



WHOLLY DEVOTED

to loving God and our neighbor



Northwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Annual Report 2023



Northwestern Minnesota Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

*"Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.
You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus."* Luke 2:30-31

Dear Beloved in Christ of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod,

This message is written in the season of Advent, a season I have loved since I was old enough to know that there were seasons. There is something about this season's mix of melancholy and hope, darkness and light, that resonates with me. Children are central to the stories of Advent and Christmas – both in their preciousness and in their vulnerability. Every parent knows the agonizing mix of hope and fear that we carry for our children. As I write this, there is a devastating war happening in the land where the stories of our faith unfolded. And tragically, this war's devastating cost is landing mostly on children. *"A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children..."* (Matt 2:16). Join me in praying every day for a just peace in the lands of Israel and Palestine and for protection of the children.

As a parent and now grandparent, I know that the most desperate prayers we pray are for our children. When I visit congregation members and leaders across the synod, one deep question is always lurking: "What will our children's and grandchildren's experience of church be?" What I have learned is that making it about our kids means making it about faith in Jesus, plain and simple. We must give up needing our kids' experience of church to be like ours was, and instead pray for and work toward a church where children simply have a deep faith in Jesus Christ and a community of faith that loves them. It's back to basics! Back to basics often involves letting go of cherished traditions, buildings and ways of doing things that may have worked for us, but now only hinder us from focusing on growing our and our children's faith.

So, much of our work this last year has and will continue to focus on how to become a church where a child's faith can grow. This does not mean throwing programs and events at our kids, hoping something sticks. IT MEANS MAKING OUR LIFE TOGETHER ABOUT OUR FAITH IN JESUS and then generously, freely and often, sharing our faith with our children. Jesus-loving adults are the force that shapes the faith of children. This means freeing up communities to expend less energy on "keeping this thing going," and much more on hearing the gospel, praying, dwelling in God's word, serving the neighbor and seeking Jesus in our everyday life.

Hence, this year has been filled with hard and focused work of continuing to build out a robust network of support and accountability for lay ministers who serve in Word and Sacrament ministry under the mentorship of a seminary-trained, ordained pastor. Our process for vitality of smaller member congregations, "Rural Revival," has drawn us deeply into finding right-sized ways of providing word and sacrament ministry tailored to the unique needs of each community. While neither of these efforts look like "youth ministry," they really are because they free people to be more focused on the basics, more focused on following Jesus. ANY church that is focused on following Jesus is a church that is for the children.

So that is my simple appeal to you as you gather for your annual meetings this year. Let's make it all about being Jesus-followers sharing our faith with everyone, starting with our children.

Your Partner in Christ's Mission,

Bishop Bill Tesch

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

Over the past year we have continued to experience changes in the world around us. Even as our church finds ways to adapt to this changing world, we find hope in the unchanging and always present promise of God's love through Jesus Christ. We change and adapt not to conform to the world but because we believe that the gift of God's Son is for the world, and that our congregations and worshiping communities are places to gather and be sent into the world, where we will tell the story of God's love in word and deed.

The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the churchwide organization provide ways for the church to move beyond the boundaries of structures and geography and to share God's love with people in our neighborhoods, our cities, our country and beyond. We engage in this ministry knowing that our church walks by faith, trusting in God's promise in the gospel, and that we exist by and for the proclamation of this gospel word. In John 15:5, Jesus reminds us, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." We are connected by the promise that we do all through Christ and can do nothing apart from him.

God gives the Holy Spirit, who uses gospel proclamation — in preaching and sacraments, in forgiveness and in healing conversations — to create and sustain this faith. Just as we rely on God to sustain our faith, we rely on each other to sustain the ministries that offer God's love to the world. Through your generosity to each expression

of this church — your congregation, your synod and your churchwide organization — you add to our collective voice proclaiming God's love for all.

I am grateful for your generosity over this last year. My gratitude spreads far beyond your generous financial gifts. You've shared your gifts of time through countless hours of volunteering, serving and accompanying. You've shared the gifts of your voices as we've tried to discover and learn how God is calling us to be the church now and into the future. And, finally, dear church, you have shared the gift of the realness of God's love with the world around you. Be well, dear church, and stand steadfast in the promise of God's love and grace as you take that promise with you into the world.



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

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

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

OPENING LITURGY

Son of God, Eternal Savior

Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

And also with you.

Teach us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Descend on our hearts, that we may love others in the ways Jesus loves us.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Empower us to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Move us to engage issues in our community in Christlike ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those with whom we serve and partner.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Strengthen us to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others amid disagreement.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Give us the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Guide us to be a healthy congregation that learns from its failures as well as its successes and offers wisdom to others.

Receive our prayer, O God.

As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, raise up leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Renew us daily in our baptism, that we may discover vitality in our relationships with you, each other and those we serve in the world.

Amen.

1 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, source of life and truth and grace,
2 As you, Lord, have lived for oth - ers, so may we for oth - ers live.
3 Come, O Christ, and reign a - mong us, King of love and Prince of peace;
4 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, source of life and truth and grace,

Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us hal - lows all our hu - man race,
Free - ly have your gifts been grant - ed; free - ly may your ser - vants give.
hush the storm of strife and pas - sion, bid its cru - el dis - cords cease.
Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us hal - lows all our hu - man race:

you our head, who, throned in glo - ry, for your own will ev - er plead:
Yours the gold and yours the sil - ver, yours the wealth of land and sea;
By your pa - tient years of toil - ing, by your si - lent hours of pain,
by your pray - ing, by your will - ing that your peo - ple should be one,

fill us with your love and pit - y, heal our wrong, and help our need.
we but stew - ards of your boun - ty held in sol - emn trust will be.
quench our fe - vered thirst of plea - sure, stem our self - ish greed of gain.
grant, oh, grant our hope's fru - i - tion: here on earth your will be done.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 655

Text: Somerset C. Lowry

Music: IN BABYLON, Oude en Nieuwe Hollandse Boerenlities en Contradansen, 1710;

arr. Julius Rontgen

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Annual Meeting Agenda

February 4, 2024

10:30 am

- I. Call to Order
- II. Devotions-Prayer
- III. Approval of Agenda
- IV. Secretary's Report from January 15, 2023
- V. Financial Reports
- VI. Reports
 - a. Synod Reports
 - b. Pastor's Report
 - c. CYF Report
 - d. Committee Reports
 - 1. Property
 - 2. Worship and Music
 - 3. Education
 - 4. Altar Guild
 - 5. FLCW
 - 6. Memorials
 - 7. Nominations
- VII. Old Business
 - a. Old Doors
 - b.
- VIII. New Business
 - a. Approval of 2024 Budget
- IX. Adjournment and Lord's Prayer

**First Lutheran Church
Annual Meeting Minutes**

January 15, 2023

Present: 31 members were present

President, Linda Bauers opened the annual meeting at 10:45 AM.

Opening prayer – Pastor opened with prayer.

Approval of the Agenda – Motion was made by Kathy Tischart, seconded by Monica Buegler to approve the agenda. MC

Approval of Minutes from January 30, 2022– a motion was made Jerry Moline seconded by Jeannie Kuehl to approve the minutes. MC

Financial report: Treasurers report was then given by Mary Sopkowiak - a motion to accept this report was made by Jeff Bauer's seconded by Eileen Cordray. MC

Reports:

The Synod, Pastors, CYF report were then gone through – Calista is working with the Sunday school kids – (see reports in booklet).

Property – Jim commented on some items in his report

Worship & Music – Joyce Washburn said she is working with the choir

Education – none

Altar Guild – Ruth Lee thanked the ladies for the new flower fridge and also from the church.

FLCW – none

Memorials – Eileen Cordray said the giving is pretty good but did not have many memorials this last year.

All of these reports are in the annual meeting booklet.

President then opened the floor for nominations –

Vice president - Jon Hanson was nominated to fill this position.

Financial Secretary – Eileen said that Bertel Anundson is willing to take this position – he was nominated for this position.

Property Board chairman – Monica B. nominated Jim Frohreich – he accepted this position.

Synod Assembly – March 18, 2023 in Bemidji is for one day only and would like some to attend this meeting.

Synod Assembly – June 3, 2023 this year will be held in 4 locations. Bemidji is one of the locations and it is for 1 day only –Jeff Bauers said he would be willing to go. The council will check on these items closer to the time to see if anyone else will attend with him.

Old Business:

- a. Old doors – the doors to replace at the one in the sanctuary NW corner, the one in the fellowship hall NW Corner and the door back by the dumpster. Also it was asked if the front door was included in this and no it was not – this will be another project to do later.
- b. Update on Bible Camp money/Endowment Fund – Mary S. went over this in her report. She has set up all the money in the ELCA Endowment fund.

New Business:

- a. Approval of 2023 budget – after some discussion about the possibility that the plowing budget will be over this year, a motion was made by Jeff Bauers, seconded by Monica Buegler to approve this budget. MC
- b. Discussion of changing service time - discussion was then held on changing the time for First Lutheran so that the pastor could spend more time with everyone and visit with people –Linda said that we would try this new time on a trial basis starting Feb. 26, 2023 and run through May. The church time for us will be 4 PM each Sunday and there will also be Sunday School. There will be coffee time at 3 PM for people. After some discussion from people, Jim F. suggested that a special meeting be called after trying out the time change to see how things went and take a vote with all the members about whether to keep the 4pm worship time or to change back.

2023 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”
Galatians 6:9

First Lutheran has exemplified this verse this past year. In March Pastor Birgitte resigned and we needed to start the process of finding a new pastor. God intervened and we now have Calista Wolf, SAM. She preaches an average of two times a month. The rest of the time we are fortunate to amazing lay leaders to lead the service. Thank you, Eileen, Kathy, Judy, Kay and Joyce for always being willing to help when asked.

We continue to support Ruby's Pantry which handed out 3972 shares in 2023. We thank the Lord for his hand in our food ministry.

We hosted “Trunk or Treat” again this year with a twist. The weather was nasty so the event was moved into the fellowship hall and was declared a huge success.

In November Calista, Mike and Patrick Wolf welcomed baby Johanna to their family.

We rejoice with them as they celebrate the life of this darling baby.

And as our year ended, we said good-bye to a long-time member of First Lutheran, Otto Lee. Otto was a member of First Lutheran Church for 63 years. He served in many capacities in his years of time at First and will be missed.

As we start a new year, we pray for our First Lutheran to prosper and grow.

Linda Bauers

President

First Lutheran Church

First Lutheran 2023 Statistics

Baptisms		
Raeder Overfield		William Schwenzfeier
Oliver Paulsen		
Charlotte Paulsen		
Confirmation/Affirmation of Faith		
Deaths/Funerals/Memorial Services/Burials		
Roger Birkeland		Vernon Fristad
Brian Achen		Richard Johnson
Ruth Arlene Orton		Otto Lee
Lil Brown		Barb Porch
Ruth Palm		
Membership		
<i>Transferred to other churches/removed by own request/removed by council action</i>		
SharRay and Larry Feickert		
Nash, Courtney, Hank and Navy Hanevold (not baptized)		
Sandra Johnson		
<i>Members Received</i>		
Gretchen and Richard Sloat		
	Baptized	Confirmed
December 31, 2022	236	159
December 31, 2023	232	152

Adjournment – motion was made by Eileen Cordray seconded by John Hanson to adjourn this meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Smith

First Lutheran Church Treasurer's Report Year End

Account Balances/(Income and Expenses)

<u>Bank Accounts</u>	2022 Year End	Increase/ Decrease	2023 Year to date
Riverwood - General Checking	\$ 5,720.47	\$ 1,624.36	\$ 7,344.83
Riverwood - Designated Funds Checking	\$ 27,965.79	\$ 990.00	\$ 28,955.79
Riverwood Total	\$ 33,686.26		\$ 36,300.62
ELCA Endowment-General	\$ 26,266.30	\$ 2767.75	\$ 29,034.05
ELCA Endowment-Building	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 2634.21	\$ 27,634.21
12 mo CD opened Sep 23	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
	\$ 51,266.30		\$ 76,668.26

Designated Funds

Alter Guild	\$ 467.95	\$ 200.00	\$ 667.95
Building Fund	\$ 5,868.03	\$ 1,650.00	\$ 7,518.03
Music	\$ 1,896.94	\$ 25.00	\$ 1,921.94
Parking Lot	\$ 4,600.00	\$ -	\$ 4,600.00
Pastor's Discretionary	\$ 100.78		\$ 100.78
Youth	\$ 1,990.18	\$ -	\$ 1,990.18
Sunday school	\$ 450.00	\$ -	\$ 450.00
Garden of Grace	\$ 10,227.98	\$ -	\$ 10,227.98
Kitchen	\$ 500.00	\$ (500.00)	\$ -
Quilt Materials	\$ 45.00	\$ (45.00)	\$ -
Temp (Special Project)	\$ 500.00	\$ (500.00)	\$ -
VBS	\$ 827.00	\$ -	\$ 827.00
Visual/Sound Equipment	\$ 491.93	\$ -	\$ 491.93
Temp Flowers	\$ -	\$ 160.00	\$ 160.00
Total Designated Funds	\$ 27,965.79	\$ 990.00	\$ 28,955.79

First Lutheran Church Treasurer's Report Budget

Category	2023 Mission	2023 Actual	% of 2023 Budget	2024 Proposed Mission
Administration				
Admin: Financial Secretary	\$ 540.00	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 540.00
Admin: Bank Charges	\$ 200.00	\$ 20.00	80.2%	\$ 200.00
Vanco		\$ 140.44		
Admin: Miscellaneous (checks)	\$ 200.00	\$ 86.90	43.5%	\$ 200.00
Admin: Postage	\$ 75.00		0.0%	\$ 75.00
Admin: Treasurer	\$ 540.00	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 540.00
Administration Total	\$ 1,555.00	\$ 247.34	15.9%	\$ 1,555.00
God's House				
God's House: Fuel	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 3,808.54	76.2%	\$ 5,000.00
God's House: Insurance & Worker's Comp	\$ 6,400.00	\$ 7,015.31	109.6%	\$ 9,000.00
God's House: Maintenance Service Salary	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 5,566.46	85.6%	\$ 6,500.00
God's House: Maintenance and Repair	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 2,106.16	35.1%	\$ 6,000.00
God's House: Snow Removal	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 1,950.00	78.0%	\$ 2,500.00
God's House: Tax	\$ 125.00	\$ 130.00	104.0%	\$ 130.00
God's House: Utilities	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 7,321.32	73.2%	\$ 10,000.00
God's House Total	\$ 36,525.00	\$ 27,897.79	76.4%	\$ 39,130.00
Outreach				
Outreach: ELCA - Benevolence	\$ 10,100.00	\$ 10,100.00	100.0%	\$ 10,000.00
Parish				
Total (11 mo. Paid in 2023)	\$ 170,256.00	\$ 39,201.19		\$ 104,610.00
First % (35%)	\$ 74,912.64	\$ 39,201.19	52.3%	\$ 36,613.50
Worshipping God				
Worshipping God: Altar Guild/worship supplies	\$ 200.00			
Worshipping God: Evangelism	\$ 450.00	\$ 106.00	23.6%	\$ 450.00
Worshipping God: Music Dept	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 3,750.00	75.0%	\$ 5,000.00
Worshipping God: NW Synod Assembly	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 240.00	24.0%	\$ 1,000.00
Worshipping God: Sunday School	\$ 200.00		0.0%	\$ 200.00
Worshipping God: Worship Supplies	\$ 500.00		0.0%	\$ -
Worshipping God: Youth	\$ 200.00		0.0%	\$ 200.00
Total Worshipping God	\$ 7,550.00	\$ 4,266.28	56.5%	\$ 7,050.00
<u>Budget Total</u>	\$ 130,642.64	\$ 81,712.60	62.55%	\$ 94,348.50

Non-Budget items:	
CD	\$ 20,000.00
AED/backpack/soul food/lent donations/ruby's donations/flowers	\$ 3,251.09
Grand Total	\$ 104,963.69

First Lutheran Church Giving for 2023

	Total Deposits	Loose Offering	Member Giving	Building Use	Other Income	Building Fund	2023 Memorials	Miscellaneous
January	\$11,377.00	\$356.00	\$10,337.00	\$200.00	\$309.00	\$150.00	\$25.00	\$0.00
February	\$7,931.65	\$192.00	\$6,592.00	\$200.00	\$682.65	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$265.00
March	\$8,682.66	\$30.00	\$6,077.00	\$400.00	\$1,385.70	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$639.96
April	\$11,436.00	\$398.00	\$9,592.00	\$350.00	\$789.00	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$157.00
May	\$8,382.00	\$210.00	\$8,022.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
June	\$8,252.00	\$245.00	\$7,337.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$150.00	\$20.00	\$0.00
July	\$9,755.00	\$283.00	\$6,562.00	\$2,760.00	\$0.00	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
August	\$9,711.77	\$225.85	\$8,935.92	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
September	\$7,258.00	\$185.00	\$6,102.00	\$200.00	\$188.00	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$433.00
October	\$8,149.00	\$202.00	\$7,522.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$150.00	\$25.00	\$250.00
November	\$6,597.00	\$95.00	\$6,102.00	\$200.00	\$25.00	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$25.00
December	\$11,011.00	\$684.00	\$9,807.00	\$200.00	\$160.00	\$150.00	\$10.00	\$0.00
Total Deposits	\$108,543.08	\$3,105.85	\$92,987.92	\$5,410.00	\$3,539.35	\$1,650.00	\$80.00	\$1,769.96
Total General Fund for 2023 *			\$105,043.12					

* Note: Total General Fund = Loose, Member, Building Use & Other Income Totals

Submitted by: Bertel Anundson, Financial Secretary

Pastor's/SAM's Annual Report 2023

What a year! 2023 was a year of growth for me in many ways, especially with my new role as the Synod Authorized Minister and adding a new baby to my family. I appreciate all your hard work this year and taking ownership of your congregations. I believe that my maternity leave was an important time for the congregations to remember that these churches belong to you!

From leading worship, technology challenges, pastoral care visits, etc., you have stepped up and faithfully helped each other through yet another transition. What a beautiful thing it has been to watch you help each other and keep moving forward through the unknown.

I am looking forward to continued growth in 2024, specifically in relationships. My star word for the parish is RELATIONSHIP. If 2023 has taught us anything, it's that we cannot do church (in all forms) without each other. My challenge for us this next year is to think about how we can get creative in growing our relationships with our neighbors. How can we show up for our people outside the church walls?

Maybe it's been a while since you have gone to a community meal. Maybe there is a sporting event that you used to make time for, but time has slipped away. How do we show each other that we care every day of the week, not just Sunday mornings? How do we show we care during ordinary times and not just when someone needs us?

I firmly believe that if we focus on the relationships within and outside of our parish, we can do wonderful and faith-filled things. Let's move into the new year in stride TOGETHER.

Your sibling in Christ,
Calista Wolf



Northwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Our Mission is to nurture safe and healthy spaces for the ministry of the Gospel to unfold and shape an abundant future for all in Northwestern Minnesota.

Freed by God's grace to be wholly devoted to Jesus and our neighbor in love.

FAITHFUL in relationships. AUTHENTIC in our welcome. LOVE that makes a difference.

Quick Stats:

Congregations: 216

Total Baptized Membership: 79,350

Rostered Ministers: 291

Synod Authorized Ministers: 48

Synod Staff (job areas on the website)

Bishop: Rev. Bill Tesch; btesch@cord.edu

Associate to the Bishop: Rev. Genelle Netland; genellenetland@cord.edu

Director for Evangelical Mission: Rev. Rebel Hurd; rebelhurd@cord.edu

Office Administrator: Cheryl Zeh; czeh@cord.edu

Director of Communications, Events and Youth Ministry: Kristina Dernier; krisdernier@cord.edu

Financial & Data Systems Specialist: Joan Meulebroeck; jmeulebroeck@cord.edu

Minister for Vocations: Rev. Jon Olson; jonolson1@cord.edu

Ministers for Community and Leader Engagement: Kathy Levenhagen (Conferences 1 & 2 and SAM Coordinator) klevenhagen@cord.edu; Rev. Chris Leach (Conferences 4 & 6) chrisleach@cord.edu; Rev. Dennis Preston (Conferences 7 & 8) dennispreston@cord.edu; Bp. Bill Tesch and Rev. Genelle Netland (Conferences 3 & 5)

ELCA Regional Gift Planner: Rev. Keith Pearson; keith.pearson@elca.org

Minister for Mental Health & Wellness: Rev. Dr. Aaron Suomala-Folkerds; aaron.suomalafolkerds@mnstate.edu

F.A.C.E.S Coordinator: Rev. Kari van Wakeren; vanwakeren@cord.edu

Rural Revival Mission Developer: Rev. Melissa Pickering; mpickering001@luthersem.edu

Ways to Connect:

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (elca.org) - Rostered minister forms; congregation best practices; worship resources for special times; constitution helps; annual appeals and more!

Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA (nwmnsynod.org) - Synod staff contact information; transition updates; pulpit supply list; resources; candidacy, upcoming events; shared resources

Social Media - Events; inspiration; information - Facebook: @nwmnelca; Instagram: @nwmnelca; X/formerly Twitter @nwmnsynod

Quarterly Zoom meetings for rostered ministers and SAMs; quarterly Zoom meetings for council presidents

Bi-monthly Zoom meetings for those who do ministry with and for children, youth, and families

Northwestern Minnesota Synod

Physical Location

310 14th Ave S, Moorhead, MN 56560

Mailing Address

Concordia College, Moorhead, MN 56562

Phone: 218-299-3019 or 800-452-3692

Website: www.nwmnsynod.org

Save the Date!

February: Giving Hearts Day (Feb 8) - Programming Fundraising

April: Joint Theological Day (April 18 with Eastern North Dakota Synod)*

May: Synod Assembly at Concordia College (May 17-18); Spring Appeal - Grant Fundraising*

Late Summer/Fall: Synod Road Trip (Coming to a town near you!)

*September: Theology for Ministry Conference**

November: Give to the Max - Programming Fundraising; Middle School Youth Gathering

December: Year-end mailing - including materials and reports to be returned to the Synod Office

May/June 2025: Synod Assembly at Concordia College (May 30-June 1)*

***Required for all rostered ministers per Letter of Call, and SAMs per Letter of Appointment**

Did You Know?

- **We offer a seminary debt reduction program** for rostered ministers. Applications available in February
- **We have Bible camps:**
 - Luther Crest: luthercrest.org - Year-round programming for all ages
 - Pathways: pathwaysbiblecamps.org - Year-round programming for all ages
- **We have Lutheran education:**
 - Oak Grove Lutheran School: www.oakgrovelutheran.com; Concordia College: www.concordiacollege.edu; Lutheran Campus Ministry of Bemidji: lcm Bemidji.org;
 - Crossroads Lutheran Campus Ministry at MSUM: www.crossroadsmsum.com
- **We have ministries with our Indigenous neighbors:**
 - Peoples Church, Bemidji: www.facebook.com/peopleschurchbemidji
 - The Way, Fargo-Moorhead: www.facebook.com/p/Native-American-Christian-Ministry-of-Fargo-Moorhead
- **We have a Companion Synod:** Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church of India (AELC)
- **We have an active Synod Women's Organization:** www.nwmnsynod.org/pages/synod-womens-organization
- **We have a strategic plan for our synod:** It can be found at the bottom of this page: <https://www.nwmnsynod.org/about>

Pulpit Supply: If you need a supply preacher, you can find the link here:

<https://www.nwmnsynod.org/pages/pulpit-supply--130> . This site is password protected; please email krisdernier@cord.edu or czeh@cord.edu for the password.

One-Day Licensure: If you need someone to preside over the Sacraments of Holy Communion or Holy Baptism, and you have asked a lay person (not an ordained pastor/Word and Sacrament Minister) to serve you, you will need to request a one-day licensure for them to preside at communion, which will authorize that lay person on that one day that is requested in that specific congregation/parish. The pastor or council president should request this in writing (email) at least 10 days in advance to Bishop Tesch.

Synod Authorized Ministry (SAM): This is a growing way for lay people to serve as leaders of congregations. New expectations have been set for this work and partnership in our synod. To learn more about becoming a SAM, having a SAM serve as your congregational leader, OR being a SAM mentor, please read this handbook for more information: <https://www.nwmnsynod.org/pages/sam-process>

ELCA Constitution Support: Your congregational constitution is the foundation for all good mission and ministry to thrive. If your constitution needs to be updated, there are tools and resources to help you along the way: www.nwmnsynod.org/pages/constitution-resources

Ministry Updates



Peoples Church

This summer, Peoples Church leadership shifted. Pr. Birgitte Simpson was installed as Mission Developer, and Julia Plum was commissioned as a SAM. Together and with a host of partner congregations, Peoples Church walks with folks living in poverty and homelessness. With and among the people of God, they enter into a ministry of hospitality, addressing hunger and clothing needs, worship, and care. Peoples Church is a multicultural congregation in Bemidji, within miles of three of the largest Indigenous reservations in Minnesota. They strongly desire to be a bridge between those living in homelessness and poverty and your congregations.

A New Journey Lutheran Parish

A New Journey Lutheran Parish consists of four congregations that have worked hard over the past couple of years to form a union in their neck of the woods for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Each of the four congregations has a long history of rich and faithful ministry. As A New Journey Lutheran Parish, they have come together to share resources, leaders, and passions and live out their calling together. A New Journey Lutheran Parish is led by Pastor and Mission Developer René L. Mehlberg and supported by two Synod Authorized Ministers, Katie DeMarais and Rachel Roggenbuck.



*Your Companion Synod Team
with the Andhra Evangelical
Lutheran Church of India*



Your Companion Synod Team has been commissioned to walk in accompaniment with our partners in ministry of the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church in India. Bp. Bill Tesch and Chris Tesch, Dn. Jon Leiseth, Per Anderson, Pr. Salim Kaderbhai, Pr. Rebel Hurd and Jeff Hurd, David Hunstad and Pr. Sue Koesterman are all members of the team. For the past year, they have worked to build strong relationships, learn and understand the work of our companions, including the Bible Women of Andhra. They have studied the caste system of India and have taken a deep dive into a political culture vastly different than ours here in the United States, all through the lens of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. As they continue the work of accompaniment, please hold our siblings in Christ across the globe and this team in your prayers.



Rural Revival vitality for rural congregations and communities

Many of our rural congregations are experiencing a strain on resources and members as the populations of rural communities are decreasing and expenses continue to rise. Our Rural Revival movement lives deeply into a vision of leaning on one another, sharing gifts, ministry, and resources as a community, as evangelists, and as neighbors.

As part of our synod's strategic plan, we "Strive to enhance the general health and resiliency of congregations with special attention on small member rural congregations." Spiritually committed rural congregations with a willingness to create a shared vision, gather and leverage shared passions and resources, and work hand-in-hand on community engagement, tactical implementation, and adaptive leadership ARE WELCOME!

Listening to the needs along the way is integral to the Rural Revival Process. Sometimes, these are things we hear from leaders, and sometimes, they are things we hear at the local gas station while getting gassed up to keep us moving around the synod. We want to be at the table with you. Small or rural does not mean you are not vital congregations. Let's explore what God might be up to together. Reach out if you would like to learn more.



Area Mission Conversations

Have you heard of Area Mission Conversations (Strategy Tables)? They are Christ-centered gatherings with guided and focused conversations around what God is up to in specific areas. Among many topics, such discussions focus on maximizing the mission and ministry at participating sites and creating opportunities to share ideas, energies, leadership, and resources for Christ's Church.

Currently, Pr. Rebel is facilitating an Area Mission Conversation with seven churches in the northeast part of our synod. This Area Mission Conversation is in response to the congregations' experience of needing leadership (both rostered and lay), wanting to find ways to support and respect each congregation's traditions, histories, and identities while desiring to collaborate for the sake of the Gospel. Over the last eight months, they have dreamed, prayed, created, trusted, wondered, implemented, and have been spiritually committed to one another and the health of their congregations. Can you imagine an Area Mission Conversation in your neck of the woods? Go, God!



Churchwide Partnerships



More than 820 million people - that's about 11 percent of people in our world today - are hungry. As members of the ELCA, we are called to respond. We are a church that rolls up our sleeves and gets to work.

Working with and through our congregations, in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands Lutheran churches overseas and other partners, ELCA World Hunger is uniquely positioned to reach communities in need. From health clinics to microloans, water wells to animal husbandry, community meals to advocacy, your gifts to ELCA World Hunger make it possible for the ELCA to respond, supporting sustainable solutions that get at the root causes of hunger and poverty.

Resources

Check out the website <https://www.elca.org/Resources/ELCA-World-Hunger> for a lot of great, free, downloadable resources.



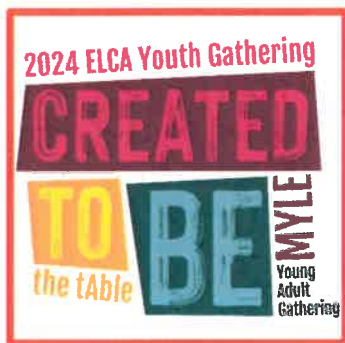
Lutheran Disaster Response shares God's hope, healing, and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.

How We Work

We are a church that is a catalyst, convener and bridge builder. Lutheran Disaster Response collaborates with other disaster response organizations and religious entities in the United States and around the world. This enables the greatest stewardship of resources and maximum impact of response. We are a welcome partner because we respect the perspectives and strengths of others. We recognize that every disaster is local. Because of this, we believe every response needs to be rooted in the community; we work to accompany that community from immediate relief through long-term recovery. In our international work we partner closely with companion churches and other Lutheran and ecumenical relief agencies to make sure local needs are being addressed and met. In the United States, we work through our extensive affiliate network and other partners to address these same concerns.

Lutheran Disaster Response strives to help the church continue to be church in the midst of disaster — following Christ's call to share hope and healing with our neighbor in need. Some key areas of work include:

- Providing emotional and spiritual care for people who have been affected by a disaster and for leaders who respond to a disaster
- Coordinating volunteers through our local affiliates
- Assisting refugees in a holistic way by meeting the varied needs of the community
- Promoting disaster risk reduction by helping communities build their assets thereby reducing the effects of likely disasters
- Providing long-term recovery efforts by addressing the unmet needs months or even years after a disaster strikes



A LIFE-CHANGING FAITH FORMATION EVENT OF THE ELCA

July 13-16, 2024: MYLE & the tAble

July 16-20, 2024: ELCA Youth Gathering & Young Adult Gathering
New Orleans, LA

Mission and Goals: The Gathering's mission of faith formation in young people is the hub from which all things come for MYLE, the tAble and the Gathering. The goal is to create environments and opportunities for faith formation through worship, interactive learning, Bible study, service and fellowship. While some of the experiences

can be replicated at home, some are unique and special to the Gathering because of the size and scope of this ministry.

Five Core Goals: Affirmed and challenged their faith, experience new perspectives, ponder their vocation, bond with their congregational group, and learn more about the ELCA and its partners.

Multicultural Youth Leadership Event [MYLE] A pre-event of the Gathering and the largest gathering of people of color within the ELCA, the Multicultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE) empowers young people of color and those whose primary language is not English to claim their story as part of God's story.

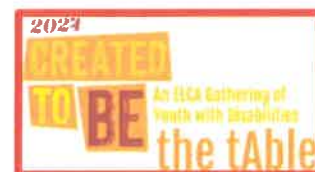


The Gathering is excited that for the 2024 Gathering cycle, the registration fee for the MYLE will be waived for the first 1,000 people. Participants are required to register for and attend the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering immediately following. We (the NW MN Synod) are excited that we have participants from our synod registered to attend MYLE this next summer.

One of the pre-events to the Gathering, **the tAble** blesses and encourages young people who live with a wide range of physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities so that they might grow as wise, faithful, and courageous witnesses.

The tAble is open to youth who are ages 14-18 or are engaged in a high school youth group, or are enrolled in high school or the vocational education equivalent. Youth who attend the tAble must be accompanied by an adult companion. The adult companion will receive a waived registration fee to attend the 2024 Gathering alongside their young person.

The Gathering is excited that for the 2024 Gathering cycle, the registration fee for the tAble will be waived for the first 200 people. Participants are encouraged to register for and attend the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering immediately following if they are able. We (the NW MN Synod) are excited that we have participants from our synod registered to attend the tAble this next summer.



Young Adult Gathering

The Gathering is thrilled to partner with ELCA Young Adult Ministries to provide the first-ever ELCA Young Adult Gathering alongside the 2024 Gathering in New Orleans!

Individuals who will be 18 to 35 at the time of the Gathering are invited to attend. We recognize that 18-35 is a wide age range and anticipate that most of our programming

will be geared toward those 18 to 25 years old. All young-adult participants will be divided into cohorts based on age.

Individuals interested in attending the ELCA Young Adult Gathering will need to register apart from any congregational group attending the ELCA Youth Gathering. Childcare will be available for those attending the ELCA Young Adult Gathering. Please note that children are not allowed to attend Mass Gathering programming.

Your Synod Gathering Champion is Kris Dernier [eating a beignet at Café du Monde in picture]

krisdernier@cord.edu



Children, Youth and Family Report 2023

The children, youth, and families in this church were busy in 2023!

Sunday School ran smoothly at both Wabanica and Clementson. A huge thank you to the adults who have stepped up to teach our children and be an example of what it means to be a leader in our church. It is wonderful to see the relationships that have been made this year through this children's ministry.

Wednesday evenings were busy during Lent and the fall with Soup Suppers and Soul Food. We shared many meals and faith conversations this year. Confirmation also took place on Wednesday night with an average of 10 active students in attendance. It has been such a blessing to get to know these kids and support them in their activities. I can't wait to continue our learning together in 2024.

Vacation Bible School had another successful year! We had over 20 preschoolers and 20 elementary school attendants. We learned how to care for each other and creation using Illustrated Ministry's Compassion Camp curriculum. Thank you so much to our volunteers who make this such a success every year! A special thank you to the youth in our parish who stayed and helped each day. It was wonderful to have youth volunteers this year and I hope it continues.

I am looking forward to continuing these education ministries and adding new ones in 2024. Be on the lookout for new studies, events and education opportunities!

Yours in Christ,
Calista Wolf

First Lutheran Church Property Board Report 2023

Projects of 2023

- Replaced damaged and faulty shingles on the South side of the church roof
- AED cabinet mounted
- Repaired water leak under shower in Daycare/Sunday School wing
- Three exterior doors were purchased, and will be installed in the Spring 2024
 - Northwest corner of Sanctuary
 - Northwest corner of Fellowship Hall
 - Northeast corner access to the kitchen hallway

A special “Thank You” to the members who donated their time and talents: repairing, organizing, cleaning, lawn care, flower care, and the beautification of the church and church property throughout the year. The spring of 2024, there are plans to repair the drywall and paint the two large Sunday School rooms on the lower South side of the Sunday School Wing.

Thank you to Don Smith, Jeff Bauers and Rodney Gubbels for stepping in whenever problems arise, using their ability and generosity to make our church better for us all.

Submitted by:

Jim Frohreich,

Property Board Chair

Worship and Music Committee Report 2023

The choir currently has 10 members and two accompanists among the members. Both Sue Smith and Harvey Lein have provided accompaniment for the choir this year. We would love to recruit new choir members, so anyone who is interested should contact us and join!

The choir gathers to practice once a week from September through May, providing music for many Sundays during the Worship Service. We moved from having Monday practices, to Tuesdays to Wednesdays, this year, and have settled into Wednesdays at 6:30pm, however, that will have to change for Lent coming up soon. We take a break from gathering to rehearse in June, July, and August.

Services at First changed from 9:30am to 4pm for Sunday Worship services. The congregation tried it for six Sundays, starting in February, after which there was a meeting to vote on whether to keep the new worship time, or to go back to the previous time. The vote was solidly in favor of returning to the previous worship time, just in time for the Easter Service, in April.

Other than Sunday Worship Service singing, we have taken some special music opportunities too, in 2023. The choir gathered a group together for the farewell event planned for Pastor Birgitte, in April, as she took a new call. We invited others from the parish to join us, which they did, and it was so nice to have more voices. We welcomed her with a “musical” and her farewell gave a similar send-off feel. Our choir participated in the Community Memorial Day Service, in May, providing music for those gathered. We came back from summer vacation to practice for the Joint Back to School Backpack Service, in September. The choir had a guest instrumentalist, flautist Kitty Gayle, from Rainy River, join us for an Advent choir anthem this year too. We all enjoyed that collaboration very much and have discussed doing another again soon. We sang Christmas carols alongside our Holiday Light Parade Float, in November, possibly helping to win our float entry, the award for the “Most Christmas Spirit”! We led parish and community members caroling around our community at the hospital, Care Center, Summerfield Apartments, and the Northwoods Commons, ending in a potluck soup, bread, and holiday goodie supper, in December. The choir provided special music for the Sunday School Christmas Program; did special music for the Christmas Eve Service and sang special music for Otto Lee’s funeral, though technically, that could be in next year’s report.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Washburn

Choir Director/Worship and Music Committee Council Member

Education Report 2023

On we go, with the year 2023 in the rearview mirror, and looking forward to 2024.

As youth and children director, Calista researched material from Illustrated Ministry to provide VBS children with "Compassion Camp". We shared a fun 4 days learning how to be kind and considerate to everyone just as Jesus said, "Love your Neighbor as yourselves". The camp included children and teachers from 1st, Wabanica, and Clementon. Thank you to the teachers for encouraging everyone in singing and learning about God's Word through stories and song.

A decision was made not to have Sunday School in the fall as the number of children were few. A blessing to learning in another way, was the children's sermons that Calista had during weekly Sunday worship.

Judy Gubbels was instrumental in writing and tweaking a Christmas program during Advent. The program included the congregation and choir. Thank you!

We look forward to seeing what the next year has in store for us all!

Submitted by,
Phyllis Paulsen

Altar Guild Report 2023

The altar guild is a dedicated group of volunteers responsible for setting the Lord's Table, Baptismal banners, sewn by Ruth Lee are made for each child when they are baptized. Decorating the sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas seasons. Keeping floral arrangements fresh, placing the proper paraments, changing the sanctuary candle weekly, hanging banners and changing linens according to the liturgical color for the day, season, or event are also duties of the Altar Guild.

THANK YOU TO ALL who helped with these duties this year; those who set up and served communion, those who helped decorate, and take down decorations and store the tree for the sanctuary at Christmas time.

The Altar Guild would like to express their appreciation to those who shared flowers, plants and monetary gifts that helped beautify the sanctuary during 2023. If you wish to share flowers for worship, please let us know. If you plan to order flowers, please let us know a week ahead to allow time for the flowers to arrive.

We would like to join in celebration in remembering Otto Lee, and how faithful he was to keep the oil filled in the candles and Baptismal candle on the altar area.

IT'S GOD'S WORK, WITH OUR HANDS, AS WE CONTINUE WORK IN OUR CHURCH.

Altar Guide members

Ruth and Otto Lee, Phyllis Paulsen, Michael Paulsen, Becky Curran, Meg Hemmingson, Nancy Anundson. Tweety Larson, communion bread.

And Jr. Members in training, Lilly and Triton Curran, Oliver and Charlotte Paulsen.

Nancy Anundson, & Tweety Larson.

FLCW Treasurer's Report 2023

FLCW FINANCIAL YEAR TO DATE REPORT					
January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023					
CHECKING ACCOUNT					
BEGINNING BALANCE	\$ 11,253.20				Comments
INCOME					
Action Group					
Angels of Mercy	166.00				
Bible Sales					
					Net profit : \$1525.00
Bakeless Bake Sale	1,531.00				Income - \$1531.00 minus Expenses - \$8.00
Bread and Soup Supper					
Circle Offering	355.72				
Coffee Donations	941.10				
Easter Fruit Baskets	259.00				
Funerals	2,950.00				
Misc Income					
Mission Outreach					
Prayer Breakfast Donations	215.00				
Quilt Raffle					
					Net profit : \$ 1148.52
Rummage Sale	1,180.50				Income - \$1180.50- Expenses- \$31.98
					Net profit : \$ 1944.61
Scandinavian Bake Sale	2,054.00				Income - \$254.00 - Expenses- \$109.39
Unit Meeting Offering					
WELCA Blanket Offering	307.00				
WELCA Thankoffering (2023)	338.00				
TOTAL INCOME	10,297.32				

EXPENSES					
1st Lutheran Alter Guild	200.00				
Action Group	60.00				
Angels of Mercy					
Bakeless Bake Sale	6.00				
Baudette Lutheran Soul Food	200.00				
Benevolence Payment					
Bibles					
General Building Fund					
Care Center Bingo Prizes	200.00				
Christ In Our Home	345.65				
Coffee Donations/Expenses					
Cradle Roll					
Easter Fruit Baskets	98.72				
FLCW FINANCIAL YEAR TO DATE REPORT					
January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023					
EXPENSES (CONT)					
					\$36.15 was from the
FLCW Unit Meeting Expenses	86.15				FLCW 2022 Christmas Unit Mtg
Funerals	1,200.67				
Gather Subscription					
Gifts, Plants, Misc for Pastors & Staff	100.00				
Kitchen Equipment & Supplies	621.41				
					Sweet Rolls for Annual Mtg -
Misc Expenses	1,362.14				Potatoes and Corn Oil for Care Center Lefse
Mission Outreach	600.00				
Over 80 Banquet					
Post Prom Donation					
Postage					
					Actual Cost of the Prayer Breakfast was
Prayer Breakfast	79.46				\$102.96 (Monica Buegler donated the Ham and
Quilt Raffle					the Cheese for the Egg Bake -\$23.50)
Quilts for Graduates	170.33				
Rummage Sale Expenses	31.98				
Scandinavian Bake Sale	109.39				
Stewardship /Backpacks					
					Registration for 3 people to attend the NWMN
Synod Convention Registration/Travel Expenses	410.00				SWO Convention in Thief River Falls (\$225.00)
					and Mileage 283 miles @\$6.55 per mile
					(\$185.00)
Synod Convention Expenses	63.00				Health Care Kit for the Homeless -
Synod Convention Offering (Physical & Regular					NWMN SWO Convention Project
Offerings)	50.00				
Synod Scholarship Offering	100.00				
Triennial Convention Offering					
WELCA Blanket Offering	307.00				
WELCA NWMN Cluster Offering & Travel Expenses	50.00				
WELCA Quarterly Offering	240.00				
					\$453.00 was for the 2022 Thankoffering
WELCA Thankoffering	791.00				that was disbursed in Jan. 2023
TOTAL EXPENSES	7,482.90				
CHECKING ACCOUNT					
ENDING BALANCE	\$ 14,067.62				

FLCW DESIGNATED FUNDS					
Designation	Beginning Balance	Income	Expenses	Current Balance	Comments
Angels of Mercy	\$ 152.24	\$ 156.00	\$ -	\$ 308.24	
Easter Fruit Baskets	\$ 148.63	\$ 259.00	\$ 98.72	\$ 308.91	
Fall 2020 Fund Raising	\$ 4,823.99		\$ -	\$4,823.99	Designated for Building Fund (Replacement/Repair of Exterior Doors)
Total Designated Funds	\$ 5,124.86	\$ 415.00	\$ 98.72	\$ 5,441.14	

TOTAL UNDESIGNATED CHECKING ACCOUNT BALANCE	\$ 8,626.48	
SAVINGS ACCOUNT	\$ 6,327.99	
THRIVENT FINANCIAL FUND (Designated for Parking Lot Repair)	\$ 18,575.07	As of Nov. 24, 2023

Submitted by,
Kathy Tischart

FIRST LUTHERAN WOMEN ACTION COMMITTEE REPORT FOR 2023

The First Lutheran Women Tuesday quilters met each week and worked on quilts. The ladies had a rummage sale last fall and did pretty well. Also, this year we did a Scandinavian Bake Sale in Nov., we made lefse and had baked goods which went over well.

We made 63 quilts, 40 health kits, 40 school kits and 20 layette kits that were shipped out to World Relief on Nov. 3, 2023.

Three quilts were made for our high school graduates this past year – the Rachel Group helped spear head this project with many others helping also.

Easter baskets were delivered to many people of our church.

Each year Thrivent Financial helps with our quilting. As members who have a product with them, you can receive \$250.00 twice per year. This has been a big boost to our lady's group to help get batting, material and supplies. We appreciate all who have gone into Thrivent to help with this. If you have any questions on how to get this done, please ask some of our ladies with the quilting group.

Our board meetings take place the 4th Wed. of each month.

Action chairs: Betty Sorenson, Sandy Johnson, Karen Berg and Sue Smith

Memorials 2023

Memorials	Fund	From
LuAnn Hennum	Music	Don and Sue Smith
Roger Birkland	General	Don and Sue Smith
Richard Johnson	General	Michael and Bette Wammer
Lil Brown	General	Carol Brune

2023 First Lutheran Church Council

2023 Council Officers Terms are two years with a max of two consecutive terms		
President	Linda Bauers	2nd Term Jan. 2023-2025
Vice President	Jon Hansen	1 st Term Jan. 2023-25
Secretary	Sue Smith	2nd Term Jan. 2022-2024
Treasurer	Mary Sopkowiak	2 nd Term Jan. 2022-2024
Financial Secretary	Bertel Anundson	1 st Term Jan. 2023-2025
2023 Members at Large Terms are two years with a max of two consecutive terms		
Education	Phyllis Paulsen	3 rd Term Jan. 2022-2024
Worship and Music	Joyce Washburn	1 st Term Jan. 2022-2024
Property	Jim Frohreich	1 st Term Jan. 2022-2024
Evangelism		
Stewardship	Darcy Hansen	2 nd Term Jan. 2022-2024
WELCA	Karen Hanson/Monica Buegler	

2024 First Lutheran Church Council

2024 Council Officers Terms are two years with a max of two consecutive terms		
President	Linda Bauers	2 nd Term Jan. 2023-2025
Vice President		
Secretary		
Treasurer	Eileen Cordray	1st Term Jan. 2024-2026
Financial Secretary	Bertel Anundson	1 st Term Jan. 2023-2025
2024 Members at Large Terms are two years with a max of two consecutive terms		
Education	Phyllis Paulsen	3 rd Term Jan. 2022-2024
Worship and Music	Joyce Washburn	2 nd Term Jan. 2024-2026
Property	Jim Frohreich	2 nd Term Jan. 2024-2026
Evangelism		
Stewardship		
WELCA	Karen Hanson/Monica Buegler	

2024 Synod Assembly Moorhead, Fri. and Sat., May 17th and 18th

Assembly Voting Members	Alternates
1.	1.
2.	2.

2024 Church Boards

Terms are 1 year and unlimited unless otherwise noted

Education	Outreach/Evangelism open	Nominating 5 members, 2 yr terms, 2 yr limit
Stewardship/Finance open	Worship & Music open	Mission Endowment Fund 5 members, 3yr terms
		Mark Washburn (elected 2022)
		Judy Humenuik (elected 2022)
Property	Audit 3 members, 3 yr terms	Linda Bauers (elected 2022)
		Ruth Lee (elected 2022)
Vice President open		



INTRODUCING STORYTELLING



**HERE YOU WILL FIND STORIES FROM AROUND THE
SYNOD THAT HIGHLIGHT WHERE OUR FAITH, OUR
LOVE OF NEIGHBOR, AND OUR CORE VALUES
CONNECT. WE ARE NWMN!**

Story to share? Contact Pr. Devlyn Brooks at
701.412.8377 or devlynbrooks@gmail.com



2023 Holy Cow Award
Recipient



The Holy Spirit
Moving in Lake
Bronson



Trinity Lutheran in
Pelican Rapids
commissions original



First Lutheran's
"Reverse Trick or
Treating"



'Warm Hearts Warm
Hands' - Good
Shepherd Lutheran



We hope you can come visit soon!

nwmnsynod.org

Mission Support

Mission Support is the money your congregation sends to support ministries of our synod, churchwide and local partners in ministry. At the start of each year, congregations pledge a percentage of their offerings toward Mission Support. These funds are used for the synod's annual mission plan and budget.

Of the Mission Support you give, 47% goes to our Churchwide ministries to start new ministries and accompany existing congregations as growing centers for evangelical mission. These funds also provide the staff and resources for developing new leaders, partnerships with churches around the globe, alleviating poverty, and so much more.

The remaining **53% of Mission Support remains with the synod**, supporting the ministry alongside congregations and leaders, call process, candidacy, conflict mediation, and staff. Additionally, 11% of these funds go to support these ministry partners:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| + Lutheran Campus Ministry of Bemidji | + Crossroads Campus Ministry at MSUM |
| + Luther Seminary | + ELCA Colleges and Universities |
| + Oak Grove Lutheran School | + Lutheran Advocacy - Minnesota |
| + Minnesota Council of Churches | + Parish Nurse program |
| + The Way | + Peoples Church |



Northwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

over and above

fundraising for initiatives

What is the difference between the "Mission Support" that congregations give yearly and the money raised through Give to the Max and Giving Hearts Day and other special appeals? Our annual appeals like Give to the Max and Giving Hearts Day are used solely to support new and emerging needs or initiatives that cannot be covered through our annual synod mission plan.

Why does the synod hold these appeals? Isn't Mission Support enough? One way to think about this is that the annual synod budget, which your Mission Support supports, is an expression of our *long-term* relationships and commitments. The budget represents things we've all agreed are essential for us to support over the long haul. As such, the synod budget does not have much "wiggle room" and does not change much yearly. Our special appeals, however, allow us to offer grants, programs, and services to support new and emerging needs and ministries. These kinds of programs and ministries are fluid and more responsive to current realities.

How is the Spring Appeal (formerly the Easter Appeal/Synod Assembly Offering) different? The Give to the Max and Giving Hearts appeals support Strategic Plan initiatives. Our Spring Appeal is for missional endeavors in our community and around the world. In 2023, the funds were shared between Care of Creation Grants and our Companion Synod ministry with the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church in India.