiences about 35-40 unique visits per day outside of event registration "seasons" when our daily visits can jump to between 60-80 visits per day. Our most visited pages (aside from the home page) are consistent and provide a good view of what is important to our congregations and people:

1. Call Process & Transitions Page
2. Office of the Bishop Page
3. Engage Page
4. Resource Page
5. About Us Page

Thank you for the opportunity to serve in this capacity.

Rev. Jason Poole-Xiong

Synod Campus Ministry Oversight Team Report

Building:

During the past year, the Campus Ministry Oversight Team highlighted the connection between campus ministries and local congregations as a mutually beneficial link that should be fostered. The team identified Campus Ministry Sunday as an opportunity to accomplish this goal. To do so, interested congregations are asked to complete a few simple questions. Afterwards, a member from the team connects with the congregation to talk through some options for a Campus Ministry Sunday, including a possible visit from a team member. As part of the outreach, the congregation receives an exceptional set of liturgical resources that drive home the connection to Campus Ministry Sunday.

Learning:

Campus ministry thrives through a consistent presence, and the Campus Ministry Oversight Team is interested in learning more about supporting campus ministries during times of transition. It couldn't be more timely with both UW-Platteville and UW-Madison going through leadership changes. The team visited UW-Platteville's campus ministry in November to discuss challenges and opportunities for the ministry.

Growing:

A constant difficulty for our three campus ministries in the Synod is the fluid nature of their ministry population. To meet students at a busy time and get them in the door is a challenge from the start. That's why any assistance connecting students with campus ministries can make a big difference. Our team hopes to grow in this area over the next year, whether that be by using a student referral form or some other means.

Other goals the team is interested in include:

- Evaluating what a group to connect young adults unaffiliated with a school could look like for the synod.
- Supporting students in more ways than faith alone by making use of congregational resources. For example, a congregation could promote available study spaces or help meet students' daily needs like caffeine and snacks.

Getting Connected:

Casey Sweeney, sweeneycr@gmail.com

Children, Youth and Family Ministry Report

Building:

Our mission with this synod crew is to create a space where Children, Youth, and Family Leaders can mingle, team up, and rally for each other. We aim to build up CYF leaders and offer a squad of supporters who truly get the importance of this essential and foundational ministry.

Learning:

We had monthly Children, Youth and Family Leader Gatherings via Zoom. A CYF leader overnight retreat at Lutherdale with a speaker from Youth Ministry Consultants, which also included access to a yearlong of free training through Youth Ministry Consultants. The team also had an Alive Youth night at Dekorra Lutheran with around 200 youth and leaders from around the Synod. Our Saviors in Sun Prairie hosted a CYF leader gathering where Author and Energetic Youth Leader Lyle Griner shared insights from his new book "Youth are either Leading or Leaving".

Growing:

This summer is the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans, and we have a great Gathering Synod Champion - Pr. Jason Xiong who is supporting and helping youth leaders and groups prepare for this incredible faith formation experience. Our Savior's in Sun Prairie is hosting a Peer Ministry Training May 11th for middle and high school student leaders in your congregation. With the Care for Creation Team Bethel Horizons is holding a synod-wide Church in the Wild event on May 4th.

Getting Connected:

Heather Greenley - youth_clc@yahoo.com or Marie Leafblad mariel@scsw-elca.org at the Synod office.

LUAD - Lutherans United Assisting after Disaster Report

LUAD (Lutherans United Assisting after Disasters) stands ready to serve within South Central Synod of Wisconsin. While thankful we did not have a major callout/activation during past year, we have not been sitting idle. LUAD's leadership team has been running scenarios to prepare for events should they occur.

Although we didn't get activation, a few of our team members responded individually to this spring's local tornadic activity. As our members assisted with cleanup, we took notes on how we can improve our future responses. Our members picked up tin, cut logs, gathered nuts and bolts, trimmed fencerows for fencing repair and other tasks as needed. Our council discussed items learned during responding to these events. We added five-gallon buckets to enhance to our trailer. We discussed acquisition of magnets after picking up small metal items strewn over fields. We learned about potential ways to feed teams. I was in awe of how farming communities pull together to respond when needed. Many loaders were on scene to move trees as I cut them into manageable chunks. These operators made quick work of trees downed by the wind's destructive forces.

I want to give a shout out to our wonderful synod staff as well. They have been a wonderful conduit to reach out to local congregations to find needs. This was evident after the February storms.

During this past year, we visited congregations within SCSW recruiting to grow our leadership team. We need your help. Many current council members have served two terms and have moved to Emeritus status leaving several conferences without representation. Personally, I have been involved with LUAD 8 years and now leave South Rock Conference without an official delegate. I have looking to find my replacement and have been visiting churches in other open conferences as well. I would like to visit your congregation in 2024. Reach out to me at info@luad.org to schedule a council member visit to your church this year. Just this morning, we scheduled a November 2024 visit, and we anticipate adding a council member at our next meeting. Please check our website www.luad.org and our Facebook page by searching for LUAD Wisconsin - ELCA.

Blessings,

Todd Long

President LUAD

SCSW Care for Creation Report

Building:

The Care for Creation team believes God loves ALL created beings and that God's spirit resides in all created beings as well as in the Earth that sustains us. We hold creation sacred and believe God created humankind to care for creation in ways both large or small. Our team seeks to build relationships with other like-minded people throughout the synod in order to

- Share information about ways to care for creation through the synod news outlets, synod website and special Care for Creation events,
- Form a network of creation care individuals/congregations, and
- Sustain hope that God helps us make a difference - even as we live in the urgency of climate crisis.

Learning:

- Submitted a Care for Creation resolution that was unanimously passed at 2023 Synod Assembly. The resolution requests a one-page Action Plan from congregations about their earth-care activities and asks what information would be helpful to them.
- 26 congregations submitted one-page Action Plans that show highlight a wide range of activities from starting a Care for Creation team and recycling to updating boilers and window insulation and installing solar panels.
- We continue to collect one-page Action Plans at www.scsw-elca.org (under Ministries/Care for Creation). Click the blue "submit a plan here" rectangle and fill out the form. Thanks to Seyla Link for designing the form.
- Gave a Care for Creation presentation on our resolution at the 2023 Fall Summit.
- Offered a Solar Zoom Session in January 2024 in response to information from Action Plans. 30 people from 17 congregations within and outside of our synod attended. View the 90-minute session under Care for Creation at www.scsw-elca.org.
- Provided Wild Church worship events. A synod-wide event at Bethel Horizons co-sponsored by Bethel Lutheran will be held May 4.
- Presented Care for Creation session at October 2023 WELCA gathering.
- Held two winter book discussion groups (15 - 20 attendees) - Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer (2023) and John Philip Newell's Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul (2024).

Growing:

We are launching a synod-wide Web of Creation email network to connect those who want to continue to explore opportunities to care for creation within our synod, share their creation care information with others, sustain hope, and advocate for Earth-friendly political policies.

Getting Connected:

Visit the synod website or contact: Chair, Meg Nielsen at churchladymeg@hotmail.com, long-time member Nick Utphall at nick@themcc.net or Jen Christensen, synod liaison, at jenc@scsw-elca.org.

Women of the ELCA/Women's Ministries Report

Building:

OUR MISSION

Mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

NUESTRA MISSION

Movilizar a mujeres a actuar con valenta en su fe en Jesucristo.

OUR PURPOSE

As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.

PROPÓSITO

Como comunidad de mujeres creadas a imagen de Dios, llamadas a convertirnos en discípulas de Jesucristo, y fortalecidas por el Espíritu Santo, nos comprometemos a crecer en la fe, afirmar nuestros dones, apoyarnos las unas a las otras en nuestras respectivas vocaciones, involucrarnos en el ejercicio del ministerio y la acción, y promover la sanación y la integridad en la iglesia, la sociedad, y el mundo.

Learning:

We have learned that Women's Ministry/Women of the ELCA is alive and well in the the Synod. At our Convention in October nearly one-third of those attending were first time attendees. Learning with other women and sharing with other women of our Synod and throughout the United States & Caribbean is truly a blessing and gift. Our theme for the convention was Good Things Come in Small Packages.

For those attending the Triennial Women of the ELCA convention and Gathering in Phoenix, Arizona we learned how full and overflowing our cups can be as we were energized, educated, and loved. The theme of the Triennial was Just Love. Our workshops, large group and worship services taught us, showed us, gave us resources, and challenged us to Just Love. The energy of the twenty-four attending was brought home to our Synod.

Women of the ELCA is not same organization as even five years ago. We are learning and relearning who we are. We learned that women do not have to be part of a Circle/Bible Study group. We have also learned that there is a lot of

misconceptions about Women of the ELCA/Women's Ministry.

We are aware that we with accompaniment, European descent women (the majority within our organization) are asked to walk in solidarity with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) women in the struggle for racial equity. As we continue to learn we continue to realize we have more to do. This we truly re-enforced at the Triennial. The work on human trafficking continues to be a learning experience as women examine how they can get involved.

Growing:

Women of the ELCA (WELCA)/Women's Ministries hopes to grow with the number of women who get involved in women's ministries around the Synod. As the women continue to renew and become more comfortable with a new look/way of thinking about WELCA we will with all women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. In 2024 we hope to have spring/fall Gatherings in all areas/conferences of the Synod. We plan to continue to raise the awareness that Women of the ELCA is really Women with the ELCA. All women are welcome. You are with Women's Ministry whether you are attending a mom's group, co-ed Bible Study, quilting, creating prayer shawls, serving meals, food pantry volunteering, Sunday School volunteer, etc. We, the Synodical Board, and women in each of the Synod congregations, will continue to seek ways and avenues to meet women of all ages, especially those younger than 40 - 45, where they are at in their life outside of the church walls and into our community. We will be offering the incentive of an annual subscription to the award-winning Gather magazine for first time attendees to the Women's Retreat in October.

Lutheran Men in Mission Ministries Report

Building:

We, the SCSW-ELCA LMM Volunteer Task Force, by God's grace, will provide and facilitate communications to congregations about opportunities that will allow them to network, link, share and grow their men's ministries with their brothers from other congregations of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin.

Learning:

One Year to Live Retreat October 2023 MacKenzie Center, Poynette
Sixteen men participated in the retreat on the weekend of October 13-15 at MacKenzie Environmental Education Center. A current schedule and registration forms for all retreats are available on

<https://www.lutheranmeninmission.org/events/one-year-to-live/> .

LMM provided new live streaming events in May in Tacoma, WA and November 2023 in Appleton, WI. The goal is to have more frequent opportunities for men to hear the stories of other men's faith journeys. Local churches can host the streaming event inexpensively if they have a good internet service. Go to www.boldgathering.com for more information about this year's events or to watch past presentations. Some of the speakers have provided discussion guides for their presentation for small groups to use as needed. Some presentation titles in 2023 were: 12 Words that transformed my life; Is science at odds with the bible?; The gift of play; Leading a church internship; Finding hope and dealing with mental illness; When the bubble bursts; Living my purpose; With the end in mind; Faith through trials; and Young men and the church.

Work has accelerated on a resource website for ministries to men sponsored by LMM. Go to <https://projecttwelve.net/> regularly to check for new postings. The website welcomes submissions of helpful resources via a form on the Contact Use tab. Submissions are reviewed by a curation team before posting is allowed.

The work on the themed series of Bible study guides called Lifelines for small groups of men continued. A team of mostly lay men writes these, so they are fresh and varied. The Lifelines production team consists of thirteen guys representing 7 denominations and ministries. There are 108 studies available on the website.

Growing:

The LMM Board is coordinating a communication group of men in each synod that will serve as promoters of LMM events and programs using their personal email and social contacts. The program provides e-newsletters to easily share, with the hopes that the personal relationship of the sender with the recipients will increase

awareness. Two members of the Task Force are ambassadors. The LMM volunteer director for communications, Dave Newman, welcomes any man who would like to serve as a conduit for LMM communications about events and resources to others in his congregation or circle of contacts. Dave can be emailed thru the LMM website (<https://www.lutheranmeninmission.org/contact/email-david-newman/>).

Getting Connected:

The Task Force members meet on a regular basis, either in person or by conference call. Men of the synod are always welcome to join us in this ministry to and with men. Please contact Jim Schieble by text or call to (920) 763-3433, for more information, or if you would like a Task Force member to visit your congregation. For more information about Lutheran Men in Mission resources, events and ideas please go to <http://www.lutheranmeninmission.org/> or www.scsw-elca.org Men's Ministry page.

Reconciling in Christ Report

Building:

The foundational identity of the synod Reconciling in Christ team is to help the synod live into its welcome statement, particularly on how that relates to inclusion of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions. Being an RIC synod doesn't mean that congregations are automatically RIC. It does mean that the work of the synod, including office and staff, should strive for full inclusion, for example in the efforts of the candidacy committee, mobility, etc.

Still, for the past year, some of the primary efforts of our RIC team were in support of congregations in their own RIC processes, to become RIC congregations (including with Messiah in Madison and West Koshkonong recently adopting welcome statements) and for those who are already RIC to work on updating their commitments.

Learning:

Across this synod, there is a wide variety of understandings and approaches about welcome for the LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer) community. Within congregations, there are ongoing care-filled conversations about being RIC and whether those efforts fit congregational identity in an appropriate way. Some figure they are already welcoming or take it as an inherent part of our identity as Lutherans or followers of Jesus. Some are not sure whether they should be. Some strive deliberately and publicly to expand the welcome, inclusion, and even safety--in language used in worship, bathroom facilities, educational opportunities, outreach, and more.

One recent aspect of learning relates to drive by the national ReconcilingWorks organization to understand both privilege and prejudice as involving overlapping intersectional identities. This is partly manifest in the expanded RIC commitments as an expectation that we will work for racial equity and strive to be antiracist.

Growing:

Besides promoting the Reconciling in Christ program and some of our internal church efforts, the synod team will also be looking for ways to broadcast our support, including how to stand with and on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community in the face of oppression from hate groups arriving at events, regressive legislation, and so on.

Getting Connected:

Nick Utphall (nick@theMCC.net) Jason Poole-Xiong (jasonx@scsw-elca.org) Brenda Lovick (pastor.brendalovick@gmail.com) Laura Svaren (lauras@midvalelutheran.org)

Stewardship Team Report

Team members:

Rev. Holly Slater, Mr. Jon Nelson, Mr. Henry Elling, Rev. Peter Heide (retired), and Rev. Peter Beeson (staff liaison)

Friends,

This year our synod stewardship webpage has been updated, thanks to the work of Jason Poole-Xiong, synod webmaster. You can access it online at: www.scsw-elca.org/stewardship Rather than an exhaustive list of resources we've curated three sections, "Resources for Financial Best Practices", "Resources for Cultivating Generosity", and "Help! My congregation is struggling with Money". You can access the resources by hovering your mouse cursor over the images on the website that are associated with each section. The four stewardship programs the SCSW Synod Stewardship Team is promoting this year are:

- Sanctified Art: Our Money Story
- New Consecration Sunday

The two resources above are time-limited (4- to 6-week) stewardship curriculum. And:

- The Generosity Project
- Holy Currencies

that focus on whole-life, year-round generosity.

A big thank-you to Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Portage and Faith Lutheran Church in Walworth for hosting two concurrent **Fall Stewardship Kick-off** events on September 16, 2023. It was a great opportunity for local congregations to learn, share stories, and encourage one another in their stewardship ministries.

Have resources or questions you'd like us to focus on? Need friendly advice? Want to see how a stewardship curriculum you are considering has worked for another congregation? Send an email to peterb@scsw-elca.org and we'll get you connected.

In Christ's peace,
The SCSW Stewardship Team

Synod Prayer Team Report

Building:

In the spirit of love and care for one another, a Synod Prayer Team was created in 2019, to offer prayers for rostered ministers and their loved ones. We are the body of Christ together and enfolding one another in prayer is a comforting and sustaining expression of this body.

During our monthly meetings, our time together includes: a brief check-in, a devotion, prayers for individuals, our Synod staff and rostered leaders, our congregations, communities, state, national and global areas of concern/needs.

Learning:

During both the LEAD Event in February 2023 and the Synod Assembly in May 2023, our members set up a quiet room to be used for prayer and contemplation. Each setting was unique but very conducive to prayer or quiet time. We had a unique bowl with water centrally located for anyone who wished to dip their fingers in as a reminder of their baptismal roots. Other items included natural materials like stones and baskets to help set the mood. A handout about the synod prayer group was available as were pieces of paper for persons to put in a request for prayer. People came in and stayed as short or long as they wanted. It was sacred space.

LEAD Event, February 2024: At the conclusion of the break-out sessions, our team encouraged the use of partner prayer for the last 5-10 minutes. A list of simple ideas was offered for prayer topics.

Growing:

Please consider joining the prayer team!! We are open to new voices and ideas! Currently we meet by zoom on the first Thursday of each month from 1:00-2:00.

Getting Connected:

To make prayer requests, please go to the Synod web site at South-Central Synod of Wisconsin - Prayer (scsw-elca.org). There is a form to complete and send to us for your requests. You will also find the "Devotions for Christ's People, Called as Leaders of God's Church" devotion booklet. This was created in 2021 for congregational leadership positions to use as monthly devotions for their meetings.

To join us on the prayer team or for further information, please contact Diane Padrutt at padruttjde@outlook.com. Thank you!

Samaritan Counseling Center Report

Building:

At the Samaritan Counseling Center of Southern Wisconsin, we're proud to serve as a Social Ministry Organization under the ELCA and as part of Lutheran Services in America. Our center holds national accreditation through the esteemed National Samaritan Institute (Solihten Institute) and is certified by the state as a mental health clinic.

We provide a range of services, including counseling, consultation, and educational programs. Our dedicated team works with individuals, couples, and families from diverse backgrounds, offering spiritually integrated psychotherapy and educational support. We also offer specialized programs designed to assist clergy and congregations in their unique challenges.

Dr. Dan Feaster leads our counseling and consultation efforts through the ASSIST program, which provides pastors, deacons, and their families with three visits to address any challenges or concerns they may have. Should further counseling be necessary, our services are often covered by insurance benefits.

Mental health is a critical concern, affecting one in four adults. At the Samaritan Center, we strive to support everyone facing mental health challenges, whether mild or severe. Our services address a range of issues including depression, anxiety, trauma, grief, family, and relationship dynamics, as well as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. We accept most major health insurance plans, including Anthem Blue Cross Shield, Dean Health/SSM plans, Quartz, Medicare, and Medicaid plans, UnitedHealth Care, The Alliance, UMR, Cigna and others. Some plans vary by therapist. Please contact your insurance for specifics regarding your health plan if you will be using insurance.

To better serve our community, we offer both in-person counseling and telehealth video therapy. Telehealth services allow us to extend our reach statewide, ensuring accessibility for all residents of Wisconsin. Our services are open to anyone within your congregation, including pastors and deacons.

Learning:

The needs of clergy, deacons and congregations are significant. Significant stress and burnout for clergy and deacons. Challenges of congregations needing to adapt and be relevant in today's society.

Growing:

Continue expanding and offering additional counseling, consultation and educational programs.

Getting Connected:

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact our center at 608-663-0763 or www.SamaritanCounselingCenterWI.org. If you are a pastor or deacon and calling about the ASSIST program, mention you are wanting to schedule an ASSIST visit so we can get you in quickly. We're here to support you on your journey toward mental and emotional well-being!

Racial Equity Report

Building:

The Racial Equity Team exists to build awareness of racial disparities through educational events in our synod, to build capacity to connect congregations and individuals in racial equity work, to empower congregations and individuals to join actions that promote racial equity in the policies of our synod, and to equip congregations and individuals to take action to promote racial equity in programs through our synod and communities.

Learning:

In the past year, the Racial Equity team has supported the Voices of Color Book Discussion series led by Donna Peterson and WELCA. The Racial Equity Team also helped Bethel Horizons to provide an anti-racism training program for staff and campers last summer which was led by Rhonda Hill of Race & Faith. This camp was a goal of the team for several years and so we celebrate this partnership! Back in 2022, the Racial Equity Team wrote a resolution passed by the assembly to require an annual anti-racism educational opportunity for rostered leaders. We are grateful that Bishop Joy and the synod staff helped arrange follow up on this resolution by bringing Rhonda Hill to our Fall Summit in 2023 and for the plans to offer a four-week training online for rostered leaders in 2024. At the 2023 assembly, the Racial Equity Team worked on two resolutions that passed. The first committed our synod to updating our Reconciling in Christ commitments to include a commitment to racial equity, and the second sought to begin the process of a meaningful land acknowledgement regarding the territory our synod occupies and the First Nations who historically lived in this area. At the Fall Summit, the Bishop's Staff arranged for an RIC workshop on updating commitments and a presentation by the Rev. Kerri Parker on Land Acknowledgments. Thank you to Bishop Joy and the staff for arranging that follow-up! The team held some discussions about additional follow up on these resolutions, but more work needs to be done in the coming year.

Growing:

The Racial Equity Team is always looking for more ways to connect with individuals and congregations around our synod. We try to meet roughly once a month, and we welcome all those who are interested in learning more. One of our top priorities for the coming year will be following up with the Reconciling in Christ team regarding updating our commitments. Another change: The role of convener of the team is

being passed on from Andy Twiton to Vica-Etta Steel. Thank you, Vica, for stepping into this role! And thank you to the other passionate members of our team!

Getting Connected:

Vica-Etta Steel (convener), vicavsteel@gmail.com



Rules of Organization and Procedure

Note: The following rules are proposed in accordance with S7.32.A12. Provisions of governing documents pertaining to each Synod Assembly are described in the Constitution of the Synod, particularly Chapter 7.

GENERAL PROCEDURES

- 1) **AGENDA.** The Synod Assembly shall approve the agenda prior to commencement of any formal consideration of business. The agenda may include items to be adopted by common consent prior to any reports. Any member of the Assembly may extract an item for later discussion from the bloc present. Items not extracted will be adopted by common consent.
- 2) **OFFICIAL VISITORS.** The synod bishop or the Synod Council may invite visitors to address the Synod Assembly. They shall not have vote.
- 3) **ACCESS TO SEATING.** A person will be admitted to restricted seating areas only upon display of proper credentials.
- 4) **OBTAINING THE FLOOR.** In plenary sessions of the Synod Assembly, the voting members have prior right to obtain the floor, unless the chair determines that it is in the best interests of the assembly to call upon another individual with voice.
- 5) **SPEECH LENGTH.** Unless otherwise determined by a majority vote of the assembly, all speeches during discussion shall be limited to two minutes. A signal shall be given one minute before the speaker's time ends. A second signal shall be given one minute later, and the speaker shall then refrain from speaking further.
- 6) **ALTERNATING VIEWPOINTS.** Insofar as is possible during discussion, a speaker on one side of the question shall be followed by a speaker on the other side. To facilitate alternating speeches, assembly members awaiting recognition at the floor microphones shall approach the microphone holding their green card for a position of "in favor" of the question or red card for a position of "in opposition" to the question.
- 7) **THE QUESTION WILL BE CALLED** when three speakers on the same side of the question have spoken and there are no further speakers on the opposing side.
- 8) **MOTION TO RESCIND OR AMEND SOMETHING PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED AT THIS ASSEMBLY.** A two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting shall be required to rescind or to amend something previously adopted during this Synod Assembly.

- 9) **SUSPENDING OR REVISING THE RULES.** After the adoption of the Rules of Organization and Procedure and any amendments thereto offered prior to the adoption of the Rules, any further amendment to, revision in, or suspension of, the Rules shall always require for adoption a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting.
- 10) **MOVING THE PREVIOUS QUESTION.** A member who has obtained the floor and spoken on the pending question(s) may not move the previous question(s) without an intervening speaker.
- 11) **APPLAUSE.** In the give-and-take of debate on issues before the Synod Assembly, members of the assembly and visitors shall refrain from applause.
- 12) **DEPARTING FROM AGENDA.** The chair shall have the authority to call items of business before the assembly in whatever order they consider most expedient for the conduct of the assembly's business. A member of the assembly may move to alter the agenda. Adoption of such a motion shall require a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting.
- 13) **UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND MINUTES.** Upon adjournment of the Synod Assembly all remaining unfinished items of business shall be referred to the Synod Council of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, as well as the review of minutes of this Assembly.
- 14) **VARIOUS METHODS OF VOTING.** As directed by the chair, voting may be by voice, by show of hands, by standing, by written ballot, by raising of cards, or through electronic means.
- 15) **DIVISION OF THE HOUSE.** When a division of the house is ordered, the vote shall be by raising of cards, by standing vote, or by written ballot as directed by the chair. No division of the house is in order when a vote has been taken by concrete means as indicated above.
- 16) **ABSTENTIONS.** Abstentions are not recognized and do not count as a vote cast.
- 17) **FLOOR HANDOUTS TO BE APPROVED.** All handouts not included in preassembly materials to voting members and visitors at the Assembly must be approved by the Executive Committee.

RULES GOVERNING RESOLUTIONS

- 18) COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED. The Reference and Counsel committee shall be appointed by the Bishop within two weeks of the deadline for filing proposed resolutions for the Synod Assembly with the Synod Office.
- 19) SOURCE OF RESOLUTIONS.
- a) Resolutions may be submitted by: the Synod Council and other constitutional units, conferences, clusters, coalitions, committees, ministry teams of the Synod as recognized by the Synod Assembly; Lutheran partnerships with which the Synod works or which it funds; congregations of the Synod; or three or more voting members of congregations of the Synod.
 - b) Only voting members of the assembly (three minimum) may introduce resolutions following the Call to Order of the assembly.
- 20) THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF RESOLUTIONS to the Reference and Counsel committee for inclusion in the assembly book shall be 60 days prior to the opening of the assembly. Resolutions submitted after the deadline may be referred to the appropriate committee or reported as information to the assembly.
- 21) RESOLUTIONS RECEIVED AFTER THE OPENING OF THE ASSEMBLY must be timely and/or germane to the matters before the assembly or on the assembly agenda. The Reference and Counsel committee may receive and review resolutions in order to make recommendations to the assembly. They may be brought to the floor of the Assembly by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly present and voting.
- 22) FISCAL ESTIMATE REQUIRED. If a resolution calls for additional costs or staff time, the author(s) of the resolution must estimate the cost.
- 23) RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE CHAIR OF THE REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE. Any proposed resolution or amendment to a resolution shall be written legibly and/or typed and be given and/or e-mailed (preferred) to the chair when introduced or to the chair of the assembly planning team. These must include the author's name, address, and congregation.
- 24) AUTHORITY GIVEN TO REFERENCE AND COUNSEL. All resolutions and memorials brought to the floor of the Assembly by the Reference and Counsel Committee shall be considered properly moved and seconded.

- a) When the Reference and Counsel Committee recommends approval or makes no recommendation, the resolution or memorial will be the main motion on the floor.
 - b) When the Reference and Counsel Committee recommends rejection, referral or a substitute motion, the recommendation will be the pending question on the Assembly floor.
 - c) When the Reference and Counsel Committee declines to bring a resolution to the floor of the Assembly, the submitter(s) of the resolution shall be notified and the Assembly may, by a majority vote of those present and voting, bring the resolution to the floor for action.
- 25) PROPOSED FLOOR AMENDMENTS. On any action, the counsel of the committee may be sought by the chair of the Assembly; it is appropriate for the committee to offer recommended language to expedite the work of the Assembly. Such language may be utilized by the assembly with unanimous consent of the body or, if objection is heard, by the majority vote of the body.

RULES GOVERNING ELECTIONS

- 26) BALLOTS. If written ballots are used, write-in candidates may be recorded on the first ballot only.
- 27) NOMINATIONS. Nominations will be taken from the floor on the first ballot only.
- 28) PLACEMENT OF NAMES ON BALLOT. Names will be placed on first ballots in random order as determined by lot, and on subsequent ballots in the order of votes on the previous ballot.
- 29) DETERMINATION OF ELECTION FOR SINGLE OFFICE. Any person receiving a majority of the votes on the first ballot cast shall be elected. If no person receives a majority of the votes cast on the first ballot, the names of the two persons receiving the largest number of votes cast on the first ballot shall be placed on the second ballot, and the recipient of the largest number of votes cast on the second ballot shall be elected.
- 30) REPRESENTATIONAL PRINCIPLE. All representational principles of the ELCA and the SCSW will govern the tickets as determined by the Elections Committee. (Refer to S6.04)
- 31) MEANS OF ELECTION FOR SYNOD COUNCIL, CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY DELEGATION, AND DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE ON

COMMON BALLOTS. When more than one candidate is to be elected to a position, the number of candidates, equal to the number of seats to be elected, who receive the most votes shall be elected, provided those candidates have received votes on a majority of the ballots cast. If any number of seats remains unelected after the casting of votes on the first ballot, the names of those persons not elected, who received the largest number of votes on the first ballot, shall be placed on the second ballot. The total number of persons listed on the second and subsequent ballot(s) shall be up to twice the number of seats yet to be elected. The recipient(s) of the largest number of votes cast on the second and subsequent ballot(s) shall be elected. Each member of the Synod Assembly shall be permitted to vote for the number of nominees equal to the number of unfilled positions on subsequent ballots.

- a) The first ticket for any position shall include any nominees that meet the representational principal requirements for a) Youth or Young Adult, or b) Person of Color/Language Other Than English on a ballot for the office for which they are nominated.
- b) Balloting shall continue until such time as the number of seats to be filled by a) Youth or Young Adults or b) Persons of Color/Language Other Than English for the body is filled or nominees that satisfy these principles are exhausted. Persons placed on these tickets, if not elected, remain nominated for the role sought, and may be elected to positions not reserved for such persons, provided that they meet the criteria otherwise applicable for the position (i.e. lay or clergy, male or female).
- c) After the election of the persons of color/language other than English and persons less than 30 years of age as described above, a first ballot shall be taken for the remaining positions available according to the required balance (clergy male, clergy female, lay female and lay male). All properly nominated candidates shall appear on the first ballot, with each voting member of the Synod Assembly permitted to vote for the number of open positions in the categories of clergy and lay.
- d) All ties shall be resolved by lot.

Language for Introducing Motions

The chart below offers standard phrases used when introducing motions for various purposes.

If you wish to . . .	You say . . .
Close the meeting	I move to adjourn.
Take a break	I move to recess for [<i>specify time duration</i>] OR until [<i>time certain</i>].
Register a complaint	I rise to a question of privilege.
Require the assembly to return to its agenda	I call for the orders of the day.
Lay a matter aside temporarily	I move to lay the question on the table.
Close debate	I move the previous question.
Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited to . . .
Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to [<i>time</i>
Refer the motion to a committee	I move to refer the motion to [<i>committee</i>
Modify wording of the motion	I move to amend the motion by . . .
Kill the main motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely.
Bring business before the assembly	I move that . . . OR I move to . . .

If you wish to . . .	You say . . .
Enforce the rules	Point of order.
Submit a matter to the assembly after a ruling from the chair	I appeal the decision of the chair.
Suspend the rules	I move to suspend the rules.
Avoid a main motion altogether	I object to the consideration of . . .
Divide a motion	I move to divide the question.
Demand a rising vote	I move for a rising vote.
Ask a parliamentary law question	Parliamentary inquiry.
Request for information	Point of information.
Take a matter from the table	I move to take from the table . . .
Reconsider a motion	I move to reconsider . . .
Cancel a previous action	I move to rescind . . .

Chart of Non-Ranking

Name of Motion	Section	Interrupt?	Second?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Vote	Reconsider?
<i>Incidental</i>							
Appeal	24	YES	YES	YES	NO	M	YES
Consider by paragraph/seriatim	28	NO	YES	NO	YES	M	NO
Division of the Assembly	29	YES	NO	NO	NO	DEMAND	NO
Division of a question	27	NO	YES	NO	YES	M	NO
Nominations and polls (reopen)	31	NO	YES	NO	YES	M	YES (-)
Nominations and polls (close)	31	NO	YES	NO	YES	2/3	NO
Objection to consideration of a question	26	YES	NO	NO	NO	2/3	YES (-)
Parliamentary inquiry	33	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO-CHAIR	NO
Point of information	33	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO-CHAIR	NO
Point of order	10	YES	NO	NO*	NO	NO-CHAIR	NO
Ratify/confirm	10	NO	YES	YES	YES	M	YES
Requests to withdraw a motion, read a paper, etc.	33	YES	NO*	NO	NO	M*	YES*
Suspend the rules	25	NO	YES	NO	NO	2/3*	NO
Voting	30	NO	YES	NO*	YES	M*	YES
<i>Bring Back Motions</i>							
Discharge a committee	36	NO	YES	YES	YES	2/3*	YES(-)
Reconsider	37	YES*	YES	YES	NO	M	NO
Rescind or amend something previously adopted	35	NO	YES	YES	YES	2/3*	YES(-)
Take from the table	34	NO	YES	NO	NO	M	NO

Notes

- * = Exceptions exist
- + = Only an affirmative vote can be reconsidered
- = Only a negative vote can be reconsidered
- M** = Majority

Chart of Ranking

Name of Motion in Order of Rank	Section	Interrupt?	Second?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Vote	Reconsider?
<i>Privileged</i>							
Fix the time to which to adjourn	22	NO	YES	NO*	YES	M	YES
Adjourn	21	NO	YES	NO*	NO*	M	NO
Take a recess	20	NO	YES	NO	YES	M	NO
Raise a question of privilege	19	YES	NO	NO	NO	CHAIR*	NO
Call for the orders of the day	18	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO*	NO
<i>Subsidiary</i>							
Lay on the table	17	NO	YES	NO	NO	M	YES(-)
Previous question	16	NO	YES	NO	NO*	2/3	YES*
Limit or extend limits of debate	15	NO	YES	NO	YES	2/3	YES
Postpone to a certain time	14	NO	YES	YES	YES	M*	YES
Commit or refer	13	NO	YES	YES	YES	M	YES*
Amend	12	NO	YES	YES*	YES*(x1)	M	YES
Postpone indefinitely	11	NO	YES	YES	NO	M	YES(+)
<i>Main motion</i>							
Main motion	10	NO	YES	YES	YES	M	YES

Notes

- * = Exceptions exist
- + = Only an affirmative vote can be reconsidered
- = Only a negative vote can be reconsidered
- M** = Majority

1 **RESOLUTION RE: THE WAR BETWEEN HAMAS AND ISRAEL**

2 **WHEREAS**, Hamas militants horrifically stormed into Southern Israel on October 7,
3 2023 killing about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting about 250 others; and

4 **WHEREAS**, Israel has retaliated resulting in 100,000 people killed, injured or missing
5 with the deaths continuing to increase. Two thirds of those killed are women and
6 minors. Israeli Defense Forces have caused massive destruction to the infra-structure
7 and the environment in Gaza, and has targeted places of worship, schools and hospitals,
8 forcing nearly all of the 2.3 million residents to flee their homes. Civilians of Gaza are
9 deprived of clean water, food, medicine and medical care, and other basic human needs;
10 and

11 **WHEREAS**, the United States is Israel’s greatest ally, continuing to supply Israel with
12 military aid and weapons, without regard to whether the military resources are used in
13 accordance with U.S. law, international humanitarian law and the law of armed conflict;
14 and

15 **WHEREAS**, without a ceasefire between Israel and Gaza, the deaths of civilians, the
16 suffering and disease from hunger, lack of clean water and medical care will continue to
17 grow, and the likelihood of hostages being released will continue to diminish; and

18 **WHEREAS**, the International Court of Justice (NPR, January 26, 2024) has found it is
19 plausible that Israel has committed acts that violate the Genocide Convention; and

20 **WHEREAS**, the ELCA Statement on Peacemaking professes that the biblical narrative
21 reveals God’s resolve for peace, and God’s reign of peace was established through
22 Jesus’ death and resurrection and Jesus’ followers are called to participate in God’s
23 reign as peacemakers; therefore be it

24 **RESOLVED**, that voting members of the 2024 Synod Assembly instruct Bishop Joy
25 Mortensen-Wiebe to write a letter to Senators Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson and
26 Congressional Representatives Bryan Steil, Derrick Van Orden, Mark Pocan, Glenn
27 Grothman, and Scott Fitzgerald asking them to publicly support a ceasefire to prevent
28 the further loss of life; prioritize the protection of all civilians, including securing the
29 entrance of humanitarian aid into Gaza and working to secure the release of hostages;
30 urge all parties in the conflict to fully respect international humanitarian law and require
31 that all military aid to Israel be used in accordance with the U.S. law, international
32 humanitarian law and the law of armed conflict; and be it further

33 **RESOLVED**, that congregations and members of the ELCA South Central Synod of
34 Wisconsin be encouraged to contact their US Senators and Congress members to ask
35 them to publicly support a ceasefire to prevent further loss of life; prioritize the
36 protection of all civilians by securing the entrance of humanitarian aid into Gaza and
37 working to secure the release of hostages; urge all parties in the conflict to fully respect
38 international humanitarian law and require that all military aid to Israel be used in
39 accordance with U.S. law, international humanitarian law the law of armed conflict; and
40 be it further

41 **RESOLVED**, congregations and members of the SCSW be encouraged to pray for a
42 just and lasting peace for Israel and Palestine, to consider financially giving to the
43 ELCA Disaster Response for the Middle East Crisis, and the Holy Land, and find and
44 read resources that will inform them about the history and the current situation of
45 Palestinians and Palestinian Christians.

46 **Submitted By:**

47 Rev. Anne Andert (Retired Rostered Minister)

48 Rev. David Andert (Retired Rostered Minister)

49 Judy Armelin (Messiah, Madison)

50 Bonnie Block (St. John's, Madison)

51 Rev. George Carlson (Retired Rostered Minister)

52 Rev. Jerry Folk (Retired Rostered Minister)

53 Rev. Blake Rohrer (Midvale Community, Madison)

54 Pam Shellberg (Messiah, Madison)

55 Rev. Jeff Wild (Retired Rostered Minister)

Nominations

Nominations for all positions will be taken at the opening of the assembly only.

No nominations will be received after nominations are closed.

Any positions remaining open following synod assembly will be appointed by synod council.

SYNOD COUNCIL

3 positions open; **1** rostered male, **1** lay female, **1** youth member

The Synod Council is the Board of Directors of the Synod and is its interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly. The Council makes decisions not in conflict with actions taken by the Synod Assembly or not precluded by provisions of the Synod's constitution and bylaws or the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA.

Synod Council Rostered Male – 3 Years *(vote for one)*

Rev. Chris Strohm *(he/him/his)*



- **Congregation/Ministry:** New Hope (Blanchardville/Hollandale)
- **Present Occupation:** Pastor
- **Education:** MDIV- Wartburg Theological Seminary; BS-Economics-University of Wisconsin-Madison
- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Pastor
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Churchwide Assembly Delegate (twice, South Dakota Synod), Synod Council (South Dakota Synod), Executive Council-2 yrs; (South Dakota Synod)

○

Gifts this person would bring:

I bring my experience from being on the synod council in my previous synod of South Dakota. I also was on the executive synod council for two years. In my previous call I served as the conference President. I bring my love for the church and the ELCA and my desire to help guide us into the future as a leader of this Synod.

Synod Council Lay Female – 3 Years *(vote for one)*

No nominees at time of publication.

Synod Council Youth Member – 2 Years *(vote for one)*

No nominees at time of publication.

CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

4 positions open; 1 rostered male, 1 rostered female, 2 lay female

The Synod Consultation Committee is a constitutionally mandated committee which serves in an advisory capacity for the Office of the Bishop. The Consultation Committee may be called upon to help navigate disagreements or disputes within or between congregations.

Consultation Committee Rostered Male – 6 Years *(vote for one)*

Rev. Mark Dressel *(he/him/his)*



- **Congregation/Ministry:** Trinity (Lake Mills)
- **Present Occupation:** Pastor
- **Education:** Cornell University, major -Government, BA 1992, Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MDiv, 1996, Harvard Divinity School, program - Christianity and Culture, ThM 1997
- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Christ Lutheran Church, Sharon, WI (1997-2007), Trinity Lutheran Church, Lake Mills, WI (2007 - Present)
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Almost two terms on Synod Council (completed a term for a member who resigned and then served a full term). Many Synod Assemblies and Convocations. Involved in Area ministry.
- **Gifts this person would bring:**

I've been blessed to work with a lot of wonderful people and to see God's grace on numerous occasions. I try to address small challenges while they are still small, and to find the good in people and situations.

Consultation Committee Rostered Female – 6 Years (vote for one)

Rev. Michelle Elfers (she/her/hers)



- **Congregation/Ministry:** St. John's Evangelical (Richland Center)
- **Present Occupation:** Pastor
- **Education:** MDIV, Trinity Lutheran Seminary; JD, UW-Madison, MA Portuguese, UW-Madison, BA Anthropology, Wright State University
- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Pastor at St. John's Lutheran Evangelical Church in Richland Center Wisconsin (Jan. 2019-present), Pastor at New Hope, WI (2016-2019), in Indianapolis, IN (2011-2016), in Louisville, KY (2006-2011) Lawyer in Madison, WI (Elfers, Knoll and Hart 1995-1998; Elfers Law Office 1998-2001), Board Member (South Louisville Community Ministries 2007-2011, University of Indianapolis Ministry Board 2013-2015, Richland County Ministerial Association 2019-present)
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Transformational Ministry Team, Indiana-Kentucky Synod (2008-2015); Connect Transformational Ministry Team, South-Central Synod of WI (2016-2018); Dean, Iowa/Richland/Grant Counties Conference of the South-Central Synod of WI (2019-2023)
- **Gifts this person would bring:** Compassionate heart. Serving in congregations with losses due to prior pastor death to suicide, prior pastor death from heart attack, and theft of money by lay leaders. Legal training.

Consultation Committee Lay Female – 6 Years (vote for two)

No nominees at time of publication.

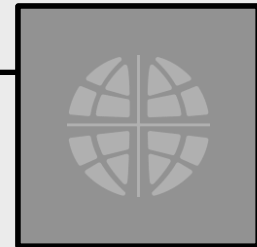
COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE

5 positions open; 1 rostered male, 1 rostered female, 2 lay male, 1 lay female

The Committee on Discipline is a constitutionally mandated committee which acts to administer a thorough review and, as necessary, discipline process upon congregations and rostered ministers. The Committee on Discipline meets on the call of the Office of the Bishop should charges be either pending or submitted.

Committee on Discipline Rostered Male – 6 Years *(vote for one)*

Rev. Richard Inglett *(he/him/his)*



- **Congregation/Ministry:** Sugar Creek (Elkhorn)
- **Present Occupation:** Pastor
- **Education:** B.L.S., M.Div. S.T.M.
- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Walworth County Sheriff Chaplain; Blessing in a Back Coordinator Delavan School District; Internship Supervisor
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** New Testament instructor, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin Lay School of Theology (past); Old Testament and New Testament instructor South Central Synod of Wisconsin Diakonia School (past); Rural Ministry work on behalf of Synod; Synod Wide Listening Session Leader with Interim Bishop Peter Rogness on behalf of South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
- Gifts this person would bring:
I have 35 years of parish pastor experience in four congregations. For 20 plus I have been a clinical fellow of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy. In these roles I have had any number of experiences with working with groups, congregations and at the synod level working with these entities in destress and challenge.

Committee on Discipline Rostered Female – 6 Years (vote for one)

Rev. Sara VanDeBerg (she/her/hers)



o **Congregation/Ministry:** Immanuel Evangelical (Lake Geneva)

o **Present Occupation:** Pastor

o **Education:**

o **Congregational & Community Activities:** Co-Pastor of Immanuel in Lake Geneva since 2017; I was ordained in 2002,

and have served continuously in parish ministry since then. This is my 4th congregational call.

o **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:**

Gifts this person would bring:

In 21 years as a pastor in 4 different congregations, I have had a wide variety of experiences with both rostered and lay leaders within those congregations and in the surrounding communities. I have served in urban, suburban, and small town contexts, and I have been a solo pastor, an associate, and now as co-lead pastor. I have the spiritual gifts of wisdom and discernment, and I am a careful listener and thoughtful speaker.

CONTESTED ELECTION

Committee on Discipline Lay Male – 6 Years (vote for two)

Brian Johnsrud (he/him/his)



- **Congregation/Ministry:** Castle Rock (Fennimore)
- **Present Occupation:** Recently retired
- **Education:** High School

Congregational & Community Activities: Council President for Castle Rock Lutheran; Chairman of the Town of Castle Rock

- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Member of the Synod Nominating Committee; Member of LUAD
- **Gifts this person would bring:**

A desire to be a part of the ELCA organization beyond my own church. I would like to help doing the next right thing.

Gus Knitt (he/him/his)



- **Congregation/Ministry:** Lakeview (Madison)
- **Present Occupation:** Retired
- **Education:** Bachelor's--UW Stevens Point; Master's--UW Whitewater; Specialist--UW Milwaukee

Congregational & Community Activities: Interim Business

- Manager--Glendale River Hills School District; Sales person--Mousehouse Cheese
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Synod Candidacy Committee; Synod Reference and Counsel Committee

Gifts this person would bring:

Experience as School Administrator in dealing with discipline of school employees. Involvement in synod committees gives me understanding of operation of synod.

Steven W. Marshall *(he/him/his)*



○ **Congregation/Ministry:** Bethany English (Wisconsin Dells)

○ **Present Occupation:** Retired

○ **Education:** High School plus

○ **Congregational & Community Activities:** Lutheran Men in Mission; Portage Lions Club

○ **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Lutheran Men in Mission

○ **Gifts this person would bring:**

Have good listening skills, is fair and keeps an open mind.

Committee on Discipline Lay Female – 6 Years *(vote for one)*

Mary Irwin *(she/her/hers)*



- **Congregation/Ministry:** First Evangelical (Beaver Dam)
- **Present Occupation:** Church Musician
- **Education:** St. Olaf College
- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Direct choir, ring bells, organist; Loaves and Fishes; Beaver Dam Area Orchestra; Lay reader
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** LUAD council; Grace Institute for Spiritual Formation
- **Gifts this person would bring:**

I am a good listener, compassionate, and empathetic. I prayerfully consider serious decisions and challenges. Since I am retired from full time work (music teacher) my schedule is flexible.

ELCA CHURCH COUNCIL NOMINEES

2 positions open; 2 lay male

From the ELCA's website: "The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is both the board of directors of a Minnesota nonprofit corporation and the interim legislative authority of the churchwide organization, one of the three "expressions" of a denomination with deep roots in the U.S. In fulfilling its dual constitutional roles, the Church Council exercises fiduciary, strategic, and generative responsibilities to govern the ELCA churchwide organization."

ELCA Church Council Nominees Lay Male *(vote for two)*

Andrew Stevens *(he/him/his)*



- **Congregation/Ministry:** Luther Memorial (Madison)
- **Present Occupation:** Assistant Professor of Ag & Appl. Econ, UW–Madison
- **Education:** PhD (2017) & MS (2013), Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of California, Berkeley; BS (2012), Economics, University of Chicago
- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Luther Memorial Church Foundation Board of Directors, 2022–present; Adult Choir, Luther Memorial Church, 2019–present; Lake Monona Waterfront Ad Hoc Committee, City of Madison (Mayoral appointee), 2022–2023; Executive Council, Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc. (downtown Madison neighborhood association), 2023–present
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Candidacy Committee, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, 2021–present; Innovation Leadership Team, ELCA Churchwide, 2021–2022; Voting Member, ELCA Churchwide Assembly (2011, for the Saint Paul Area Synod; 2016, for the Sierra Pacific Synod; 2019, for the Southeastern Synod; and 2022, for the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin); Synod Council, Sierra Pacific Synod, 2015–2017
- **Gifts this person would bring:**
Over the past fifteen years, I have been a full or associate member of five ELCA congregations in five different synods. In each congregation and synod, I integrated myself into the church community and its work, giving me many rich perspectives on the opportunities and challenges our ELCA communities face. As a result, I now feel well-equipped to share my time and effort as a member of the ELCA Church Council.

Nominations for this position continue on the next page.

Paul Waelchli *(he/him/his)*



- **Congregation/Ministry:** Trinity English (Fort Atkinson)
- **Present Occupation:** Library Director - University of Wisconsin Whitewater
- **Education:** Master of Information and Library Science; Master of Arts in Teaching
- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Sunday School Teacher; Optimist Club (Whitewater) - Secretary, Community Christmas Toy Drive Coordinator 2019 - Present
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:**
- **Gifts this person would bring:**

Paul is a gifted administrator and project manager. In his work, he excels at communication and advocacy. Paul has strong faith in Jesus Christ and is committed to the ELCA. As he is a Pastor's spouse, his gifts are untapped in a local congregation.

ELCA CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

15 positions open; **3** rostered male, **2** rostered female, **3** lay male, **4** lay female, **1** layperson of any gender, **1** youth or young adult, **1** person of color or person whose primary language is other than English.

The Churchwide Assembly is the highest legislative body of the ELCA. The assembly will gather in 2025 and will review the work of the churchwide officers and churchwide units; receive and consider proposals from synod assemblies; establish churchwide policy; adopt a budget for the churchwide organization; elect officers, board members, and other persons as provided in the constitution or bylaws; establish churchwide units to carry out the functions of the churchwide organization; have the sole authority to amend the constitution and bylaws; fulfill other functions as required in the constitution and bylaws; conduct such other business as necessary to further the purposes and functions of the churchwide organization. (Source: ELCA.org)

CONTESTED ELECTION

ELCA Churchwide Assembly Rostered Male (*vote for three*)

Rev. Eric Bakken (*he/him/his*)



- **Congregation/Ministry:** West Koshkonong (Stoughton)
- **Present Occupation:** Ordained Clergy
- **Education:** B.S. in Education; M.A. in History; M. Divinity
- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Bread for the World; ELCA World Hunger; Cambridge Ministerial; Bible Camp Advocate
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Active in Conference meetings; Active in local text study group; Served five years as a Mission Developer; Served 12 years as a Campus Pastor

Gifts this person would bring:

I have served the church as a Program Director (3 years) at a Lutheran Camp; 12 years as a Campus Pastor; 3 years in a rural 3-point parish; 5 years as a Mission Developer; 16 years as a Senior Pastor in a large congregation; and now 5 years serving two small rural churches in this synod.

Nominations for this position continue on the next page.

Rev. Gus Barnes *(he/him/his)*



- **Congregation/Ministry:** Peace (Belmont)
- **Present Occupation:** Pastor, Faith (Cuba City) and Peace (Belmont)
- **Education:** Master of Divinity
- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Synod People of Color; Belmont Community; Cuba City Community; Funeral Planner
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Churchwide Assembly 2022; Synod Assembly Planning Team
- **Gifts this person would bring:**

A person of color who meets God’s people wherever they are. An urban raised man who understands rural living and the needs of the people.

Nominations for this position continue on the next page.

Rev. Erik Jelinek *(he/him/his)*



- **Congregation/Ministry:** Central (Edgerton)

- **Present Occupation:** Pastor

- **Education:** M. Div.

- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Free Community Meal Organizer at Central Lutheran; Volunteer at Edgerton Outreach; Edgerton Ministerial

- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Former Director of Evangelical Mission for the SCSW; Discipline Committee for the Synod; Synod Council; Former Churchwide Assembly Voting Member for Montana Synod

- **Gifts this person would bring:**

Pr. Erik is a gifted minister with experience at the congregational, synodical, and churchwide level. He works well in the church of the present but is always look for ways for the church to thrive into the future. He believes that building relationships, both in the church and in the communities, we serve is essential.

Nominations for this position continue on the next page.

Rev. Daniel O'Brien *(he/him/his)*



- **Congregation/Ministry:** Messiah (Madison)
- **Present Occupation:** Associate Pastor **Education:**
- B.A. / MDiv
- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Visitation Ministry; Outdoor Ministry/Environmental Justice and Education; Children, Youth, and Family Ministry Support
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Care of Creation Synod team member
- **Gifts this person would bring:**

A younger voice excited to get involved with the life of the wider church, seeking ways to engage our congregations with the movement of the wider church. Pr. Dan is new to the synod and to rostered ministry and desires to get to know the wider church more thoroughly.

Rev. Chris Strohm *(he/him/his)*



- **Congregation/Ministry:** New Hope (Blanchardville/Hollandale)
- **Present Occupation:** Pastor
- **Education:** MDIV- Wartburg Theological Seminary; BS-Economics-University of Wisconsin-Madison
- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Pastor
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Churchwide Assembly Delegate (twice, South Dakota Synod), Synod Council (South Dakota Synod), Executive Council-2 yrs; (South Dakota Synod)
- **Gifts this person would bring:**

I bring my experience of already attending a churchwide assembly and synod leadership through my previous synod.

ELCA Churchwide Assembly Rostered Female *(vote for two)*

Rev. Brenda Crossfield *(she/her/hers)*

- **Congregation/Ministry:** First English (Platteville)
- **Present Occupation:** Pastor of First English Lutheran Church

Education: MDiv from Wartburg Seminary

- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Ruby's Pantry; Ecumenical Worship services; Quilting groups/LWR; Hospice work

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Currently Dean of our conference; Campus Ministry



Rev. Amy Waelchli *(she/her/hers)*

- **Congregation/Ministry:** Trinity English (Fort Atkinson)
- **Present Occupation:** Pastor
- **Education:** Double graduate of Wartburg Theological Seminary. MA 2003. MDiv 2014
- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Lead Pastor: called to serve a growing community of faith, I work with a talented staff and an engaged leadership team; Community Presence: you'll find me at the Pride Day celebrations, out for breakfast before worship on St Patty's, and conducting funerals for anyone in town who desires a Christian burial; Ministerium Convener: working ecumenically post COVID on community projects like our Lenten 40 Days of Giving to help the Fort Atkinson Food Pantry.
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Bold Cafe Presenter: I recently had the pleasure of being the guest presenter for the Women of the ELCA's online community dinner meeting; SCMOT, former member
- Gifts this person would bring:
I'm a creative and collaborative thinker who's committed to this expression of Christ's church. I believe the Spirit is moving us toward a bold witness in the world.



ELCA Churchwide Assembly Lay Male *(vote for three)*

Tim Asplund *(he/him/his)*



-
- **Congregation/Ministry:** St. John's (Madison)
- **Present Occupation:** Water Resources Sup., WI Dept of Natural Resources

- **Education:** MS Water Resources and Limnology, UW Madison
- and BA in Biology, Gustavus Adolphus College

- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Worship Team co-lead, St John's Madison; Sanctuary Design and Visioning Team lead, St John's Madison; Volunteer poll worker, City of Madison; Bay Creek Neighborhood Association volunteer
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Churchwide Assembly voting member in 2009

Gifts this person would bring:

As a life long Lutheran, I have constantly strived to discern what God is calling me to do, as well as the Church as a whole, to help carry out God's plan in the world. I bring a listening ear, an open mind, and a compassionate heart to everything I do in my work, community, congregation and family life. I would be honored to serve the ELCA at this important time in our church life.

Nominations for this position continue on the next page.

Dale Holmen *(he/him/his)*



- **Congregation/Ministry:** Bethel (Madison)
- **Present Occupation:** Retired construction
- **Education:** BS Political Science/ community service
- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Bethel Adult Choir 50 years; Bethel Usher leadership 45 years; Representative work in Madison Urban Ministry Homeless Men's Shelter (Grace Church)
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Lutherans United After Disaster (Past President) founding member and current Board member; Lutheran Disaster Relief (LDR) regional committee.
- **Gifts this person would bring:**

Lifelong Bethel Member third generation of five generation membership. Lifelong advocate of social service and committee.

Nominations for this position continue on the next page.

Andrew Stevens *(he/him/his)*



- **Congregation/Ministry:** Luther Memorial (Madison)
- **Present Occupation:** Assistant Professor of Ag & Appl. Econ, UW–Madison
- **Education:** PhD (2017) & MS (2013), Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of California, Berkeley; BS (2012), Economics, University of Chicago
- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Luther Memorial Church Foundation Board of Directors, 2022–present; Adult Choir, Luther Memorial Church, 2019–present; Lake Monona Waterfront Ad Hoc Committee, City of Madison (Mayoral appointee), 2022–2023; Executive Council, Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc. (downtown Madison neighborhood association), 2023–present
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Candidacy Committee, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, 2021–present; Innovation Leadership Team, ELCA Churchwide, 2021–2022; Voting Member, ELCA Churchwide Assembly (2011, for the Saint Paul Area Synod; 2016, for the Sierra Pacific Synod; 2019, for the Southeastern Synod; and 2022, for the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin); Synod Council, Sierra Pacific Synod, 2015–2017
- Gifts this person would bring:
I have served as a voting member at four past Churchwide Assemblies (2011, 2016, 2019, and 2022). I enjoy serving the broader church in this way and would be happy to do so again in Phoenix—especially if there is the possibility I would be elected to the ELCA Church Council at the Assembly. Of course, I am happy for others to have this experience, too.

ELCA Churchwide Assembly Lay Female *(vote for four)*

Jeanette Burkum *(she/her/hers)*



- **Congregation/Ministry:** St. John's Evangelical (Richland Center)
- **Present Occupation:** Substance Abuse Counselor
- **Education:** Master's in psychology
- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Past church

president; past church council member; Participate in the church walk with grace fundraiser.

-
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Attended Churchwide assembly.
-

Gifts this person would bring:

I would bring the gift of understanding of the church and what it stands for. The love and grace that i receive from God in my daily work and home life. I help in the church by projection set up and attend women's bible studies. Before coming to St. John's Lutheran was a member in the lacrosse synod and attend every synod assemble and also work with the committee for the sister church in Ethiopia.

Nominations for this position continue on the next page.

Raelene Freitag *(she/her/hers)*



- **Congregation/Ministry:** Advent (Madison)
- **Present Occupation:** Retired
- **Education:** PhD, MSW

Congregational & Community Activities: Leadership (Advent council, MCC leadership team,); Road Ahead Review

(Co-lead team to assess key aspects of ecumenical partnership, make recommendations, and help implement.); Music for worship (choir, frequent musician); Community volunteer work (food pantry delivery, volunteer driver for Dane County Sanctuary, Stream monitor)

- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Lay delegate to one synod assembly 10-15 years ago
- **Gifts this person would bring:**

In my career and in other leadership or task-based groups, I can actively facilitate or support another person's facilitation. I help create safety and bring about collaboration.

Nominations for this position continue on the next page.

Jean Lincoln *(she/her/hers)*



- **Congregation/Ministry:** Our Savior's (Beloit)
- **Present Occupation:** Lay Pastoral Asst(PT)@ OSLC-Beloit (semi-retired)
- **Education:** Synods Lay School of Ministry, additional credits for AIM from Wartburg
- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Lutherans on the Move (traveling group); Fellowship Committee/Young at Heart; Worship, Music and the Arts Committee; Caring Team
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Previously a voting delegate to Churchwide in Chicago; Previous member of the Synod Youth Board; Supply Lay Pastor for area congregations; attends text study with local pastors.
- Gifts this person would bring:
I have a wide range of gifts having worked side by side with youth, families, adults and our senior members. I am active in the adult choir and have directed youth choirs in the past. I have assisted with teaching confirmation and was a mentor for a student. I enjoy assisting our youth and visiting with our shut-in and hospitalized. I feel I understand our members and what they are going through.

ELCA Churchwide Assembly Layperson of Any Gender *(vote for one)*

(Elaina) Meier *(any pronouns)*



- **Congregation/Ministry:** Advent (Madison)
- **Present Occupation:** Therapist/Teacher/Pharmacy Tech
- **Education:** BA in History and Secondary Education; MA in Writing; MS in clinics mental health counseling; anticipated PhD in Counseling Psychology
- **Congregational & Community Activities:** Transgender Community Support (e.g., letter of readiness Pride Fest pop-up booths, Trans Wellness WI non-profit mutual aid efforts, etc.); Intergenerational drama team for worship services and stewardship season; Confirmation and Sunday School teacher; Mentoring of pre-service and early-career psychotherapy clinicians.
- **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:** Creator/Organizer for Trans Community of Faith meals; Wis. Faith Voices for Justice interfaith Trans-focused programming (Trans Day of Remembrance, etc); Former Bible Camp waterfront & recreation director; 2024 Synod Assembly Voting Representative
- Gifts this person would bring:
Meier has a careful discernment about the church's ministries, with an eagerness for extending welcome and for integrity in what we say and do. Meier value's Lutheran theological identity and baptismal heritage, including after the comparison through time in a conservative megachurch. As a member of and advocate for the transgender community (among other things, like deep passion for the wellbeing of young people), Meier is an expression of diversity in the Body of Christ.

ELCA Churchwide Assembly Youth or Young Adult *(vote for one)*

Claudia VanBendegom *(she/her/hers)*

- o **Congregation/Ministry:** St. Luke's (Middleton)
- o **Present Occupation:** Student
- o **Education:** HS Senior
- o **Congregational & Community Activities:** Church breakfast, Mission trips, Youth chaperone, Vaccine clinics
- o **Synodical/Churchwide Activities:**
- o **Gifts this person would bring:** Thoughtful, measured, adaptable.



**ELCA Churchwide Assembly Person of Color or
Person whose Primary Language is other than English** *(vote for one)*

No nominees at time of publication.

2025 Compensation Guidelines

Salary Guidelines

Experience	Base Salary	Experience	Base Salary	Experience	Base Salary
0	\$ 42,788	18	\$ 57,643	36	\$ 72,498
1	\$ 43,613	19	\$ 58,468	37	\$ 73,323
2	\$ 44,438	20	\$ 59,294	38	\$ 74,148
3	\$ 45,263	21	\$ 60,119	39	\$ 74,973
4	\$ 46,089	22	\$ 60,944	40	\$ 75,798
5	\$ 46,914	23	\$ 61,769		
6	\$ 47,739	24	\$ 62,595		
7	\$ 48,565	25	\$ 63,420		
8	\$ 49,390	26	\$ 64,245		
9	\$ 50,215	27	\$ 65,071		
10	\$ 51,041	28	\$ 65,896		
11	\$ 51,866	29	\$ 66,721		
12	\$ 52,691	30	\$ 67,547		
13	\$ 53,516	31	\$ 68,372		
14	\$ 54,342	32	\$ 69,197		
15	\$ 55,167	33	\$ 70,022		
16	\$ 55,992	34	\$ 70,847		
17	\$ 56,818	35	\$ 71,673		

COLA of 3.2% for 2025 Salary Guidelines

Housing Guidelines

County	Average	Low	High
Adams	\$ 27,000	\$ 24,300	\$ 29,700
Columbus	\$ 36,000	\$ 32,400	\$ 39,600
Dane	\$ 51,300	\$ 46,200	\$ 56,500
Dodge	\$ 30,500	\$ 27,400	\$ 33,500
Grant	\$ 23,400	\$ 21,000	\$ 25,700
Green	\$ 33,800	\$ 30,400	\$ 37,200
Iowa	\$ 32,500	\$ 29,200	\$ 35,700
Jefferson	\$ 40,100	\$ 36,100	\$ 44,200
Lafayette	\$ 23,200	\$ 20,800	\$ 25,500
Richland	\$ 25,100	\$ 22,600	\$ 27,600
Rock	\$ 30,300	\$ 27,300	\$ 33,300
Sauk	\$ 35,800	\$ 32,300	\$ 39,400
Walworth	\$ 42,100	\$ 37,900	\$ 46,300

Based on Wisconsin Realtor Association Information from 2021-2023

Bulletin of Reports

Reports from the public witness work groups, ministry partners, and agencies and institutions affiliated with the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are contained in the Bulletin of Reports.

These reports outline the array of work we undertake together in the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin and as part of the whole church as we carry out global ministries, seek to become more inclusive and loving to all, develop resources and equip leaders, advocate for justice and the common good, care for God's creation, serve the needs of the poor and marginalized, and find new, collaborative, effective ways to work together as the body of Christ in the world.

Those submitting reports include:

- Wartburg Theological Seminary
- ELCA Federal Credit Union
- Lutheran Office of Public Policy in Wisconsin
- Luther College
- Lutheran School of Theology Chicago
- Mission Investment Fund
- PORTICO Benefit Services
- Region 5
- Wartburg College
- Carthage CFS

- **Synod Constitution August 2020**

Current Synod Constitution is available at the link below:

<https://scsw-elca.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Synod-Constitution-August-2020.pdf>



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.
- Rabecca 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



ELCA Foundation

Updates from the ELCA Foundation | Synod Assemblies 2024

The ELCA Foundation doesn't just envision a future; it's building one where intentional generosity and stewardship have allowed the mission and ministry of the ELCA to grow beyond our expectations. Our goal is to create a vibrant culture where intentional giving fuels the expansion of the ELCA's work in the US and around the world.

We're on a mission to grow ELCA ministries by empowering individuals, congregations, synods, and other entities with the tools they need to maximize their financial potential.

But what does that mean for you?

Imagine having a trusted partner who not only helps you navigate the complexities of gift planning and administration but also provides expert guidance on how to invest in the future of your ministry. That's where the ELCA Foundation steps in.

Whether you're considering leaving a legacy through an endowment, navigating estate planning, or exploring creative ways to support your congregation, we're here to make the process seamless and straightforward. Best of all, our gift planning services are completely free for you and your ministry.

Ready to take the next step in growing your congregation's culture of giving? Connect with your local ELCA Foundation representative today and discover how together we can make a lasting impact. Visit Foundation.ELCA.org to get started.

2023 AT A GLANCE

Our gift planning network walked alongside **203 donors/families** in developing their gift plans, which resulted in **\$62.5 million** in future planned-gift commitments. **More than \$17 million** of this will go to provide direct support to individual ELCA congregations.

The network generated **\$116.3 million** in total gifts and investment assets. This includes new planned-gift commitments, **\$8.8 million in current gifts**, including funded trusts, gift annuities and individual endowments, and **\$45 million in new assets** invested in the Ministry Growth Fund.

CONTACT YOUR REGIONAL GIFT PLANNER:

Cynthia Halverson
cynthia.halverson@elca.org
773-380-2572

8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631 • 800-638-3522 • Foundation.ELCA.org



Building
Learning
Growing

ELCA Foundation Synod Assembly 2024



Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin (LOPPW) Annual Report

www.lopepw.org (Search LOPPW on Facebook)

Submitted by Rev. Cindy Crane, Director cynthia.crane@elca.org

Thank you for supporting your ELCA advocacy ministry in Wisconsin with support to the UP! We especially express gratitude for Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe, the synod staff, and your SCSW representatives on our policy council, Reverend Andy Twiton and Kristi Jones.

During the last year, in response to God's grace and our life in holy community, we engaged our members and worked with legislators on the following priorities:

Calling for an End to Hunger: We are an active part of the Healthy School Meals for All Coalition. We also are advocating on the Farm Bill and Child Tax Credit. To the left is our **2023/24 Hunger Advocacy Fellow, Frances Dobbs**, at a press conference supporting Healthy School Meals for All legislation. Frances is with us full-time for one year thanks to a grant from ELCA World Hunger.



New Presentation! Frances has developed a new presentation on hunger in Wisconsin and the Healthy School Meals for All proposed legislation.

Addressing the Crisis of Human Trafficking: LOPPW builds awareness on human trafficking. Because of our steady advocacy, the Governor's office invited LOPPW staff to be present at the signing of three new bills we supported (photo on the right).



Caring for God's Creation: LOPPW held its second biennial State Budget budget advocacy day on climate and water in March 2023. We worked in partnership with Faith in Place. Some of the participants from the SCSW on the left at the Capitol.



Building

for a license only because they are ineligible for a Real ID. We advocated for this to help our immigrant neighbors, support farmers and others who employ immigrant workers, and to make our roads safer.

Immigration: In February 2024, we organized an advocacy day to address four bills that would impact DACA recipients living in Wisconsin. One of the DACA bills came close to passing. We are hopeful that the bills will be able to gain more ground in the future and that our voices will continue to make a difference. We also continued to support driver's licenses for people who do not qualify



LUTHER COLLEGE

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.



Dear ministry partners in the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin:

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) 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 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.



Mission Investment Fund

The Mission Investment Fund: Your financial partner

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 South-Central Synod of Wisconsin (as of December 31, 2023):

- 11 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of \$6,349,276
- \$4,059,742 in Mission Investment Fund investment obligations

For more information about MIF capabilities, please visit our website, mif.elca.org or contact your Regional Manager LuAnn Ferguson: 651-900-3575 luann.ferguson@elca.org

Mission Investment Fund | 8765 West Higgins Road | Chicago, Illinois 60631 | Tel: 877-886-3522 | Web: mif.elca.org



***Providing a full complement of financial services
to ELCA members, congregations and ministries***



The ELCA Federal Credit Union, chartered in 2015, provides a full suite of financial products and services to members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA. **We are the first of the ELCA's financial ministries to offer loans to individuals.** The Credit Union offers a rich variety of products—from savings and checking accounts and CDs ... to loans, lines of credit and credit cards. And now, we

provide home mortgage loans for new homes or remodeling, along with home equity lines of credit.

We serve ministries with federally insured deposit accounts, a flexible credit card program, auto loans and unsecured ministry loans up to \$100,000 for small projects such as building repair and purchases. Our new CU@Work program presents the opportunity for ministry organizations to offer our Credit Union products and services along with other exclusive perks to their employees.

In 2023, we ushered in the fifth cohort of participants in the ELCA's Resourceful Servants program, designed to improve financial wellness and assist rostered leaders in building emergency savings funds. In this matching program, ELCA rostered leaders make ongoing deposits to their Credit Union emergency savings accounts, and our partner MIF matches those deposits up to an established amount. Together, we have served **722 rostered ministers** who, collectively, have made emergency savings deposits of more than \$1 million.

Our strong online presence allows members to access their funds anytime, anywhere—as consumers expect.

Why choose the ELCA Federal Credit Union?

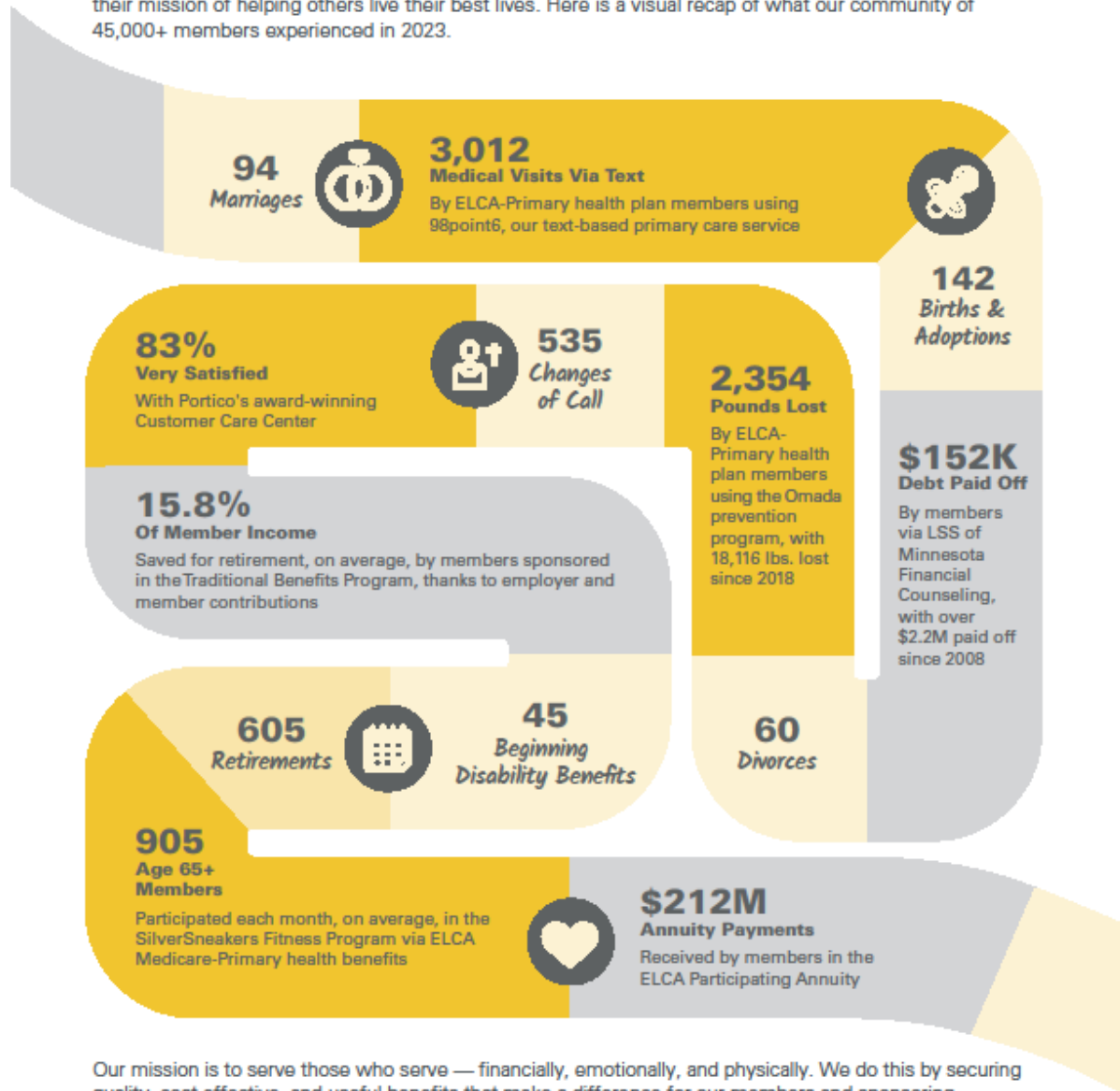
- **The ELCA Federal Credit Union supports the ELCA's mission of good stewardship.** We provide full services to all ELCA members, congregations and related ministries.
- **Our mission is to offer competitively priced products and services.** As a not-for-profit financial cooperative, we can often offer better rates and lower fees than traditional banks. We have demonstrated success in providing savings to our members.
- **With the church as our sponsor, we operate in ways that are consistent with the church's values.**

Membership is open to every ELCA member, synod, congregation and ministry—and their employees.

For more information about the products and services of the ELCA Federal Credit Union, please visit our website, elcafcu.org or call us toll free at 877-715-1111.

Benefits Making a Difference

At Portico we strive to offer benefits that make our plan members' lives better, so that they can fulfill their mission of helping others live their best lives. Here is a visual recap of what our community of 45,000+ members experienced in 2023.



Our mission is to serve those who serve — financially, emotionally, and physically. We do this by securing quality, cost-effective, and useful benefits that make a difference for our members and sponsoring organizations. With each new year we continue to grow our pool and affirm the value and importance of church together.

Note: Unless a specific benefit program is mentioned, these numbers and percentages were drawn from across Portico's benefit programs.

60-302 (02/24)

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.

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 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.

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
Sue Dodd, Region 5 Archivist 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

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!

John 16:13. "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."



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