



Allegheny Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Section Three

Reports

Reports of the Bishop & Staff:

Report of the Interim Bishop:

Grace and Peace be with you... A report from your Interim Bishop.

Do you remember what you were doing in August of 2024? I was in my kitchen canning tomato juice when a call came on my cell phone. The name on the screen was “Bishop Eaton.” Wow, how nice that the Presiding Bishop is calling me. Ah..., why is the Presiding Bishop calling me? And so, our journey together began.

Shortly after that phone call, Vice President Ann Ferry presented my name to the synod council as Bishop Eaton’s recommendation to serve as Interim Bishop for the Allegheny Synod. Their vote was yes, and I joined the council briefly for their September 2024 meeting where we discussed the work ahead of us, and I started serving in October.

It was during that September meeting that the joint decision was made to postpone our 2025 Synod Assembly until the fall of the year. The reason behind this decision came from a conversation that raised the need for a time of healing and reconciliation to take place across the synod, along with time to properly prepare for the election of a new bishop to serve the Allegheny Synod.

To say that the synod was in transition when I arrived, is putting it lightly. Having just moved into the Hollidaysburg Lutheran Home, the synod office setting was new and still in the process of settling in. Michelle was still trying to figure out where to put things, while continuing to clear out the old office. Pr. Kevin Shock, as Assistant to the Bishop, had more leadership responsibilities placed upon him. Sue Ellen Spotts, our Director for Evangelical Mission, was fully engaged in a new conversation with ten congregations in the Clearfield Conference as they discerned how they might do ministry together. Pr. John Kratz, Director for the Go Tell It IN The Mountain initiative, had just moved into the synod office to begin his role. And then I walked in, a new face, a new voice, and a new style of leadership.

I realize that annual reports, such as this one, typically list the year of events since the previous synod assembly. Allow me to skip that formality and simply say this: Over the past year this synod has graciously been in conversation and in discernment to prepare for the future of this synod, and I am grateful for the willingness from so many to do this together.

First step was to establish a Transition Team to guide the processes of healing and preparing for a bishop’s election. In January, all rostered leaders of the synod gathered for a day of conversation at Camp Sequanota. The importance of collegiality was raised, ideas were shared and recorded, fellowship was enjoyed, and we worshiped together. In the spring months, all six of our conferences met to discuss the needs of the synod and the role and expectations of a bishop who would serve this synod. Again, information about the synod was provided, ideas were shared and recorded, and we celebrated that more folks were in attendance for these gatherings than typically in the past. People were showing up! And people were engaged.

Report of the Interim Bishop (continued):

Since then, so many more conversations have taken place between synod council, conference deans, and synod staff. We've worked on reconnecting and rebuilding relationships across the synod territory. We've revisited the structure of our committees and are working on reactivating ministries of this synod. We've looked for better ways to connect, communicate, and serve folks across the synod. We've added events to the calendar to empower preaching, empower leadership, and strengthen our relationship with God, with each other, and our communities. We've done this work together, the synod as a whole.

Now, there have been struggles along the way, disappointments, and challenging conversations. Things like that will always exist in ministry. But we cannot allow those things to weigh us down to the point where we forget to focus on how and where God is leading us in service to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must remember that God, our loving God, is a God of abundance who provides us with all that is needed to answer the call to discipleship. Look around and see God's abundance. You'll find it in the face of a sister or brother in Christ and in the communities in which we live.

As I look around this synod, I see great potential, I truly do. Sometimes, all it takes is a word of encouragement, an invitation, a little hospitality, and a smile. It is about our relationships with each other and fostering the positive rather than the negative. It is about being there for each other, showing up for the fun and fellowship, as well as the hard work. It is about living Christ-like in what we say and what we do. I pray that you also see the potential around you and the potential of the ministries we share in this synod and beyond.

I give thanks to God for that phone call from Bishop Eaton. I give thanks to the members of synod council for placing their trust and faith in me. I give thanks for the supportive and gifted synod staff with whom I've had the pleasure of serving. I give thanks for the colleagues and leaders across this synod who have extended their welcome to me and showed up when asked. And I give thanks for Camp Sequanota, the place where I heard the call to ministry and where room #12 has provided a place to lay my head while I travel through the hills and valleys of the synod's territory. It has been my humble honor to "come back home" and serve this beautifully rural, down home and loving Allegheny Synod.

Shalom
Bishop Barb Collins

Report of the Assistant to the Bishop:

I want to begin with a word of thanks to my colleagues. Michelle's steady presence in the Office of the Bishop has brought an institutional knowledge that is necessary in a time of transition. Sue Ellen has taken the lead in facilitating congregations who are discerning their future and the possibility of cooperative ministry. John's leadership has both promoted the gift of lay worship leaders to our ministry and established high standards and consistency in the program. Bishop Collins has taught us the importance of rebuilding relationship and exhibited faithful presence in being an agent of healing and in uniting us in common mission. I am grateful for each of them and the stability they have brought to the Office during this transition, even as we have worked to build ministry in the Allegheny Synod.

I confess that I am weary of transition. From splitting DEM and Assistant duties to moving to a full-time Assistant to the resignation of a Bishop and the workload that came to my desk, each year of my ministry in this Office has come with new responsibilities and challenges. In this past year I have struggled with my sense of call to this Office, and there have even been times when I have struggled with my sense of call to the church in general. Yet I have witnessed signs of hope and new life over the last six months. Relationships are being rebuilt; people are taking more ownership in ministry and showing more interest in living as disciples of Jesus. Although many days the weariness still creeps in, I am beginning to feel more hopeful about our ministry and life together than I previously have in this Office.

While this past year has mostly been filled with day-to-day administrative tasks in this Office there has been movement in three major areas.

First, the Candidacy Committee has engaged in much work to build up that ministry in our Synod. I have worked with the committee chairperson, the Rev. Sharon Erb, along with Bp. Collins, our ELCA regional candidacy manager, and seminary representatives to ensure that we are serving our candidates as best we can. As of the writing of this report, we have two candidates who have been approved for ordination and are awaiting calls, four candidates who are at various stages of formation, and two people who have begun seminary and are preparing to be entranced into the process. This formation work takes a fair amount of time and energy and a large amount of paperwork, but it is worth the effort to raise up well-formed leaders for the church from our Synod.

Second, I have worked with several congregations, councils, and call committees who are at various stages of transition in their ministry. Some are beginning the process to call new pastors, and some have been in the process for years now. The landscape of mobility in the church is completely different than it was 5 years ago. There are fewer candidates and fewer people looking to move between synods, but we are finding ways together to uphold the ministries that are happening throughout our Synod.

Report of the Assistant to the Bishop (*continued*):

Finally, we are nearing the end of a period, I pray, of congregations disaffiliating from the ELCA. During my time in this Office, I have in varying degrees been involved with eight different congregations who were exploring disaffiliation. A couple of those congregations had realized that their affiliation with the Allegheny Synod was no longer fitting with their ministries and were kind and cordial throughout the process. Most others were not. Vulnerable congregations are susceptible to propaganda from other church bodies and are quick to believe divisive rhetoric in the political and church worlds. Not only did I find it necessary to learn much more about our governing documents and the work of Churchwide committees, but I also needed to learn the false information that was being spread mostly by people affiliated with other Lutheran church bodies. I learned to be factual with my presentations, especially as people tend to believe what they want to believe, and I learned that how we share information in relationship with one another is more important than what information we are sharing. Many of those congregations chose to disaffiliate. Although doing so is probably better for them and for us, it does not come without pain. For the congregations who have stayed, they will spend significant time healing from the division and hurt that infiltrated them. Join me in prayer for all these congregations and for an end to the division that has poisoned the church and distracted us from our mission.

It helps me to begin with gratitude in this report to remember why I have been called to serve here and the wonderful servants with whom I serve. It is easy for me to focus on the difficulties of ministry and administration in my role, but I know that God is calling us toward a better future. May it be so among us.

In the peace of Christ,
The Rev. Kevin T. Shock
Assistant to the Bishop

Report of the Director of Evangelical Mission:

In my report for last year's assembly, I admitted that what excites me as your DEM is exploring with you the ways you live into your calling as Christ's people to share Christ's love in the world, even as we face the challenges of changes in our communities and congregations. Throughout this year, in conversations at Bishop's Convocation, the rostered leaders gathering, and Tend Festival you shared what this looks like day to day, week to week; where you feel uplifted, where you need support.

I have also had the opportunity to work alongside you as you explore new partnerships and new leadership possibilities in Clearfield Conference and with Laurel Mountain Lutherans. Some of the congregations of the Nittany Conference recently participated in a mission workshop to share their mission and consider ways to support or collaborate with each other.

In response to Christ's call to care for "the least of these," many of you reach out to your neighbors through feeding ministries. To coordinate and support each other in this mission, we have created a Synod Hunger Team. You can read more about this, including how to get involved, in its own report in the assembly materials.

As you continue to explore how to live out your baptism as individuals and congregations, I continue to explore with colleagues across the ELCA (especially those who also serve rural and small town congregations) how to adapt to the changes and challenges of being Church today.

Together we are finding new paths to faithfulness as God's people, to bringing love and grace to a world in need of healing and hope. As we continue this exploration, I repeat the questions and suggestions I posed in a recent article in *The Lutheran Letter*:

What are the measures you are using for vitality in your congregation? How are you taking the grace of God into your community in new ways, to reach people who need to experience it? I'd like to suggest that, when you discuss the vitality of your congregation, try doing the following:

- Tell stories, not just stats – where have you been sharing Christ's love in the world?
- Track spiritual growth, not just attendance – how are the members of your congregation growing in their faith; how are you studying and praying together?
- Focus on community engagement – cultivate relationships in your ministries instead of counting heads.
- Practice experimental faithfulness – celebrate trying new ways of reaching out, not just what succeeds.

Consider that we do not know the number of people Jesus reached in his ministry. What we know are the stories of how people were healed, their lives transformed. I challenge you to start your meetings and other gatherings with stories of where you and others are experiencing the love of Christ. Use that collection of stories to measure how the church is growing in your community.

And, if you would like a partner in this exploration, please reach out. I am ready to join you, to support you in your journey.

In Christ,
Sue Ellen

Report of the Director of the Go Tell It In the Mountains Initiative:

What is the “Go Tell It IN the Mountains Initiative”?

The Allegheny, Northwest Pennsylvania and Upper Susquehanna Synods of the ELCA were blessed to receive a grant in 2024 from the Lilly Endowment. This 1.25-million-dollar grant formed our tri-synod Initiative called Go Tell It IN the Mountains. These grant funds are to be used in full by December 31st, 2029.



There are 3 primary goals of the Go Tell It Initiative. First is that we want to ensure that our present preachers, both clergy and lay, are provided best options to aid them in becoming compelling preachers. Regularly scheduled training events, on site in our region and via zoom, help make this a reality.

Second, we want to recruit and train additional preachers by resourcing people called to preach with the best tools and training available. If you, or anyone you know, are sensing a call to

preach, please contact the Synod Office so that we may send you full information as to the next steps.

Third, we want to assist every person worshipping in our congregations to hear and respond to the Gospel message in their daily lives. A great resource to use as a personal or group study is “I Will” by Thom Rainer and Will Willimon’s book “Listeners Dare.”

The Go Tell It IN the Mountains Initiative is driven by people volunteering their time and talents to reach the desired goals. The whole of the Initiative is overseen by the Steering Committee which is chaired by Bishop Emeritus Greg Pile along with volunteer representatives from each Synod and numerous task forces. Pastor Schul serves on the Steering Committee.

Rev. John Kratz was hired by the Steering Committee, and he began his role on September 1, 2024, as the Director of the Initiative. His office is located within the Allegheny Synod office area.

Through the training options and our intentional support of one another we hope that compelling preaching will be our standard of excellence in preaching.

Events Sponsored by the Go Tell It In the Mountains Initiative include:

Small Group Preachers Training Cohorts

Large Group Preachers Training Cohort

Authorized Lay Worship Leaders Fellowship Meetings: October 26th and January 25th

Preachers Training Event: November 8th with Bishop Craig Satterlee

Mission Insite Demographic Studies for EACH congregation

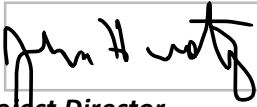

Assistance to purchase books of Listeners Dare by Will Willimon or I Will by Thom Rainer for church council studies

Digital Library of Preachers tools through Go Tell It IN the Mountains website

For full details on any of the above or to keep current on the Go Tell It IN the Mountains Initiative, email Director Kratz. You can ask questions or request to be added to the mass email updates. Rev. John Kratz at Director@alleghenysynod.com.

Finance Report for the Go Tell It In the Mountains Initiative:

Allegheny Synod ELCA
Grant No. 2023 1663
Financial Report as of 12/31/2024

Budget Categories	Revised Budget	For Period 01/01/24-12/31/24	Cumulative	Grant Balance
INCOME				
Lilly Endowment Grant	1,250,000	1,250,000	1,250,000	-
Other Funding Sources	121,000	68,098	68,098	52,902
TOTAL INCOME	1,371,000	1,318,098	1,318,098	52,902
EXPENSES				
Personnel	747,276	34,825	34,825	712,451
Equipment and Office	36,600	9,281	9,281	26,719
Travel	73,950	1,692	1,692	72,258
Consultants	297,875	43,178	43,178	254,697
Program Digital Library	21,500	765	765	20,735
Program Activities	178,200	1,510	1,510	176,690
				-
Subtotal Expenses	1,355,401	91,251	91,251	1,263,550
Indirect Costs	15,599	3,134	3,134	12,865
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,371,000	94,385	94,385	1,276,415
CURRENT CASH BALANCE				1,223,713
Lilly Endowment Grant Funds Cash Balance				
<div> <div>  </div> <div>  </div> </div>				
Project Director				Finance Director

Reports of Synod Council:

Report of the Vice President, Ann Ferry:

A year of transition. A year of rejuvenating the caring spirit of the Allegheny Synod. A year of getting to know each other and sharing our hopes and dreams of how to serve Jesus and our neighbors!

We bid former Bishop Lebo farewell as she began the next part of her ministry. We have welcomed retired Bishop Barbara Collins back to our synod. (Spoiler alert! She grew up in Hollidaysburg). Thank you to Bishop Eaton for your wisdom of sending Bishop Barb and her gifts to us!

The Synod Council has been working alongside Bishop Barb, Assistant to the Bishop Kevin Shock and DEM SueEllen Spotts to reconnect all of us to our mission. Our emphasis has been on rebuilding relationships. Between clergy, between clergy and lay people, between people in the conferences and pews.

We have had two multi day rostered leader gatherings to talk and dream and look forward to what we can do together. Each conference has met twice to connect the members of the Synod Office with the laity. All of this is so we can see and hear what is happening and how we can all work together.

Your synod council has worked hard at visioning and still doing the work of the ELCA and our synod. A rather thankless job, but I am grateful to each of you for putting in the work! So much great discussion that n e e d e d to b e shared. S o m u c h sharing of our dreams and fears.

I am so very grateful that I could attend the churchwide assembly in Phoenix in July. (So hot. You cannot tell me dry heat is not hot..)

Report of the Secretary:

Blessings and peace to you, my siblings in Christ,

In my first year of serving as the Synod Council Secretary, I have learned much and know there is still more to learn. Taking minutes and recording the actions of the council are important responsibilities, but I have also come to see that this role is about more than documentation. It is about helping ensure that the work of the Synod Council is carried out with accountability, transparency, and faithfulness to our shared mission in Christ.

This past year, the council has prayerfully considered matters such as visioning the roles and responsibilities needed for the Office of the Bishop, particularly as we prepare for the call and election of a new Synodical Bishop. We have also updated accounting titles and descriptions to align with the Synod's needs and goals, and we transitioned our insurance coverage to Brotherhood Mutual. Each of these decisions reflects our desire to be good stewards of the resources and opportunities God has entrusted to us.

I am grateful for the partnership of Interim Bishop Barbara Collins, the synod staff, and my fellow council members. Their wisdom, encouragement, and commitment to the gospel make this work a joy. I also thank you, the members of the assembly, for entrusting me with this role and for your ongoing prayers and support.

It is an honor to serve Christ's church in this way. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide us as we seek to be the body of Christ together for the sake of the world.

In Christ,
Rev. Rebecca Horn
Secretary, Allegheny Synod Council
Pastor, St. Luke Lutheran Church, Centre Hall, PA

Allegheny Synod Constitution Updates from the ELCA Churchwide Assembly 2025:

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION FOR SYNODS AS APPROVED BY THE 2025 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

Official Notice of Certification of Required Provisions and Notice of Recommended Provisions

Prepared by the Office of the Secretary
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
August 2025

Following is official notification of amendments to the *Constitution for Synods* that were approved by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. Additions are underlined; deletions are ~~struck through~~; all changes are highlighted.

Provisions within the *Constitution for Synods* are of two types:

- **Required Provisions:** Sections of the *Constitution for Synods* marked by a dagger [†] are required provisions. These sections, including constitutional provisions and bylaws, must be used without alteration or amendment of the text in any manner (i.e., neither additions nor deletions are permissible). In accordance with provision †S18.11., amendments to required provisions in the *Constitution for Synods* passed by the Churchwide Assembly are automatically incorporated into the constitutions of individual synods upon formal certification by the secretary of this church.
- **Non-Required Provisions:** Sections of the *Constitution for Synods* not marked by a dagger are non-required provisions. These provisions represent wording recommended by the Churchwide Assembly. In accordance with provision †S18.12., whenever the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially informs synods that the Churchwide Assembly has amended non-required provisions within the *Constitution for Synods*, the synod constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the Synod Assembly. An amendment that is identical to a provision of the *Constitution for Synods* shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption by the synod; presentation at a prior Synod Assembly is not required in the case of recommended provisions. The Church Council, through the secretary of this church, shall be given prompt notification of any changes to the synod constitution.

For convenience, in this document the amendments to the *Constitution for Synods* approved by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly are organized into four sections:

1. *Amendments to Required Provisions.* These provisions are presented in Section 1, and are to be entered into your synod's constitution for immediate effect.
2. The 2025 Churchwide Assembly approved the redesignation of one provision from non-required to required. This provision is presented in Section 2. It must now be entered into each synod's constitution. If it already is part of a synod's constitution, it must now be marked as "required."
3. The 2025 Churchwide Assembly approved the redesignation of three provisions from required to non-required. These provisions are presented in Section 3. If a synod desires to eliminate these provisions, there must be a majority vote by the synod assembly to amend the synod's constitution. Note also that there is a wording change to one of these provisions. If the synod maintains this provision, the wording change may be incorporated, and would require a majority vote.
4. *Amendments to Non-Required Provisions.* These provisions are presented in Section 4.

The Office of the Secretary would like to express gratitude for your faithful attention to your synod's constitution!

Allegheny Synod Constitution Updates from the ELCA Churchwide Assembly 2025 (*continued*):

Section 1: Amendments to Required Provisions

Chapter 6.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

†S6.04.02. 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 members of historically underrepresented groups, in addition to the 10 percent representation of persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English in †S6.04. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal.

Chapter 7.

SYNOD ASSEMBLY

†S7.21. The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:

....

- b. Lay voting members shall be elected by each congregation or its council as follows: A minimum of one lay member elected by from each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected by from each congregation with 175 or more baptized members related to this synod, typically one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men.

†S7.21.02. If a special Synod Assembly is called and voting members at the previous assembly are unable to serve as voting members, where permitted by state law, the congregation through the Congregation Council or its council may elect new members who shall continue to serve until the next regular Synod Assembly.

†S7.25. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution or in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, each voting member of the Synod Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod.

Chapter 8.

OFFICERS

†S8.21. The vice president shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The vice president shall be a layperson. The vice president shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod. The vice president shall not receive a salary for the performance of the duties of the office.

†S8.31. The secretary shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The secretary shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod. The secretary may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

†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 or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod. The treasurer may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

†S8.51. The terms of office of the officers of this synod shall be as follows:

....

- c. The treasurer of this synod shall be [elected] [appointed] [elected or appointed] to a term of ____ years and may be [re-elected] [reappointed] [re-elected or reappointed]. The treasurer shall serve until a successor takes office.

†S8.52. The terms of the officers shall begin on the first day of [(name of month)] [(the ordinal number) month] following election or, in special circumstances, at a time designated by the Synod Council.

†S8.53. Each officer shall be a voting member in a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod, except that the bishop need not be a member of a congregation of this synod at the time of election.

Allegheny Synod Constitution Updates from the ELCA Churchwide Assembly 2025 (*continued*):

Chapter 10. SYNOD COUNCIL

- †S10.01. The Synod Council, consisting of the four officers of the synod, and 10 to 24 other members, and at least one young adult youth and with a goal of at least one young adult youth, shall be elected by the Synod Assembly.
- Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshipping community of this synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise provided shall be specified in the bylaws. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.

Chapter 11. COMMITTEES (names of other organizational units)

- †S11.01. There shall be an Executive Committee, a Consultation Committee, a Committee on Discipline, a Mutual Ministry Committee, an Audit Committee, and such other committees as this synod may from time to time determine. The duties and functions of such committees, or any other organizational units created by this synod, and the composition and organizational structure of such units, shall be as set forth in this constitution or in the bylaws or continuing resolutions, and shall be subject to any applicable provisions or requirements of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S11.11. This synod shall in its bylaws or by continuing resolution establish a process to ensure that the members of its committees and other organizational units will be persons possessing the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of such units, and to meet the requirements of †S6.04. With the exception of ministers on the rosters of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of a committee of this synod, or any other organizational unit created by this synod, shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshipping community of this synod.

Chapter 13. CONGREGATIONS

- †S13.01. Each congregation, except those certified as congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the uniting churches, prior to being listed in the roster of congregations of this synod, shall adopt the *Model Constitution for Congregations* or one acceptable to this synod that is not in contradiction to the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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- Recognition and reception.** Recognition and reception of additional congregations into this church of transferring or independent congregations by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is based upon the judgment of the synod that the congregations satisfy the criteria of 9.21. and 9.25. is based on the judgment of the synod and action by the synod through the Synod Council and Synod Assembly. The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the roster of congregations.
 - Recognition and reception of congregations newly formed by this church is accomplished by action of the Synod Council.
 - Recognition and reception of transferring or independent congregations is accomplished by the action of the Synod Assembly upon the recommendation of the Synod Council.
 - If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should contact the synod bishop or synod staff in this church where the congregation is located.
 - The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Allegheny Synod Constitution Updates from the ELCA Churchwide Assembly 2025 (*continued*):

Chapter 14.

ROSTERED MINISTERS

†S14.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

....

- 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, **proclaiming God's love for the world,** advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.

†S14.18. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and a congregation shall be as follows:

....

- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. **In the bishop's sole discretion, the bishop's committee may also present, as may be appropriate, either a report or report summary to the pastor and to the congregation together with the recommendations.** The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.

†S14.32. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

....

- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, **proclaiming God's love for the world,** advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;

Chapter 17.

CONSULTATION AND ADJUDICATION

§17.02. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall receive expressions of concern from rostered ministers **of this church,** congregations, and organizations within this synod; provide a forum in which the parties concerned can seek to work out matters causing distress or conflict; and make appropriate recommendations for their resolution. When a concern relates directly to the synod bishop, the synod vice president will lead the Executive Committee's efforts at resolving the matter. When the matter at issue cannot be resolved in this manner, applicable procedures for investigation, decision, appeal, and adjudication shall be followed. Allegations or charges that could lead to the discipline of a rostered minister **of this church** shall not be addressed by the Executive Committee but shall be resolved through the disciplinary process set forth in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

Chapter 18.

AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

†S18.12. Whenever the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially informs this synod that the Churchwide Assembly has amended **any non-required provision of** the *Constitution for Synods*, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the Synod Assembly without presentation at a prior Synod Assembly. An amendment that is identical to a provision of the *Constitution for Synods* shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption by this synod. The Church Council, through the secretary of this church, shall be given prompt notification of its adoption.

†S18.13. Other amendments to this constitution may be adopted by this synod through either of the following procedures:

- a. Introduced with the support of at least _____ voting members and having been approved by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, an amendment may be **adopted ratified** unchanged by a two-thirds vote at the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

Allegheny Synod Constitution Updates from the ELCA Churchwide Assembly 2025 (*continued*):

Section 2: Provision Reclassified from Non-Required to Required

Chapter 10. SYNOD COUNCIL

†S10.0809.01. To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held through electronic means such as the Internet or by telephone, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent, electronically or by telephone conference, and ~~To the extent permitted by state law, N~~notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Section 3: Provisions Reclassified from Required to Non-Required

Chapter 1. NAME AND INCORPORATION

‡S1.21. The seal of this synod is (*describe*).

Chapter 9. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

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

Chapter 11. COMMITTEES (names of other organizational units)

‡S11.04. ~~The A~~ Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council to provide support and counsel to the bishop.

Section 4: Amendments to Non-Required Provisions

Allegheny Synod Council recommends for adoption the amendments to the non-required provisions as highlighted, underlined, and struck through. Below the recommended updated provisions is what currently is in the constitution in blue text.

Chapter 7. SYNOD ASSEMBLY

S7.26. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit persons currently serving as synod-authorized ministers and/or lay representatives of authorized worshiping communities and/or outreach ministries of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with ‡S7.21.

Currently in the Allegheny Synod Constitution:

S7.26. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit lay representatives of authorized worshiping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with ‡S7.21.

Chapter 9. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot.

Allegheny Synod Constitution Updates from the ELCA Churchwide Assembly 2025 (*continued*):

Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons ~~(plus ties)~~ who receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons ~~(plus ties)~~ who receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons ~~(plus ties)~~ who receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the previous ballot.

Currently in the Allegheny Synod Constitution:

S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.

Chapter 10.

SYNOD COUNCIL – NOTE: S10.06. below is an added provision, that would change the numbering of provisions currently in the Synod Constitution, however the current provisions remain intact.

S10.05. ~~No e~~Elected members of the Synod Council shall ~~not~~ receive compensation solely for such their service as council members.

S10.06. No person related to a synod staff member shall be eligible for nomination to or membership on the Synod Council or the following synod committees: [e.g. Advocacy, Candidacy, Constitution, Faith Formation, Finance, Nomination and Reconciliation]. For this purpose, a related individual is one who, with respect to the synod employee, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).

S10.0607. If a member of the Synod Council ceases to meet . . .

S10.0708. The composition of the Synod Council . . .

S10.0809. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern . . .

Currently in the Allegheny Synod Constitution:

S10.05. No elected member of the Synod Council shall receive compensation for such service.

Chapter 13.

CONGREGATIONS

S13.40. Synod-authorized Worshiping Communities and Outreach Ministries.

S13.41. ~~Authorized worshiping~~ Worshiping communities and outreach ministries, authorized by the synod and acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

Currently in the Allegheny Synod Constitution:

S13.40. Synod-authorized Worshiping Communities

S13.41. Authorized worshiping communities, acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

Report of Synod Council Actions:

July 2024 – October 2025

July 27, 2024

SC24.07.01 – Motion to adopt the agenda for today’s meeting, motion by Michele Peese, second by Austin Beirlair, motion carried.

SC24.07.02 – Motion to accept St. John, Sinking Valley’s request to disaffiliate from the ELCA. Motion made by Bishop Paula Lebo, seconded by Michele Peese, motion carried.

SC24.07.03 Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Michele Peese, seconded by Austin Beirlair. Motion carried.

August 13, 2024

SC24.08.01 – Motion to appoint Bishop Emeritus Barbara Collins as the Interim Bishop for the Allegheny Synod until the election of a new Bishop can occur at the next Synod Assembly. Motion was made by VP Ann Ferry, seconded by Peggy Thatcher, motion carried.

SC24.08.02 – Motion to appoint Terry Koch to serve a three-year term as a Lay Male on the Allegheny Synod Council made by Pr. Ralph Hamer, seconded by Pr. MJ Irvin-Stellabotte, motion carried.

September 21, 2024

SC24.09.01 – Motion to adopt the amended agenda for today’s meeting, motion by Pr. Ralph Hamer, second by Pr. Tyler Graham, motion carried.

SC24.09.02 – Motion to approve the minutes of May, July and August meetings, motion by Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte, second by Peggy Thatcher, motion carried.

SC24.09.03 – Motion that after receiving the recommendations of the ministry review team the Allegheny Synod Council vote for the closure of Gloria de Dios as a Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community (SAWC). Motion made by Pr. Ralph Hamer, seconded by Joyce Long, motion carried.

SC24.09.04 – Motion to request that the election of a bishop for the Allegheny Synod be postponed to no sooner than October 2025. The Allegheny Synod Assembly scheduled for May 31, 2025 will emphasize reconciliation and all rostered leaders will be required to attend per Allegheny Synod Constitution S14.25.¹ and S14.47.² Motion made by Tim Albright, seconded by Pr. Tyler Graham, motion carried.

SC24.09.05 – Motion that all recommended changes of the dedicated accounts be made. Motion made by Pr. Ralph Hamer, seconded by Pr. Marty Jo Irvine-Stellabotte, motion carried.

SC24.09.06 – Motion to expand the office space to include a third room to rent at an additional cost of \$450 per month. Motion made by Pr. Becky Horn, seconded by Pr. Tyler Graham, motion carried.

SC24.09.07 – Motion that the compensation package for Bishop Collins be based upon her own years of ordination at halftime at \$46,008 and in lieu of mileage the Allegheny Synod would make donations of \$5000 each to Camp Mount Luther and Camp Sequanota. Motion made by Pr. Tyler Graham, seconded by Austin Beirlair, motion carried.

SC24.09.08 – Motion to add Bishop Collins as a signer on all Synod Accounts. Add Pastor John Kratz as a signer on the Lilly grant. And to add Pr. Kevin to the DYD account. Motion made by Bishop Paula Lebo, seconded by Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte, motion carried.

SC24.09.09 – Motion to approve new members of the ALSM Board. The new members are Mr. James Beauchamp, Ms. Denise Steele, The Rev. Marty Jo Stellabotte, The Rev. Laura Waltermire. Motion made by Bishop Paula Lebo, seconded by Paula Nihoff, motion carried. Abstentions: Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte and Pr. Ralph Hamer.

SC24.09.10 Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Paula Nihoff, seconded by Pr. Becky Horn. Motion carried.

September 30, 2024

SC24.09.11 – Motion to adopt the minutes of the September 21, 2024 meeting. Motion made by Timothy Albright, Jr., seconded by Rev. Ralph Hamer, the motion is adopted.

¹S14.25. All ministers of Word and Sacrament under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the pastors of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

²S14.47. All ministers of Word and Service under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the ministers of Word and Service of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

Report of Synod Council Actions:

July 2024 - October 2025 (continued)

October 2, 2024

SC24.10.01 – Motion to move the 2025 Allegheny Synod Assembly to October 31 and November 1, 2025 and to cancel the original scheduled dates of May 30-31, 2025. Motion made by Ann Ferry, seconded by Michele Peese, motion carried.

November 16, 2024

SC24.11.01 – Motion to adopt the agenda for today's meeting, motion by Pr. Ralph Hamer, second by Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte, motion carried.

SC24.11.02 – Motion to approve Michelle Bossler as a second signature for the DYD account. Motion made by Pr. Tyler Graham, second by Michele Peese, motion carried.

SC24.11.03 – Motion to approve the draft of the Audit from the auditors as presented, Motion by Paula Nihoff, second by Pr. Tyler Graham. Motion carried.

SC24.11.04 – Motion to allocate \$3,900 to each active seminarian. Motion made by Paula Nihoff, seconded by Terry Koch. Motion carried.

SC24.11.05 – Motion to send a gift of \$250 to Evangelical, Duncansville for hosting Bishop Lebo's farewell event. Motion made by Ann Ferry, seconded by Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte. Motion carried.

SC24.11.06 – Motion to enter Executive Session made by Bishop Collins, seconded by Pr. Becky Horn. Motion carried.

SC24.11.07 – Motion to end Executive Session moved by Bishop Barb Collins, seconded by Pr. Ralph Hamer. Motion carried.

SC24.11.08 – Motion to approve financial support, including flight, hotel, registration, meals and incidentals for Christy Harford to go as a visitor to the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. This is a special case of financial support due to the need of the Vice President of the Synod Council needing to attend as a voting delegate. Motion made by Pr. Becky Horn, seconded by Terry Koch. Motion Carried.

December Email Communication

SCE24.12.01 – Motion to accept the Stuckey Subaru estimate for the sale of the Allegheny Synod car, a 2018 Subaru Forester, of \$13,900 if able to sell before the end of December 2024 or the estimate of \$13,500 if selling in 2025. Motion made by Pastor Becky Horn, seconded by Paula Nihoff, motion carried.

January 18, 2025

SC25.01.01 – Motion to adopt and approve the Consent Agenda as presented, motion by Pastor Tyler Graham, second by Pastor Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte, motion carried.

SC25.01.02 – Motion to have newly-elected positions, excluding the Office of the Bishop which constitutionally is three-months following election (February 1, 2026), to begin the term immediately but continue to have the traditional end date for the respective position. Motion made by Pastor Becky Horn, seconded by Tim Albright, motion carried.

SC25.01.03 – Motion to allow for Pre-Identification Process to be used to aid in sharing of information related to rostered leaders who may or may not be nominated by ecclesiastical ballot at the Allegheny Synod 2025 Synod Assembly. Motion made by Pastor Tyler Graham, seconded by Terry Koch, motion carried.

March 22, 2025

SC25.03.01 – Motion to adopt and approve the Consent Agenda as presented, motion made by Peggy Thatcher, second by Rev. Tyler Graham, motion carried.

SC25.03.02 – Motion to approve the proposed Allegheny Synod Budget for 2026-2027 as presented, motion made by Tim Albright, Second by Rev. Ralph Hamer, the motion carried.

Report of Synod Council Actions:

July 2024 - October 2025 (continued)

SC25.03.03 – Motion to accept \$100 per month for rent from Go Tell It in the Mountains as recommended by the Finance Committee, motion made by Peggy Thatcher, seconded by Tim Albright, the motion carried.

SC25.03.04 – Motion to accept the Compensation Manual for 2026 as presented, motion made by Rev. Tyler Graham, seconded by Rev. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabote, the motion carried.

SC25.03.05 – Motion to accept the Vistacom proposal of \$3725 to use VPoll to facilitate voting for the October 31 - November 1, 2025 Allegheny Synod Assembly. Motion made by Rev. Rebecca Horn, seconded by Michele Peese, the motion carried.

March Email

SC25.03.06 – The Allegheny Synod Council moves that Pr. Kevin Shock fill Bishop Barb Collins' voting seat at the ELCA 2025 Churchwide Assembly, granting him the status of "Acting Bishop" from July 28 through August 2, 2025. This status will begin at the opening of the Churchwide Assembly 2025 and end at the conclusion of the same. Motion made by Bishop Barb Collins, seconded by Pr. Becky Horn, the motion carried.

April Email

SC25.04.01 – The Allegheny Synod Council motions to approve Mr. Charles Zorger to the ALSM Board of Trustees, as recommended by the ALSM Board of Trustees to fill the "At-Large IV" position beginning May 1, 2025. Motion made by Bishop Barb Collins, seconded by Pr. Becky Horn, the motion carried.

May 17, 2025

SC25.05.01 – Motion to adopt and approve the Consent Agenda as presented, motion made by Rev. Ralph Hamer, second by Peggy Thatcher, motion carried.

May Email

SC25.05.02 – Motion to approve the recommendation of the Finance Committee to change the Allegheny Synod's insurance carrier to Brotherhood Mutual as stated in the insurance proposal, available in the May Minutes Addendum and in the Office of the Bishop presented by Bradley Herman of The Stewardship Group. The proposal includes a total annual premium of \$4,541 with the added one time premium for retroactive coverage of \$1,123. Motion made by Paula Nihoff, seconded by Timothy Albright, motion carried.

July 19, 2025

SC25.07.01 – Motion to adopt and approve the Consent Agenda as presented, motion by Timothy Albright, second by Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte, motion carried.

SC25.07.02 – MOTION made that anything related to medical, sabbatical, paternal leave will come out of health and wellness; anything related to continuing education, lifelong learning will come out of Leadership Budget which is for both Lay and Worship Leaders with policy being written in the near future. Motion made by Pastor Ralph Hamer and seconded by Terry Koch, motion carried.

SC25.07.03 – MOTION made by Pastor Ralph Hamer for Bishop to reach out to pastor who made the request for funds to cover preaching course with offer up to \$1,500.00, seconded by Pastor Tyler Graham, motion carried.

SC25.07.04 – MOTION made by Pastor Ralph Hamer for a policy be established for leadership funds on how monies will be distributed in the future, seconded by Pastor Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte, motion carried.

SC25.07.05 – Amendment to the motion SC25.07.04 made by Pastor Ralph Hamer to say Policy will be set by the Synod Council to create a task force to write policy for leadership line money, dedicated health and wellness for rostered leaders' monies, and vitality and innovation grant monies, seconded by Pastor Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte, motion carried.

SC25.07.06 – Motion that Synod Council Sponsor a hole for Camp Sequanota Golf Tournament made by Pastor Tyler Graham and seconded by Paula Nihoff, motion carried.

Report of Synod Council Actions:

July 2024 – October 2025 (continued)

September 20, 2025

SC25.09.01 – Motion to adopt and approve the Consent Agenda as presented, motion made by Pr. Tyler Graham, second by Tim Albright, motion carried.

SC25.09.02 – Motion to approve the Budget with the changes noted below, motion made by Paula Nihoff, second by Tim Albright, motion carried.

SC25.09.03 – Motion to affirm the formula to determine the Defined Compensation of the Bishop, motion made by Pr. Becky Horn second by Michele Peese, motion carried.

▫ **FORMULA**

- Base Salary from Compensation & Benefit Guideline + (# of years ordained * \$500) = X
- Then $X * 1.2$ = Bishop Premium
- Then Bishop Premium + Social Security Offset (Bishop Premium * .0765) = Defined Compensation

SC25.09.04 – Motion to reinvest in the position of Synod Communicator for 10 hours per week at the same rate of contracted vacancy pastor (\$30/hr). Position to start on October 1, 2025. Motion made by Bishop Barb Collins, second by Terry Koch, motion carried.

SC25.09.05 – Motion to offer the position of Synod Communicator to Pr. MJ Irvin-Stellabotte, motion made by Bishop Barb Collins, seconded by Paula Nihoff, motion carried.

SC25.09.06 – Motion to amend the previously approved Budget for 2026-2027 (SC25.02) to now include the position of Synod Communicator, motion made by Pr. Ralph Hamer, seconded by Terry Koch, motion carried.

SC25.09.07 – Motion for all checks to require two signatures. Signers are the Bishop, the Assistant to the Bishop, the Vice President, and the Treasurer, all from the Allegheny Synod. If using a facsimile signature, an email approval must be received for the specific use, motion made by Tim Albright, seconded by Pr. Tyler Graham, motion carried.

SC25.09.08 – Motion for the Compensation & Benefit Guideline to be amended to recommend that congregations sponsor one of the two plans at the \$2000 deductible range from Portico Benefits. We encourage congregations to discuss the most appropriate health plan for the congregation and the plan members annually. Motion made by Pr. Tyler Graham, seconded by Pr. MJ Irvin-Stellabotte, motion carried.

SC25.09.09 – Motion to distribute \$4360 per active seminarian to be distributed to either the seminary or loan company as determined by each seminarian. Motion made by Tim Albright second by Michele Peese, motion carried.

SC25.09.10 – Motion to recommend the Conference of Deans Resolution, “Resolution to Continue the Collaborative Work of the Allegheny Synod Begun During the 24-25 Transition,” to the Allegheny Synod Assembly on October 31-November 1, 2025 as presented along with the Synod Council to affirm and endorse as a partner to the Resolution, motion made by Pr. Ralph Hamer, second by Pr. Becky Horn, motion carried.

SC25.09.11 – Motion to affirm the formula to determine the number of voting representatives from each congregation to be sent to the Allegheny Synod Assembly, motion made by Terry Koch, seconded by Michele Peese, motion carried.

▫ Formula is as follows:

- Using the 2024 Congregation Report to the ELCA
 - Congregations up to 499 baptized members – 2 voting members (one female, one male)
 - Congregations 500-899 baptized members – three voting members (one female, one male, and one either male or female)
 - 900 or more baptized members – four voting members (two female, two male)
- In addition, each congregation may elect one additional voting member who is a youth or young adult at the time of the election and one additional voting member who is a person of color or person whose primary language is other than English.
- Each congregation is strongly encouraged to have equal representation of female and male voting members.

Report of Synod Council Actions:

July 2024 - October 2025 (continued)

September Email

SC25.09.12 – Motion to recommend for adoption of the Amendment changes from the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly for the non-required amendments in the Model Constitution for Synods. Motion made by Pr. Becky Horn, seconded by Tim Albright, motion carried.

October Email

SC25.10.01 - Motion to approve the withdrawal of Graef's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Cairnbrook from the ELCA. Motion made by Pr. Becky Horn, Second by Terry Koch, motion carried.

SC25.10.02 - Motion to recommend for adoption the following Amendments to the Allegheny Synod Constitution to allow voice and vote for Vicars and Communion Partners serving at ELCA congregations.:

S.7.27.A25 All Ministers of Word and Sacrament on the roster of a church body with which the ELCA has declared a Full-Communion partnership (relationship), serving calls and/or interims to congregations of this synod, shall be given voice and vote as voting members of the Allegheny Synod Assembly.

S7.27.B25. All Vicars (Interns, TEEM Candidates, etc.) serving in ELCA congregations of the Allegheny Synod shall be given voice and vote as voting members of the Allegheny Synod Assembly.

Motion made by Pr. Becky Horn, seconded by Terry Koch, motion carried.

SC25.10.03 - Motion to recommend for adoption the following Amendments to the Allegheny Synod Constitution to allow voice and vote for retired rostered leaders of the Allegheny Synod.

S7.22.01. All Ministers of Word and Sacrament retired, disabled, or on leave from call, on the roster of this synod shall be given voice and vote as voting members of the Allegheny Synod Assembly.

S7.22.02. All Ministers of Word and Service retired, disabled, or on leave from call, on the roster of this synod shall be given voice and vote as voting members of the Allegheny Synod Assembly.

Motion made by Pr. Becky Horn, seconded by Terry Koch, motion carried.

SC25.10.04 - Motion to recommend for adoption the 2025 Rules of Procedures for the Allegheny Synod Assembly, motion by Pr. Becky Horn, seconded by Terry Koch, motion carried.

SC25.10.05 - Motion to approve the addition of Rev. John Kratz to the Lilly Investment Account at 1st Summit. Motion made by Paula Nihoff, seconded by Pr. Becky Horn, motion carried.

SC25.10.06 – Motion to approve the location of the installation service for the Bishop-Elect to be at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Johnstown, PA on February 7, 2026. Motion made by Pr. Becky Horn, seconded by Pr. Tyler Graham, motion carried.

SC25.10.07 – Motion to recommend the amended proposed budget for FY 2026-27 as presented for adoption at the Allegheny Synod Assembly. Motion made by Tim Albright seconded by Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte, motion carried.

Minutes of the 36th Assembly of the Allegheny Synod:

Minutes of the 36th Allegheny Synod Assembly
June 15, 2024
Blair County Convention Center
Go Tell It In the Mountains

Welcome

Bishop Paula Lebo opened the 36th Allegheny Synod Assembly at 8:38AM

Report of Registration/Quorum

Delegate	
Count Clergy.....	40
Deacon	1
Vicars.....	3
Laity	
Male.....	31
Female.....	51
Officers.....	4
Synod Council.....	3
 Total Delegate Count ¹	133
Visitors.....	20
 Total Present.....	153

Adoption of the 2023 Minutes, the Agenda & the Rules

Upon motion by Gary Gable, seconded Pr. Tyler Graham

- SA24.06.01 - to adopt the minutes of the 2023 Allegheny Synod Assembly as presented... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Lebo, seconded by Pr. Scott Schul

- SA24.06.02 – to adopt the agenda for the 2024 Allegheny Synod Assembly... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Carolyn Hetrick, seconded by Pr. Paul Tomkiel

- SA24.06.03 – to adopt the Rules of Procedure for the Allegheny Synod Assembly ... the motion is adopted (2024 Bulletin of Reports - pages 7&8)

Upon motion by Pr. David Wright, seconded by Pr. Ben Hoffman

- SA24.06.04 - To extend voice & vote for the 2024 Allegheny Synod Assembly to the UCC clergy (Pr. Julie Holm & Pr. Dick Henry) present & the ELCA Vicars (Vic Jennifer Bobolsky, Vic Christy Harford, Vic Penny Koontz, Vic Claudia Plows, Vic Josh Spangler, Vic Steve Koths) present ... the motion is adopted

Introductions

- Mr. Chris Reighard – Interim CEO Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries
- Synod Officers – VP Ann Ferry, Treasurer Paula Nihoff, Secretary Dave Finney
- Pr. Tim Spence - Synod Assembly Parliamentarian

¹ In accordance with provision S7.14 of the Allegheny Synod Constitution, one-third of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.

Minutes of the 36th Assembly of the Allegheny Synod: (continued)

- Pr. Kevin Shock - Assistant to the Bishop/DEM
- Michelle Bossler - Allegheny Synod Office Manager
- Jeanne Fleegel - Assembly Committee Chair
- Pr. Kathy Popp – Chair of Reference & Counsel Committee
- Sue Ellen Spots – Director for Evangelical Mission
- Sister Mary Ann Brock – ELCA Foundation

Report of the Synod Treasurer – Paula Nihoff

- We offer our sincere thanks to past Treasurer Bill Layton
- Moving forward with an emphasis on simplicity of reporting
- Addressing the current year's approved budget
- Adopting the 2025 - 26 budget

Upon motion by the Finance Team

- **SA24.06.05** – to accept an amendment to the 2025-26 fiscal year budget, correcting an error in calculations... the motion is adopted

Upon motion of the Synod Council (**SC24.05.05**)

- **SA24.06.06** – to adopt the amended 25-26 Fiscal Year Budget ... the motion is adopted

Upon motion & recommendation of the Synod Council (**SC24.05.04**)

- **SA24.06.07** – to adopt the 2025 Compensation & Benefits Manual... the motion is adopted

The First Ballot – will consider nominations for Synod Council, the Discipline Committee, the Consultation committee & the Mission Endowment Committee.

- 1) Panel for Synod Council
- 2) Panel for Secretary
- 3) Panel for Churchwide Assembly Voting Members
- 4) Panel for Mission Endowment Committee
- 5) Panel for Consultation Committee
- 6) Panel for Discipline Committee

Report of the Synod Vice President – Ann Ferry

- Ann delivered a spoken message to the Assembly.

Report of the Synod Secretary – Dave Finney (*2024 Bulletin of Reports, page 45*)

- Secretary Finney is retiring from the office of the Secretary (effective June 30, 2024) following 12-years of service. Dave delivered a brief farewell message to the Assembly; including factual information, along with several items of whimsy.

Report of Bishop Lebo (*2024 Bulletin of Reports, pages 34 & 35*)

- We are moving into new territory on how to do ministry.
- We celebrate the ordinations of our newpastors.
- We bid farewell & best wishes to several congregations leaving the Allegheny Synod thru disaffiliation & closure.
- We gave thanks for the ways that our recently deceased Pastors touched our lives.

continued

Minutes of the 36th Assembly of the Allegheny Synod:

(continued)

- We continue to nurture the partnership we have with the Upper Susquehanna and Northwestern PA Synod, for tri-Synodical learning for those interested in becoming lay worship leaders... we authorized six new lay worship leaders who were trained in this new model.
- I am deeply grateful for Pastor Kevin, Michelle and Sue Ellen and the gifts they share with our Synod. I look forward to the ways we will become more focused on our mission to invite people to love one another and live into the gracious welcome of our Lord.

Report of Assistant to the Bishop; Kevin Shock (2024 Bulletin of Reports, page 36)

- Our vision statement is that target in the distance to aim toward
 - What are the things that you do to show love to people?
 - What are the things that people do to show love to you?
 - What are things that Jesus does to show love to people?

Report of the Director for Evangelical Mission; Sue Ellen Spotts (2024 Bulletin of Reports, page 37)

- Joshua 1:9, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."
- Recently, a friend shared a prayer of Fr. Pedro Arrupe, a twentieth century Jesuit priest. I have found insight and encouragement in its words, and so I share it with you:
 - "Grant me, O Lord, to see everything now with new eyes, to discern and test the spirits that help me read the signs of the times, to relish the things that are yours and to communicate them to others."

Report of the ELCA Foundation; Sister Mary Ann Brock (2024 Bulletin of Reports, page 41)

Report of Reference & Counsel – Pr. Kathy Popp

We will consider 1 Resolution & 1 Memorial (2024 Bulletin of Reports, pages 114 & 115)

† **Resolution** - *Regarding the Authorized Lay Worship Leader Program in the Allegheny Synod*

- Reference & Counsel recommends the passage of this resolution.

† **Memorial** - *Clergy Health Insurance Costs*

- Reference & Counsel has edited the Memorial... changing the phrase "to direct" to the phrase "to request." R&C recommends passage of the Memorial with the aforementioned edits.

Upon motion by the Reference & Counsel Committee

- **SA24.06.08** – to adopt both the Memorial & the Resolution & to convey the Memorial on to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly... the motion is adopted

Report of the First Ballot

Q1 – Synod Council (clergy) 3-year term, elect 3

- 341 votes cast, 58 minimum to elect
 - Pr. Tyler Graham – 96 votes
 - Pr. Nancy Hoover – 91 votes

continued

Minutes of the 36th Assembly of the Allegheny Synod: (continued)

- Pr. Marty Jo Irvin Stellabotte – 88 votes
- Pr. Mark Fischer – 66 votes
- Pr. Tyler Graham, Pr. Nancy Hoover & Pr. Marty Jo Irvin Stellabotte are each elected to a 3-year term on Synod Council
- Q2 – Synod Council** (lay female) 3-year term, elect 1
 - 122 number of valid ballots
 - Margaret (Peggy) Thatcher – 122 votes
 - Margaret Thatcher is elected to a 3-year term on Synod Council
- Q3 – Synod Council** (lay male) 3-year term, elect 2
 - 122 number of valid ballots
 - Austin Berlair – 122 votes
 - Austin Berlair is elected to a 3-year term on Synod Council
- Q4 – Synod Council** (youth member) 2-year term, elect 1
 - No nominations received
- Q5 – Synod Secretary**, 4-year term, elect 1
 - 121 number of valid ballots
 - Pr. Becky Horn – 121 votes
 - Pr. Becky Horn is elected to a 4-year term as Synod Secretary
- Q6 – Churchwide Assembly** voting members, Clergy, elect 2
 - 242 votes cast, 62 needed to elect
 - Pr. Mark Fischer – 35 votes
 - Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte - 75 votes
 - Pr. Traci Marriot – 65 votes
 - Pr. Tyler Graham - 67 votes
 - Pr. Tyler Graham & Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte were each elected as Clergy voting members to the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly
- Q7 – Churchwide Assembly** voting members, lay female, elect 1
 - 124 votes cast, 63 needed to elect
 - Susan Barclay - 46 votes
 - Christy Harford – 55 votes
 - Claudian Plows – 23 votes
 - There was no election on this ballot
- Q8 – Churchwide Assembly** voting members, lay male, elect 2
 - 238 votes cast, 62 needed to elect
 - Timothy Albright – 50 votes
 - Terry Bender – 51 votes
 - Ben Hoffman – 85 votes
 - Jacob Koch – 52 votes
 - Ben Hoffman was elected on this ballot
- Q9 – Churchwide Assembly** voting members, young adult (age 18 – 30)
 - No nominations were received
- Q10 – Churchwide Assembly** voting members, a person of color or whose first language is other than English
 - No nominations were received

continued

Minutes of the 36th Assembly of the Allegheny Synod: (continued)

Q11 – Consultation Committee

- Clergy female – vote for 1
 - No nominations received
- Clergy male – vote for 1
 - No nominations received
- Lay male – vote for 1
 - Timothy Albright
- Lay female – vote for 2
 - No nominations received
- Timothy Albright is elected to a 6-year term on the Consultation Committee.

Q12 – Discipline Committee

- Clergy female – vote for 1
 - No nominations received
- Lay female – vote for 3
 - Christy Harford
- Lay male – vote for 3
 - No nominations received
- Christy Harford is elected to a 6-year term on the Discipline Committee.

Q13 – Mission Endowment Committee

- Elect to a 2-year term – vote for 2
 - No nominations received
- Elect to a 1-year term – vote for 1
 - No nominations received

Report of the Second Ballot

Q14 – Churchwide Assembly voting members, lay female, elect 1

- Christy Harford is elected

Q15 – Churchwide Assembly voting members, lay male, elect 2

- Jacob Koch is elected

Video Presentations

- ELCA Synod Assembly Video
- A Tend Bible Podcast presentation (Bible Study)

Go Tell It In the Mountains Report – Bishop Emeritus Gregory Pile

In September 2023, Lilly Endowment approved 81 grants to organizations across the United States through its Compelling Preaching Initiative. The aim of the initiative is to help Christian pastors strengthen their preaching so they can better inspire, encourage and guide people to live their faith more fully.

Ranging from \$275,400 to \$1.25 million, the grants will fund programs at a variety of organizations, including congregations, theological schools, faith-affiliated colleges and universities and media organizations, church resourcing organizations, denominational judicatories, parachurch organizations and other church networks. These organizations reflect diverse Christian communities, including Anabaptist, Black Church, Catholic, Evangelical, Orthodox Christian, Pentecostal and Protestant traditions.

continued

Minutes of the 36th Assembly of the Allegheny Synod:

(continued)

The Lilly Endowment Compelling Preaching Initiative has provided an exciting opportunity for 3 Pennsylvania Appalachian Lutheran synods to turn dreams into action. The Allegheny Synod, the Northwestern PA Synod & the Upper Susquehanna Synod are excited to be in partnership for this grant.

We anticipate impacting three important goal areas that will guide the key activities of our project:

- 1) Ordained and lay preachers will be equipped to utilize traditional and nontraditional techniques including different modes of delivery to develop skills and practices that will make the gospel message more compelling.
- 2) Aspiring preachers will be recruited and engaged in a variety of compelling preaching strategies that educate, empower, and support competency in their ministry.
- 3) Existing members of congregations and new community audiences within our three Lutheran partner synods will respond to compelling preaching opportunities and content by integrating the gospel message into their attitudes, actions and ministries in daily life.

We are launching the Go Tell It In The Mountains initiative today... enhancing the proclamation of Jesus in each of our 283 congregations.

Partner Presentations

- † ***Sequanota Lutheran Conference Center and Camp*** – Pr. Nathan Pile; spoke on a mental health crisis among young adults & Sequanota's role in providing healthier paths forward. *(2024 Bulletin of Reports, pages 97 - 108)*
- † ***United Lutheran Seminary*** – Dr. Guy Irwin (via video) addressed the realities in theological education. Enrollment is ½ of the level from 20-years ago. Geographic limitations are inhibiting unencumbered assignments post-graduation. Alternative routes to ordination are being tailored to specific communities. *(2024 Bulletin of Reports, page 110))*
- † ***Breezewood Trucker/Traveler Ministry*** – Chaplain Bruce Maxwell.
- † ***LAMPa*** – Susan Barclay & Pr. Becky Horn – seeking the common good here in Pennsylvania. Ann Ferry was the recipient of the Advocate of the Year Award. *(2024 Bulletin of Reports, page 89)*
- † ***Lutheran Campus Ministry at Penn State*** – Pasquerilla Center @ PSU. *(2024 Bulletin of Reports, page 90)*

Afternoon Prayer with Closing of the Assembly

Bishop Paula Lebo declared the 36th Allegheny Synod Assembly closed at 3:30PM

Report of the Treasurer:

I have completed my second year as your treasurer! It has been a continual learning experience, and an enlightening one. I am so happy to have met so many people along this journey, for which I am forever grateful. I would like to sincerely thank the members of the Finance Committee who have been such a wealth of advice and assistance. They include: Tim Albright, Rev. Traci Marriott, Andrea Paul, Pastor Scott Schul and much help from Bishop Barbara, Pastor Kevin and Michelle.

Our income for fiscal 2024/2025 ended at \$251,242.50. After accounting for unrealized loss on investments, the more realistic income is \$196,647.22. This reflects our investment income of \$229,662.61. As we prepared your 2026/2027 budget, we anticipate this trend to continue. The investment portfolio was reworked to eliminate most risk to income. I worked with our investment professional and we are now in a conservative investment strategy. The income for 2024/2025 was approximately \$100,000 over the previous year while the expenses were a mere \$10,000 higher than the previous year. I call this year a success!!

I will allow Pastor John to give his report of Go Tell It In the Mountain. However I will simply say that we initially received a grant for \$1,250,000 and the balance at the fiscal year ending January was \$1,247,776.61. The 2024/2025 expenses were \$94,033.76.

I am very pleased to report that our Mission Support has shown an increase from the previous year. Year ending January 2024 was \$594,430.50 and year ending January 2025 was \$647,402.39. That is an increase of \$52,971.89 or approximately 1% which hopefully will replace a recent trend of a negative amount for Mission Support.

The committee also evaluated and recommended to Council that we change our insurance company this year. Council approved that recommendation and we are now insured by Brotherhood Mutual with additional coverages and similar premium.

The Budget for fiscal years 2026/2027 is attached and awaiting your approval. The committee used a few assumptions in the process. Including, a new Bishop hire with 15 years of ordination and a 3% salary increase. That same 3% salary increase is for all other staff as well. Also, a net expense for the Synod Assembly and Youth events of \$1,000 for each. The Compensation Manual is also awaiting your approval.

With God's help I will continue to work for our Synod,
Paula Nihoff
Allegheny Synod Treasurer

Allegheny Synod, ELCA

Analysis of Revenues Expenses - Detail

February 2024 to January 2025

Accounts	YTD Actual (This Year)	YTD Budget (This Year)	Actual (Prior Year Period)
Revenues			
Synod Operations			
Income, Mission Support			
052.400.I – Mission Support	\$461,387.49	\$542,914.00	\$519,284.80
052.4050.I – Designated Mission Support	\$186,014.90	\$65,614.00	\$75,145.79
Total Income, Mission Support	\$647,402.39	\$608,528.00	\$594,430.59
Income Interest			
052.6500.I - Interest & Dividend Income	\$112,628.72	\$33,000.00	\$48,348.49
052.6502.I - Unrealized Loss/Gain on Invest	-\$54,595.28	\$0.00	\$131,626.68
052.6504.I - Realized Loss/Gain on Invest	\$229,662.61	\$0.00	\$18,362.93
052.6506.I - Gain on Sale of Equipment	\$13,487.70	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Income Interest	\$301,183.75	\$33,000.00	\$198,338.10
Designated Gifts, Synodical			
052.4101.I - General Income Undesignated	\$2,450.26	\$0.00	\$3,440.26
052.4107.I - Disaster Relief – Domestic	\$33,737.50	\$0.00	\$32,193.00
052.4108.I - Disaster Relief - International	\$905.00	\$0.00	\$4,329.00
052.4109.I - World Hunger	\$34,627.91	\$0.00	\$35,472.30
052.4112.I - Missionary Support	\$3,561.00	\$0.00	\$4,426.00
052.4200.I - Seminarian Support	\$27,626.70	\$0.00	\$5,566.37
052.4500.I - Other Designated Gifts	\$13.00	\$0.00	\$485.00
052.9107.I - Lampa	\$262.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
052.9109.I - United Lutheran Seminary	\$2,842.00	\$0.00	\$15,450.00
052.9110.I - ALSM Designated Gifts	\$10,213.00	\$0.00	\$11,738.00
052.9111.I - Global Msn & Blkt Sun Desig Gift	\$8,394.75	\$0.00	\$7,753.52
052.9112.I - Kenya Ministries	\$1,777.00	\$0.00	\$872.00
052.9114.I - Penn State Designated Gifts	\$700.00	\$0.00	\$1,125.00
052.9115.I - Lutheran World Relief Designated	\$12,819.01	\$0.00	\$8,388.72
052.9116.I - ELCA Programs & Training	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
052.9117.I - Sequanota Center Designated Gifts	\$4,468.50	\$0.00	\$5,925.00
052.9120.I - The Well	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,000.00
Total Designated Gifts, Synodical	\$144,397.00	\$0.00	\$143,664.17
Mission & Ministry Development			
052.4105.I - ELCA Funds – DEM	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
052.4106.I - ELCA Funds - DEM Payroll	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$30,958.08
052.4304.I - Bishop Discretionary Fund	\$5,118.86	\$0.00	\$5,050.00
052.8103.I - General Supplies – Facility	\$407.89	\$0.00	\$0.00
052.8600.I - Lutheran Letter Income	\$856.41	\$0.00	\$2,930.57
052.8700.I - DEM Support	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
052.9214.I - Cong Mission Grant Income	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,448.77
052.9450.I - Synod Leadership Team Income	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$305.00
Total Mission & Ministry Development	\$16,383.16	\$10,000.00	\$55,692.42
AccountsEvents, Synodical			
052.4201.I - Synod Assembly Registration/Fees	\$11,872.76	\$0.00	\$12,267.31
052.4202.I - Lutheran Day - Lakemont Regist/Fees	\$544.25	\$0.00	\$518.50
052.4204.I - Bishops Convo - Leaders Regist/Fee	\$5,726.19	\$0.00	\$9,475.00
052.4205.I - Youth Events Register/Fees	\$12,947.30	\$0.00	\$30,144.20
052.4207.I - Lay Worship Ministry - Reg/Fees	\$1,022.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Total Events, Synodical	\$32,112.50	\$0.00	\$53,405.01
Total Synod Mission General & Admin	\$1,141,479.43	\$651,528.00	\$1,045,530.29
Total Synod Operations	\$1,141,479.43	\$651,528.00	\$1,045,530.29
Total Revenues	\$1,141,479.43	\$651,528.00	\$1,045,530.29

continued

Allegheny Synod, ELCA

Analysis of Revenues Expenses - Detail

February 2024 to January 2025

Accounts	YTD Actual (This Year)	YTD Budget (This Year)	Actual (Prior Year Period)
Expenses			
Synod Operations			
ELCA Churchwide Mission Support			
Partner Ministry Support			
001.9100.E - Mission Support ELCA	\$164,229.78	\$192,200.00	\$240,299.05
Total Partner Ministry Support	\$164,229.78	\$192,200.00	\$240,299.05
Partners			
Partner Ministry Support			
054.910.E - ALSM - Allegheny Luth Soc Mini	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$4,000.00
054.9102.E - United Lutheran Seminary	\$13,500.00	\$13,500.00	\$13,500.00
054.9103.E - Sequanota Center	\$34,500.00	\$33,500.00	\$33,500.00
054.9104.E - Penn State Campus Ministry	\$11,000.00	\$11,000.00	\$11,000.00
054.9106.E - Camp Mount Luther	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
054.9107.E - LAMPA: Luth Advocacy Min PA	\$1,340.00	\$1,078.00	\$1,078.00
Total Partner Ministry Support	\$69,340.00	\$67,078.00	\$63,078.00
Designated Gifts - Synodical			
052.4101.E - General Expense Undesignated	\$697.02	\$0.00	\$0.00
052.4107.E - Disaster Relief - Domestic	\$33,737.50	\$0.00	\$32,193.00
052.4108.E - Disaster Relief - International	\$905.00	\$0.00	\$4,329.00
052.4109.E - World Hunger	\$34,627.91	\$0.00	\$35,472.30
052.4111.E - Lutheran Women of the Allegheny Syn	\$577.55	\$0.00	\$0.00
052.4112.E - Missionary Support	\$4,561.00	\$0.00	\$4,426.00
052.4200.E - Seminarian Support	\$28,995.00	\$0.00	\$9,000.00
052.4500.E - Other Designated Gifts	\$13.00	\$0.00	\$485.00
052.9109.E - United Lutheran Seminary Design Gift	\$2,842.00	\$0.00	\$15,450.00
052.9110.E - ALSM Designated Gifts	\$10,213.00	\$0.00	\$11,738.00
052.9111.E - Global Msn & Blkt Su Desig Gift	\$8,392.75	\$0.00	\$7,753.52
052.9112.E - Kenya Ministries	\$1,777.00	\$0.00	\$872.00
052.9113.E - Other Designated - Design Gift	\$ (305.00)	\$0.00	\$0.00
052.9114.E - Penn State Designated Gifts	\$700.00	\$0.00	\$11,125.00
052.9115.E - Lutheran World Relief Desig Gift	\$12,819.01	\$0.00	\$7,888.72
052.9117.E - Sequanota Centre Design Gift	\$4,468.50	\$0.00	\$5,825.00
052.9120.E - The Well	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,500.00
Total Designated Gifts - Synodical	\$145,023.24	\$0.00	\$153,057.54
Total Partners	\$214,363.24	\$67,078.00	\$216,135.54
Total ELCA Churchwide Mission Support	\$378,593.02	\$259,278.00	\$456,434.59
Synod Mission General & Adim			
Salaries, Ordained			
052.7000.E - Salary - Bishop	\$74,875.80	\$78,204.00	\$74,936.25
052.7020.E - Salary - Ordained Asst	\$70,056.35	\$69,478.00	\$16,096.05
052.7021.E - Salary - DEM	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	\$50,628.14
052.7025.E - Salary - Lilly Program Manager	\$33,945.60	\$0.00	\$0.00

continued

Allegheny Synod, ELCA

Analysis of Revenues Expenses - Detail

February 2024 to January 2025

Accounts	YTD Actual (This Year)	YTD Budget (This Year)	Actual (Prior Year Period)
052.7050.E - Salary Bishop S.S. Offset	\$5,633.25	\$5,983.00	\$5,936.74
052.7051.E - Salary - Ordained Asst S.S. Offset	\$5,312.67	\$5,315.00	\$0.00
052.7052.E - Salary - DEM Offset	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,279.97
052.7053.E - Salary - Lilly Prg Mgr S.S. Offset	\$2,469.92	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Salaries, Ordained	\$192,293.59	\$163,980.00	\$152,877.15
Salaries & Wages, Non Ordained			
052.7060.E - Salary - Office Manager	\$47,677.98	\$47,314.00	\$45,669.27
052.7080.E - Hourly - Synod Secretary	\$ (1,214.76)	\$3,600.00	\$3,300.00
052.7082.E - Hourly - Housekeeping	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,081.25
052.7084.E - Hourly - Synod Treasurer	\$3,600.00	\$3,600.00	\$3,600.00
052.7085.E - Salary - Accrued PTO	\$16,253.33	\$0.00	\$3,896.85
Total Salaries & Wages, Non Ordained	\$66,316.55	\$56,514.00	\$58,547.37
Employee Benefits			
052.7100.E - Pension	\$22,323.72	\$23,752.00	\$23,016.92
052.7110.E - Employee Health & Other Benefits	\$27,163.41	\$29,857.00	\$29,762.29
052.7115.E - Lilly Program Manager Benefits	\$7,476.21	\$0.00	\$0.00
052.7131.E - Continuing Education	\$90.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
Total Employee Benefits	\$57,053.34	\$54,609.00	\$52,779.21
Employer Expenses			
052.7200.E - FICA	\$3,647.55	\$3,620.00	\$3,493.74
Total Employer Expenses	\$3,647.55	\$3,620.00	\$3,493.74
General Expenses			
052.8102.E - Office Supplies	\$411.07	\$1,250.00	\$1,034.66
052.8105.E - Lilly Equipment & Office Supplies	\$9,280.98	\$0.00	\$0.00
052.8300.E - Postage	\$1,488.58	\$900.00	\$1,321.26
052.9801.E - Memorials/Floral Tributes	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$0.00
052.9802.E - Hospitality	\$830.60	\$1,000.00	\$746.47
Total General Expenses	\$12,011.23	\$3,250.00	\$3,102.39
General Exp. - Personnel Related			
052.6850.E - Ministry Resources	\$146.40	\$600.00	\$401.60
052.8710.E - Staff Travel - Gas/Milea/Hotel&Toll	\$6,545.93	\$10,000.00	\$2,686.11
052.8712.E - Lilly Travel	\$1,736.67	\$0.00	\$0.00
052.8800.E - Vehicle Costs - Ins/Maint Only	\$375.00	\$500.00	\$0.00
052.9401.E - Memberships/Dues/Subscriptions	\$5,000.00	\$5,300.00	\$5,178.60
Total General Exp. - Personnel Related	\$13,804.00	\$16,400.00	\$8,266.31
Expenses, Council & Financial			
052.8005.E - Accounting Software	\$5,899.76	\$4,000.00	\$1,792.00
052.8006.E - Bank and CC Fees	\$16,738.51	\$10,000.00	\$12,150.78
052.8020.E - Audit Expense	\$4,800.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,400.00
052.9440.E - Synod Council Expenses (retreat Etc.)	\$1,410.00	\$1,350.00	\$1,404.32
052.9590.E - Depreciation & Amortization - Allowable	\$333.79	\$6,100.00	\$2,853.34
Total Expenses, Council & Financial	\$29,182.06	\$25,950.00	\$22,600.44

continued

Allegheny Synod, ELCA

Analysis of Revenues Expenses - Detail

February 2024 to January 2025

Accounts	YTD Actual (This Year)	YTD Budget (This Year)	Actual (Prior Year Period)
Adminstrative & Technology			
052.8001.E - Software & Computer Maintenance	\$1,993.13	\$4,000.00	\$3,752.69
052.8025.E - Accounting Services	\$8,820.00	\$8,640.00	\$8,520.00
052.8201.E - Utilities: Network Services Web	\$2,202.65	\$2,100.00	\$1,926.11
052.8500.E - Office Equipment (Copier Lease)	\$2,473.89	\$2,100.00	\$1,926.11
Total Administrative & Technology	\$15,489.67	\$16,840.00	\$16,124.91
Facility Expenses			
052.8103.E - General Supplies Cacity	\$ (165.63)	\$400.00	\$270.14
052.8200.E - Telephone & Cell Phone	\$2,502.48	\$3,000.00	\$3,005.89
052.8400.E - Electricity	\$750.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
052.8410.E - Heat	\$360.00	\$720.00	\$720.00
052.8420.E - Sewer & Water	\$390.00	\$780.00	\$780.00
052.8430.E - Rent	\$13,869.00	\$13,392.00	\$13,392.00
052.9300.E - Professional Insurance	\$4,996.01	\$5,000.00	\$5,075.45
Total Facility Expenses	\$22,701.86	\$24,792.00	\$24,743.48
Congregational & Ministry Supp			
052.4304.E - Bishop Discretionary	\$3,065.00	\$0.00	\$3,870.00
052.8110.E - Lilly Program Activities	\$1,509.56	\$0.00	\$0.00
052.9400.E - Lilly Resource Library	\$765.11	\$0.00	\$0.00
052.9430.E - Global Ministry Synod Team Expense	\$0.00	\$50.00	\$0.00
Total Congregational & Ministry Supp	\$5,339.67	\$50.00	\$3,870.00
Other Ministry Teams Expenses			
052.9433.E - Region 8	\$0.00	\$3,230.00	\$3,230.00
Total Other Ministry Teams Expenses	\$0.00	\$3,230.00	\$3,230.00
Mission & Ministry Development			
052.4105.E - ELCA Funds - DEM	\$1,312.86	\$0.00	\$0.00
052.8600.E - The Lutheran Letter	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00
052.8801.E - Rostered Leaders Day Events	\$4,020.00	\$1,000.00	\$100.00
052.9180.E - Candidacy Expenses	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,012.12
052.9185.E - Seminarian Grants	\$0.00	\$14,900.00	\$0.00
052.9210.E - First Call Theological Education	\$241.34	\$1,000.00	\$243.34
052.9214.E - Vitality and Innovation Grants	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	\$10,175.00
052.9450.E -Synod Leadership Team Expenses	\$2,100.00	\$5,000.00	\$1,580.98
052.9464.E - DEM Expenses	\$524.34	\$0.00	\$1,073.96
052.9500.E - Lilly Program Consultants	\$43,652.60	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Mission & Ministry Development	\$56,351.14	\$32,400.00	\$19,685.40
Events, Synodical			
052.4201.E - Synod Assemble Expenses	\$11,893.11	\$4,000.00	\$11,890.13
052.4202.E - Lutheran Day - Lakemont Expenses	\$189.00	\$200.00	\$525.00
052.4204.E - Bishops Convo - Leaders Exp	\$15,388.97	\$3,000.00	\$13,502.15
052.42055.E - Youth Events Expense	\$9,054.87	\$1,000.00	\$26,872.93
052.4207.E - Lay Worship Ministry Expenses	\$900.00	\$500.00	\$1,050.00

Allegheny Synod, ELCA

Analysis of Revenues Expenses - Detail

February 2024 to January 2025

Accounts	YTD Actual (This Year)	YTD Budget (This Year)	Actual (Prior Year Period)
052.9200.E - Worship Team	\$0.00	\$300.00	\$0.00
Total Events, Synodical	\$37,425.95	\$9,000.00	\$53,840.21
Total Synod Mission General & Admin	\$511,643.61	\$409,435.00	\$423,084.68
Total Synod Operations	\$890,236.63	\$668,713.00	\$879,519.27
Total Expenses	\$890,236.63	\$668,713.00	\$879,519.27
Net Total	\$251,242.80	\$ (17,185.00)	\$166,011.02

Allegheny Synod Budget Worksheet

Proposed Budget 2026-2027:

Allegheny Synod Proposed Budget for Feb 1, 2026 thru Jan 31, 2027 (FYE2027)									
Revenue: Mission Support from Congregations						(Last Year)	(Current Year)	(Next Year)	
Account #		FYE 2021 Actual	FYE 2022 Actual	FYE 2023 Actual	FYE 2024 Actual	FYE 2025 Actual	FYE 2026 Budget	FYE 2027 Proposed	
052.4000.I	Unrestricted Mission Support	\$ 640,655	\$ 606,585	\$ 565,925	\$ 519,285	\$ 461,387	\$ 532,056	\$ 460,000	
052.4050.0	Restricted Mission Support	\$ 81,669	\$ 68,582	\$ 70,975	\$ 75,146	\$ 72,257	\$ 64,302	\$ 65,000	
	Total Mission Support	\$ 722,325	\$ 675,167	\$ 636,900	\$ 594,431	\$ 533,644	\$ 596,358	\$ 525,000	
Staffing Expenditures									
052.7000.0	Bishop-Salary	\$ 76,721	\$ 80,475	\$ 78,043	\$ 74,936	\$ 74,875	\$ 81,548	\$ 82,490	
052.7020.0	Bishop's Assistant-Salary	\$ 40,031	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 16,096	\$ 70,056	\$ 72,405	\$ 74,803	
052.7021.0	Director for Evangelical Mission	\$ 56,310	\$ 39,879	\$ 62,649	\$ 50,628	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
052.7050.E	Bishop Social Security Offset				\$ 5,937	\$ 5,633	\$ 6,238	\$ 6,310	
052.7052.E	Bishop's Assistant Social Security Offset				\$ 5,280	\$ 5,312	\$ 5,539	\$ 5,722	
052.7060.0	Office Manager-Salary	\$ 41,040	\$ 42,433	\$ 43,395	\$ 45,669	\$ 47,667	\$ 49,207	\$ 50,683	
052.7061	Communications Director	-	-	-	-			\$ 15,600	
052.7082.0	Housekeeping	\$ 1,765	\$ 1,748	\$ 1,810	\$ 2,081	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
052.7200.0	FICA-Support Staff	\$ 3,140	\$ 3,246	\$ 3,195	\$ 3,494	\$ 3,647	\$ 3,764	\$ 5,077	
052.7080.0	Synod Secretary	\$ 1,100	\$ 3,600	\$ 1,800	\$ 3,300	\$ (1,214)	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,600	
052.7084.E	Synod Treasurer	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,600	
	Total Compensation	\$ 223,706	\$ 174,981	\$ 194,491	\$ 211,021	\$ 209,576	\$ 225,901	\$ 247,885	
052.7110.E	Healthcare, Life, Disability Insurance	\$ 42,745	\$ 31,709	\$ 26,352	\$ 29,762	\$ 27,163	\$ 31,339	\$ 33,000	
052.7085.E	Accrued PPO	\$ (13,922)	\$ (12,688)	\$ -	\$ 3,897	\$ 16,253	\$ -	\$ -	
	Total Insurance & Other Benefits	\$ 28,823	\$ 19,021	\$ 26,352	\$ 33,659	\$ 43,416	\$ 31,339	\$ 33,000	
052.7100.E	Total Pensions	\$ 23,897	\$ 15,714	\$ 21,856	\$ 23,017	\$ 22,323	\$ 28,371	\$ 25,715	
052.7131.0	Continuing Education	\$ 375	\$ -	\$ 1,028	\$ -	\$ 90	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,500	
052.9401.0	Memberships/Dues/Subscriptions	\$ 323	\$ 1,165	\$ 4,606	\$ 5,179	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	
	Ordained Staff Sabbatical Accrual	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
052.8710.0	Staff Travel and Vehicle Related Costs	\$ 1,410	\$ 4,584	\$ 4,729	\$ 2,686	\$ 6,545	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	
052.8800.0	Vehicle Costs-Ins./Maint. Only	\$ 75	\$ -	\$ 169	\$ -	\$ 375	\$ 500	\$ -	
	Total Other Professional Expenses	\$ 2,183	\$ 5,749	\$ 10,532	\$ 7,865	\$ 12,010	\$ 14,400	\$ 14,000	
	Total Staffing Expenditures	\$ 278,610	\$ 215,465	\$ 253,231	\$ 275,562	\$ 287,325	\$ 300,011	\$ 320,600	
		37%	32%	38%	38%	45%	46%	46%	
Office Expenditures									
052.8025.0	Accounting Services	\$ 7,680	\$ 7,920	\$ 8,220	\$ 8,520	\$ 8,820	\$ 8,700	\$ 9,000	
052.8005.0	Accounting Software/dB Fees (Logos)	\$ 5,439	\$ 4,064	\$ 3,587	\$ 1,792	\$ 5,899	\$ 5,650	\$ 7,500	
052.8020.0	Audit Expense	\$ 4,150	\$ 4,200	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,400	\$ 4,800	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,500	
052.8006.0	Bank and CC Fees	\$ 5,797	\$ 6,985	\$ 10,765	\$ 8,393	\$ 16,738	\$ 8,000	\$ 15,000	
052.9590.E	Depreciation	\$ 6,389	\$ 6,462	\$ 6,202	\$ 2,853	\$ 333	\$ 3,400	\$ 500	
052.8400.0	Electricity	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 750	\$ -	\$ -	
052.8103.0	General Supplies	\$ 766	\$ 708	\$ 238	\$ 270	\$ (165)	\$ 200	\$ 500	
052.8410.0	Heat	\$ 720	\$ 720	\$ 720	\$ 720	\$ 360	\$ -	\$ -	
052.8201.0	Network Services	\$ 582	\$ 762	\$ 467	\$ 1,850	\$ 2,202	\$ -	\$ 2,000	
052.8500.0	Office Equipment	\$ 2,617	\$ 1,815	\$ 1,980	\$ 1,926	\$ 2,473	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,500	
052.8102.0	Office Supplies	\$ 1,204	\$ 837	\$ 834	\$ 1,035	\$ 411	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	
052.8300.0	Postage	\$ 1,317	\$ 1,005	\$ 926	\$ 1,321	\$ 1,488	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,500	
052.9300.0	Professional Insurance	\$ 5,478	\$ 5,248	\$ 4,923	\$ 5,075	\$ 4,996	\$ 5,500	\$ 4,000	
052.8430.0	Rent	\$ 13,392	\$ 13,392	\$ 13,392	\$ 13,392	\$ 13,896	\$ 12,600	\$ 18,000	
052.8420.0	Sewer & Water	\$ 780	\$ 780	\$ 780	\$ 780	\$ 390	\$ -	\$ -	
052.8001.0	Software and Computer Maintenance	\$ 2,624	\$ 1,233	\$ 3,986	\$ 3,753	\$ 1,993	\$ 2,500	\$ 500	
052.8200.0	Telephone	\$ 4,403	\$ 2,695	\$ 2,240	\$ 3,006	\$ 2,502	\$ 2,500	\$ 3,000	
	Total Office Expenditures	\$ 64,838	\$ 60,326	\$ 65,259	\$ 60,586	\$ 67,886	\$ 58,350	\$ 69,500	
		8%	9%	10%	8%	11%	9%	10%	
Partner-Related Expenditures									
054.9101.0	Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries	\$ 4,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 10,000	
054.9107.0	LAMPA	\$ 2,078	\$ 2,078	\$ 1,078	\$ 1,078	\$ 1,340	\$ 2,000	\$ 3,000	
001.9100.0	Mission Support-ELCA	\$ 320,327	\$ 303,292	\$ 254,666	\$ 240,299	\$ 164,229	\$ 186,220	\$ 161,000	
054.9104.0	Penn State Campus Ministry	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 17,000	
052.9433.0	Region 8	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,800	
054.9103.0	Sequanota	\$ 33,500	\$ 33,500	\$ 33,500	\$ 33,500	\$ 34,500	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	
054.9106.E	Camp Mount Luther					\$ 1,000		\$ -	
054.9108.0	Shawnee Park Chaplaincy	\$ 22	\$ 22	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
54.9102.0	United Lutheran Seminary	\$ 23,500	\$ 23,500	\$ 23,500	\$ 13,500	\$ 13,500	\$ 13,000	\$ 15,000	
	Total Partner-Related Expenditures	\$ 394,428	\$ 381,392	\$ 331,744	\$ 303,377	\$ 233,569	\$ 256,720	\$ 244,800	
		52%	57%	50%	42%	36%	39%	35%	

Allegheny Synod Budget Worksheet
Proposed Budget 2026-2027 (continued):

		FYE2021 Actual	FYE2022 Actual	FYE2023 Actual	FYE2024 Actual	FYE2025Actual	FYE2026 Budget	FYE2027 Proposed
Programmatic Expenditures								
052.4204.E	Bishop's Convocation Leaders Expenses	\$ 620	\$ 1,986	\$ 3,735	\$ 13,052	\$ 15,388	\$ 5,500	\$ 5,000
052.9180.0	Candidacy Expenses	\$ 2,212	\$ 2,691	\$ -	\$ 2,012	\$ -	\$ 2,400	\$ -
052.9420.E	Leadership Support	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,581	\$ -	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
052.9450.E	Synod Leadership Team	\$ 4,545	\$ 75	\$ 24	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,100	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
052.9464.E	DEM Expenses	\$ 2,147	\$ -	\$ 1,823	\$ 1,074	\$ 524	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
052.9210.0	First Call Theological Education	\$ 274	\$ 82	\$ -	\$ 243	\$ 241	\$ 500	\$ 500
052.9430.0	Global Ministry Team	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50	\$ -
0.52.9802.0	Hospitality	\$ 856	\$ 976	\$ 477	\$ 746	\$ 830	\$ 500	\$ 2,000
052.4207.E	Ignite/Discerning Your Discipleship Exp.	\$ 74	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,050	\$ 900	\$ -	\$ 1,000
052.9433.0	Region 8	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,230	\$ -	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,800
052.4202.E	Lutheran Day Lakemont Curve	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14	\$ 525	\$ 189	\$ 200	\$ 200
0.52.9801.0	Memorials/Floral Tributes	\$ -	\$ 50	\$ 60	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100	\$ 100
052.8650.0	Ministry Resources	\$ 35	\$ 2,836	\$ 602	\$ 402	\$ 146	\$ 500	\$ 500
052.8715.0	Non-Synod Staff Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500	\$ 500
052.8801.0	Rostered Leader Events	\$ 418	\$ 200	\$ 648	\$ 100	\$ 4,020	\$ 500	\$ 500
052.4201.E	Synod Assembly Expenses	\$ 200	\$ 2,629	\$ 3,598	\$ 11,890	\$ 11,893	\$ 3,500	\$ 16,000
052.9440.0	Synod Council Expenses	\$ 169	\$ -	\$ 816	\$ 1,404	\$ 1,410	\$ 1,750	\$ 2,000
052.8600.0	The Lutheran Letter	\$ 8,746	\$ 504	\$ 1,357	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,500
052.9214.0	Vitality and Innovation Grants	\$ 4,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,175	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
	Women in Ministry Event Expenses	\$ 450	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
052.9200.E	Worship Team	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000
052.4205.E	Youth Team	\$ 350	\$ -	\$ 226	\$ 26,873	\$ 9,054	\$ 1,000	\$ 14,000
	Total Programmatic Expenditures	\$ 25,095	\$ 12,029	\$ 13,381	\$ 83,858	\$ 51,195	\$ 37,000	\$ 63,600
		3%	2%	2%	12%	8%	6%	9%
	Total Expenditures	\$ 762,970	\$ 669,212	\$ 663,616	\$ 723,383	\$ 639,975	\$ 652,081	\$ 698,500
	Mission Supported (Deficit)/Surplus	\$ (40,646)	\$ 5,955	\$ (26,716)	\$ (128,952)	\$ (106,331)	\$ (55,723)	\$ (173,500)
	(Mission Support Income - Expenses)							
Supplemental Income Sources								
052.4100.0	ELCA COVID-19 Grant	\$ 6,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
052.4105.I	ELCA DEM Grant	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
052.4106.I	ELCA DEM Reimbursement Salary &Ben	\$ 50,034	\$ 27,169	\$ 24,281	\$ 25,314	\$ -	\$ -	
052.8103.I	General Supplies Facility					\$ 407		
052.4201.I	Synod Assembly Registration					\$ 11,872		\$ 15,000
052.4202.I	Lutheran Day-Lakemont Curve					\$ 544		\$ -
052.4204.I	Bishop's Convo Registration					\$ 5,726		\$ 6,000
052.4207.I	DYD Registration/Fees					\$ 1,022		\$ 1,000
052.4205.I	Youth Event Registration/Fees				\$ 30,144	\$ 12,947		\$ 13,000
052.8600.I	Lutheran Letter Income				\$ 2,931	\$ 856	\$ 2,500	\$ -
052.6506.I	Gain on Sale of Equipment					\$ 13,487		\$ -
	PPP Loan	\$ -	\$ 60,562	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
	Total Supplemental Income	\$ 66,534	\$ 97,731	\$ 34,281	\$ 68,389	\$ 56,861	\$ 12,500	\$ 45,000
	Operational (Deficit)/Surplus	\$ 25,888	\$ 103,686	\$ 7,565	\$ (60,564)	\$ (49,470)	\$ (43,223)	\$ (128,500)
	(Mission Support + Supplemental Income - Expenses)							
Interest Income								
052.6500.I	Interest Income	\$ -	\$ -		\$ 48,024	\$ 43,988	\$ 33,000	\$ 45,000
	Adjusted (Deficit)/Surplus	\$25,888	\$103,686	\$7,565	(\$12,540)	(\$5,482)	(\$10,223)	(\$83,500)
	(Mission Support + Supplemental Income + Interest - Expenses)							
	Synod Mission Support to ELCA %	50%	50%	45%	46%	36%	35%	35%
Additional Financial Information								
Year End Balance of Accounts								
052.1120.0	Reserve Investment Fund		\$ 4,682	\$ 4,701	\$ 4,720	Closed and moved to Expense Reserve 1126		
052.1126.0	Expense Reserve Fund		\$ 163,075	\$ 154,461	\$ 151,879	\$ 232,998		
056.9127.0	Investment Fund		\$ 1,067,293	\$ 1,064,134	\$ 1,175,418	\$ 1,365,975	(Of this, \$242,580 is Dedicated)	
056.9125.0	Seminarian Support Fund		\$ 456,008	\$ 398,027	\$ 429,901	\$ 498,444	(Restricted)	
DED9431.0	Walter Startzel Bequest: All funds to be received by FYE2026; this money is part of the Investment Fund total					\$ 113,757	\$ 9,365	

Committee Reports:

2026 Compensations and Benefits Manual:

2026 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.

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)
- K. Leadership Development Expense (p 10)
- L. Medical Expense Reimbursement (p 10)* + \$ _____

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 2026 increased 3% from 2025.
- 2) Salary is increased for each year of experience by \$500.

To Calculate years of experience, subtract the minister's year of ordination from 2026.

2026 - _____ (Year of Ordination) = _____ Years of Experience

Base Salary with a Parsonage \$43,673

Add Years of Experience x \$500 + _____

Minimum Salary with a Parsonage = _____

OR

Base Salary without a Parsonage \$61,241

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. The IRS provides information on housing allowance:

<https://www.irs.gov/faqs/interest-dividends-other-types-of-income/ministers-compensation-housing-allowance/ministers-compensation-housing-allowance>

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.

Congregations that provide a parsonage for the called rostered minister pay the parsonage's utilities in full each month. Utilities include electric, gas, oil, water, sewer, trash, internet, telephone (if a landline exists). If the rostered minister uses their personal cell phone for church business, a negotiated amount of reimbursement should be paid in addition to the parsonage utility costs. Billing for utilities for the parsonage are registered in the name of the congregation and directed to the congregation's treasurer.

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 administrates 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 at PorticoBenefits.org/philosophy.

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 at EmployerLink.PorticoBenefits.org or from calling Portico at 800.352.2876.

ELCA Survivor Benefit

Basic group life insurance is offered through Securian and is paid for by the congregation. Rostered ministers may pay for additional coverage through Securian or other supplemental insurance.

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. Each fall, congregations should engage in conversation with their sponsored plan members to determine the option that best fits their needs, then make their selection during annual enrollment. In September 2025, the Allegheny Synod Council voted to recommend that congregations sponsor one of the two plans at the \$2000 deductible range: Select Copay 2000 or Select HDHP 2000.

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

Page 8 of 20

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, maintenance, 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 2025 is 70 cents per mile; this may change in 2026. 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.

The IRS clarifies allowable mileage reimbursement guidelines: <https://www.irs.gov/publications/p463>
 Some rostered ministers may work from home; it is the responsibility of the congregation's council to clearly state from where mileage is calculated for reimbursement. When an agreement is reached, it should be included on the Definitions for Compensation worksheet, Section C.

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. (Check allowed amounts for 2026 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 2026 rate for Sunday supply worship leadership will be \$140 for one service, PLUS \$50 for each additional service on the same day, PLUS mileage reimbursement at the 2026 IRS rate.

To budget for supply coverage of the minister's vacation, multiply the number of Sundays offered in vacation (minimum 4) x \$140 (+\$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 or by contacting 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 this page in the congregation files, provide a copy to the pastor, and send a copy to the Allegheny Synod Office, 918 Hickory Street, Hollidaysburg, PA 16686.

Definition of Compensation, Benefits and Responsibilities of the Rostered Minister

Prepared by: _____

For: _____

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:

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, Synodical Committee meetings, etc.; at least \$600)

4. Leadership Development Expenses *(at least \$500)*

\$ _____

5. Continuing Education *(Minimum of \$700 from the congregation)* \$ _____

6. Moving expenses \$ _____

7. Other expenses \$ _____

Please list: _____

D. AGREEMENT

1. Vacation time of _____ weeks per year including _____ Sundays (*at least 4 weeks, 4 Sundays*)
2. Continuing Education time of _____ weeks per year (*Recommended 2 weeks per year*)
- 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 \$200 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 of at least 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:

Minister _____ Date: _____

Synod Hunger Team - Advocacy Committee:

The Allegheny Synod has identified food insecurity as a major problem in our synod. Feeding our neighbors is one of the most common outreach ministries we offer as Christ's people. It is a ministry which comes naturally in many respects; we identify so readily with the need and with the value of being fed and sharing in a meal. Our hearts break at stories and pictures of people with no food. We may have personal experience of not having enough food and want to help others in need. In sharing food, we not only meet a physical need for the body, but we feed spirits and create community.

One of the programs of the ELCA is a World Hunger Network. This ministry is a resource to synods, congregations, and individuals concerned with responding to the cry, "when I was hungry, you gave me food." To connect with this churchwide effort and, more importantly, to be strengthened across this synod in our efforts, we have launched the Allegheny Synod Hunger Team.

The Hunger Team will have several areas of concern:

- Provide a roundtable for those involved in feeding ministries to share stories, struggles, and strategies.
- Raise awareness and offer education in the synod on hunger issues and action as people of faith.
- Encourage discussion and advocacy on issues related to hunger and access to food.

The Hunger Team is open to anyone who feels called to work with us in any or all of these areas. If you would like to join the Hunger Team, email the synod DEM, Sue Ellen Spotts, (sueellen.spotts@elca.org) to be included in Hunger Team communications. Watch Facebook and the Allegheny Synod website for announcement of the next meeting of the Allegheny Synod Hunger Team.