



SECTION

3

# REPORTS



Allegheny Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

# REPORTS OF THE BISHOP & STAFF

## BISHOP'S REPORT

### 2023 ALLEGHENY SYNOD ASSEMBLY



BISHOP PAULA SCHMITT

In my written report to the Synod Assembly last year, I expressed my hope for a shift in our mindset toward a more generous support of our leaders and congregations. I am proud of the work that has been done in this area so far. Several congregations and leaders participated in the Building A Culture of Generosity program and have made significant shifts in the way they use the resources they have been given to steward. Thirteen grants totaling over \$10,000 were given to congregations to support already existing ministry or to help start a new, innovative ministry in their context. This is a good start toward a new way of thinking about ministry together. Our staff will continue to work toward this shift in mindset and toward finding sustainable ways to support the mission and ministry we share as The Allegheny Synod.

This past year had us regretfully bidding farewell to six congregations who made the decision to disaffiliate from the ELCA. Trinity Lutheran, Johnstown; Mt. Zion Lutheran, Bakersville; Christ Lutheran, Dubois and the three congregations of the Central Bedford Parish: Bald Hill, St. Mark and St. James. All of those processes are now complete and those congregations have been removed from the roster of congregations of this Synod and of the ELCA. In cases where the congregation had a called pastor, those pastors were removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament for this Synod and the ELCA. The disaffiliation process is not an easy one and I am grateful for the faithful deliberation of the congregations who made that choice. We continue to pray for them that they will thrive in their new denominational home.

Two congregations made the hard, but faithful choice to close during the last year. Trinity Lutheran, Hooversville and Grace Lutheran, Stoystown which made up the Stonycreek Parish. Coming to the realization that it is time to close the doors, is a hard decision. The faithful work of the Councils at both of these congregations has been admirable. As I visit with congregations in the communities neighboring these two congregations, I see some of the former members who have become part of new communities of faith. I am thankful for the welcome they have received and for the ways they are participating in the life of their new communities.

We bid farewell to several pastors who accepted calls in other Synods and our hearts were broken when Pastor Bill Deist, Pastor John Klingeman, Pastor Walter Startzel and Pastor John (Jack) Timm died. All were long-serving pastors in this Synod and contributed to this Synod's mission and ministry in ways for which we will always be grateful.

In the past year, our Synod partnered with the Upper Susquehanna and Northwestern PA Synod for a tri-Synodical learning module for those interested in becoming lay worship leaders. Our Synod has six people in the process. The classes meet via Zoom and when needed, in-person practicum classes are arranged. We look forward to authorizing these new students and being blessed by their ministry among us.

I served as the Region 8 Bishop liaison to the ELCA Church Council. Having worked with the Council before I

was ordained, I was familiar with the function and scope of their work. It's been a good experience to be reconnected with this part of the Church. The ELCA Church Council is doing important work with the Commission For A Renewed Lutheran Church, continuing to wrestle with the realities of church decline and addressing our response to it, and working together with the Conference of Bishops on new social statements and messages that will guide our life of faith together.

I serve on the board of our partner ministries, Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries and Camp Sequanota. I give thanks for the dedicated leadership of both of those organizations and for the ways they contribute to our life together. It's not been an easy year for Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries as they saw the hope of affiliation dissolve. We continue to pray along with them as they discern next steps.

Camp Sequanota staff and a group of leaders in our Synod have partnered to form the Faith Formation Committee and have been planning retreats, mission trips, a festival, a youth event and other opportunities to nurture our faith for both adults and youth. I am proud of the work they are doing and look forward to seeing their endeavors thrive into the future.

I am excited about another Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community in our Synod. The Well is a ministry to and for underserved and marginalized people in the Blair County area. Vicar Ted Williams is leading the way in this new ministry. Please pray for Vicar Ted as he continues to reach out into the community with the love and grace of Jesus.

This is the part of my report where I am to tell you what to expect in the next year. I can faithfully and honestly say, I don't know. I don't know what lies ahead for us. I do know the Holy Spirit will accompany us in whatever we undertake. My hope is to find ways for us to more fully support the congregations and leaders of our Synod. I am deeply grateful for Pastor Kevin and Michelle and the gifts they share with our Synod. I look forward to the ways we will become more focused on our mission and live into the gracious welcome of our Lord.

Thank you for the privilege of serving in this role.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bishop Paula". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Bishop" and "Paula" being capitalized and prominent.

+Bishop Paula

## REPORTS OF THE BISHOP & STAFF

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### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR EVANGELICAL MISSION/ ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP



REV. KEVIN T. SHOCK

#### 2023 ALLEGHENY SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Recalling the 2022 Synod Assembly, I recognized that day how new and inexperienced I felt in this call. At that point I was still trying to figure out what all this ministry entailed. Some days I still feel that way, but now I can recognize how I have grown into this call, thanks mostly to all that people have shared with me.

Sharing is a primary characteristic of the early church that we hear about in Acts 2, rooted in the words *κοινά*—common—and *κοινωνία*—communion, or fellowship. They shared not only their food and homes and physical assets and financial resources with one another; they also shared their lives, their hopes, their fears, their sorrow, and their joy. Sharing in the early church is a comprehensive act. They gave all of themselves to one another. What was the result? We read that the early church had the goodwill of all the people around them and that daily more people were being added to their number. It's a vision that I wish were true with the church in this age, a vision of growth and goodwill in a world that preaches scarcity and division. If we will ever live into that vision, I'm certain that we must first strive together in Christ to share more of what we have and who we are with one another.

In the past year I have seen the goodness of God that is present when we share with one another. Many people have shared themselves and their gifts with me and with

the Office of the Bishop since I began this call. I'm sure that I could not give a comprehensive list of all the ways I have experienced common sharing in the past year, but several things come to mind.

Bishop Paula and Michelle have shared their insight with me as I have transitioned from parish ministry to the Office of the Bishop. Their wisdom has made this transition as smooth as I could imagine. It also has been many years since I have worked in a staff situation, and I am grateful to have two gracious and patient people working with me and guiding me.

Many people throughout our Synod, both clergy and laity, have also shared much insight with me. I have heard stories about congregational life and histories. People have served in the role of historian to help me piece together all of the scattered details I thought I knew about in the Synod. Through these siblings in Christ I have been able to learn much about the past and present landscape of our church.

People beyond our Synod have shared tools, experience, and feedback with me. The national network of DEMs and close relationships with my regional DEM colleagues have given shape to my call. Although the contexts are not always the same, I'm learning which tools and methods



can be effective here in our Synod. I'm grateful for the time and wisdom we have shared with one another. I'm also grateful for the gifts of people in the ELCA Coaching Ministry. Completing the Level 1 Coaching training has been invaluable to the work that I do in this office. I continue to meet with two partners from that training cohort to practice and receive coaching from one another. It's a holy thing for me that sharing time once a month with a pastor in Minnesota and a lay leader in Washington state can be so renewing and impactful on my work here.

I have learned to live into this call in part through people and congregations sharing their willingness to try new things and to bring me along as a partner in conversation and in ministry. From congregations that entered into the Building a Culture of Generosity program to councils that allowed me to utilize assessment tools to parishes that helped me design a process for finding their own identity and call as God's people, I have witnessed the way that the Holy Spirit moves in our openness to sharing our hopes and our fears with one another. God wiggles into the space we create when we share ourselves with one another and becomes our faithful partner in reimagining ministry and life with God's people inside and outside of our congregations.

It is my hope and a focus in my ministry that we can learn to share our common gifts and ministry more fully with one another. I see how easily God can move among us and how well God can work through us when we let down our defenses a bit and spend some time dismantling some walls that have prevented us from sharing more things in common as congregations and as God's people. Being a conversation partner with leaders and congregations has emerged as the passion in my call, and every time I witness God opening people up to sharing themselves, their thoughts, their feelings, their lives with others, that passion is renewed.

Thank you for all of the ways you have shared yourselves with me as I continue to learn this call to ministry, and please know that I am willing to share myself with you all in any way that will help us to be opened in renewed ministry and to hold all of God's abundant gifts in common.

In the peace of Christ,

The Rev. Kevin T. Shock  
Director for Evangelical Mission  
Assistant to the Bishop



# SYNOD SNAPSHOTS



Pastor Kevin with First Johnstown for the Sacrament of Holy Baptism for Adeline Charlotte.



St. James, Huntingdon—Pastor Brandon Cian welcomed Pastor Kevin to preach and worship.



Grace Delivered in Uptown Somerset for "Peace in the Park"



Synod group at a First Call Theological Education retreat dinner in Waynesboro.



Bishop Paula at Trinity, Sidman with the Josephson sisters.



KELC, West Pokot's Ordination



Seminarian Laura Waltermire was approved for ordination by the Synod Candidacy Committee during a Zoom meeting.





Pastor Kevin at St. Luke's Roaring Spring, with Pastor Amanda McCaffery and Vicar Jennifer Bobolsky.



Pastor Kevin led worship at Trinity in State College.



Blessing of the Pets Service at St. Mark Lutheran Church Snyderstown.



Pastor Kevin celebrated 125 years + 1 day with Pastor Jono Adams and the people of Benscreek Lutheran.



LAMPa Director Tracey DePasquale talks with Rep. Anita Kulik at a PA Hunger Action Coalition event.



Left: Jennifer Schaffer at the Allegheny Synodical Women's Organization convention held at Christ Lutheran in Claysburg.



Right: Eli Kirk reading at First Lutheran, Johnstown



Kid's Chat at St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church



# REPORTS OF THE ELCA

## Report of the Presiding Bishop



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

*"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age'"*

(MATTHEW 28:18-20).

Dear siblings in Christ,

We know the gospel changes lives and that God's power and grace are real and at work today. Together we are called to bear God's creative and redeeming word to all the world. What if we could make God known to more people? To the child who's never heard of Jesus? To young adults who are trying to make sense of the world? To older adults who often feel lonely and isolated?

Our purpose – "to activate each of us so that more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love" – is an expression of our calling and our longing for others to know the love of God in Christ Jesus. We live out our purpose through worship and service, in our congregations and communities, through our individual vocations and our collective work as church together.

Many of you have wondered why we set a goal to reach one million new, young and diverse people. We believe that each of us is made in the image of God, redeemed by Jesus on the cross, and filled with the Holy Spirit. Our focus on young and diverse people is not exclusive but an acknowledgment that younger and more diverse people are disproportionately missing from our pews and

gatherings. We are challenging one another to reach out across differences of all sorts to meet our neighbors.

Setting a goal to engage with one million is a way for us to know whether the work we are doing is, in fact, reaching new people. It encourages us to work together to be a church that cares about the world around us and is effective and faithful in responding to God's call.

Join us on this future-focused journey to widen our welcome and break down the barriers that keep people from engaging with the church. Together, we can help people experience the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.

In Christ,



The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
8765 West Higgins Road  
Chicago, Illinois 60631-4101  
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# THE ELCA FOUNDATION



**ELCA Foundation**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

## Updates from the ELCA Foundation



### Synod Assemblies 2023

The vision of the ELCA Foundation is to be a thriving ministry that develops a culture of intentional generosity and financial stewardship to expand the work of the ELCA. Our mission is to support and sustain ELCA ministries by enhancing gifting capacity and stewarding resources.

As a ministry of the ELCA, we serve individuals, congregations and worship communities; synods; the churchwide organization; and institutions, agencies and other related ELCA organizations.

The ELCA Foundation exists to:

- Provide gift planning, administration, and processing.
- Manage endowment funds and offer investment management services as an acknowledged fiduciary.
- Engage individuals and organizations in thoughtful planning to pass on philanthropic values and support ministry passions.

In 2022 the ELCA Foundation's gift planning network walked alongside 200 donors/families in developing their gift plans, which resulted in \$76.5 million in future planned-gift commitments. Nearly \$26 million of this will go to provide direct support to individual ELCA congregations. The network generated \$116.1 million in total gifts and investment assets. This includes new planned-gift commitments, \$10.3 million in current gifts,

including funded trusts, gift annuities and individual endowments, and \$29.3 million in new assets invested in the Ministry Growth Fund (previously known as Fund A). Thank you for the opportunity to work in your synod, for trusting your endowment dollars to the ELCA Foundation and for allowing us to work alongside your ministries.

The ELCA Foundation and your regional gift planner are here to support your ministry through shared expertise with endowments, gift acceptance policies and practices to promote planned giving. We also work with individual donors to ease the complexity of estate plans, planned gifts, trusts and noncash gifts. Our services are free of charge to your congregation and its members. A local representative from our network of regional gift planners is available to work with you. Learn more about the ELCA Foundation by watching "[ELCA Foundation: Make a plan. Change the world.](#)" visiting our updated website at [foundation.elca.org](https://foundation.elca.org) or contacting your regional gift planner to help your congregation grow its culture of giving today.

### Contact your regional gift planner:

**Sr. Marianne Brock**

[Marianne.Brock@elca.org](mailto:Marianne.Brock@elca.org)

(717)574-9066

[foundation.elca.org](https://foundation.elca.org)



# REPORTS OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL

## Report of Synod Council Actions

July 2022 – March 2023

### July 2022

Upon motion by Gary Gable, second by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey

- **SC22.07.01** – to adopt the agenda for today's meeting as amended... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Paula, seconded by Dave Finney

- **SC22.07.02** – To modify Synod Council motion **SC22.05.04** granting Retired Roster status to the Rev. Linda McElroy Thomas, by changing the effective date to May 1, 2022... the motion is adopted.

Upon motion by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey, seconded by Pr. Ralph Hamer

- **SC22.07.03** – to authorize the transfer of \$79,000 from the 1st Summit checking account to the 1st Summit Trust account... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Ralph Hamer, seconded by Gary Gable

- **SC22.07.04** – to authorize that the 2023 Allegheny Synod Assembly shall be held at the Blair County Convention Center on June 17, 2023... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey, seconded by Michele Peese

- **SC22.07.05** – to appoint Pr. Glen Foster & Tom Horn to the Consultation Committee for terms of 6-years... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Paula, seconded by Ann Ferry

- **SC22.07.06** – the Allegheny Synod Council acknowledges receipt of the letters of dis-affiliation received from Trinity – Johnstown & The Central Bedford Lutheran Parish (Bald Hill Lutheran Church, St James Lutheran Church, St Mark Lutheran Church)... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey, seconded by Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte

- **SC22.07.07** – the Allegheny Synod Council acknowledges receipt of a letter from Christ Casebeer – Somerset, dated May 23, 2021, indicating that this congregation has modified their constitution as per the processes required under chapters 16, 17 & 18 of the 2019 Model Constitution for Congregations... the motion is adopted<sup>1</sup>

Upon motion by Bishop Paula, seconded by Andrea Paul

- **SC22.07.08** – that Suzanne Egan Glenn & William Thompson be appointed to 3-year terms the Board of Trustees of Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries beginning January 2023... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Gary Gable, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey

- **SC22.07.09** – That Rick Kazmer (editor of the digital Lutheran Letter) be granted an increase in his remuneration from \$600 per issue to \$750 per issue effective immediately... the motion is adopted

<sup>1</sup> Note that neither the Secretary of the Allegheny Synod (\*C16.03.), nor the Allegheny Synod Constitution & Bylaws Committee (S11.01.02d) have reviewed or endorsed these changes.

*continued*

## September 2022

Upon motion by Pr. Ralph Hamer, second by Bill Layton

- **SC22.09.01** – to adopt the agenda for today’s meeting...the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Paula second by Michele Peese

- **SC22.09.02** – to adopt the July minutes as presented...the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Paula, second by Gary Gable

- **SC22.09.03** – the Allegheny Synod Council affirms both Central Bedford Parish (7-0, 6-0, and 6-0) and Mt. Zion, Bakersville’s (16-1) first votes for disaffiliation process as submitted through letters to the Allegheny Synod office... the motion is adopted

## November 2022

Upon motion by Gary Gable, second by Vicar Allen Stump

- **SC22.11.01** – to adopt the agenda for today’s meeting as amended... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Andrea Paul, second Pr. Marty Jo Stellabotte

- **SC22.11.02** – to adopt the minutes of the September Council meeting... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Vicar Allen Stump, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey

- **SC22.11.03** – to confirm the disaffiliation of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church-Johnstown from the ELCA, effective November 6, 2022... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Vicar Allen Stump, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey

- **SC22.11.04** – to confirm the disaffiliation of the Central Bedford Lutheran Parish from the ELCA, effective October 30, 2022... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Marty Jo Stellabotte, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey

- **SC22.11.05** – to accept the 1st vote results (Sept 18, 2022) in favor of the disaffiliation of Christ Lutheran Church-Dubois from the ELCA... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Ralph Hamer, seconded by Gary Gable

- **SC22.11.06** – that we provide refundable funding in the amount of \$6,000 (intended to make travel deposits) plus a grant in the amount of \$5,000 to support the youth mission trip being planned for Florida hurricane recovery work in July 2023 ... the motion is adopted (Pr. Amanda McCaffrey abstained).

Upon motion by Bishop Schmitt, seconded by Pr. Amanda

- **SC22.11.07** – To affirm the selection of Katherine Peese to serve on the Board of the Sequanota Lutheran Conference Center & Camp... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Schmitt, seconded by Andrea Paul

- **SC22.11.08** – to extend an interim call to the Rev. Suzanne Morelli to serve The Abby Reformed UCC church in Huntingdon County... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Gary Gable, seconded by Pr. Ralph Hamer

- **SC22.11.09** – that the sum of \$9,000 be distributed to those eligible seminarians identified by the Office of the Bishop, as per continuing resolution **S15.40.A18**... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Gary Gable, seconded by Pr. Becky Horn

- **SC22.11.10** – that the sum of \$5,900 be transferred from the AmeriServ account to the Leadership Fund... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Schmitt, seconded by Pr. Becky Horn

- **SC22.11.11** – that the Allegheny Synod Council recommends Portico's Gold+ plan for all rostered ministers in the Synod... the motion is adopted

## SYNOD COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING – December 6, 2022

Upon motion by Dave Finney, seconded by Vicar Allen Stump

- **SCEC12.06.01** – to remove the Rev. Toby Holland from the ELCA Roster of Ministers of Word & Sacrament as a result of Trinity-Johnstown's disaffiliation from the ELCA... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Dave Finney, seconded by Vicar Allen Stump

- **SCEC12.06.02** – to correct Michelle Bossler's salary as published in the 2023-24 budget, the correct amount is \$45,494.40... the motion is adopted

## January 2023

Upon motion by Bishop Paula, seconded by Vicar Allen Stump

- **SC23.01.01** – to adopt the agenda for today's meeting as amended... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Becky Horn, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey

- **SC23.01.02** – to adopt the minutes of the November 19th Synod Council meeting & the December 6th Executive Committee meeting (*via email*)... the motion is adopted

Upon motion Bill Layton, second by Vicar Allen Stump

- **SC23.01.03** – Contingent on receiving the anticipated bump in giving (from our congregations) in January (the last month of the fiscal year), that we return to our traditional 50% level of giving to the ELCA for fiscal year 2022-23... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Ralph Hamer, seconded by Vicar Allen Stump

- **SC23.01.04** – To table the discussion of **SC23.01.03** until we have a discussion on the shared DEM position... the motion to table motion **SC23.01.03** is adopted

Bishop Paula announced that Treasurer Bill Layton does not intend to seek a second term as Synod Treasurer.

- In May of 2019, Bill was appointed by the Synod Council to a 4-year term to begin on August 1, 2019.
- Bill has offered to continue beyond the August 1, 2023 end-of-term date, until a new Treasurer is on board.
- From the Synod Constitution **+S8.41**. – The Treasurer may be elected by the Synod Assembly or may be appointed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod. The treasurer may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

Upon motion by Bishop Paula, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey

- **SC23.01.05** – that we continue to work with CPA Associates thru the 2023-24 fiscal year... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Gary Gable, seconded by Pr. Ralph Hamer

- **SC23.01.06** – That we continue to have the discussion relative to employing a shared DEM position with the Upper Susquehanna Synod & transitioning Pr. Kevin Shock's position from DEM to full-time assistant to Bishop Schmitt... the motion is adopted



Upon motion by Bishop Paula, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey

- **SC23.01.07** – that the Rev. Julia Sprenkle be granted *On Leave from Call* status, effective Feb 13, 2023... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Paula, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey

- **SC23.01.08** – to affirm the second vote for disaffiliation taken November 27, 2022, by Mt. Zion, Bakersville... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Paula, seconded by Pr. Becky Horn

- **SC23.01.09** – to affirm the anticipated second vote for disaffiliation to be taken on January 22, 2023, by Christ Lutheran-Dubois... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Paula, seconded by Pr. Becky Horn

- **SC23.01.10** – to remove the Rev. John Miller & the Rev. Amy Godshall-Miller from the Allegheny Synod roster & the ELCA roster of Ministers of Word & Sacrament, as a result of Christ Lutheran-Dubois' disaffiliation, effective January 22, 2023... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Paula, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey

- **SC23.01.11** – to remove the Rev. Jenny Barnes from the roster of Ministers of Word & Sacrament of the Allegheny Synod, retroactive to Feb 18, 2021... the motion is adopted

## February 2023

Upon motion by Bishop Paula, seconded by Pr. Becky Horn

- **SC23.02.01** – To authorize a Synodically Authorized Worshiping Committee Organizational exploration in Blair County... the motion is adopted

## March 2023

Upon motion by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey, seconded by Bill Layton

- **SC23.03.01** – to adopt the agenda for today's meeting... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte, seconded by Vicar Allen Stump,

- **SC23.03.02** – to adopt the minutes of the January 2023 meeting as amended – the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Vicar Alan Stump, seconded by Pr. Nancy Hoover

- **SC23.03.03** – to contribute \$1,500 to the printing of the *Book* for the *Weekend*... the motion is adopted.

Upon motion by Bishop Paula, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey

- **SC23.03.04** – that the *recommended changes* to the Allegheny Synod Constitution conveyed to us by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly in Columbus, OH be adopted by the Synod Council & conveyed to the 2023 Allegheny Synod Assembly along with a recommendation to adopt... the motion is adopted
  - *These recommended wording changes are highlighted in blue in the Constitution section of the 2023 Bulletin of Reports & will be considered for adoption by the 2023 Allegheny Synod Assembly along with the Synod Council's recommendation to adopt, as per **†S18.12**. A **majority** vote is required by the Assembly to adopt these changes.*

*continued*

Upon motion by Pr. Becky Horn, second by Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte

- **SC23.03.05** – that the changes to **Chapter 11 – Committees** in the Allegheny Synod Constitution be adopted by the Synod Council & conveyed to the 2023 Allegheny Synod Assembly along with a recommendation to adopt... the motion is adopted.
  - *Some of these constitutional changes involve **bylaws** & as such are governed by provision **+S18.21**, & bylaw **S18.21.01** of the synod constitution. This Synod Assembly will consider adding, amending, or removing the following bylaws: **S11.01.10**, **S11.01.20**, **S11.01.22**, **S11.01.33**. This synod may amend its bylaws at any meeting of the Synod Assembly by a **two-thirds vote** of voting members of the assembly present and voting, **after having been moved and presented in writing over the signatures of at least ten members**.*
  - *Some of these constitutional changes involve **continuing resolutions** & as such are governed by provision **+S18.31** of the synod constitution. This Synod Assembly will consider adding, amending, or removing the following continuing resolutions: **S11.01.A97**, **S11.01.B97**, **S11.01.C97**, **S11.01.A23**, **S11.01.E18**, **S11.01.D97**. This synod may adopt or amend its continuing resolutions by a **majority vote** of the Synod Assembly or by a **two-thirds vote** of Synod Council.*

Upon motion by Secretary Dave Finney, seconded by Pr. Becky Horn

- **SC23.03.06** – that bylaw **S10.01.05** be removed from the Synod Constitution as it contradicts required bylaw **†S6.04.01**. — the motion is adopted by the Synod Council & conveyed to the 2023 Allegheny Synod Assembly along with a recommendation to adopt – the motion is adopted.
  - *This synod may amend its bylaws at any meeting of the Synod Assembly by a **two-thirds vote** of voting members of the assembly present and voting, **after having been moved and presented in writing over the signatures of at least ten members**.*

## May 2023

May 2023 meeting agenda...

- **SC23.05.01** – the meeting agenda is adopted by unanimous consent

Upon motion by Gary Gable, seconded by Bishop Paula

- **SC23.05.02** - to adopt the minutes of the March 2023 Synod Council meeting as presented... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Paula, seconded by Pr. Becky Horn

- **SC23.05.03** – that a gift in the amount of \$10,000 be contributed to the Lutheran Campus Ministry at Penn State, from the Expense Reserve Fund... the motion is adopted
- **SC23.05.04** – to adopt modifications to the **second half-year** of the 2023-24 Allegheny Synod Budget & to adopt two alternative versions of the 2024-25 Allegheny Synod Budget & convey these items to the 2023 Synod Assembly, along with the recommendation to adopt one of the two budget plans... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Paula, seconded by Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte

- **SC23.05.05** – to designate the offering from the Synod Worship Service on June 11, 2023, to the Lutheran Campus Ministry at Penn State... the motion is adopted

Upon motion of Bishop Paula, seconded by VP Ann Ferry

- **SC23.05.06** – to affirm the first vote-of-disaffiliation taken by the congregation at St. Paul Lutheran Church/Buckstown (Somerset County)... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Gary Gable, seconded by Pr. Ralph Hamer

- **SC23.05.07** – to convey the 2024 **Compensation & Benefits Manual** to the 2023 Synod Assembly, along with the recommendation to adopt... the motion is adopted

# 2023 Report of the Secretary of the Allegheny Synod

Dave Finney

## Constitutional Changes to be considered by the 2023 Allegheny Synod Assembly

There are 4 categories of proposed constitutional changes for the 2023 Synod Assembly to consider...

- 1) adopting recommended changes to the Synod Constitution, conveyed to the Synod Assembly by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly – [SC23.03.04](#)
- 2) adopting changes to several bylaws in the Synod Constitution; *Chapter 11 – Committees*, conveyed to the Synod Assembly by Bishop Paula Schmitt & Synod Council – [SC23.03.05](#)
- 3) adopting changes to several continuing resolutions in the Synod Constitution; *Chapter 11 – Committees*, conveyed to the Synod Assembly by Bishop Paula Schmitt & Synod Council – [SC23.03.05](#)
- 4) adopting the recommendation to remove from the Synod Constitution a contradictory bylaw, conveyed to the Assembly by Secretary Dave Finney & the Synod Council - [SC23.03.06](#)

### I. Recommended constitutional changes from the 2022 Churchwide Assembly

Following the *2022 Churchwide Assembly* in Columbus, Ohio, we received constitutional changes in the *Allegheny Synod Constitution* & the *Model Constitution for Congregations* from the ELCA. Both of these amended constitutions appear in the Constitution section of this 2023 Bulletin of Reports.

In the *Allegheny Synod Constitution*, there are two types of changes.

- *Required changes* adopted by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly are highlighted in yellow. These required changes took effect immediately following the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. No action is required by the 2023 Allegheny Synod Assembly.
- *Recommended changes* are highlighted in blue & will be considered for adoption by the 2023 Allegheny Synod Assembly as per [†S18.11](#) & [†S18.12](#). A *majority vote* is required by this Assembly to adopt these changes.

In the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, all changes are highlighted in yellow, with no action required by the 2023 Allegheny Synod Assembly.

*continued*

## II. Presented here are Bishop Paula Schmitt's recommendations for bylaw changes with regard to Chapter 11– Committees.

Some of these constitutional changes involve *bylaws* & as such are governed by provision *+S18.21.*, & bylaw *S18.21.01.* of the synod constitution. This Synod Assembly will consider adding, amending, or removing the following bylaws: *S11.01.10., S11.01.20., S11.01.22., S11.01.33.* This synod may amend its bylaws at any meeting of the Synod Assembly by a *two-thirds vote* of voting members of the assembly present and voting, after having been *moved and presented in writing over the signatures of at least ten members*.

*S11.01.10.* This synod shall provide for the following administrative functions:

Finance -- concerning the business administration of the synod in such areas as:

### a. Program Proposal

- 1) Preparation of the synod's program proposal for each year;
- 2) Recommendation on compensation guidelines for Rostered Ministers of this Synod
- ~~2) Accounting and data processing, office management, and business policies;~~
- ~~3) Resource development.~~

b. Synod Assembly -- as specified in Chapter 7- Synod Assembly

c. Nominations -- as specified in *S9.03.*

~~*S11.01.20.* The Synod shall provide for the following ministries to and with congregations which shall include but not be limited to:~~

- ~~a. Worship;~~
- ~~b. Evangelism;~~
- ~~c. Christian education;~~
- ~~d. Stewardship;~~
- ~~e. Social Ministry.~~

*S11.01.22.* This synod shall provide for ministries to and with leaders of this synod which shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a. Pastors;
- b. Deacons;
- c. Lay leaders;
- d. Candidates for ministry.
- ~~e. Synodically Authorized Ministers.~~

*S11.01.33.* Each committee shall

- a. record minutes of meetings and activities which shall be shared with the Synod Council and the office of the bishop;
- b. submit to the committee responsible for finance **this Synod's program proposal** its anticipated budgetary needs for the next year's Program Proposal, breaking the request down into line items;
- c. submit a report to the Synod Assembly.



### III. Presented here are Bishop Paula Schmitt's recommendations for continuing resolution changes with regard to Chapter 11– Committees.

Some of these constitutional changes involve *continuing resolutions* & as such are governed by provision ~~+S18.31.~~ of the synod constitution. This Synod Assembly will consider adding, amending, or removing the following continuing resolutions: *S11.01.A97., S11.01.B97, S11.01.C97., S11.01.A23, S11.01.E18., S11.01.D97.,* This synod may adopt or amend its continuing resolutions by a majority vote of the Synod Assembly or by a two-thirds vote of Synod Council.

*S11.01.A97.* There shall be a Finance ~~Committee~~ Team

a. whose purpose will be to provide for the following administrative functions; ~~such as:~~

1) preparation of the synod's program proposal for each year;

1) make a recommendation to Synod Council regarding the synod's program proposal for the next fiscal year

2) make a recommendation to Synod Council concerning compensation and benefits guidelines for Rostered Ministers

3) make recommendation to the Synod Council concerning the synod's investment portfolio

2) accounting and data processing, office management, and business policies;

3) resource development

b. which shall have between eight and twelve members with an attempt to have at least one member from each conference.–

A team of no less than four and not more than seven people shall be appointed by the Synod Council.

c. which shall have the Synod Treasurer as an ex-officio member of this committee.

*S11.01.B97.* There shall be a Congregational Ministries ~~Committee~~

a. whose primary purpose is to support and equip congregations for ministry in their local settings. This task shall be accomplished primarily by coordinating and guiding the work of ministry teams; the chairman of each shall make up the membership of the Congregational Ministries Committee. Ministry teams represented shall include, but not be limited to:

1) Christian Education

2) Evangelism

3) Parish Health Ministries

4) Social Ministry

5) Stewardship

6) Worship and Music. *This is repeated information from S11.01.20.*

b. Toward fulfillment of the Allegheny Synod's commitment to recognize and encourage special ministries, the Congregational Ministries ~~Committee~~ shall also recognize, encourage, support, and relate to ministries which share its mission to support and equip congregations for ministry in their local settings. Such special ministries shall include, but not be limited to

1) Synodical Men's Organization

2) Synodical Women's Organization

3) Synod Youth Committee. *This is stated in S11.01.23.*

c. The Congregational Ministries Committee shall have a liaison from the Synod Council. The Synod Resource Library Coordinator shall also be a member of this committee. Other members may be appointed as appropriate to the faithful fulfillment of its purpose. The chairperson of the Congregational Ministries Committee, appointed by the Synod Council, shall not serve as chairperson of any of the committee's ministry teams.

**S11.01.C97.** There shall be a Synod Outreach Global Mission Committee

- a. which shall lift up and encourage support of ecumenical and intersynodical relations, global missions, Region 8, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the partner ministries of this synod, and church in society issues;
- b. which shall have the following standing ministry teams:
  - 1) Partnership Ministries which shall
    - a) lift up the concerns of all the partner agencies and organizations of this synod;
    - b) engage in dialog with each partner and provide opportunities for dialog among partners;
    - c) submit an annual program proposal for monies to be allocated to synod partners;
  - 1) Global Mission Committee shall
    - a) raise the synod's awareness of the global dimensions of the church,
    - b) promote support for the global work of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ,
    - c) submit an annual program proposal for monies to be allocated for global mission;
    - d) relate to the Allegheny Synod's Companion Synod, the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church
  - 3) Church in Society which shall lift concern for and work in areas of peace, justice, environment, ecology, and health issues:  
And which shall assist the bishop in ecumenical concerns at the Bishop's discretion, and take as their responsibility any ministries or programs of Region 8, the Division for Outreach and the church at large which are not the responsibility of any other synodical committee.

**S11.01.A23** There shall be a Synod Advocacy Team

- a) Coordinate training for Rostered Ministers on racial justice and boundaries annually.
- b) Raise awareness of issues in the world including but not limited to peace, justice, creation, health, environment, racism.

**S11.01.E18.** There shall be a Leadership Committee

- a. to provide counsel and guidance to the Synod's ministry to and with leaders of this Synod.
- b. which shall be composed of representatives from among active and retired pastors, deacons, pastors serving under special call, authorized lay leaders and a liaison member of the Candidacy Committee.
- c. whose members shall be chosen for their interest in and their ability to lead specific ongoing ministry teams, via, Retired Leaders, Continuing Education, Sequanota Experience for Leaders and their Families (SELF), Compensation and Benefits, Authorized Lay Leaders, Spiritual Retreats, Deacons, First Call Theological Education, Special Call Pastors, and The Bishop's Convocation and other forms of continuing education for this Synod's leaders shall be the committee's focus.
- d. whose tasks addressed by each ministry team, although largely self-generated, shall be responsive to suggestions made by the ELCA, Region 8, the Bishop, Synod Council, and other members of the Leadership Committee. Meetings of the Leadership Committee shall provide a forum for the sharing of tasks being addressed by each ministry team, and for the negotiation of projected budgetary needs.

*continued*

**S11.01.D97.** There shall be a Candidacy Committee

- a. which is related to the Leadership Committee for purposes of ministry support but is under the direction of the Bishop and Synod Council.
- b. which shall have ten members appointed to Synod Council. No committee member shall serve for more than six consecutive years.
- c. whose operational process of this committee shall be as follows:
  - 1) receive the Congregational Registration of potential candidates for ordained or certified ministry,
  - 2) receive information from and screen all candidates,
  - 3) endorse each potential candidate for the appropriate preparatory program of studies,
  - 4) review each potential candidate prior to final endorsement,
  - 5) provide ongoing support and guidance to endorsed candidates and receive reports on their progress, and
  - 6) during the candidate's last year of studies grant approval for (or deny) ordination or certification.
- d. after careful review, withdraw the endorsement of a candidate not deemed to be making satisfactory progress.
- e. ~~select one of its members to be a member of and liaison to the Leadership Committee.~~

#### **IV. Secretary Finney's recommendation to remove a conflicting bylaw.**

**Premise:** We have two bylaws in the Allegheny Synod Constitution that contradict each other..

**†S6.04.01.**

It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be youth and young adults. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, the term "youth" means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term "young adult" means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.

- Bylaw **†S6.04.01.** is a required bylaw, affirmed & re-codified by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

**S10.01.05.**

The member representing youth on the Synod Council shall be at least fifteen years of age and shall not be older than twenty-one years of age at the time of his or her election.

- Bylaw **S10.01.05.** is a non-required bylaw, which was introduced at the synod level prior to 2012.

**Recommended Action:** I would recommend that bylaw **S10.01.05** be removed from the Synod Constitution.

This synod may amend its bylaws at any meeting of the Synod Assembly by a two-thirds vote of voting members of the assembly present and voting, after having been moved and presented in writing over the signatures of at least ten members.

# Minutes of the 34th Assembly of the Allegheny Synod

A Virtual Assembly via Zoom  
Hosted from the Allegheny Synod Office, June 11, 2022  
*Built on a Rock*

**JUNE 11, 2022<sup>1</sup>**

## Welcome

Bishop Paula Schmitt opened the 34th Allegheny Synod Assembly at 8:45am via Zoom

## Adoption of the 2021 Minutes

Upon motion by Bill Layton, seconded from the floor of the assembly

- **SA22.06.03** - to adopt the minutes of the 2021 Synod Assembly as presented... the motion is adopted

## Adoption of the Agenda

Upon motion by Bishop, seconded from the floor of the Assembly

- **SA22.06.04** – to adopt the agenda for the 2022 Synod Assembly... the motion is adopted

## Rules of Procedural *(2022 Bulletin of Reports, pages 7 & 8)*

Upon motion by Bishop Schmitt, seconded from the floor of the Assembly

- **SA22.06.05** – to adopt the Rules of Procedure for the Synod Assembly ... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Vice President Ann Ferry, seconded from the floor of the Assembly

- **SA22.06.06** - To give voice & vote to the UCC pastors & the ELCA Vicars for this Assembly... the motion is adopted

## PLENARY SESSION 1

### Introductions

- Dr. Ryan Cumming – ELCA representative
- Synod Officers
- Synod Assembly Parliamentarian – Sam Clapper, of counsel
- Asst. to the Bishop/DEM Pr. Kevin Shock
- Assembly Committee Chair Jene Flegel
- Cam Ron Video – Johnstown
- Dr. Pat Savage – R&C Committee chair

<sup>1</sup> All BOR page references in the 2022 Minutes refer to the “2022 Bulletin of Reports”

*continued*

**Report of the Bishop** *(2022 Bulletin of Reports, pages 36 & 37)*

- A Pastoral conversation with the Synod
- Rebuild, reunite & revive
- Matthew 7:24 – built on a rock
- What tools do you have, how will you support our rebuilding project
- An invitation to you, about how your gifts will contribute to our rebuilding project
- With Christ as our foundation, anything is possible

**Prayer & 1st Ballot**

**Report of the Vice President – Ann Ferry** *(2022 Bulletin of Reports, page 51)*

- Change is a good thing... Bishop Paula & DEM Kevin
- Praying that we use the gifts to be the light of the world to our neighbors

**Report of the Synod Secretary – Dave Finney** *(2022 Bulletin of Reports, pages 52 & 53)*

**Report of the Synod Treasurer – Bill Layton** *(2022 Bulletin of Reports, page 72)*

- The Audit – an unqualified audit (the highest audit grade available)
  - No evidence of fraud or theft
- Budget Report
  - Total mission support has been a 2% drop per year in mission support
  - Ordained Staff Sabbatical – a new line in the budget
  - Travel expenses are on the rise, our forecast may need to be revised
  - We are returning some of our Partners to pre-COVID levels, owing to a strong year-end increase in mission support
  - We continue to see the need to withdraw \$30,000 annually from our investments, in order to balance our budget
- Compensation & Benefits Manual
  - A 5% increase to the recommended compensation for the next fiscal year
  - Some minor changes in verbiage in the Manual

*continued*



## Report of the 1st ballot – Pr. Glen Foster

Q1 – *Synod Council* (lay female) 3-year term, elect 1

- 129 number of valid ballots, 65 minimum to elect
  - Joyce Long – 129 votes
- Joyce Long is re-elected to a second 3-year term on Synod Council

Q2 – *Synod Council* (lay male) 3-year term, elect 1

- No election

Q3 – *Synod Council* (ordained) 3-year term, elect 1

- 132 number of valid ballots, 67 minimum to elect
  - Rev. Becky Horn – 69 votes
  - Rev. Marth Jo Irvin-Stellabotte – 63 votes
- The Rev. Becky Horn is re-elected to a second 3-year term on Synod Council

Q4 – *Synod Council* (youth) 2-year term, elect 1

- No election

Q5 – *Consultation Committee* (clergy male) 6-year term, elect 1

- No election

Q6 – *Consultation Committee* (clergy female) 4-year term, elect 1

- No election

Q7 – *Discipline Committee* (lay male) 6-year term, elect 1

- 120 number of valid ballots, 61 minimum number to elect
  - Tom Horn – 120 votes
- Tom Horn is re-elected to a second 6-year term on the Discipline Committee<sup>2</sup>

Q8 – *Discipline Committee* (lay female) 6-year term, elect 1

- No election

Q9 – *Discipline Committee* (clergy female) 4-year term, elect 1

- No election

Q10 – *Mission Endowment Fund Committee*, 3-year term, elect 1

- 125 number of valid ballots, 63 minimum number to elect
  - Allan Ilgen – 125 votes
- Allen Ilgen is elected to a 3-year term on the MEF Committee

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<sup>2</sup> This election was disallowed as per provision **+S11.03.** of the Allegheny Synod Constitution, which prohibits consecutive re-election to the Discipline Committee. Mr. Horn was subsequently appointed to a 6-year term of service on the Consultation Committee as per **SC22.07.05.**

*continued*

Q11 – *Mission Endowment Fund Committee*, 2-year term, elect 1

- 126 number of valid ballots, 64 minimum number to elect
  - William Lonsinger – 126 votes
- William Lonsinger is elected to a 2-year term on the MEF Committee

Q12 – *Mission Endowment Fund Committee*, 1-year term, elect 1

- 130 number of valid ballots, 66 minimum number to elect
  - Edward Jenkins – 130 votes
- Edward Jenkins is elected to a 1-year term on the MEF Committee

Q13 – *Synod Council* (ordained) 2-year term, elect 1

- 137 number of valid ballots, 69 minimum number to elect
  - Rev. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte – 137 votes
- Rev. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte is elected to a 2-year term on Synod Council

Q 14 – *Synod Council* (ordained) 1-year term, elect 1

- 136 number of valid ballots, 69 minimum number to elect
  - Rev. Ralph Hamer – 136 votes
- Rev. Ralph Hamer is elected to a 1-year term on Synod Council

## **ELCA Churchwide Representative Report - Dr. Ryan Cumming<sup>3</sup>**

Acts 2:1-6, 41-47 – the Day of Pentecost

Your ministry in the Allegheny Synod empowers this church, in 2021 the Allegheny Synod forwarded \$303,293.00 to the ELCA

- *Gloria de Dios* – a path to a new Spanish speaking congregation in our Synod
- *ELCA Fund for Leaders* scholarship program supports students of tremendous promise attending ELCA seminaries.
- *ELCA World Hunger* - \$2.3 million in food, clean water, education, public policy advocating & more
- *ELCA Public Policy Advocacy*... <https://www.elca.org/advocacy>
- *AMMPARO* is a holistic, whole church commitment by the ELCA, as a church in the world, to accompany children today and in the future... <https://www.elca.org/ammparo>

## **Churchwide Synod Assembly Video – Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton**

### **Virtual Worship — Video from First Lutheran, Altoona PA**

<sup>3</sup> Ryan P. Cumming, Ph.D., is the program director for hunger education with ELCA World Hunger. In this role, he directs the development of ELCA World Hunger's educational resources, research trends in hunger and poverty and supports communications with partners and congregations. In addition, Ryan teaches courses on theological ethics and religious studies at Central Michigan University and Loyola University Chicago. Ryan is a former interim editor of the Journal of Lutheran Ethics and was a member of the ELCA's criminal justice social statement task force.

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## PLENARY SESSION 2

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### Report of Reference & Counsel – Dr. Pat Savage

Presentation of three items for consideration of the 2022 Synod Assembly

- **SA21.06.01** – Allegheny Synod Bishop's Sabbatical
- **SA22.06.01** – Memorial to Restructure the Governance of the ELCA
- **SA22.06.02** – Memorial to Recommend a Structured Process for the Pre-Assembly Identification of Nominees for the Election of a Presiding Bishop

### ELCA Churchwide Representative Report of Home Area (World Hunger) – Dr. Ryan Cumming

- Providing tools, seed, protection of rights & other resources
- Hunger is a symptom of much deeper inequities
- Food alone will not resolve inequities
- The war in Ukraine is having a rippling effect on the global food system
- Everyone needs to have food to eat & a seat at the table
- We can't end hunger with food
- Holistic, transformative work at ELCA World Hunger
- Food is a symbol of hope
- An interlocking crisis around the world
- ELCA World Hunger... <https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/ELCA-World-Hunger>

### Clergy Anniversary Recognition

Five years

- Pr. Christine Roe, Faith First Cooperative
- Pr. Vicki Beilfuss, Holy Shepherd Parish

Ten years

- Pr. Brandon Cian, St. James, Huntingdon
- Pr. David Bowmen, Zion, Hollidaysburg
- Pr. Kevin McNamara, St. Paul, Mundy's Corner
- Pr. Traci Marriot, St. Matthew, Martinsburg

Fifteen years

- Pr. Nathan Pile, Camp Sequanota
- Pr. Susan Williamson, Ferguson Township Lutheran Ministry
- Pr. Tiffany Marvich, Williamsburg Parish

*continued*

Twenty years

- Pr. Elisa Osman, ALSM, The Oaks
- Pr. Will Osman, St. John, Bellefonte

Twenty-five years

- Pr. Eli Hess, Trinity, Altoona
- Pr. Susan Haas Yatta, retired

Thirty years

- Deacon Alicia Anderson, Lutheran Campus Ministry at Penn State

Thirty-five years

- Pr. Denise Arpino, retired

Forty years

- Pr. P. Stevens Lynn, retired
- Pr. Ron Miller, Trinity, State College

Forty-five years

- Pr. Barry Folmar, First, Altoona

Sixty years

- Pr. Norman Gindelsperger, retired

## Congregational Anniversary Recognition

125 years

- Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Altoona
- Benscreek Lutheran Church, Hollsopple

150 years

- First English Lutheran Church, Tyrone
- First Lutheran Church, Portage
- Graef's Lutheran Church, Cairnbrook

## Compensation & Benefits Manual

Upon motion by Susan Younkin (New Centerville Parish), seconded from the floor of the Assembly

- **SA22.06.07** - That we increase compensation for rostered ministers to 8% (the proposed base rate of inflation)... the motion is lost
  - 141 total votes: 49 yes votes, 90 no votes, 2 abstentions

*continued*

**Report of Pr. Nathan Pile & Camp Sequanota** (2022 Bulletin of Reports, page 114)

- A Word of Thanks – In the summer of 2022 Sequanota is preparing to begin the 75<sup>th</sup> summer of camping
- Together – Sequanota began in 1947 (just after WW2) when people came together to live out the mission of God's Church,
- Celebrating - the lives & the impact our ministry has had

**Report from Lutheran Campus Ministry at Penn State** (2022 Bulletin of Reports, page 108)

- Video presentation by Vicar Alicia Anderson
- Campus ministry during & post COVID

**Report from ALSM** (2022 Bulletin of Reports, pages 101–103)

- Video presentation by Dr. Pat Savage
- The ability to provide care for those whose resources are depleted

**Report of Asst to the Bishop/DEM – Rev. Kevin Shock** (2022 Bulletin of Reports, pages 38–39)

- Built on a Rock in times of war
- Christ's evidence of new life
- Tell the story of what God is already doing thru you
- New life does not come without death
- We are not without hope!
- Built on a rock the church shall stand, even when most pews are empty. Working with less than what was planned, God's people still are proclaiming: exploring how to serve & bless, speaking of hope amid distress, sharing our new life in Jesus.

**Prayer & 2nd Ballot**

Resolution **SA21.06.01** – Ordained Synod Staff Sabbatical<sup>4</sup>

- (2022 Bulletin of Reports, page 118)
- 138 number of valid ballots, 70 minimum number to pass
  - 115 Yes votes, 23 No votes... the Resolution is adopted

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<sup>4</sup> Upon motion by Gary Gable, seconded by Andrea Paul - **SC22.05.06** –to convey to the 2022 Synod Assembly resolution **SA21.06.01**. Funding for this resolution will include establishment of an annual \$1,000 transfer of funds to the *Ordained Synod Staff Sabbatical Fund*, capped & maintained at \$5,000, along with a recommendation to adopt the Resolution... the motion is adopted

*continued*



**SA22.06.08** – Motion to adopt the 2023-24 Synod Operating Spending Plan (Budget)<sup>5</sup>

- (2022 *Bulletin of Reports*, pages 73 - 76)
- 135 number of valid ballots, 68 minimum number to pass
  - 131 Yes votes, 4 No votes... the motion is adopted

**SA22.06.09** – To adopt the 2023 Allegheny Synod Compensation & Benefits Manual<sup>6</sup>

- (2022 *Bulletin of Reports*, pages 77 - 94)
- 137 number of valid ballots, 69 minimum number to pass
  - 125 Yes votes, 12 No votes... the motion is adopted

Memorial **SA22.06.01** – Memorial to Restructure the Governance of the ELCA<sup>7</sup>

- (2022 *Bulletin of Reports*, page 119)
- 129 number of valid ballots, 65 minimum number to pass
  - 88 Yes votes, 41 No votes... the Memorial is adopted & conveyed to the Office of the Secretary ELCA

Memorial **SA22.06.02** – Memorial to Recommend a Structured Process for the Pre-Assembly Identification of Nominees for the Election of a Presiding Bishop<sup>8</sup>

- (2022 *Bulletin of Reports*, page 120)
- 130 number of valid ballots, 66 minimum number to pass
  - 77 Yes votes, 53 No votes... the Memorial is adopted & conveyed to the Office of the Secretary ELCA

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<sup>5</sup> Upon motion by Pr. Nancy Hoover, seconded by Allen Stump - **SC22.05.08** – to accept the fiscal-year 2023-24 budget as presented by the Finance Committee & convey this budget to the 2022 Synod Assembly, along with a recommendation to adopt.... the motion is adopted

<sup>6</sup> Upon motion by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey, seconded by Pr. Beck Horn - **SC22.03.03** - to receive the updated 2023 Compensation Manual from the Finance Committee & to convey this document to the 2022 Allegheny Synod Assembly, along with the recommendation to adopt... the motion is adopted

<sup>7</sup> The Synod Council considered the *Memorial to Restructure the Governance of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* submitted by Bp. James Dunlop, Lower Susquehanna Synod – ELCA. This Memorial will be placed in the 2022 Bulletin of Reports as motion **SA22.06.01** for consideration by the 2022 Allegheny Synod Assembly.

<sup>8</sup> Upon motion by Pr. Becky Horn, seconded by Andrea Paul - **SC.22.05.02** – received the Memorial to Recommend a Structured Process for the Pre- Assembly Identification of Nominees for the Election of a Presiding Bishop (**SA22.06.02**) & to convey this Memorial to the Committee on Reference & Counsel for their recommendation & to the 2022 Allegheny Synod Assembly for deliberation... the motion is adopted

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## RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION 2022

WHEREAS, the Allegheny Synod has met in Assembly and fulfilled its business;

WHEREAS, the Holy Spirit has enabled the Assembly in its action to fulfill its theme to be “Built on a Rock” in our Allegheny Synod and in all of the world;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Allegheny Synod Assembly convening via Zoom on June 11 expresses its gratitude:

- to the synod assembly planning committee for arranging the agenda of the “Brady Bunch” format to address business, education, and worship;
- to Bishop Paula for her calm demeanor and her leadership of our beloved synod during turbulent times and for her encouragement to celebrate abundance and provide more support for our congregations and ministries as we move toward a culture of generosity;
- to Camp Sequanota staff for opening our Assembly with joyous music;
- to Pastor Kevin Shock for reminding us we need to point to the future and the coming of Jesus;
- to Bill Layton for his financial expertise and for his thorough explanation of the budget proposal;
- to our synod partners for their ministries among us and for sharing their stories of how they touch lives;
- to Ann Ferry who calls on us to meld together all of our talents and skills to serve our mission;
- to David Finney, our synod secretary, for keeping our records organized;
- to the technology crew for dealing with technological challenges of a virtual synod assembly;
- to the Help Team for responding to our questions;
- to Ryan Cumming, the ELCA Program Director of Hunger Education, for his informative report on the status of World Hunger and Advocacy in the ELCA. Every one of us should have a place at the table;
- to the rostered persons and congregations celebrating anniversaries of ministry;
- to all the faithful servants who serve on synod committees and synod council;
- to Pastor Glenn Foster for overseeing the elections of important synod offices;
- to the pastors who will serve as conference deans. Thank you for your leadership;
- to Bishop Eaton for her message of encouragement to move forward to rebuild; and

*continued*

## MINUTES OF THE 2022 ASSEMBLY OF THE ALLEGHENY SYNOD

- to some behind the scenes assistants among us (to name a few)....Michelle Bossler for distribution of needed materials for our Zoom assembly; to the Caffeine Addiction Counselor, Bruno Moore; to the clock watcher, Colette O'Day; to the Chief Information Officer, Otto Delupe; to the Long-Range Planning Director, Kay Sera; to the philosopher, Wanda Y. Datso; to the prayer coach, Denise Hurt; to the proofreader, Erin Spelling; to the self-esteem coach, Mia Culpa; to the solicitor of new ideas, Obie Quiet, to the staff chaplain, Neil Down : and to all those persons who once again enabled us to conduct a successful and prayerful assembly filled with "Zoom" fellowship.

This Assembly called upon us to remember that we are built on a rock. May we remember the strength we share in the promise of Christ with all believers as we move forward together to fulfill our mission to serve in the world.

*Bishop Paula Schmitt declared the 34th Allegheny Synod Assembly closed at 3:47 pm*

## Treasurer's Report

### Fiscal year 2022-2023

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The past year was one of realization of a new normal. We have not been able to recover to the pre-Covid level of receipts, and in fact, have even fallen back with respect to mission support.

Our cash revenue receipts reflected a net income of approximately \$34,000. This was entirely due to the \$50,000 ELCA contribution to support the DEM position. Once again, we saw a decrease in total mission support of 7.5% year over year. This was unusually large because of last year's significant increase in January's receipts. We received no such increase this year.

Total expenses for the year were approximately \$10,000 higher than last year. This can be attributed to the increased personnel costs associated with the hiring of an Assistant to the Bishop/Part-time DEM. The office staff is to be commended for keeping the other expenses flat and reducing some expenses. It is also noted that our contributions to partners were reduced due to the fact that we did not receive a typical year-end boost.

The Synod balance sheet was reduced by investment market value losses of \$159,000. This unrealized loss is reflective of the current economic climate of high inflation and higher interest rates. We anticipate that this temporary unrealized loss will reverse with hopefully improving economic conditions.

We always thank God for you, and we thank you for your generosity. We continue to be mindful that without you none of the initiatives undertaken by the Synod would occur.

Peace be with you,

William D. Layton  
Treasurer

## Allegheny Synod Member Church Year-to-Year to Mission Church

			Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
	Account Number	Allegheny Synod, ELCA	FYE 2024 Amended 1	FYE 2024 Amended 2	FYE 2025 Projected 1	FYE 2025 Projected 2
5	052.4000.0	Unrestricted Mission Support	\$ 552,613	\$ 552,613	\$ 542,914	\$ 542,914
6	052.4050.0	Restricted Mission Support	\$ 61,606	\$ 61,606	\$ 65,614	\$ 65,614
7		Total Mission Support	\$ 614,219	\$ 614,219	\$ 608,528	\$ 608,528
8						
9	<b>Allegheny Synod Staffing Expenditures</b>					
	Account Number	Allegheny Synod, ELCA	FYE 2024 Amended 1	FYE 2024 Amended 2	FYE 2025 Projected 1	FYE 2025 Projected 2
10						
11	052.7000.0	Bishop-Defined Compensation	\$ 80,699	\$ 80,699	\$ 81,925	\$ 81,925
12	052.7020.0	Bishop's Assistant-Salary and Housing	\$ -	\$ 29,892	\$ -	\$ 73,770
13	052.7021.0	Assistant and Part-Time DEM	\$ 71,742	\$ 43,850	\$ 73,770	\$ 5,000
14	052.7060.0	Office Manager	\$ 45,494	\$ 45,494	\$ 47,314	\$ 47,314
15	052.7061.0	Communications Coordinator	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
16	052.7082.0	Housekeeping	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
17	052.7200.0	FICA-Support Staff	\$ 3,480	\$ 3,480	\$ 3,620	\$ 3,620
18	052.7080.0	Synod Secretary	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,600
19	052.7084.E	Synod Treasurer	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,600
20		Total Compensation	\$ 210,616	\$ 212,615	\$ 215,828	\$ 220,828
21						
22		Pension-Ordained Staff	\$ 18,293	\$ 18,293	\$ 18,683	\$ 19,283
23		Pension-Office Manager	\$ 5,459	\$ 5,459	\$ 5,678	\$ 5,678
24	052.7100.0	Pension (Total)	\$ 23,752	\$ 23,752	\$ 24,361	\$ 24,961
25						
26		Healthcare	\$ 29,857	\$ 29,857	\$ 31,051	\$ 31,051
27		Accrued PPO	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
28	052.7110.0	Employee Health and Other Benefits	\$ 29,857	\$ 29,857	\$ 31,051	\$ 31,051
29						
30	052.7131.0	Continuing Education	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
31	052.9401.0	Memberships/Dues/Subscriptions	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,200	\$ 5,300	\$ 5,300
32		Ordained Staff Sabbatical Accrual	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
33	052.8710.0	Staff Travel and Vehicle Related Costs	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
34	052.8800.0	Vehicle Costs-Ins./Maint. Only	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500
35		Total Fringe Benefits-Ordained Staff	\$ 18,100	\$ 18,100	\$ 16,800	\$ 16,800
36						
37		Total Staffing Expenditures	\$ 282,325	\$ 284,324	\$ 288,040	\$ 293,641
38			46%	46%	47%	48%

continued



# Allegheny Synod Member Church Year-to-Year to Mission Church

			Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
	Account Number	Allegheny Synod, ELCA	FYE 2024 Amended 1	FYE 2024 Amended 2	FYE 2025 Projected 1	FYE 2025 Projected 2
39	<b>Allegheny Synod Office Expenditures</b>					
40	052.8025.0	Accounting Services	\$ 8,568	\$ 8,568	\$ 8,640	\$ 8,640
41	052.8005.0	Accounting Software/dB Fees (Logos)	\$ 5,460	\$ 5,460	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
42	052.8020.0	Audit Expense	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,500
43	052.8006.0	Bank and CC Fees	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
44	052.9590.E	Depreciation	\$ 6,500	\$ 6,500	\$ 6,100	\$ 6,100
45	052.8400.0	Electricity	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500
46	052.8103.0	General Supplies	\$ 800	\$ 800	\$ 400	\$ 400
47	052.8410.0	Heat	\$ 720	\$ 720	\$ 720	\$ 720
48	052.8101.E	Miscellaneous	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
49	052.8201.0	Network Services	\$ 900	\$ 900	\$ 900	\$ 900
50	052.8500.0	Office Equipment	\$ 1,620	\$ 1,620	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,100
51	052.8102.0	Office Supplies	\$ 1,350	\$ 1,350	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,250
52	052.8300.0	Postage	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 900	\$ 900
53	052.9300.0	Professional Insurance	\$ 6,035	\$ 6,035	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
54	052.8430.0	Rent	\$ 13,392	\$ 13,392	\$ 13,392	\$ 13,392
55	052.8420.0	Sewer & Water	\$ 780	\$ 780	\$ 780	\$ 780
56	052.8001.0	Software and Computer Maintenance	\$ 1,943	\$ 1,943	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
57	052.8200.0	Telephone	\$ 3,700	\$ 3,700	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
58		Total Office Expenditures	\$ 65,768	\$ 65,768	\$ 67,182	\$ 67,182
59			11%	11%	11%	11%
60	<b>Allegheny Synod Partner-Related Expenditures</b>					
61	054.9101.0	Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000
62	052.9405.0	Ecumenical	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
63	054.9107.0	LAMPA	\$ 1,078	\$ 1,078	\$ 1,078	\$ 1,078
64	052.9431.0	Lutheran Planned Giving	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
65	001.9100.0	Mission Support-ELCA	\$ 255,398	\$ 228,676	\$ 234,685	\$ 192,200
66		PA Council of Churches	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
67	054.9104.0	Penn State Campus Ministry	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,000
68	052.9433.0	Region 8	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,230	\$ 3,230
69	054.9103.0	Sequanota	\$ 33,500	\$ 33,500	\$ 33,500	\$ 33,500
70	054.9108.0	Shawnee Park Chaplaincy	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
71	54.9102.0	United Lutheran Seminary	\$ 13,500	\$ 13,500	\$ 13,500	\$ 13,500
72	54.9109.0	United Lutheran Seminary-Designated Gift	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
73		Total Partner-Related Expenditures	\$ 318,476	\$ 291,754	\$ 304,993	\$ 262,508
74			52%	48%	50%	43%

continued

# Allegheny Synod Member Church Year-to-Year to Mission Church

			Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
	Account Number	Allegheny Synod, ELCA	FYE 2024 Amended 1	FYE 2024 Amended 2	FYE 2025 Projected 1	FYE 2025 Projected 2
75	Allegheny Synod Programmatic Expenditures					
76	52.4204.E	Bishop's Convocation Leaders Expenses	\$ 5,500	\$ 5,500	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
77	052.9180.0	Candidacy Expenses	\$ 2,250	\$ 2,250	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
78	052.9420.E	Leadership Support	\$ -	\$ -		
79	052.9450.E	Synod Leadership Team	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
80	052.9464.E	DEM Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
81	052.9210.0	First Call Theological Education	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
82	052.9430.0	Global Ministry Team	\$ 50	\$ 50	\$ -	\$ -
83	0.52.9802.0	Hospitality	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
84	052.4207.E	Ignite/Discerning Your Discipleship Expenses	\$ 250	\$ 250	\$ 500	\$ 500
85	052.9432.0	Joint Regional Ministries	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
86	052.4202.E	Lutheran Day-Lakemont Expenses	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200
87	0.52.9801.0	Memorials/Floral Tributes	\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 100
88	052.8101.E	Micellaneous, Other Ministry Teams	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
89	052.8650.0	Ministry Resources	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 600	\$ 600
90	052.9460.0	New Ministry Initiatives	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
91	052.8715.0	Non-Synod Staff Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
92	052.9410.0	Reconciliation Ministry Team	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
93	052.8801.0	Rostered Leader Events	\$ 1,800	\$ 1,800	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
94		Seminarian Grants	\$ 11,683	\$ 11,683	\$ 14,900	\$ 14,900
95	052.4201.E	Synod Assembly Expenses	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
96	052.9440.0	Synod Council Expenses	\$ 1,350	\$ 1,350	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
97	052.8600.0	The Lutheran Letter (Expense after Donations)	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,200
98	052.9214.0	Vitality and Innovation Grants	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
99		Women in Ministry Event Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
100		Worship Team	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 300
101	052.4205.E	Youth Team	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
102		Total Programmatic Expenditures	\$ 46,683	\$ 46,683	\$ 40,800	\$ 40,800
103			8%	8%	7%	7%
104		Allegheny Synod Total Expenditures	\$ 713,252	\$ 688,529	\$ 701,016	\$ 664,131
105						
106		Allegheny Synod Operational Deficit/Surplus	\$ (99,033)	\$ (74,311)	\$ (92,488)	\$ (55,603)
107						

continued

## Allegheny Synod Member Church Year-to-Year to Mission Church

			Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
	Account Number	Allegheny Synod, ELCA	FYE 2024 Amended 1	FYE 2024 Amended 2	FYE 2025 Projected 1	FYE 2025 Projected 2
108		<b>Allegheny Synod Supplemental Income Sources</b>				
109	052.4100.0	ELCA COVID-19 Grant	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
110	052.4105.I	ELCA DEM Grant	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
111	052.4106.I	ELCA DEM Reimbursement Salary and Benefits	\$ 46,647	\$ 21,925	\$ 36,885	\$ -
112	052.6500.0	Interest Income	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
113		Investment Fund Rollover	\$ 30,703	\$ 30,703	\$ 30,703	\$ 30,703
114		PPP Loan	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
115		Seminarian Support Fund Rollover	\$ 11,683	\$ 11,683	\$ 14,900	\$ 14,900
116		Revenue Appeal (Synod)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
117		Total Supplemental Income	\$ 99,033	\$ 74,311	\$ 92,488	\$ 55,603
118						
119		<b>Allegheny Synod Adjusted Deficit/Surplus</b>	(\$0)	\$0	\$0	(\$0)
120						
121						
122		Synod ELCA support %	46%	41%	43%	35%
123						
124		Amended 1 & Projected 1 - Pastor Shock remains in the same situation	(328)	(27,050)	(9,626)	(52,111)
125		Amended 2 & Projected 2 - Pastor Shock becomes fulltime Asst. to the Bishop with no ELCA support for DEM				

# COMMITTEE REPORTS

## Allegheny Synod Candidacy Committee

Candidacy in the ELCA is a time of discernment for candidates, committees and seminaries. We work in partnership with each other through the process to ensure candidates are supported and cared for as they discern the future to which the Holy Spirit is calling them. The Allegheny Synod Candidacy Committee is currently accompanying eight candidates at different phases of the process.

**Candidacy is a process.** There are three required 'touch points' with the Candidacy Committee, Entrance, Endorsement and Approval. At each of these steps in the process there is a written essay and an in-person interview with the committee. These are the times when candidates have the opportunity to speak more fully about how they are being formed for ministry and what they are learning about themselves and the church. It is a privilege to walk alongside our candidates as they learn and grow.

### ***The Allegheny Synod candidates are:***

**Jennifer Bobolsky.** Jennifer attend United Lutheran Seminary and is doing ministerial practice work at St. Luke in Roaring Spring.

**Christy Harford.** Christy is a candidate in the TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) program. Christy will earn a Certificate of Theological Studies. Christy's ministry site placement is Trinity Lutheran in Sidman and she has started working with First Lutheran in Johnstown. Christy's home congregation is Christ Lutheran in Johnstown.

**Regina Holliday.** Regina is a candidate in the TEEM program currently completing her internship year. Regina started her process with Journey in Faith Ministries and is now serving at Trinity Lutheran and Horner Lutheran in Somerset. Regina will earn a Certificate of Theological Studies. Regina's home congregation is Christ Lutheran in Grantsville, MD.

**Penny Koontz.** Penny attends United Lutheran Seminary and is in the TEEM program. Penny's ministry site assignment is Mt. Olive Lutheran in Fairhope and she also works with Christ Lutheran in Buffalo Mills. Penny will earn a Certificate of Theological Studies. Both congregations are in the Bedford Conference. Penny's home congregation is Laurel Trinity is Jennerstown.

**Steve Koths.** Steve attends United Lutheran Seminary and is a candidate in the TEEM program. Steve had been serving Shiloh Lutheran in State College for many years as a lay worship leader before discerning this next step toward ordination. Steve continues to serve Shiloh as he completes his education toward ordination. Steve will earn a Certificate of Theological Studies Steve's home congregation is Grace Lutheran in State College.

**Allen Stump.** Allen attends United Lutheran Seminary and is a candidate in the TEEM program. Allen's ministry sites are Christ Casebeer Lutheran and Laurel Trinity Lutheran in the Laurel Highlands Conference. Allen is completing his internship year and is looking forward to ordination. Allen will earn a Certificate of Theological Studies. Allen's home congregation is St. David's in Hanover.

**Laura Waltermire.** Laura has graduated from Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa with a Master of Divinity. Laura was assigned to the Allegheny Synod and is currently interviewing with one of our congregations. When she receives a call, she will be ordained. Laura's home parish is the Laurel Mountain Lutheran Parish in the Laurel Highlands Conference.

**Ruth Williamson.** Ruth is a graduate of Luther Seminary in Minnesota with a Master of Divinity. Ruth took some time off from the Candidacy process to attend to her health and well-being. We are excited to continue to walk with her as she discerns where God is calling her next. Ruth's home

*continued*



congregation is Gatesburg and Pine Hall Lutheran in the Nittany Conference.

The Candidacy Committee has had four inquiries from candidates and looks forward to how the Holy Spirit will guide and direct them as they continue to discern how they are being called to ministry. If you or someone you know is sensing a call to serve the church as an ordained leader, please be in contact with the Office of the Bishop. There are resources and support available for the process.

We give thanks for the work of Pastor Becky Resch, the ELCA Candidacy Manager for our region. Her insight and helpful support are vital to our committee in its decisions. Deacon Chelle Huth is the Seminary Representative to our Committee. She provides useful information regarding the seminary's guidelines and expectations.

*Respectfully submitted on behalf of the  
Allegheny Synod Candidacy Committee*

# 2024 Compensation and Benefits Manual

A Tool for Ministry Budgeting in the Allegheny Synod, ELCA

This manual is intended as a tool for ministry sites and their ministers of Word and Sacrament or ministers of Word and Service to mutually plan and budget for the minister's compensation and benefits.

Predominantly we think of ministry in terms of a minister's efforts for members of the ministry on behalf of Jesus Christ. In the same way, the ministry of the laity includes care of the minister and the minister's family on behalf of Jesus Christ.

In many ministry settings, a specific team is tasked with primary concern for care of the minister and their family. One of the key tasks of such a team is to discuss annually with the minister a fair and equitable compensation package. Since the minister depends on the ministry employer to make ample provision for their financial needs, the minister should have the opportunity to discuss those needs in an open and supportive forum. This team is in a position to provide such a forum. The team can gather data from the minister about their financial needs and subsequently make recommendations to the Finance Committee, Council or Board, and/or Congregation for fair and equitable compensation.

There are reasons for the varieties of financial compensation packages within this Synod and the ELCA. Some ministries have full-time ministers while others have less than full-time ministerial service. Some have multiple ministers on staff. Some cooperatives have one minister serving multiple locations. Some ministers have additional education, training, or work experience prior to entering the ministry that benefits their ministry. It is the intention of the Synod to affirm the reality of different ministry arrangements while at the same time ensuring adequate and fair compensation.

This document attempts to provide flexibility in determining base salary by only specifying minimum amounts, in negotiating housing arrangements, and in providing components for some other benefits. Primary in all that is recommended here is the need for the minister and team members to discuss openly and honestly the subject of money and the minister's responsibilities and needs.

This document is not intended to serve as financial or tax advice. Ministry employers are responsible for following legal employment practices regarding compensation and taxation. Ministers are strongly encouraged to employ a qualified tax accountant and/or financial advisor to review their compensation and ensure compliance with tax codes.

*continued*

**Worksheet for Budgeting Minister’s Compensation**

*Each amount is calculated individually on the indicated pages.*

*\* Some items depend on type of housing compensation and/or medical plan.*

Salary & Housing

- A. Annual Base Salary (p 3)
- B. Furnishing Allowance (p 4)\*
- C. Social Security Allowance (p 4-5) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Benefits

- D. Portico Pension Contribution (p 5)
- E. Other Portico Benefits (p 6-7)
- F. Housing Equity Allowance (p 7)\* + \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Professional Expenses

- G. Synod Assembly & Conference Expenses (p 8)
- H. Automobile Expense (p 8-9)
- I. Continuing Education (Etc.) Expenses (p 9)
- J. Business & Attire Expense (p 9-10)
- K. Leadership Development Expense (p 10)
- L. Medical Expense Reimbursement (p 11)\* + \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total paid to/for Minister by Employer = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

To Facilitate Minister’s Required Vacation Compensation  
(Budgeted by the Ministry, Not Paid to the Minister)

Estimated Supply Expense (p 11) + \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Budgeted Expense for Rostered Ministry = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### A. Annual Base Salary Compensation

Listed below are recommended ***minimum*** guidelines for use in developing the compensation package for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service. Each ministry setting requires unique responsibilities; adequate compensation is related but not limited to the expectations of the minister and the ministry they are serving. Ministry employers may choose to compensate ministers beyond the minimum guidelines for additional degrees, certifications, or years of other relevant professional experience.

1) Each year the Synod Finance Committee reviews current economic indicators to determine an appropriate starting salary. Starting salary for ministers ordained in 2024 increased 4% from 2023.

2) Salary is increased for each year of experience by \$500.

To Calculate years of experience, subtract the minister's year of ordination from 2024.

2024 - \_\_\_\_\_ (Year of Ordination) = \_\_\_\_\_ Years of Experience

Base Salary with a Parsonage \$40,770

Add Years of Experience x \$500 + \_\_\_\_\_

Minimum Salary with a Parsonage = \_\_\_\_\_

OR

Base Salary without a Parsonage \$57,170

Add Years of Experience x \$500 + \_\_\_\_\_

Minimum Salary without a Parsonage = \_\_\_\_\_

AND

Compensation for additional degrees,  
certifications, years of other relevant  
professional experience + \_\_\_\_\_

Base Salary A. \$ \_\_\_\_\_



**B. Housing & Furnishing Allowance**

A minister whose compensation does not include a parsonage may designate as housing allowance an amount of compensation which is excluded from their Federal taxable income up to the fair rental value of a furnished home plus utilities to the extent that the allowance is actually expended for housing. Qualifying Housing Allowance expenses include rent payments, principal and interest payments on mortgages, taxes, utilities, maintenance, insurance, furnishing, and landscaping.

For the purpose of including a housing allowance in calculating the Total Defined Compensation, Portico will add 30% to Base Salary for a minister whose compensation includes a parsonage.

A minister may receive a Furnishing Allowance. The Furnishing Allowance is excluded from Federal Income Tax to the extent that the allowance is actually expended for furnishing; however, the amount used is subject to Social Security Tax. The Furnishing Allowance is paid directly to the minister and is in addition to any maintenance and repair costs paid directly or reimbursed by the ministry employer.

Furnishing Allowance B. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Social Security Allowance**

For Social Security purposes, ministers are taxed as if they are self-employed. The current combined Social Security and Medicare tax is 15.3%. The Synod policy requires the ministry site to assume at least 50% of the combined Social Security and Medicare tax that the minister is required to pay or an equivalent amount if the minister had previously opted out of Social Security.

To calculate the compensation subject to Social Security Tax, add the Base Salary (A), 30% of Base Salary for ministers with a parsonage only, Furnishing Allowance (B), and any other allowances paid directly to the minister, excluding reimbursed expenses.

A. Base Salary	_____	
30% of A.	+ _____	(for ministers with a parsonage only)
B. Furnishing Allowance	+ _____	(if utilized)
Other Allowances	+ _____	
	= _____	(C1) Compensation Subject to SS Tax

To calculate the Social Security Tax, multiply the minister’s compensation (C1) x 15.3%.

C1 \_\_\_\_\_ x .153 = \_\_\_\_\_ (C2) Social Security Tax

To calculate the Social Security Allowance paid by the ministry employer, multiply the minister's Social Security Tax (C2) x at least 50% (more if the ministry employer chooses).

C2 \_\_\_\_\_ x .5 (or more) = \_\_\_\_\_ (C) Social Security Allowance

Social Security Allowance C. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### **D. Portico Pension Contribution**

Portico Benefits Services administers pension benefits for the ELCA. The Synod policy encourages the ministry employer to contribute to the minister's pension fund at a rate of 12% of the Defined Compensation.

To calculate the Portico Defined Compensation, add the Base Salary (A), 30% of the Base Salary for ministers with a parsonage only, the Furnishing Allowance (B), and the Social Security Allowance (C).

A. Base Salary	_____	
30% of A	+ _____	(for ministers with a parsonage only)
B. Furnishing Allowance	+ _____	
C. Social Security Allowance	+ _____	
	= _____	(D1) Portico Defined Compensation

To calculate the Pension Contribution paid by the ministry employer, multiply the minister's Portico Defined Compensation (D1) x 12%.

D1. \_\_\_\_\_ x .12 = \_\_\_\_\_ (D) Pension Contribution

Pension Contribution D. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### **E. Other Portico-ELCA Benefits Contribution**

Portico Benefit Services, the nonprofit benefit ministry of the ELCA, provides the benefit program for rostered ministers, lay employees, and their families. Portico provides health, dental, prescription drug, retirement, disability, and group life insurance benefits in one bundled program.\* This program is designed to address the needs of rostered ministers and provide

seamless benefits during change of call, leave from call, and other events unique to ministry. A bundled approach helps ensure rostered ministers and lay employees are protected against significant financial loss from a variety of risks. Through Portico, ministries in this synod and across the country pool their collective purchasing power to provide benefits in a cost-effective manner. For more information, see the [ELCA Philosophy of Benefits](#).

Congregations and plan members share the cost of benefits. Congregations are expected to support the well-being of their covered plan members by paying 100% of the cost of non-elective benefits. Plan members are expected to participate in the cost of utilizing the benefits (e.g., deductibles, coinsurance, and copays).

\*A plan member may waive health coverage if they have access to valid medical insurance coverage through their spouse or another employer.  
Current contribution rates for benefits are available on at [EmployerLink.PorticoBenefits.org](#) or by calling Portico at 800.352.2876.

ELCA Survivor Benefit

Basic group life insurance is offered through Securian is paid for by the congregation. Supplemental insurance can be purchased by the rostered minister.

ELCA Disability Benefits

When approved, the ELCA disability trust provides monthly income, retirement plan contribution, and health coverage. There are two types of disability benefits: short term and long term. Short term (60 days) compensation and benefits are paid by the congregation. Long term (over 60 days) disability benefits are paid by the ELCA’s disability trust.  
ELCA Retirement

The ELCA maintains a defined contribution retirement plan for rostered ministers. The Allegheny Synod encourages congregations to contribute a minimum of 12% of the rostered minister’s defined compensation to the retirement plan. Members in the plan can also contribute pre-tax contributions through payroll deduction.

ELCA Health Benefit

The ELCA’s health benefit plans cover the following areas: medical, dental, prescription coverage, tax advantage accounts (Flexible Spending and Health Savings Accounts) and wellness support. The ELCA Church Council has approved a balance of cost-sharing between congregations and plan members. Portico offers a choice of ELCA-Primary health benefit options that fit this approved balance: Gold+, and Silver+ with either Level A or B employer HSA contribution. Each fall, congregations should engage in conversation with their sponsored plan members to determine the option that best fits their needs, and then make their selection during annual enrollment. In 2013 the Allegheny synod council voted to recommend the Gold+ level.

Plan Choice \_\_\_\_\_

Cost of Plan \_\_\_\_\_

Portico Benefits E. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**F. Housing Equity Allowance** (For Ministers with a Parsonage Only)

When a parsonage is furnished as part of the minister's compensation, the minister does not have the opportunity to build equity as a homeowner. The ministry employer may compensate for this lack of equity with a Housing Equity Allowance. Recommended Housing Equity Allowance Provisions:

1. The Housing Equity Allowance equals 3% of the minister's Defined Compensation.
2. The ministry employer pays this amount in monthly installments to a depository agreed to by the ministry employer and the minister.
3. Use of the funds is limited to the provision of housing whenever it is needed, specifically at the time of retirement, disability, or death, or when a congregation disposes of its parsonage.
4. Provisions are to be made for changing the depository when required by relocation of the minister, provided that the original contractual limitations for the use of the funds are maintained.

To calculate the Housing Equity Allowance paid by the ministry employer, multiply the Defined Compensation (D1) x 3%.

D1. \_\_\_\_\_ x .03 = \_\_\_\_\_ (F) Housing Equity Allowance

Housing Equity Allowance F. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Professional Expenses**

The IRS has made it difficult to itemize and deduct professional expenses. Therefore, it is recommended that the ministry employer reimburse professional expenses in full and budget accordingly for these anticipated costs, reviewing these allowances frequently. Professional expenses include:

- G. Synod Assembly and Conference Expenses
- H. Automobile Expenses
- I. Continuing Education, Book, Periodical, and Digital Resource Expenses
- J. Ministry-Related Business and Attire Expenses
- K. Leadership Development

Additional Professional Expenses unique to a ministry may be incurred and compensated.

**G. Synod Assembly and Conference Expenses**

All ministers are required to attend the annual Synod Assembly and Bishop's Convocation, for which the ministry employer is required to pay registration, lodging, and meals for the minister while attending these events. Further, ministers may be expected to attend other Synod conferences or trainings, and the ministry employer is expected to pay those registration fees and expenses as well. Expenses for Synod Assembly, Convocation, and other Synod conferences or trainings are to be covered in addition to Continuing Education expenses.

Typical expenses for Synod Assembly and Bishop's Convocation are \$300 each (\$600 total). Ministers in the first three years of their first call after graduation/ordination are required to attend First Call Theological Education (FCTE). FCTE incurs a fee of \$200/year for three years.

Synod Assembly & Conference Expenses G. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**H. Automobile Expenses**

In most ministry settings, the minister will incur transportation costs that include fuel, repairs, insurance, tolls, etc. The IRS allows reimbursement of a specific amount per mile when a car is used for business purposes. American Automobile Association (AAA) and Department of Transportation studies indicate that the cost of operating automobiles is greater than the mileage reimbursement allowed by the IRS. The ministry employer should provide to the minister a travel allowance adequate to cover all costs. The Synod recommends three possible arrangements (in order of preference):

1. An employer-owned or leased car. The ministry employer owns or leases a car for the minister to use in the course of their duties; the employer pays the cost of fuel and repairs.
2. Reimbursement to the minister for actual miles driven. The employer pays the leader for the use of their car based on an agreed upon amount per mile and in accordance with IRS regulations. The IRS rate for 2023 is 65.5 cents per mile; this may change in 2024. Amounts up to the IRS rate are not taxable; any amount paid in excess of the IRS rate is taxable compensation.
3. Pay the leader a flat rate for transportation. Having budgeted an amount for travel, the ministry employer pays the minister a regular amount, regardless of the miles driven by the leader. A flat rate travel compensation is considered taxable income, so an additional 15%-20% should be added to the allowance to account for the additional tax obligation of the minister.

Automobile Expense H. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Continuing Education, Book, Periodical, and Digital Resource Expenses**

In order to update their skills and strengthen their ministry, the ELCA expects ministers to participate in at least 50 contact hours of Continuing Education (Life-Long Learning/ Professional Development) annually. Such activities are not vacations, and ministry employers shall provide both time and money to facilitate these learning opportunities.

For the minister to keep abreast of developments in theology and ministry, expenses for books, periodicals, and digital resources are included with Continuing Education.

Like the Housing Equity Allowance, an account with a depository agreed to by the minister and the ministry employer should be established for Continuing Education. The Synod recommends the employer contribute at least \$700 and the minister at least \$300 annually.

Two weeks study leave, or its equivalent, is to be provided over and above vacation.

Continuing Education, Book, Periodical, Digital Resource Expenses I. \$ \_\_\_\_\_



**J. Ministry Related Business and Attire Expenses**

The IRS has made it difficult to itemize and deduct professional expenses. Therefore the Synod recommends the ministry employer reimburse in full professional expenses including, but not limited to, professional attire such as vestments and clerics, ministry use of personal technical resources (i.e. cell phone, computer), professional organization dues, and business entertainment.

Ministry Related Business and Attire Expense J. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**K. Leadership Development**

Leadership Development is different than Continuing Education or vacation, which benefit the ministry but are for the minister's personal development, rest, and renewal. Leadership development benefits the ministry's well-being and growth. The Synod recommends that the ministry employer offer at least \$500 for Leadership Development which may include retreats, resources, coaching, or other education for the minister's development and growth.

Leadership Development Expense K. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**L. Flexible Spending Accounts/Medical Expense Reimbursement**

(Premiums for Medical and Dental Benefits are not to be included here. See p. 5-6)

**Health Flexible Spending Account (FSA)**

A minister with Platinum+ or Gold+ plans may set aside an amount, pretax, to pay for eligible out of pocket health care expenses. The minister has access to the full amount of the FSA election starting January 1, even though contributions will be withheld from each paycheck throughout the plan year.

**Health Savings Account (HSA)**

A minister with Silver+ or Bronze+ may set aside pretax money to pay for eligible out of pocket health care expenses. The minister and employer can contribute and any earned wellness dollars are deposited here. For the calendar year 2022, an HSA accepts up to \$3650 per member or \$7300 per family, plus an additional \$1000 if age 55 or older. (Check allowed amounts for 2023 when available.)

**Dependent (Day) Care Flexible Spending Account**

A minister may set aside an amount, pretax, to pay for day care expenses incurred for the care of the minister's child(ren) or other eligible dependent to enable the minister to work.

Flexible Spending Accounts can be established through Portico Benefit Services.

Flexible Spending Designation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (made by the minister; not an additional budgeted item)

FSA, HSA, and Depend Care Account contributions are capped; check current allowed amounts.

**Medical Expense Reimbursement**

The leader may be reimbursed for copays or medical expenses not otherwise covered by insurance.

Medical Expense Reimbursement L. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### **Pre-Tax Contribution**

Contributions up to the amount permissible by the IRS are made to Portico Benefit Services and/or other approved depositories. The minister should contact Portico for details on the IRS annual limits for retirement plan contributions.

Pre-Tax Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (made by the minister; not an additional budgeted item)

### **Related Items**

#### **Vacation**

Sabbath is a commandment of God; therefore, weekly time off and annual vacation are necessary for the minister's personal physical, mental, and spiritual health as well as for their leadership by example. The Synod requires a minimum of four weeks annual vacation, which includes four Sundays, and a minimum of one day off each week. Coverage should be arranged so that the minister is not "on call" during scheduled vacation time. The ministry employer may grant additional vacation time based on the length of service in the ministry.

Vacation of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks per year (including Sundays)

The 2024 rate for Sunday supply worship leadership will be \$135 for one service, PLUS \$50 for each additional service on the same day, PLUS mileage reimbursement at the 2024 IRS rate.

To budget for supply coverage of the minister's vacation, multiply the number of Sundays offered in vacation (minimum 4) x \$135 (+\$50 per additional service) + an estimate of mileage reimbursement.

Estimated Supply Expense \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (to be paid to supply leaders)

#### **Leave of Absence**

A leave of absence should be negotiated between the minister and ministry employer (council or board) at least 14 days prior to the leave request. If emergency leave is required in which the 14 day notice is not possible, the Executive Committee may grant the leave with the approval of the full council or board.

#### **Sick Leave**

Rostered ministers and congregation employees shall receive ten (10) days of paid sick leave per year. Illness of longer than two (2) months should be referred to Portico Benefits. Sick leave may accrue up to a maximum of thirty (30) working days. The decision to grant additional paid sick leave is at the discretion of the congregation council.

#### **Family Leave**

In the event of an illness in the immediate family (spouse, children, parents, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchildren, mother-in-law, father-in-law, or legal guardian) that requires the rostered minister or employee's presence, accrued sick leave may be utilized for this purpose.

#### **Maternity/Paternity/Adoptive Leave**

Leaves under this section are for the purpose of issues related to parenting, and may only be taken after six (6) months of full-time employment. Rostered ministers and employees who will be absent due to maternity/ paternity/adoptive leave are requested to provide as much advance notice as possible. Eight (8) weeks of paid maternity/paternity/adoptive leave are available to a rostered minister or an employee following the birth of a child or an adoption of a child less than one year old. Such leave must be taken within fifteen (15) weeks of the birth or adoption. If medically necessary, additional time may be requested. Rostered ministers and employees

desiring additional leave, either prior to or following the birth of their child or adoption of their child less than one year old, may use accrued vacation or sick time to supplement time off with the approval of the congregation council. The rostered minister or employee agrees to return to work for a minimum of six (6) months after taking leave.

### **Vacation**

Rostered ministers are granted four (4) weeks of paid vacation time including four (4) Sundays each year as a minimum guideline. Rostered ministers should notify the congregation council at least thirty (30) days in advance of vacation and make arrangements for the proper pastoral coverage while out of town. Additional vacation time may be granted to rostered ministers by the congregation council. Unused vacation time will be paid to the rostered minister upon resignation of call or separation from call. Full benefits will be paid through the end of unused vacation time at time of resignation or separation. Congregational employees are granted paid vacation time according to congregational guidelines.

### **Compassionate and Emergency Leave**

In the event of a death in a rostered minister or employee's immediate family (spouse, children, parents, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchildren, mother-in-law, father-in-law, or legal guardian) five (5) days paid leave will be granted to attend the funeral and to deal with family affairs. Additional time may be granted by the congregation council.

### **Jury Duty**

This synod recognizes an employee's legal and civic duty to serve if called to jury duty or subpoenaed as a witness. A rostered minister or employee who is required to serve as such will be entitled to full pay and benefits during the period of such service. Rostered ministers and employees are required to report to work when not required to be present in court, and to call in daily to report their status on returning to work.

### **Leave Without Pay**

Leave without pay may be granted to a rostered minister or employee, for personal reasons, after due consideration has been given to the work requirements of the congregation. Leave without pay may be granted for a period of up to two (2) months. Such leaves of absence are granted by the congregation council only in consultation with the bishop and the Synod Council. The congregation will hold a rostered minister or employee's position open for the leave period, while on an approved leave without pay. If the rostered minister or employee is unable to return to work at the conclusion of the leave period, their position may or may not continue to be held open. This decision will be made, on a case-by-case basis, by the bishop in consultation with the congregation council. If the individual has been on a leave without pay for medical reasons, a medical release from their physician to return to work must be submitted.

### **Disability Leave**

This synod and its congregations are committed to accommodate qualified rostered ministers and employees with disabilities, to the extent it can do so without undue burden. If, for example, a qualified employee is temporarily disabled and provides the congregation a medical certification recommending leave, the congregation will provide unpaid leave as an accommodation to that employee if it can do so without undue burden. Requests for accommodation should be made in writing, and the rostered minister or employee will need to work with the bishop or his/her delegate to determine the appropriate accommodation and documentation needed. Longterm Disability claims are handled through Portico Benefit Services. See the Portico website for requirements for guidelines to apply. The ministry employer will pay full compensation for the

eight week period until Portico Disability Benefits begin. Ministry employers may explore cost benefit of purchasing short-term disability insurance to cover that eight week period. The Office of the Bishop will work with the congregation council to secure pastoral coverage during the period of disability.

### **Military Leave**

Rostered ministers and regular full-time and regular part-time employees who perform military service will be granted leaves of absence for such service in compliance with state and federal laws. For purposes of this handbook, military service in the performance of duty on a voluntary or involuntary basis in the U.S. Armed forces, the Reserves, or the National Guard under competent authority, and includes active duty for training, inactive duty training, and full-time National Guard duty. Vacation or accrued sick time is not to be used for this leave. Rostered ministers or employees who are called to military service will be paid during their leave at a rate of 50% of their normal wages and benefits will be paid in full. Rostered ministers are asked to notify the congregation council and bishop and submit copies of military orders as soon as they become aware of the military obligation. Employees are asked to notify the pastor and congregation council as soon as they become aware of the military obligation and submit copies of military orders. An employee's eligibility for reinstatement after completion of military service is determined in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

### **Sabbatical Leave**

In January 2004, the Synod Council approved the following Sabbatical Guidelines:

Vision: Throughout Holy Scripture, from Genesis' beginnings to Jesus' ministry and the church's witness, accounts of holy activity are clearly set apart by rest, quiet places, and time for restoration. God has given us, God's people, the Sabbath pattern as a time of renewal, a time to be reminded of whose we are and what we are called to do, a time of rest that refreshes us for life.

In the lives of ministers of the Allegheny Synod, time apart from the regular responsibilities of ministry benefit both the ministry setting and the minister. Over an extended period, a Sabbatical, rest separate from the immediate expectations of congregational ministry, can renew a congregation and refresh a leader's sense of call for ministry. As the minister is released from the regular responsibilities of the call, it does not mean that congregational life is suspended. In fact, many congregations report that the Sabbatical was a time for growth and renewal.

Each Sabbatical will be unique. Sabbatical is clearly permission for a minister to be blessed by time away. In the church, as we discuss Sabbaticals for ministers, the challenge is for us to pursue its meaning for each Christian community. These guidelines are intended to help congregations and ministers create a mutual plan of rest and renewal for ministry.

### **Purpose, Rationale, and Expectations**

We are familiar with the Sabbath, the seventh day of creation, when God rested. The word "Sabbatical" is derived from Sabbath, and is defined as a time reserved for rest, research, renewal, enrichment, learning, spiritual growth, travel, and strengthening of ministry gifts. Sabbaticals provide opportunities to see new directions, renew relationships, to begin new pursuits. Nourishing one's soul and changing perspective requires a change in one's space and place. Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness, after which his ministry set off on a new course.

Preparation for a Sabbatical is important, and openness to the movement of God's Spirit in the life of people and minister is vital. A Sabbatical is arranged in consideration of the congregation's ministry. It can be expected that while a minister is on Sabbatical, congregational life—worship, education, outreach, evangelism, etc., will continue. Sabbatical leave is not a vacation, nor is it only continuing education. While life-long learning and continuing education are vital for all, and ministers are expected to participate in regular opportunities to grow and be strengthened, the Sabbatical is an enriching component of ministry, which may include particular continuing education opportunities, but most likely will encompass more. Necessarily, the plans for a Sabbatical will be mutually detailed well in advance of departure.

Many congregations reflect that while their minister was away they learned new things about themselves and the ministry they share with one another. Thus, renewal of God's people and minister occurs. Sabbaticals provide a means by which the congregation can minister to their leader. The Sabbatical may also bring into being a Sabbatical for the congregation, a time to rethink the "busyness" of congregational life, a time to reevaluate the congregation's relationship with God, a time for the Holy Spirit to lead their ministry in new ways. Most importantly, the congregation gains a minister who returns to God's calling with renewed vigor, insight, appreciation, and vision.

Ministers of the church in the Allegheny Synod need Sabbath time to break away from the stress and strain and the 24/7 nature of ministry. A Sabbatical gives a minister more than a time to study, learn, and rest. To keep the Sabbath is to renew one's trust in God to provide by abstaining from those activities that provide material resources. A Sabbatical provides ministers time to be nurtured by God, reflect on their relationship with God. A Sabbatical gives the minister an opportunity to reflect on God's call and discover the importance of who they are in the light of who God wants them to be.

### Benefits of Sabbaticals

Sabbaticals provide a means for the congregation to gain new insight into mission and ministry and to minister to their called leader. A Sabbatical leave will benefit the congregation, the church leadership, and their shared ministry. A few of these benefits are listed below.

#### For the Ministry

An opportunity to show support for the minister and their family; a time to develop lay leadership by assuming some of the minister's responsibilities; an opportunity for learning new ideas to enhance their ministry; renewed congregational leadership; opportunities for spiritual growth; leadership stability, while not losing an effective and respected minister to burnout or a new call.

#### For the Ministry Leadership

A time to renew their energy and rediscover their zeal for ministry; an opportunity for learning new ideas to enhance their ministry; a time for prayer, rest, and renewing their relationship with God; a time to spend with family and friends to renew and strengthen relationships; an extended time for focused study and spiritual growth.

#### Mutual Benefits

Renewal of the covenant between the leader and the congregation; improved understanding of each other's perspective: the leader will experience more of life in the pew during the Sabbatical, and the lay leadership will come to a greater understating of how the congregation's ministry is



renewed, revitalized, and stimulated; an opportunity for learning new ideas to enhance their ministry

### Suggested Sabbatical Guidelines

A Sabbatical is encouraged for ministers of the Allegheny Synod after 5-7 years of service in the same setting, beginning after three years of First Call Theological Education.

The length of Sabbatical is encouraged to be a minimum of 3 months, though each Sabbatical may vary in length, depending on the covenant agreed upon by the congregation's council and the minister. It is strongly encouraged that the entire Sabbatical be taken continuously to allow for disengagement from pastoral responsibilities and duties.

Sabbatical time is not considered vacation time or continuing education time for the minister but a separate experience of renewal for continued ministry.

Planning for a Sabbatical can begin anytime. When possible, it is suggested that the discussion begin early in a ministry.

Final preparations are encouraged at least 6 months to a year in advance, including the writing of a covenant, which provides full compensation and benefits for the minister and outlines the vision and practical details of the Sabbatical.

A covenant designed by the congregation's council, or its designated representatives, and the minister is encouraged. The congregation's leadership usually does the final affirmation of the covenant. The time of planning of Sabbatical should focus on the vision and hopes for the Sabbatical time as well as practical arrangements regarding pastoral coverage and financial considerations for the congregation. Conversation with the synod can help facilitate this planning and implementation so that it is intentional and mutually beneficial for both the congregation and the minister.

As Sabbatical coverage for a congregation is discussed, there are resources within the synod to help in planning for pastoral coverage. Possibilities for Sundays include utilizing the gifts of retired pastors, worship led by authorized lay leaders of the synod, youth led worship services, hymn sings, etc. Coverage for pastoral care may be arranged in a variety of ways, including support from area pastors.

It is expected that a minister will return to their call from the congregation after their Sabbatical. It is suggested that in the Sabbatical covenant this expectation is discerned between the congregation council and the minister, with at least one to two years of continued service after the Sabbatical being the norm.

Upon return from Sabbatical, the minister is encouraged to provide a reflection or report to the congregation about the Sabbatical experience. This can be flexible and creative in its form, yet, provide an opportunity for congregation and minister to learn from and explore the benefits of the Sabbatical time.

*\*\*A comprehensive list of sabbatical resources, ideas, retreat centers, etc. are available at [www.alleghenysynod.org](http://www.alleghenysynod.org) or by contacting [office@alleghenysynod.com](mailto:office@alleghenysynod.com) or 814-942-1042\*\**

**Worksheet: Estimate of Household Expenses**

To calculate the percentage of salary to be designated as Housing Allowance for tax purposes

Housing Allowance for year extending from \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_

Estimated expenses:

- A. Rent for leased property or payments on home purchase  
(down payments, acquisition costs, mortgage payments of principal) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Garage rental (if not included in A) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Utilities (gas, electricity, water, sewer, oil, telephone, trash removal,  
cable, internet, firewood or other heating fuel) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Insurance  
(homeowner's, fire, extended coverage, liability, contents, flood) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Repairs and maintenance \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- F. Furnishings and improvements \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- G. Interest and taxes (may want to itemize these separately) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- H. Other housing expenses (list in detail)

If the minister is living in a parsonage and there is no landline, the congregation may pay a monthly stipend to help cover the cost of cell phone usage related to the church.

The congregation may provide internet at a parsonage. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Congregational Council Action on Housing Allowance**

To provide a record of Housing Allowance designation for tax and audit purposes

The \_\_\_\_\_ Committee advised the Council that under the tax laws an ordained minister of the gospel is not subject to Federal Income Tax with respect to the “rental allowance paid as part of compensation to the pastor used to rent or provide a home.” Where the minister owns a home, the amount of the Housing Allowance will be an amount equal to the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appliances, plus the cost of utilities.

The Council, after considering the statement of the Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ setting forth estimates of the amount expected to be spent to rent or otherwise provide a home during the period of

\_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_ and in light of the Federal Income Tax law and of the established salary level, on motion duly made and seconded, adopted the following resolution:

Resolved that the Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ receive a Salary of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ and a Housing Allowance of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the period \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_, to be so designated in the official records.

Respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of Council

**Notification of Housing Allowance by Congregation**

To provide a record for the minister of the Housing Allowance designation for tax and audit purposes

Dear Rev. \_\_\_\_\_:

This is to advise you that at a meeting of the Congregation Council, held on \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_, your Housing Allowance for the period \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_ was officially designated and fixed in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of Council

*NOTE: Retain the original of each of these agreements in the congregation files, send a copy to the Allegheny Synod Office, 701 Quail Ave., Altoona, PA 16602 and provide a copy to the pastor.*

## Definition of Compensation, Benefits and Responsibilities of the Pastor

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

For the Reverend: \_\_\_\_\_

For the period of: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

### A. COMPENSATION

The congregation will provide the following annual compensation:

1. Base cash salary  
Parsonage included \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Parsonage NOT included \$ \_\_\_\_\_
2. Social Security Allowance (1/2 of 15.3%) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
3. If parsonage is included:  
Utilities allowance \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Furnishing allowance \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Housing equity allowance \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### B. PENSION AND OTHER BENEFITS

The congregation will sponsor the pastor in the pension and other benefits program through Portico Benefit Services.

*(Sponsorship includes health, pension, disability and life insurance. Health insurance is expected to be provided in full by the congregation for the pastor, spouse and family where applicable. If the health coverage is waived, a certificate of insurance must be provided to the Allegheny Synod Office. Full cost coverage is expected for this option.)*

- ELCA Pension at \_\_\_\_\_ % (12% recommended) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ELCA Health, Disability and Life Insurance \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Other insurance benefits \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### C. EXPENSES

The congregation will provide the following expenses related to this pastor's ministry.

1. Automobile/travel/mileage allowance *(IRS guideline for mileage recommended)* \$ \_\_\_\_\_
2. Other professional expenses *(See Compensation and Benefits manual)* \$ \_\_\_\_\_
3. Official meetings of the Synod \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
*(i.e. Bishop's Convocation, Synod Assembly, First Call Theological Education, Synodical Committee meetings, etc.)*

4. Continuing Education \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Minimum of \$700 from the congregation.)

5. Moving expenses \$ \_\_\_\_\_

6. Other expenses \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please list: \_\_\_\_\_

**D. AGREEMENT**

1. Vacation time of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks per year including \_\_\_\_\_ Sundays.

2. Continuing Education time of \_\_\_\_\_ weeks per year. *(Recommended 2 weeks per year)*

3. Sick time of \_\_\_\_\_ days per year.  
*(Recommended 10 days per year. Congregation Council may decide whether time can be accumulated)*

4. Participation in the First Call Theological Education event where applicable.  
*(Congregations calling a pastor in the first three years of ministry are expected to contribute \$300 per year for 3 years to help offset the cost of this event.)*

5. Ongoing care through a Mutual Ministry Committee

6. Up to two months of continued salary, housing and other contributions to Portico Benefits in a 12-month period in the event the pastor is physically or mentally disabled and,

7. Where applicable, parental leave up to eight weeks with full salary, housing and benefits.

**E. OTHER PROVISIONS**

Special emphasis of the pastor and special encouragement and support from the congregation:

1. During this time period, the pastor will give special attention in ministry to the following:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

2. The congregation will support the pastor in these emphasis' in the following ways:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

**F. OTHER MATTERS**

*(Accountabilities, service on Synodical committees, work in church camps or other boards)*

\_\_\_\_\_



**We, the undersigned, certify that the necessary approvals of the congregation and congregation council have been granted for the provisions so set forth in this agreement.**

Congregation President: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Sign

Congregation Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Sign

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify and accept the above statement:

The Reverend \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# CONFERENCE REPORTS

## Bedford Conference

The Bedford Conference is the smallest of the Conferences and consists of seven congregations. The Rostered Leaders are the Reverend Judy Simonson (Mt. Zion, Breezewood), the Reverend Kathy Popp (Zion, Everett) and the Reverend David Wright (St. Clairsville Parish – St. Peter’s, Osterburg and Messiah, Bedford). Mt. Olive and Christ Lutheran are served by TEEM student, Vicar Penny Koontz. Congregational Lay Leader Robbie Roland serves Zion, Clearville. During 2022, the Central Bedford Lutheran Parish departed from the ELCA for the NALC.

At the Conference Caucus in 2022, Pastor David Wright was re-elected to a second term as Conference Dean.

The Conference Pastors have resumed meeting on a fairly regular basis, primarily for collegial support and fellowship. Each of the congregations has resumed in-person Worship on their regular schedules, as well as other congregational activities.

Respectfully submitted,

The Reverend David Wright, Dean  
Bedford Conference

## Blair-Huntingdon Conference

2022-2023

This year our Conference enjoyed relative stability in terms of congregational affiliation and pastoral leadership, with no new departures, vacancies or transitions.

Both current and retired clergy met for text study most weeks at local coffee shops and restaurants, as well as for Conference meetings most months either at a hosting congregation or outside at one of our area parks.

Since Christmas and New Year’s Day fell on Sundays and altered some congregations’ schedules, the conference pastors worked together to create a comprehensive list of in-person and digital holiday worship opportunities, particularly for the members of congregations that do not have regular pastoral leadership. The clergy are grateful for the work of the Bishop’s staff in clarifying the practice of extending the table to our neighboring congregations who rarely have an ordained pastor leading Sunday worship.

St. Luke Roaring Spring served as a field education site for the 2022-2023 academic year for ULS seminarian Jen Bobolsky; under the supervision of Pastor Amanda McCaffery, Vicar Jen preached, taught, and assisted with Snow Camp at Sequanota.

Several youth from our conference attended the Synod’s learning trip to Washington, D.C. and Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp last summer, which was planned after the cancellation of the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering. Conference youth are preparing to travel to Florida this July for the Synod’s hurricane relief service trip.

Our Conference is excited to host the Synod’s first junior-senior high retreat since before the pandemic. The Weekend will be held December 8-10, 2023 at St. James in Huntingdon.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Traci A. Marriott, Dean  
(Pastor, St. Matthew Martinsburg)

## Clearfield Conference

The Clearfield Conference includes ten congregations, nine of which are in partnerships. The rostered leaders are: The Rev. Robert Way (St. John, Clearfield), The Rev. Christine Roe (First Faith Lutheran Cooperative) and The Rev. Vicki Beilfuss (Holy Shepherd Parish).

Pr. Way also serves as the vacancy pastor for St. Peter, Luthersburg, and St. John, Rockton. Both of these congregations depend on Dick Hertlein to lead them in worship. The communities of Grace and Salem in Olanta, until recently, were served by Authorized Lay Minister, Richard Steuernagle.

Conference losses include: Richard Steuernagle, who died on Friday, February 3, 2023. The Revs. Amy Godshall Miller and John Miller along with Christ Lutheran Church, DuBois disaffiliated with the Allegheny Synod in January 2023 for the NALC.

St. John's has seen an increase in attendance, both returning members, as well as, some new folks. Outside groups using their building are in full force. They are delighted to report the ability to increase the number of boxes for Operation Christmas Child to 260 this past season.

First Faith Lutheran Cooperative consists of Faith United, Houtzdale and First Evangelical, Philipsburg. Several new members have been welcomed, including two baptisms. Ministries inside and outside the walls of the buildings continue. The Lydia's Circle of Faith United manages funds for parishioners in need of fuel assistance and are now reaching out to folks who live alone, gifting them with prayer shawls. This group also collaborates with the community for a Ministerium event called "80s and Over Dinner."

First Evangelical's *All God's Animals Pet Pantry* continues to serve people age 55 and over. The two congregations

partner in collecting pull tabs for Shriners and gently used eyeglasses for the Lion's Club. Summer of 2022 they also collected items for Military Families Ministry USA. Both communities share space inside their buildings with others, have active Eucharistic ministry teams, and share in their lives of prayer together. Life in ministry together is of great value for both communities.

The leadership of Holy Shepherd Parish (HSP)—Holy Trinity, Lanse and Shepherd of the Hills, Karthaus—did the work of discerning mission, vision, and goal setting with the help of Pr. Kevin Shock. Currently they are working on increasing ties between the two congregations, as well as, reestablishing connections with their surrounding communities. Realizing the congregations are stronger together, Worship, Education, and Outreach committee work is done together.

Joint stewardship efforts saw a collection of 40 lbs of pull tabs for Ronald McDonald House, 2 large boxes of school supplies for West Branch school teachers, and 2 large boxes of items for the Hollidaysburg Home enrichment. The Parish Quilters created 200 quilts and Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Preschool continues to fill a vital need in the area. Both, individually raised money to help congregants with difficulties and have supported the local ecumenical Ministerium "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" program.

Loving and serving God, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, our small conference of churches finds meaningful ways to love and serve our faith communities and our neighborhoods in the name of Jesus.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Vicki Beilfuss  
Clearfield Conference Dean

## Johnstown Conference

The Johnstown Conference of the Allegheny Synod comprises twelve congregations in Cambria County and in Somerset County. The pastors of the conference meet regularly at different locations within the conference and several of the pastors gather on Wednesday mornings for Bible Study and fellowship.

The past year has seen significant transition among the congregations. Three pastors have taken calls outside the Allegheny Synod and we wish them well as the Holy Spirit has called these pastors to serve new congregations. Second, Trinity Lutheran Church voted to leave the ELCA and to affiliate with the North American Lutheran Church; Pastor Toby Holland has resigned from the roster of the ELCA as a result of this vote. Third, Pastor Walter Startzel,

covenant pastor to First Lutheran Church, Johnstown, died very suddenly at the end of August, 2022. Pastor Startzel's funeral was a wonderful celebration of his life and ministry to the numerous congregations he served. Since his death, First Lutheran Johnstown has been served by a number of supply pastors who have helped to continue the work of the Church in Johnstown.

Five congregations within the Johnstown Conference are in discernment about their futures and we pray that the Holy Spirit will assist in discerning their future.

Pastor Mark Fischer  
Dean, Johnstown Conference

## Laurel Highlands Conference

Our conference experienced a change in leadership this year, when Dean Dena Gable accepted a call outside our Synod. In September, Rev. Glenn Foster was appointed (volunteered) to serve as Interim Dean until the conference could elect a new Dean at our Spring Conference meeting.

During the year, we've had monthly clergy meetings to discuss the needs of the Conference, and for support for each other, particularly during this time when we have had so many vacant parishes in our Conference. Our pastors have been providing coverage for emergency visitation, hospitals, weddings, and funerals for these vacant churches.

Also, the *Grace Delivered*, trailer ministry has been active. They were in the Jubilee Parade in New Centerville

with youth distributing candy and other items. They distributed t-shirts and snacks at the Pray for Peace services. They partnered with the Lazarus Gate Food Pantry in Rockwood transporting donated items from CVS to be distributed there, along with serving meals from donated food. They have also retrieved items for Camp Sequanota. Interested parties for the *Grace Delivered* trailer or other information about the work of *Grace Delivered* can contact Ann Ferry.

At our Spring Assembly, we elected Rev. Tyler Graham of the Salisbury Lutheran Parish to be our new Dean.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Glenn Foster  
Interim Dean

## Nittany Conference

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The rostered ministers of the Nittany Conference continue to meet monthly using Zoom or meeting in person for prayer, support and idea sharing. We will be hosting Tracy de Pasquale from Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania (LAMPa) at our May meeting. These gatherings have been well received by our colleagues and provide helpful opportunities to walk with each other and help our congregations and ministries navigate the challenges of ministry.

Since I began serving as dean, the only pastoral transition in the Nittany Conference has been Pastor Kevin Shock taking a new call to serve in the Allegheny Synod office. Vicar

Ted Williams continues to serve as transitional minister at St. Mark Lutheran in Pleasant Gap as the leadership there seeks a new pastor through the synod call process.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve within the Nittany Conference and thank God for the people and leaders here.

In Christ,

Deacon Alicia Anderson  
Nittany Conference Dean  
Campus Minister with Lutheran Campus Ministry  
at Penn State



## 10 Things to Know about 1517 Media

### Spring 2023

1. The *All Creation Sings* family of resources continues to expand, including the *Assembly Song Companion to All Creation Sings*, the *Ensemble Setting of Holy Communion (Setting 12)*, and the soon-to-be-released braille edition. We continue to add online resources that can help you use this liturgy and song supplement to *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* to enliven your congregation's worship. [augsburgfortress.org/allcreationsings](https://augsburgfortress.org/allcreationsings)
2. Kids will find new ways to explore and learn about Lutheran worship with the newly updated *Kids Celebrate* series, featuring topics like Worship, Creation, the Trinity, and Hymns and Songs. *A Time to Say Goodbye: A Booklet for Kids about Funerals* helps kids understand what happens during a Lutheran funeral. [augsburgfortress.org/for-kids](https://augsburgfortress.org/for-kids)
3. This summer we invite kids to learn what it means to become menders in God's world with *Operation Restoration*, a new Vacation Bible School based on Daniel Erlander's timeless works. This flexible VBS complements other Erlander resources: *A Place for You* (Holy Communion), *Come to the Water* (Holy Baptism), *Baptized, We Live* (introduction to Lutheranism), and *Manna and Mercy* (the biblical narrative). [augsburgfortress.org/operationrestoration](https://augsburgfortress.org/operationrestoration)
4. Fortress Press continues its legacy of publishing compelling theological, biblical, and ethical books for the church and the world in which it lives. Recent and upcoming releases include *The Everyday Advocate: Living Out Your Calling to Social Justice* by Deacon Ross Murray, *Blessing and Beseeching: Seventy Prayers Inspired by the Scriptures* by Gail Ramshaw, and *So That All May Flourish: The Aims of Lutheran Higher Education* by a veritable "who's who" of Lutheran higher education, a must read for everyone concerned about the work being done on Lutheran campuses. [fortresspress.com](https://fortresspress.com)
5. Our Broadleaf Books imprint explores the expanse of human experience—seeking to deepen faith and understanding and bring wholeness to readers and society. Recent releases include *Ordinary Blessings for Parents: Prayers, Poems and Meditations for Family Life* by Rev. Meta Herrick Carlson, *Red State Christians: A Journey into White Christian Nationalism and the Wreckage It Leaves Behind* by Rev. Angela Denker, and *What Makes You Come Alive: A Spiritual Walk with Howard Thurman* by Dr. Lerita Coleman Brown. [broadleafbooks.com](https://broadleafbooks.com)
6. For a low annual fee, Sparkhouse provides access through *Sparkhouse Digital* to a wide range of regularly refreshed resources for early childhood, children, and youth. Subscribers can access new digital activity kits that help congregations provide resources for use in the home or as a supplement to in-person faith formation activities. [sparkhousedigital.com](https://sparkhousedigital.com)
7. Congregations looking to bridge connections with families during the summer will find, *Families Celebrate Summer* an excellent resource. This colorful deck of 56 cards is full of faith-based activities, rituals, reflections, and other ideas for families to try at home and on the go. [augsburgfortress.org/familiescelebrate](https://augsburgfortress.org/familiescelebrate)
8. This spring Sparkhouse released *Remind Me Again: Poems and Practices for Remembering Who We Are*, a collection of 41 poems by Joe Davis that will inspire, challenge, and affirm readers from all stages of life. This fall, a facilitator guide by Rev. Jia Starr Brown will help youth and adults engage with the poetry and encourage meaningful discussions and connections to your own community. [augsburgfortress.org/remind-me-again](https://augsburgfortress.org/remind-me-again)
9. Beaming Books continues its mission to publish high-quality children's books that help kids thrive in every part of who they are—emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Recent and upcoming releases include *I Am Not Afraid: Psalm 23 for Bedtime, Wherever You Are*, and *Pause, Breathe, Be: A Kid's 30-Day Guide to Peace and Presence*. [beamingbooks.com](https://beamingbooks.com)
10. Frolic Preschool, Frolic Nursery, and Frolic Family introduce little ones to faith concepts in age-appropriate ways. The award-winning Frolic Storybooks are now available in affordable paperback bundles that make great gifts for kids in your communities. [wearesparkhouse.org/frolic](https://wearesparkhouse.org/frolic)

Want to learn more? Follow us on social media. Sign up for our free eNewsletters at [augsburgfortress.org](https://augsburgfortress.org) | [wearesparkhouse.org](https://wearesparkhouse.org) | [fortresspress.com](https://fortresspress.com) | [beamingbooks.com](https://beamingbooks.com) | [broadleafbooks.com](https://broadleafbooks.com)

## Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries (ALSM)

### 2023 Message to the Allegheny Synod, ELCA

Greetings and blessings to each of you from the leadership of ALSM!

Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries (ALSM) is the only regional faith-based not-for-profit organization offering services that span the generations. ALSM has been responding to the needs of our communities for the past 75 years.

At the heart of our mission is the ability to provide benevolent care for those whose resources have been depleted through unexpected changes in circumstances as a resident. Each year, approximately 370 people who reside in ALSM's senior living communities are provided these funds-- totaling more than \$3 million--in order to be able to live as independently as possible. We are grateful that no one has been asked to leave a community because of a lack of funds.

ALSM is able to fulfill its mission and touch the lives of more than 3,000 people because of the partnership we share in this ministry with each of you. As ALSM serves individuals throughout an eight-county area, you may know someone who has received our services or lives in one of our senior communities. I would like to share an example of how ALSM touches the lives of people.

### The Smith's Story:

Neil Smith and his wife, Nancy, moved into their cottage home at The Oaks at Pleasant Gap a little more than four years ago. They wanted to give up the stress and responsibility of home maintenance and enjoy their retirement. They owned a home with many acres of land including a 150-year-old schoolhouse. "It is a relief to have the responsibilities of upkeep gone, Neil said. "The move has made it easier to travel. We love to travel. At home, we couldn't just leave as we can now. We can just go and enjoy!" The Smiths enjoy being active in the community and have been involved with groups such as the Tyrone Rotary Club, Historical Society and Women's Club. Neil, an avid gardener, has a beautiful garden at his cottage. He and

Nancy enjoy assisting their neighbors with gardening tasks. "I enjoy gardening and giving to others. It is something you can easily give to another. It is a good way to stay busy and keep healthy. I also start almost every day with a walk around campus," said Neil.



### Caryl's Story:

Caryl Swanson is a resident on the campus of The Lutheran Home at Johnstown. From a young age, Caryl had a love for working in retail. "I started working when I was 15 in a small drug store in Crystal Lake, IL., Caryl said. She later worked in retail in the Johnstown and Somerset areas. As an active member of First Lutheran Church and a pastor's wife, she was instrumental in starting the gift shop on the campus of The Lutheran Home at Johnstown. "The gift shop was started in 2000 at the request of former resident Betty Will. She wanted to see a shop for residents, so the women of First Lutheran became involved. I was no longer working retail and wanted something to do. I used my experience and quickly learned how to order gift shop items. The Cambria County Auxiliary then became involved. I have been an Auxiliary member since 1980. In the early days, the gift shop was open five days a week, always staffed by volunteers," said Caryl. Through the years, she remained active in both the Auxiliary, taking the reins to organize the "Attic Treasures" sale each year, and serving post-recital lunches at her congregation.

Nearly five years ago, Caryl decided to move into a cottage home on campus, making it easier to volunteer. Unfortunately, during a time early on in Covid, the gift shop was temporarily closed. However, since May of 2021, Caryl, has been the only volunteer to operate the gift shop two days a week. "It has become more difficult to order items for the gift shop," Caryl said. "I do not shop online but have found a few remaining catalogs to order items. Gift shows are a thing of the past. I enjoy my time being in the gift shop and have through all these years."

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We are truly blessed to be able to serve the needs of people throughout our region with the following programs and services:

- **Senior Communities** (The Lutheran Home at Hollidaysburg, The Lutheran Home at Johnstown and The Oaks at Pleasant Gap)
- **Rental Assistance Senior Housing** (Lutheran Commons at Berlin Pike and Lutheran Commons at Pleasant Gap)
- **Community Services** (ALSM at Home)
- **Children's Services** (Head Start, Early Head Start, Family Center, Growing Years Early Learning Centers, Kid Stop before-and-after programs and PRE-K Counts programs)

We thank you and the members of your congregations for your prayerful and financial support.

## A few highlights from our programs and services include:

### Senior Living Communities

- Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries senior living communities continue to take every precaution to keep everyone safe and follow public health recommendations to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.
- Volunteers are welcome on campus. Volunteers follow the same safety protocols as ALSM team members for safety and protection. If you would like to discuss volunteer opportunities, please contact:
  - Hannah Myers – The Lutheran Home at Hollidaysburg, 814.696.4527
  - Cassidy Keilman – The Lutheran Home at Johnstown, 814.255.6844
  - Sara Wright – The Oaks at Pleasant Gap, 814.359.2782

### Blairmont Commons, Hickory Commons and The Lutheran Home at Hollidaysburg

- Blairmont and Hickory Commons cottages offer residents a stress-free lifestyle. Exterior and interior maintenance is included in the cost, allowing residents the time to enjoy their favorite activities. The cottages are energy efficient and handicapped accessible so that residents may “age in place” in this secure neighborhood setting. These independent

living residences attract individuals aged 55 and over. The waiting list for these cottages continues to grow.

- The bright and spacious apartments at Hillcrest are perched atop the famous “Double Dips” in historic Hollidaysburg, overlooking ALSM’s Hickory Commons campus. Small pets are welcome. Meal plans are available with dining room and to-go options.
- The Lutheran Home continues to focus on individuals who require short-term rehab. Many times, persons who have suffered a stroke or are recovering from a broken limb or limb replacement surgery may benefit from therapy services in a nursing home setting. In addition, long-term care residents are also accepted.
- Short-term respite stays are available. Respite stays allow family caregivers to take a break from caregiving, tend to their own healthcare needs, go on vacation or attend a family celebration such as a wedding or graduation.
- For more information or to schedule a tour, contact Jeremy Schrader at 814.696.4527.

### The Lutheran Home at Johnstown

- The continuing care campus is located in the historic Westmont neighborhood of Johnstown. The campus provides independent living cottage homes and apartments. All private personal care accommodations include a full bathroom to provide comfort and privacy for those who require a helping hand. For more information or to schedule a tour, contact Ray Soto at 814.255.6844.
- The Lutheran Home continues to focus on individuals who require short-term rehab. Many times, persons who have suffered a stroke or are recovering from a broken limb or limb replacement surgery may benefit from therapy services in a nursing home setting. In addition, long-term care residents are also accepted.
- Short-term respite stays are available in personal care and health care. Respite stays allow family caregivers to take a break from caregiving, tend to their own healthcare needs, go on vacation or attend a family celebration such as a wedding or graduation.

### The Oaks at Pleasant Gap

- The Oaks at Pleasant Gap campus continues to serve the needs of those who desire personal care services as well as independent living.

*continued*

- Additional independent living cottages are under construction. Reservations are now being accepted for new cottage homes. For information or to schedule a tour of The Oaks, call Melissa Hall at 814.359.2782.
- Short-term respite stays are available. Respite stays allow family caregivers to take a break from caregiving, tend to their own healthcare needs, go on vacation or attend a family celebration such as a wedding or graduation.
- For those seniors who meet income guidelines, there is also a 14-unit apartment building, Lutheran Commons at Pleasant Gap. Waitlist applications are being accepted. For information on Lutheran Commons, call 814.696.4500 or 800.400.2285.

## Community Services

- The services of ALSM at Home are available in Blair County and include personal care, cleaning, meal preparation, assistance with the activities of daily living (such as bathing, dressing and medication reminders) and companionship. Often, members of our staff team provide respite care for persons who live with their families. Services may be scheduled in two-hour increments.

## Children's Services

- Growing Years Early Learning Center and Kid Stop managers completed educational courses through the Keystone STARs program for continuous quality improvement. The centers have a rating of 3 STAR or higher out of 4 STAR. Those centers include Bedford and Johnstown Kid Stops and Growing Years in Bedford and Johnstown. PRE-K Counts is offered through Growing Years in Bedford and Johnstown.
- Head Start continued partnerships with the Intermediate Units 08 and 11 to provide inclusive preschool programming to children in Bedford and Fulton counties.
- Head Start continued collaborations with the Chestnut Ridge, Northern Bedford and Central Fulton school districts for preschool programming.
- The Family Center of Bedford County serves families through home visits, monthly playgroups, fathers' groups and special events.

In addition to these program highlights, ALSM's annual golf outing raised more than \$48,000 for benevolent care. We invite you to join us at this year's outing, scheduled for Monday, July 31 at Scotch Valley Country Club. For more information, please contact the Advancement Office at 814.696.4516.

As was announced earlier this year, the affiliation with ALSM and Liberty Lutheran Services did not occur. The major factor that hindered the affiliation was explained in a communication that was sent to all of our partners and other interested parties. To briefly reiterate the challenge to the affiliation was the delay of the approval of the sale of The Lutheran Home at Johnstown by the Office of the PA Attorney General. The sale of the Johnstown Home continues but unfortunately not soon enough to accommodate affiliation plans.

Please note that Liberty and ALSM share mutual respect and each will move forward to independently fulfill our missions of service. Please also note that ALSM is financially sustainable so while there are operational factors that challenge us, we continue to have a strong balance sheet.

The ALSM board will be working with the interim CEO Chris Reighard and his staff colleagues to identify future strategic initiatives. Chris has served ALSM as the financial officer for the past twenty-three years. I will serve as a consultant to ALSM through June 20, 2023.

Please know we appreciate your prayerful support and thank you for your partnership in our mission of serving people with love, compassion and mercy in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

For more details on ALSM programs, I invite you to visit our website at [www.alsm.org](http://www.alsm.org). For a copy of ALSM's Annual Report, please call 814.696.4516 or send an email to [development@alsm.org](mailto:development@alsm.org).

Chris Reighard  
Interim President/CEO  
ALSM  
998 Logan Blvd., Altoona, PA 16602  
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[www.alsm.org](http://www.alsm.org)

*"To serve people through a ministry of love, compassion, and mercy in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ."*

# Allegheny Synodical Women’s Organization

## 2023 Report

The Allegheny Synodical Women’s Organization Board has met six times since the last Synod Assembly. We also held our 33rd Convention on October 22, 2022, at Christ Lutheran Church, Claysburg, PA. The convention was a morning session with breakfast, worship, and business meeting.

At the convention we received \$282 in donations to benefit the Bull Dog Back-pack Program at the Claysburg Kimmel School District.

Our churchwide representative was Jennifer Armstrong-Shaffer from Latrobe, PA. Jennifer is a member of the board of the Women of the ELCA. Bishop Paula was also in attendance.

Board members elected were Donna College and Margaret (Peggy) Steinfurth, for two-year terms. Officers elected were Secretary Jeanne Fleegle and Treasurer Donna Wilt, for two-year terms.

Jeanne Fleegle and Mary Ann Wolfhope were elected as voting members to the Women of the ELCA Triennial Convention in Phoenix, AZ., September 19-21, 2023.

Our organization has received a \$1000 grant from “Katie’s Fund.” We are planning to use this to help fund a Day of Renewal in August, 2023. We have also voted to donate \$250 to the Allegheny Synod’s Faith Foundation Team’s project: The Book.

One of the ongoing responsibilities of the ASWO is the Lutheran World Relief truck to collect blankets, quilts and kits. St. Peter’s Lutheran Church of Osterburg took on this responsibility for 2022. The following is the report of the collection.

### Lutheran World Relief Collection Report, 2022

<b>Blankets and Quilts</b>	<b>1,928</b>
<b>Personal Care Kits</b>	<b>1,254</b>
<b>School Kits</b>	<b>871</b>
<b>Fabric Kits</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Dress Kits</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Knit lap robes</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Baby Sweaters &amp; Hats</b>	<b>8</b>

There are many other projects of the women of the Allegheny Synod that we are trying to highlight in our newsletter, *The Courier*. Our newsletter is mailed to all women’s organizations, and congregations in the synod, and, downloaded to the Synod website, please take time to look it over.

We are asking everyone here to encourage the women of your congregations to become an active unit in the Synodical Women’s Organization. Please contact me or any members of the board if you have any questions.

Respectively submitted:

Fay L Dellinger, President  
Allegheny Synodical Women’s Organization



# Breezewood Trucker and Traveler The Year In Review 2022

Greetings and grace to all in the Allegheny Synod ELCA! We appreciate your partnership in this marketplace outreach. The Breezewood Trucker and Traveler Ministry is blessed to record the following:

## (2019) (2020) (2021) (2022)

1043	.....331	..... 533	..... 700	.....trucker contacts.
1213	.....397	..... 854	..... 1014	.....traveler contacts.
743	.....477	..... 505	..... 763	.....employee/staff contacts.
69	.....48	..... 65	..... 62	.....spiritual/emotional assistance for truckers.
132	.....91	..... 104	..... 104	.....spiritual/emotional assistance for employee/staff.
273	.....184	..... 246	..... 208	.....pastoral care calls in the community.
1231	.....1041	..... 1224	..... 802	.....food resource provided.
108	.....199	..... 184	..... 191	.....nights of lodging provided.
37	.....44	..... 40	..... 46	.....persons assisted with gasoline.
164	.....48	..... 49	..... 35	.....persons provided with transportation(including bus).
45	.....55	..... 37	..... 40	.....camping gear, bags, showers, gift cards, cash, or clothing.
117	.....131	..... 82	..... 121	.....traveler's "Zip Lock" care packages given.
202	.....82	..... 80	..... 140	.....Bibles or New Testaments given.
210	.....105	..... 52	..... 85	.....families/individuals served through Christmas food drive.
9	.....1	.....1	.....4	.....local church sponsored holiday hospitality tables.
22	.....14	..... 13	..... 21	.....ministry presentations/preaching/special services.
89	.....22	..... 21	..... 46	.....Bible studies/ prayer service.
2130	.....1803	..... 2005	..... 2177	.....professional staff hours worked.
2323	.....1379	..... 1606	..... 1774	.....hours served by volunteers.

## Professional Chaplaincy: Spiritual Care Association Membership (NIBIC)

Endorsed Chaplain, United Methodist Church

In 2022 our world continued to experience a great shaking of geopolitical, health system, and global economic foundations. Nations have rattled sabers, some entered fields of battle while other governments appear lost in cultural and moral confusions without a compass. The trauma of violence, disease, and loss is a fire-signal(Jeremiah 6) seen in Breezewood and so many lands far and wide. Many of our friends on the highway hold fast to the Living Word(Jesus) and prepare for battle by

seeking/sharing His Truth daily. The trumpet of Jeremiah 6 is blaring; we give thanks to God for the warning and ready ourselves in faith. Christ-following truckers are daily in and out of Breezewood delivering freight and meeting the needs of multitudes. Wandering and homeless travelers at this crossroads though sometimes suffering from isolation, can uncover a crack in the work of government and the church. Are we listening? The pressure cooker that is 24/7 interstate commerce is

*continued*

managed and served by an underappreciated Breezewood workforce whose 8+ hour shifts often expose them to an exhausting ear full and eye full of highway humanity that reflects national reality. Breezewood has seen the signal-fire and been invited along with the rest of the world to repent on our way to battle against the “Babylonians” of our day. We don’t have to look far to find the threat, easier yet to find hope. . . .in a promised Messiah!! We have been given precious Good News to share at the interstate crossroads in Breezewood, PA!

We continue to coordinate for food, fuel, care packages, transportation, and emergency lodging for those in need. We give thanks for ELCA partner churches, businesses, and individuals whose faithfulness multiplies resources for ministry! Special thank you to Judy Simonson(Mt. Zion, Breezewood) and David Wright(St. Clairsville Parish) who provide excellent leadership on the Management Committee!

**SOUND THE TRUMPET IN TEKOA! RAISE A SIGNAL FLAG**

—Jeremiah 6

P.O. Box 286, Breezewood, PA 15533; (814) 977-6964

## Candidacy and Leadership Regions 7 and 8



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America

*Gracious God, we thank you for the new life you give us through holy baptism. Especially, we ask you to bless those gathered in Synod Assembly and all who are discerning a call to rostered ministry. Continue to strengthen them with the Holy Spirit, and increase in them your gifts of grace: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.* (adapted from Anniversary of a Baptism, ELW Pastoral Care, p.131)

Grace to you and peace as you gather in assembly. Thank you for answering the call to serve the church by attending to the work we do together. Thank you also for taking time to read this report about our shared ministry of Candidacy and First Call in Regions 7 and 8.

**What is Candidacy?** It is the process of formation and discernment that prepares someone considering a call to be a deacon or pastor in the ELCA. It is the avenue by which a candidate is evaluated for public service in the church in partnership with home congregations, seminaries, churchwide, and synods. Your Synod Candidacy Committee works confidentially to accompany and prepare potential candidates for ordained ministry through prayerful discernment, intentional conversation, and thoughtful interviewing. They act to make decisions regarding a person's readiness for ordained ministry.

**What is First Call?** Near the end of candidacy, one may be approved for ordination. As a candidate approaches approval, a potential pastor or deacon enters a process where bishops meet by region to discern and determine in which synod God might be calling that candidate to serve.

**What is my role?** In my call as a deployed staff person of the ELCA, I listen to people share their sense of how God might be calling them to serve. I assist committees in their prayerful deliberation of candidates and provide education about candidacy and the first call process. In September 2023, candidacy committee members will have the opportunity to participate in a national online candidacy summit.

**You are a part of this ministry.** When you pray for people who are considering a call to ordained ministry; when you pray for your bishop, synod staff, and other leaders; when you ask a young person or a retiree or your lay Bible study leader if they have ever considered being a pastor or a deacon, you are a part of candidacy ministry.

### How can you learn more about Candidacy?

- To learn more about the current candidacy process, go to [ELCA.org/resources/candidacy](https://www.elca.org/resources/candidacy). There are many materials for those considering becoming a pastor or deacon. I particularly recommend a discernment document, "Called to Lead" as a guide for considering the many ways a person's baptismal call might be lived out in the world.
- We have also recently launched a new online discernment tool at [www.journi.faith](https://www.journi.faith) for anyone who is interested in exploring how their gifts for ministry can be used in the church and beyond.
- In March 2022, a Candidacy Leadership Development Working Group convened for the purpose of formally reviewing the entire candidacy process. You can learn more about the progress of the Working Group at [ELCA.org/our-work/leadership/candidacy-leadership-development](https://www.elca.org/our-work/leadership/candidacy-leadership-development)

Thank you for your synod's participation in this shared ministry and for the privilege to serve among you.

In Christ,

The Rev. A. Rebecca Resch  
Candidacy and Leadership Manager, Regions 7 & 8  
[becky.resch@elca.org](mailto:becky.resch@elca.org)

Region 7: New Jersey Synod ~ New England Synod ~ Metropolitan New York Synod ~ Upstate New York Synod ~ Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod ~ Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod ~ Slovak Zion Synod

Region 8: Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod ~ Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod ~ Allegheny Synod ~ Lower Susquehanna Synod ~ Upper Susquehanna Synod ~ Delaware-Maryland Synod ~ Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod ~ West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod

## LAMPa

***In response to God's love in Jesus Christ, we advocate for wise and just public policies in Pennsylvania that promote the common good.*** Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania is a shared ministry of seven Pennsylvania synods, ELCA Service and Justice, and Pennsylvania ELCA agencies and institutions. Through LAMPa, Lutherans called to be part of God's healing and reconciling mission in the world are supported to voice their faith convictions in the public square with and on behalf of our most vulnerable neighbors and the world we share, while seeking to create a more just Commonwealth.

Since last year's assembly, LAMPa celebrated 43 years of advocacy ministry that supported and deepened your congregational efforts to address hunger, poverty, health care, civic engagement, housing and homelessness, and care for creation. Our decades of advocacy on these issues have enabled us to lift up the needs of your ministries and communities to secure emergency food, shelter and access to health care as the nation emerged from pandemic. In the midst of a nationwide housing crisis, your advocacy through LAMPa lifted the cap on funding for the state housing trust fund, which Lutherans helped create more than a decade ago, and won passage of a Whole-Home Repairs law, a first-of-its kind program that will help preserve its aging housing stock, increase energy efficiency, and help keep Pennsylvanians, particularly seniors, in their homes. Your care for creation was turned into bipartisan support for investments in environmental conservation and protection for clean streams at a time

when one third of the state's waterways has been deemed impaired.

In its work of equipping disciples, growing leaders and supporting vital congregations, LAMPa assisted with the Homeless Remembrance Blanket Project on the lawn of the U.S. Capitol, soliciting and delivering invitations from ELCA-affiliated ministries around the country to members of Congress to visit and learn from their work with neighbors experiencing homelessness. LAMPa continues to educate faithful advocates through our website, e-news and other resources. LAMPa supported congregations in adding advocacy to their service on God's work. Our hands. Sunday and participated in the ULS spring convocation. LAMPa staff continues to serve in consultation to the ELCA task force developing the social statement on Faith and Civic Life, and urges all to devote time to the newly released study and to offer feedback. LAMPa recently held its first in-person day of advocacy since the pandemic, drawing a record number of attendees, including many from this synod.

We give thanks to God for you and for the support of our Allegheny Synod Policy Council representatives, the Rev. Rebecca Horn and Ms. Susan Barclay.

With deep gratitude for all the ways in which you support LAMPa's ministry,

Tracey DePasquale  
LAMPa Director

## Lutheran Campus Ministry at Penn State /Lutheran Student Community

**Campus Ministry is all about creating community.** *A college or university campus is packed with people, but it can be an isolating and lonely place. When campus ministry gathers around worship, discussion and service, or meals, students find connection with each other and with God. They learn that they are called and they are loved. Students find people who care about them, and who are trying together to live God's call to love our neighbors. In community, students share their stories; things they are struggling with, where they are joyful, what they are wondering about.*

**Lutheran Campus Ministry is your presence on campus.** On behalf of the synod and the whole church, we walk with students through their years at the university, offering opportunities for connection, growth, and service. We provide ongoing reminders of God's love and presence in the world for individual students and the campus community as a whole.

**Worshipping Community** – Each Thursday, students gather for worship on campus with Lutheran Student Community at the interfaith Pasquerilla Spiritual Center. Through the ancient texts of evening prayer, students sing, pray, share scripture and reflections, and encounter God in the heart of the campus. On Sundays, Deacon Alicia Anderson welcomes students at Grace Lutheran Church near campus at either Sunday morning congregational worship or Sunday evening worship led by a music team and the staff of Grace Lutheran Church and Lutheran Campus Ministry.

**Community Connections** – Weekly meals are an important part of creating authentic community in campus ministry. As students sit together for lunch or dinner, they share their experiences, thoughts, struggles, and successes. Students also connect with each other and build supportive friendships at volunteer opportunities, through discussions, and in worship. They truly share the journey together, supporting and caring for each other in the highs and lows of university life and the years after. They share their challenges, laugh together, pray for each other, and embody the presence of God with and for one another.

**Service and Learning** – Students are eager to share their time and abilities to help others. Through service both on campus and off campus, they find the joy of helping while learning more about the complexities of need, generosity, and justice. They also learn about themselves while serving as God's hands in the local community and wider world.

**Growing in Faith and Knowledge** – Students have so many questions and they seek out safe places to explore and discover new understandings. Through informal conversations, discussion events, campus-wide speakers, and especially one-on-one conversations with our campus minister, students can ask questions and delve into meaningful ways faith and daily life intersect. They discern how God is calling them to serve the needs of the world through their life's work, their activities and interests, and the relationships they have.

### This past year

Grace Lutheran Church continues to be an important partner in ministry in State College. Students are part of the worshipping community each Sunday and are welcome to participate in the life of the congregation. Students are a vital part of music at Grace this year and have been regular participants in anti-hunger food distributions in partnership with the local YMCA.

**Campus Partnerships** - Lutheran Campus Ministry and Lutheran Student Community maintain important connections with a variety of groups on campus. Our office in Pasquerilla Spiritual Center provides regular opportunities to work with the Center for Spiritual and Ethical Development in supporting students who are seeking pastoral care, and to partner on events and projects, including a fair on St. Patrick and Ireland, Interfaith Literacy Chats, and a Candlelit Labyrinth Walk in Eisenhower Chapel. Opportunities to volunteer at the Penn State Arboretum allow students to serve the community while enjoying the beauty of God's creation. As Covid-19 precautions fade, there are renewed opportunities to resume partnerships with the Gender Equity Center and the Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity within Penn State Student Affairs.



Ecumenical and interfaith partnerships are valuable in our campus setting. In March 2022, students engaged issues of anti-racism, justice and inclusion through a Service and Learning Pilgrimage to Washington, D.C. for a portion of Spring Break Lutheran Campus Ministry sponsored with Presbyterian Student Community and Wesley Penn State. Time exploring the National Museum of the American Indian, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and the National Portrait Museum, and volunteering at a feeding program on Capitol Hill offered rich context for meaningful conversation about race, justice and privilege.

On Ash Wednesday, we worked together to offer Ashes to Go for students between classes on the plaza outside Palmer Art Museum. In April, we and our ecumenical partners will host staff members from *Frontero de Cristo* in Douglas, Arizona, who will share about their work on the US – Mexico border and issues of faith and justice there.

Partnership with Hillel at Penn State provided the opportunity to join their community in their new Gutterman Family Center for Jewish Life for worship and Shabbat dinner on Sukkot in fall 2022. There are plans in process for an Interfaith Fellowship bringing students from various faith backgrounds together to explore what it means to be a “person of faith” on campus.

**Online Presence** – Through weekly listserv messages, Instagram and Facebook posts, and our website, Lutheran Campus Ministry helps inform and engage people online. Students, alumni, parents, and supporters find reflection and prayer resources, see updates on events and opportunities, and can request prayers or one-on-one conversation.

**We are grateful** – We truly are grateful that the Allegheny Synod sees the vital need for Lutheran Campus Ministry at Penn State and our work on campus. Reaching out to young adults to foster and support their faith is incredibly important. Providing a community that is centered on the Gospel of Jesus where questions are welcome, diversity is celebrated, and God’s love is truly lived, is both life-giving and life-altering.

As Lutheran Campus Ministry continues to adapt to decreased synodical support, clearly congregational gifts and individual donations are increasingly important.

Your financial contributions, volunteer time, leadership skills, student referrals, regular prayers, and other forms of support help us continue to build faith community and bring the good news of Jesus on campus.

We invite your continued prayers for campus ministry and for students as they face the unique challenges of university life and growing into adulthood. Please pray especially for those who will graduate this year and those who will arrive on campus for their first year this fall.

Thank you for the important partnership we share in this ministry.

Peace,

Alicia Anderson, Campus Minister  
Minister of Word and Service (ELCA Deacon)

**Website:** [lutheranpennstate.org](http://lutheranpennstate.org)

**Social Media on Facebook and Instagram:** [@lutheranpennstate](https://www.facebook.com/lutheranpennstate)

**Weekly listserv for students:** [Sign Up Here](#)

**Quarterly messages for friends of Lutheran Campus Ministry:**  
[Sign Up Here](#)

## **You Can Help Connect Students with Campus Ministry all across the country**

Lutheran Campus Ministry serves more than 250 schools across the country and we invite your help connecting students to campus ministry. [Use this link](#) to share names and contact information for students and campus ministry on or near campus will reach out to welcome them.

Visit the LuMin Network to find information about campus ministry at a particular school to share with students: [luminelca.org/ministries/](http://luminelca.org/ministries/).

*Lutheran Campus Ministry at Penn State is the ELCA's presence on the Penn State campus, supported through grants from the Upper Susquehanna Synod, Lower Susquehanna Synod, Allegheny Synod, ELCA Churchwide, plus individuals and congregations who are committed to fostering spiritual growth of students on campus which lays a groundwork for their lives after graduation.*



# Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Partners in Ministry,

For many of us, 2022 represented a moment of hope. After the darkness and isolation of the pandemic, life has begun to return to normal —offering new opportunities for connection and renewed commitment to serving our neighbor.

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has embraced this moment; in the past year, we have grown exponentially in both size and scale, expanding our capacity to welcome immigrants and refugees.

With the help of people of faith and communities like yours, we were able to...

- help **16,690 children** reunify with their families or find safe, loving foster homes
- resettle nearly **12,000 Afghans** forced to flee after Afghanistan fell under Taliban control
- welcome **3,169 refugees** from countries across the world
- assist **18,262 people** seeking safety from Central America and beyond

We continue to expand our slate of innovative programming to move beyond traditional resettlement into an empowered living experience that promotes not just surviving, but thriving.

That work reaches, too, into our media and advocacy footprint. You may have seen LIRS President and CEO Krish O'Mara Vignarajah on national news programs like *PBS Newshour*, *MSNBC*, *NPR*, the *BBC*, and others, advocating on behalf of our immigrant and refugee neighbors from Ukraine to Venezuela.

**"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."**

It remains a priority of ours in 2023 to combat the divisive, xenophobic rhetoric surrounding immigration and instead promote kindness, compassion, and inherent human dignity.



## Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

We invite you to join us in that work! This year, we will continue to offer opportunities to get involved in the work of welcome, including:

- advocating alongside LIRS and our newest neighbors in celebration of **World Refugee Day** on June 20th,
- sharing notes of welcome with children and families impacted by immigration detention through LIRS' **Hope for the Holidays™** program each fall,
- and equipping leaders and faith communities to create more just and welcoming communities through the **LIRS Ambassador Network** and **EMMAUS Network for Congregations** throughout the year.

Together, we can realize Jesus's ministry of compassion and welcome. We're so grateful for your support and look forward to working alongside you in the coming year.

In peace,

Chelsey Johnson, LIRS Mobilization and Faith Relations

***LIRS has also created a video specifically for Synods that showcases the impact of faith voices in our work. We hope this video might be helpful during portions of your Synod's gathering, like coffee breaks or pre-session times, or wherever you need! You can find the YouTube version here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUkg7OcMFjo>) or downloadable files here (<https://lirs.canto.com/s/MSFHS?viewIndex=0>).***

## 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 2022, MIF had 812 loans outstanding, totaling \$582.7 million. Investment obligations totaled \$559.4 million. With total assets of \$776.3 million and net assets of \$202.9 million at year-end 2022, MIF maintains a capital ratio of 26.14 percent—

**Mission Investment Fund**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.



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.

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### MIF at work in the Allegheny Synod (as of December 31, 2022):

- \$2,369,285 in Mission Investment Fund investment obligations

**For more information about MIF capabilities, please visit our website, [mif.elca.org](http://mif.elca.org) or contact your Regional Manager the Rev. Kent Peterson: 276-698-7970 [kent.peterson@elca.org](mailto:kent.peterson@elca.org)**

Mission Investment Fund  
8765 West Higgins Road  
Chicago, Illinois 60631  
Tel: 877-886-3522  
Web: [mif.elca.org](http://mif.elca.org)

## Portico Benefit Services

### Helping Members Refill Their Cup with Responsive Benefits

**PORTICO**<sup>®</sup>

Benefit Services | A Ministry of the ELCA

In 2022, Portico invited plan members to use their full range of benefits to care for themselves following the challenges and stress of the last few pandemic years. We continually seek cost-effective and nimble ways to support ELCA leaders, congregations, and organizations with high-quality, innovative, and stable benefits that promote holistic well-being.

- ELCA-Primary health benefits provided both in-person and virtual access to health care and wellness resources.
- Portico's Financial Planners and LSS of Minnesota helped ELCA Retirement Plan members navigate the weight of rising interest rates and market downturns through no- or low-cost financial planning, coaching services, and financial education.

In recent years, we've added several eligible ELCA- and full-communion-partner organizations to the Portico community. Growing the number of members we serve helps us manage costs and offer innovative benefits not typically available to smaller groups, affirming the importance of church together.



**The Rev. Jeff Thiemann**  
President & CEO

### Meeting the Need in 2022

**232**

#### Podcast Plays

Of the "Creative Approaches to Innovative Ministry" episode of Being Here last year.

**16,002**

#### Total Pounds Lost

Through the Omada prevention program since it launched in 2018, with 2,643 pounds lost in 2022.

**591**

#### Retired

With Portico's bundled benefits program — Congratulations to these faithful servants!

**1,132**

#### Webinar Views

Of the annual Retirement Readiness Series (live and on-demand).

**3,080**

#### Medical Visits via Text Based Care

Through 98point6®, our virtual primary health care service.

**9.75%**

#### Increase in Net Membership

Over the past 5 years.

**3,952**

#### Health & Fitness Classes Completed

On Portico's online Burnalong platform.

**Over \$2M**

#### Debt Paid Off

By plan members working with LSS of Minnesota financial counseling since the partnership began.

**86%**

#### Very Satisfied

With our Customer Care Center, certified for excellence since 2015.



## Sequanota Lutheran Conference Center & Camp

# Look at What YOU DID through

Sequanota Conference Center & Camp



# SEQUANOTA

SUMMER CAMP

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

CONFERENCE & RETREAT



## YOU

*Are Making a Difference*

The 2022 camper survey results are in!  
Here is a snapshot of the survey  
responses and the impact of camp!

### Campers surveyed agreed:

- 94% felt they were included.
- 91% felt they grew in their faith in God.
- 94% had fun.
- 94% felt safe.
- 91% tried something new.
- 84% practiced their faith habits.
- 85% didn't give up when challenged.
- 97% had a great week.

### How has your time at camp changed you?

- "I think it will help me be more aware of my actions."
- "It taught me how to pray so I can pray every night now."
- "to be more confident"
- "It made me realize that you don't have to be online all day."
- "I learned to talk more and not be on my phone"
- "It changed me by not being scared of people (like always)."
- "I think that I'm just more comfortable with myself."
- "Got to try different things like zip-line, tie dye, archery, etc."



## Summer Camp

# YOU Are Making a Difference

The American Camp Association, which Sequanota is an accredited member, just completed a five year study detailing the benefits of camp. Responsibility, appreciation for differences, relationship skills, an affinity for nature, and appreciation for living in the moment were the most frequent responses that campers and parents see as lifelong values of camp. Camp makes a difference for life!

<i>Campers</i>	2022	2021	2019	2018
On Site	341	301	308	298
Off site Day Camp	57	0	224	272
Hosted Youth Camps	298	133	238	266
Summer Totals	696	434	770	836



Bring a Friend Free & financial scholarships awarded



Congregations supported 61 kids to come to camp with direct financial assistance.



Swimming students taught!



Pool pass guests



Pastors & "everyday Christian" leaders served for a week with kids at camp.

Sequanota offers a holy place to connect with Christ, creation and community.

In living out our mission, Sequanota invites people from all walks of life into a community that:

- encourages inclusivity, balance and wholeness;
- creates a deeper respect for nature;
- fosters a further understanding of faith;
- enables time for reflection
- develops a greater sense of life together for the common good.



## How YOU DID IT

\$11,035

Scholarships given



## Leadership Development

23

Young adult summer staff members hired



Lifeguards trained

13



210

Community service hours earned during SaLT camp



Valuation of  
volunteer hours

\$66,110

## How YOU DID IT

### Volunteer Hours

	2022
Total	1478
Summer Camp	1103
Year Round	375

2022

1478

1103

375

38

Individuals volunteered





## Conference & Retreat



Campers and staff from the 1970s at the reunion weekend



### Conference & Retreat

# of groups

# of guest days

Hosted Ministry

37

3747

Program Ministry

13

705

2509

Meals prepared for retreat guests

### 2022 Programmed Ministries

New Year's Day Hike

Snow Camp

IGNITE Spring Youth Retreat

Synod Day at Camp

Spring Work Day

5 School Field Trips

75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion

IGNITE/PLUNGE Youth Retreat

Adult Day Study



75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion Campfire

What is the difference between Hosted and Program Ministry?

Hosted Ministry = groups that use Sequanota's facilities, but Sequanota is not part of planning the content of the event.

Program Ministry = events that Sequanota directly oversees, plans, and executes, often with the help of great volunteers.



Fresh coat of paint on the gate

## Facility Improvements

Sequanota's facilities team and volunteers from synod congregations (Grace, State College; Zion, Hollidaysburg, Messiah, New Centerville, St. Matthew, Martinsburg) continue to make renovations to the campus. The past two years have seen new bathroom facilities completed in Hillside C, Cabin 2 and the Director's Cabin. Cabins 4 & 6 received improvements to the interior and exterior of their cabins. As Sequanota strives to be

more inclusive we installed an ADA shower in room #11 of the Bowersox Center. We have also completed necessary improvements for the waste water treatment system throughout camp's property. We hope to finish the landscaping work behind the retreat center in late summer or early fall.



## Why Choose SEQUANOTA

People are hardwired for connection. From the time we are born, humans are constantly seeking loving, safe relationships of family and friends to support us. Whether you are a 12 year old or 60 year old, we all have the desire to belong and be valued for who we are.

Sequanota's programming has been focused both on the individual camper and the small group (cabin group) community for over 35+ years. The reason the past directors and the current staff have chosen this

model to run camp is because it provides a place where the individual can be valued and find a place of acceptance. Every week one of the first activities of camp is "get-to-know-you" games. These games provide campers and staff a time to share a little bit about their personal stories. They are great ways to share who we are. Telling our personal story and finding a place where we are valued for who we are is critical to one's confidence. In these times of creative expression, the Sequanota staff begin to form an inclusive, accepting small group, we the goal is to help every camper feel welcomed and belonging.

It is in the security of finding our place to belong, that we can then appreciate the differences of others. No camper, staff member or human being is like another. We are all a little different. From the music we listen to, to our favorite colors; from the things we are passionate about, to our personal identity; from our physical abilities, to our race or gender; we are all different. Small group camping gives us an opportunity to appreciate each other's differences. It is in the safety and acceptance of a small community that we can learn to trust one another.



Belonging, connection and community are at the heart of Sequanota's programs. These values have been taught and experienced by campers and guests for generations. They are the building blocks of healthy people and society. Sequanota believes that in providing this kind of living environment, we inspire campers and guests to live more fully into God's love that will guide us all to change the world for the better.

### Past directors gathered at the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion

Round Table (left to right):

Rev. Jack Timm (2003 - 2004)

Rev. George Mason (2007-2012)

Tom (& Peggy) Grote (1986 - 1992)

Rev. Nathan Pile (2013 - current)

Dick Peterson (1982 - 1986)

Front (left to right):

Beth Belsterling ( 1994 )

'Chelle Jellef ( 1993 )



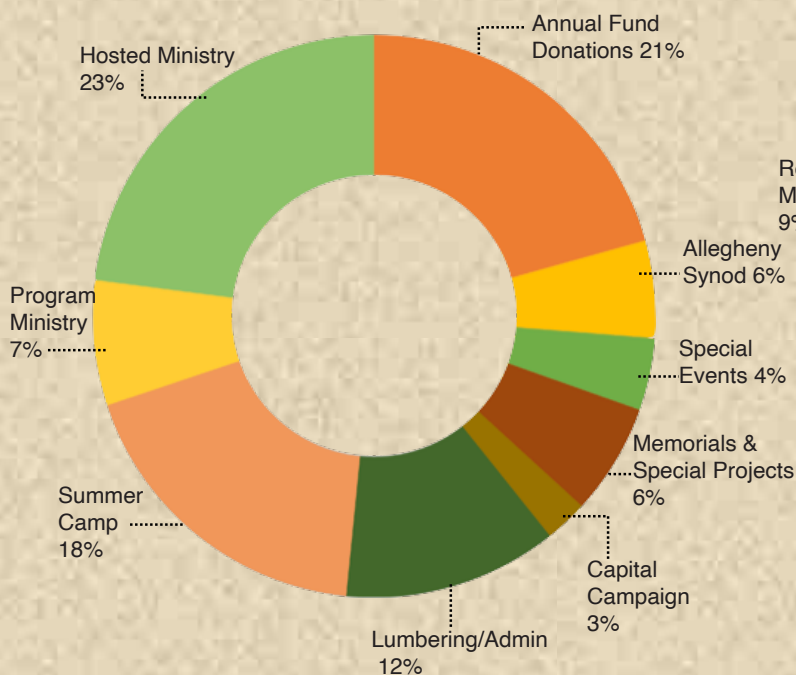


## How YOU DID IT

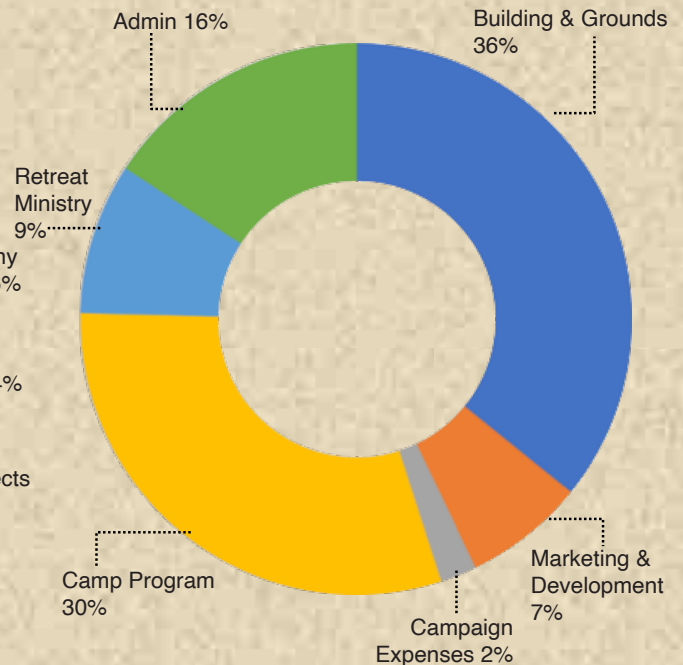
<i>Special Events</i>	Participants	\$ Raised
5K Fun Run	21	\$2,018
Spring Benefit Dinner	86	\$10,058
Mother's Day Buffet	305	\$4,536
Golf Benefit	40	\$4,212
Breakfast with Santa	135	\$1,020
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>\$21,844</b>



### Total Revenue - \$599,809



### Total Expenses - \$600,939



### Assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$	332,593
Pledges & Receivables		19,980
Other assets		7,218
Property and equipment, net		895,399
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,255,190</b>

### Liabilities

Notes payable	\$	247,125
Deferred revenue		3,950
Other Liabilities		20,345
<b>Equity</b>		<b>983,770</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Equity</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,255,190</b>

Note: The 2022 audited financials will be available after September 2023.

## Have you noticed the trees?

Sequanota is 76 years old. Our forests are around 85-90 years old. The timber stand on the property needed some age diversity. The forest is made up of many trees about the same size and age. The forest was beginning to thin the trees naturally,



Trees planted up near the old gas wells on Intergenerational Synod Day

but the Sequanota Board decided to work with a professional forestry team and use this time of natural selection to our advantage and create some funds for Sequanota's ministry and property maintenance. We recently completed several selective cuts around camp's property in an effort to make main camp and trail life safer.

We also created some natural habitat for our wildlife neighbors while also protecting our dominate Oak tree species. This work has been slow and intentional. The Board of Directors and staff take very seriously our responsibility to care for these sacred woods and the streams that flow through this holy hillside. Our recent work will make the forest and camp healthier for years to come.



Trees planted near BC during confirmation camp

## How YOU DID IT Kindle Monthly Giving Club



**BECOME A KINDLE CLUB MEMBER**

In 2020 we began encouraging folks to become members of Kindle Monthly Giving Club. KINDLE monthly partners ignite our ministry to serve in new ways. When you give though monthly gifts, you provide regular and consistent income to help Sequanota kindle the faith of our campers and guests.



Monthly gifts ranged from \$10 - \$250

## Thrivent Action Teams

Thrivent Financial offers a program to encourage community involvement by its members. Members can organize an "Action Team" for a service project, a fundraiser, or an educational event and Thrivent will provide \$250 in "seed money." In 2022 the Sequanota community was the beneficiary of 5 Action Teams.

Handicap Bathroom Remodel

Garden Planting

Bowersox Center Landscaping

Cabin Renovation

Breakfast with Santa

If you are a Thrivent member, please let us know and we will help you put a team together. Teams can be organized for fundraisers, service projects, or education.



Call the office to let us help you set up an Action Team. (814)629-6627.



## Founders' Fires Giving Tiers

2022 gifts to the Annual Fund,  
Benefits, and scholarship funds



+ Denotes Kindle Club Members

### Founders:

\$1000+

Lisa Bahr and Kevin Shock  
Pamela Baker  
Kirby and Susan Barclay +  
Susan Baughman +  
Benscreek Lutheran Church  
Elda Burket  
Dennis and Evelyn Calhoun  
Christ Lutheran, Johnstown  
Christ Lutheran, Dubois  
Samuel and Fern Clapper  
Faith United Lutheran Church  
Gary and Jackie Gable  
Sandy and Denny Hall  
Scott Klimke and Julia Sprenkle  
Kathy Landis +  
Dave and Cindy Liska  
Traci Marriott +  
Bill and Holly Marriott +  
John and Pam Maurer  
Dennis Merringer  
Jane and Mark Nicholson  
John and Gail Palko  
Greg and Barb Pile  
Nathan and Angie Pile +  
Colleen Reeves  
George and Joanna Rudisill  
Michael and Marcia Satryan  
Bishop Paula Schmitt  
Susan Sedory  
Marvin and Jeanie Shaffer  
Ruby Shaw  
St. Luke's Lutheran Church  
St. Matthew Lutheran Church  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Stoystown Tank and Steel Co.  
Eva Strang  
Trinity Lutheran, Hooversville  
Trinity Lutheran, Somerset  
Barbara Wachter  
The Law Office of Megan E. Will  
Greg and Amy Will  
Larry Mazer and Susan Winger +  
Joy Zimmerman  
Zion Lutheran, Hollidaysburg

## Luther League:

\$500 - \$999

Kim Ankeny  
Vicki Beilfuss  
Kevin and Melody Berg  
Dan and Sharon Berkebile  
Kevin Borchert  
Brian Coltin  
Dan and Fran Decker  
Dan and Geeg Eash +  
Megan and Ben Flower  
Friedens Lutheran Church  
Debra Garland +  
Michael and Staci Gaunt  
Grace Lutheran, State College  
Grace Lutheran, Johnstown  
Rev. Edward Harshbarger  
Jim and Ginny Hockensmith  
Bruce and Wilma Horner  
Raeanne and Sean Knull  
Donald F. Koontz  
Charlie and Gail Korn  
Laurel Trinity Lutheran Church  
Lavansville/Bakersville Parish  
Bonnie Leibfreid  
M. J. Miller Family Agricultural Heritage Fund  
George and Ardelle Mason +  
1st Summit Bank  
Stan and Deb McQuaide  
Carl and Nancy Miller  
Tom and Jill Mitchell +  
Mt. Calvary Lutheran, Johnstown  
Randy and Linda Musser  
David Myers  
Jeff Nider  
Larry and Allison Olson  
Will and Elisa Osman  
Major Builders Inc.  
Barbera Law  
St. Mark Lutheran, Pleasant Gap  
Robert & Linda McElroy Thomas  
Stacy and Paul Wheeler  
Cindy Winger  
Zion Lutheran, Johnstown

## Council Fire:

\$250 - \$499

Aaronsburg Salem Lutheran  
David Andrews  
Charlotte Aungst  
Rick and Tina Barron  
Bob & Beth Belsterling  
Richard Braun  
Christ Casebeer Lutheran  
John Conklin & Maria Esposito  
Scott and Carol Custead  
Jane and Jim Fagans  
Jim & Sandra Fogle  
Jennifer Hollinger  
Monica and Tim Knauss  
Sarah and Jim Kucherer  
Tara McKenzie  
Troy Miller  
Moxham Lutheran  
Mt. Zion Lutheran, Glasgow  
Andrea Paul  
Erin and Shane Peterson +  
Dick and Sharon Peterson +  
Kathy and Bob Reed  
Gloria Reed  
Dave and Theresa Shoemaker  
Elaine Smith  
Kristen and William Snyder  
St. John Lutheran, Centre Hall  
St. John Lutheran, Williamsburg  
St. Paul's Lutheran, Buckstown  
Mrs. Caryl Swanson  
Brooke and Jonathan Thiele  
Ed and Sue Vorhauer  
Florence Warfel  
Valerie and Wayne Weaver  
Weaver Services LLC  
Hanna Weimer +  
Christ Lutheran, Buffalo Mills  
Pine Hall Lutheran  
St. James Lutheran, Huntingdon  
Zion Hoffman Lutheran, Acosta

## Framing Faith for the Future 2022 Donations & Pledges

Vicki Beilfuss  
Paul and Collette Beuther  
Tony & Susan Buda  
Robert and Patricia Byers  
Lisa Byers  
Matthew Campbell  
James & Ellen Campbell  
John & Donna Diercks  
Tom Drake  
Theresa Facini

Vicki Sue Golemboski  
Grace Lutheran, State College  
Ann & William Gray  
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Holly Jo Stoltzfus  
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Anne Whitney  
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James Bassette +  
Gillian Benton  
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Ann and Randy Ferry  
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Sandy Griffith  
William and Nancy Grove  
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Horace and Connie Hubbard  
Ryan and Erin Knepper  
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Christy Lesnevich +  
Lois Miller  
Olanta Lutheran Church  
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Kellie Schwake +  
Doug and Linda Shrader  
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Barb Timm  
Ben and Marie Waltermire  
Joel and Kristine Weaver  
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Gary and Amy Weimer

## Outpost: \$100 - \$174

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Bob and Bev Anderson  
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Daniel Weimer +  
Dana and Dennis Weimer  
James and Rebecca West  
Hattie Williams  
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## Contributions up to \$99

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Faith Lutheran Church  
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## Thrivent Choice Dollar Donations for 2022 = \$5,463

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Daniel Weimer  
Robert & Susan Will  
Cheryl Zwick



## Faith-informed Learning & Community

*June 22-25, 2023*

We are excited to invite you to Sequanota's Well Festival, an event that celebrates creation, wellness, social justice, and community. This unique festival offers a range of activities and events that promote physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, as well as an opportunity to enjoy the beautiful surroundings of Sequanota.

The Well Festival will take place on June 22-25 at Sequanota, and we would love to have you join us. We strive to live authentically as God's people. Over the generations, people have found that it is easier to live and strive when we do it together. This is what the Well Festival is all about - living, learning, and loving together.

A key component of the event is to simply provide open space for participants to engage one another. The idea is for spiritual explorers to gather to find community and support as we engage in a wide range of conversations.

The festival is designed to offer different "tents" or learning experiences to provide opportunities for conversation. Maybe the conversation is new to you, or maybe you are a seasoned veteran on a topic, but this weekend is curated to provide the space to discuss and explore together.

For more information and to register, visit our website: [www.sequanota.com/well](http://www.sequanota.com/well)

## "Tents" (aka Learning Areas)

### Environment

- Naturalist hike & technology
- Feeding ourselves and our neighbors
- Hunting and ethics
- Climate change and faith

### Economics, Justice & Advocacy

- Gender & Sexuality 101
- Personal finance planning & stewardship
- Advocacy and living the economic life
- Shop Local - does it matter?

### Food & Health

- Mental Health
- Sports and faith
- Kids and Gardens
- The culture of greatness and how it affects our lives

### Practical Theology

- Welcome in the congregation
- Finding your way in faith as a young adult
- Social media and evangelism
- Faith & Politics

### Devotional/Spiritual Life

- Yoga
- Practicing Journaling
- Walking a Prayer Labyrinth
- Making a Prayer Shawl

### Arts & Media

- Basket weaving
- Calligraphy
- Accessible parish art
- Painting and crafts

### Music

- Faith and sound workshop
- Hymn sing along
- Exploring the new All Creation Sings hymn book
- Live Band performances

### Open Space

This is a designated tent area that will always be open to continue a conversation. Participants can share a topic they would like to talk about or continue a topic from earlier in the event. The space is designed to make an open space for continued conversation.



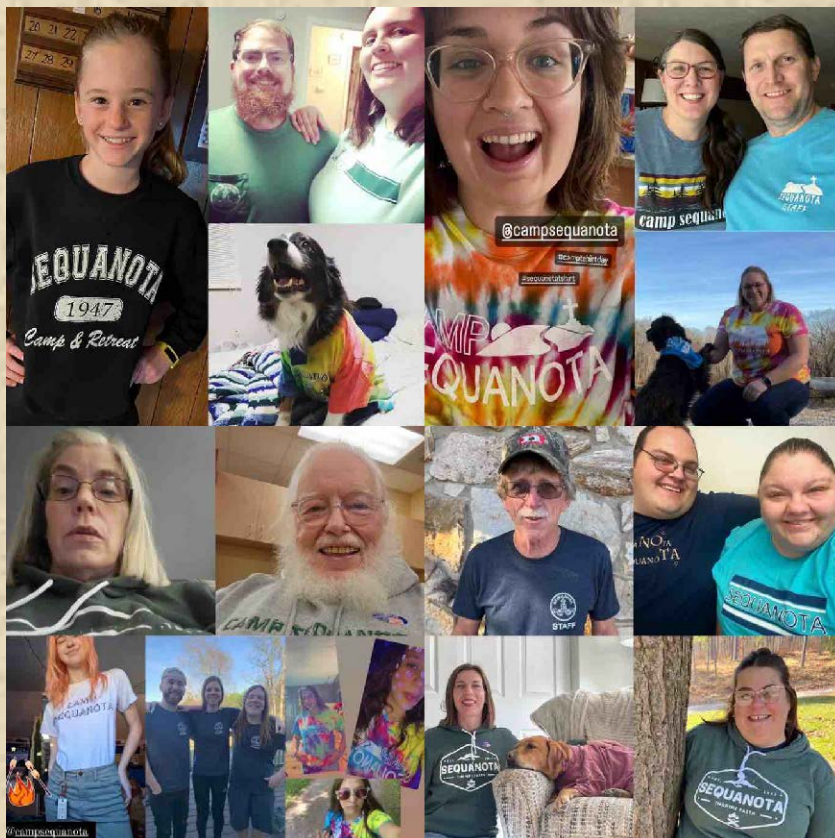


**SEQUANOTA**  
Lutheran Conference Center & Camp  
PO Box 245  
Jennerstown, PA 15547

Contact us:  
web: [www.sequanota.com](http://www.sequanota.com)  
Phone: (814) 629-6627  
email: [contact@sequanota.com](mailto:contact@sequanota.com)



*Thank YOU! Thank YOU! Thank YOU!*



We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

~ 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

### Looking forward in 2023

May 6	Spring Work Day
May 14	Mother's Day Banquet
June - Aug	SUMMER CAMP
June 22-25	WELL FESTIVAL
Aug 21	Golf Benefit
Sept 22	Trail Clean Up Weekend
Sept 23-24	IGNITE/PLUNGE - Retreat
Oct 12	Adult Day Bible Study
Dec 2	Breakfast with Santa
Dec 8-10	Synod Youth Gathering



# United Lutheran Seminary

## *Unifying, Learning, Serving*

United Lutheran Seminary continues to build and sustain an affirming and diverse learning community of faithful, well-educated leaders skilled at guiding grace-filled encounters.

Deeply rooted in the history of Lutheranism within Christianity, we witness to and participate in the work of God in the world through spiritual leadership and accompaniment, public advocacy, impactful worship, and care of neighbor.

In three years, we will be observing the bicentennial of our origins when Samuel Simon Schmucker founded the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg in part because its bucolic setting would ensure a place of study and contemplation free from the distractions of the world. Of course, our national narrative put an abrupt end to that concept in 1863, and shortly thereafter C.P. Krauth felt that the center of Lutheran theological learning would be better off in the growing city of Philadelphia. After 154 years and several failed attempts, the two campuses were re-united under the banner of United. This word is a lofty aspirational sentiment, given the fractious world in which we find ourselves.

The church of Christ is struggling to be seen against a backdrop of political drama and escalating tensions over our history, our climate, and our future. Nevertheless, it is a good time to be the church. It is a good time to be United under the banner of God's intended formation for all of us. The seminary has adapted quickly to the world emerging from Covid, providing new technologies and learning platforms that make theological education accessible to people as far away as Palestine, Ghana, and Myanmar. No longer bound by archaic notions of geographical limitations, our two campuses have broken down old barriers and assumptions, creating a new campus that is both geographical and without boundaries, offering our students to gather in person and virtually. Our faculty is working to provide learning opportunities in Guatemala, Germany, Palestine, and India.



In the past year we have dedicated a great deal of time and resources to developing a Strategic Plan for the seminary which gives us a wide-angle view of future aspirations to fulfill the needs of a changing church and world. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of the ELCA Mission Investment

Fund and support from your synod, we will continue to offer degree programs at little or no cost to the student, allowing a higher ed. degree without crippling educational loan debt. In addition, our endowment allows us to apply funding to a new and exciting horizon of learning opportunities for rostered and lay folks.

The Strategic Plan recognizes that learning and formation never end. Our faith narrative is never fully formed. Sanctification is a life-long process full of fits and starts, mountaintops and valleys. This is the reason United Lutheran Seminary will continue to focus on building a lifelong community of learning through Kindling Faith, the Center for Sabbath Rest and Formation. Already in its first year of existence, Kindling Faith has created over sixty opportunities for learning across a wide range of topics, demographics, and learning platforms. While much of the programming takes place in a virtual setting, multi-day events take place on both United campuses, offering alums and lay folk the opportunity to spend time in a place apart where they can engage in learning and fellowship with like-minded colleagues and friends. Kindling Faith has a learning opportunity for you—simply go to [uls.edu](http://uls.edu) and click on “Learn” to see what we are offering.

Thank you for walking with us on this portion of our common journey. In the year ahead, I hope to see and meet more of you on the territory of your synod, on zoom, or on one of our beautiful historic campuses. Peace be with you.

Rev. Dr. R. Guy Erwin, *Seminary President*