

NORTHWEST SYNOD OF WISCONSIN
2022 Partnership Ministry Reports
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

"And [Jesus] said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15).

Dear siblings in Christ,

When I talk about our goal of engaging a million new, young, diverse people I get asked a lot, "I'm not new, young, or diverse. Am I not important to the church anymore?" My answer is always the same, "You've never been more important."

When we committed to our new goal, we identified our purpose as "Activate each of us so more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love." This goal does not happen without the people who are already part of this church. Theresa of Avila talked about the church as the hands and feet of Christ in the world, the very way God will work to engage new people.

Those aren't easy things to do and certainly not ones that only a few of us can do alone. God has blessed us with so many resources to do this work: nearly 3.6 million people, 65 synods, and 350 CWO staff, plus colleges, universities, seminaries, social ministry organizations, and other affiliated organizations, and our separately incorporated ministries. We truly are a church of abundance.

So, what can you do right now?

- Pray. For our church. For one another. For those whom we have yet to meet.
- Find time to listen to people who are new to the ELCA, young, and/or diverse. Share the story of Jesus with them.

Along the way, don't forget: You are important.

Grace and peace,



Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson's Report to the Assembly 2022

Part I Resolutions

In 2021 our synod attempted two remarkable actions. 1. We held our first virtual assembly. 2. We voted to approve five (5) resolutions all focusing on biblical justice. Our theme for last year's assembly was Justice and Joy. Proverbs 21:15 *When Justice is done, it is joy for the righteous!* It is with joy I report to you that those five teaching resolutions had significant impact on our synod. Bible study classes, discussions, sermons, workshops, and one-to-one conversations were held that raised awareness and paved the way for new learning around the biblical justice issues of hunger, creation, race and gender. The synod council is responsible to see that the resolutions passed at assembly are enacted.

S10.03c The functions of the synod council shall be to carry out the resolutions of the synod assembly.

This year, the annual report to the bishop was used as a tool to measure how many congregations implemented the resolutions. Trinity Lutheran in Spooner was award a Bright Spot award for implementing the resolutions and modeling helpful ways to have conversations about biblical justice. There are many ways to interpret the results of the survey. The pessimist will notice all the congregations that DID NOT engage with the resolutions. The optimist will notice the number of congregations that DID engage with the resolutions. The realist will remark that something is better than nothing. I believe that the resolutions and the resources produced by the Justice Team were very helpful in lifting up ways to begin important conversations. It was a baby step and every great movement begins with baby steps. It is my prayer that we continue this movement with the two resolutions that come before the assembly today.

Questions from annual report to the bishop 2021	140 surveys	Percentage "YES"
Did you use CARE OF CREATION materials?	24	17%
Does your Congregation have a green team?	13	9%
Do you have members who might be interested in green team?' 2021 Resolution RESOLVE Urge all members to exemplify personal and institutional care for Creation. Encourage all congregations in the synod to celebrate a Season of Creation. Provide confirmation curriculum for all congregations to educate youth on Care for Creation; and	58	39%
Does your Congregation have PERSONNEL /SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY ? 2021 RESOLVED , that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin develop or provide anti-sexual harassment training materials to assist congregations in developing and implementing anti-sexual harassment policies;	55	39%

Did you or will you have a conversation in the next 6 months about providing a WIDER WELCOME TO LGBTQIA COMMUNITY , or becoming RIC? 2021 RESOLVED , that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin shall, in faithfulness to the gospel, invite and encourage 25% of congregations to intentionally discuss the process of what it means to become a Reconciling In Christ congregation by the end of 2021	52	37%
Did you take RACIAL JUSTICE TRAINING like IDI in last year or plan to take it in 2022? 2021 Resolved that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin offer at least one Racial Justice/Anti-Racism Training workshop every year ... Resolved that all Rostered leaders and Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAMs) in the Synod be encouraged to participate in Racial Justice/Anti-Racism Training in 2021-2022	80	57%
How much was given to the ELCA World Hunger appeal from our synod last year?2021 RESOLVED that the Northwest Synod in assembly establish a total giving goal of \$1,000,000 for ELCA World Hunger from this synod by Assembly in 2023		

PART II Reflections on the Synod

As bishop, I see the effect COVID has had on our congregations and leaders. I am concerned for the spiritual, mental and physical health and wellbeing of our pastors, deacons and SAMs. In the annual report to the bishop I asked how they were doing. Most are doing “reasonably well under the circumstances.” However the words that were repeated the most frequently in the report were “tired, exhausted” Our leaders are mentally, spiritually and emotionally weary of the pandemic and accompanying rancor and political divisiveness. I encourage all our leaders to tend to their souls, their bodies and their mental health. I encourage all members of congregations to be kind to your pastors, be patient, understanding, and encourage them to take care of themselves. It does the congregation no good to beat up their pastor, deacon or SAMs. Build them up and care for them so they can care for you and build up the body of Christ. Could you offer your pastor an extra week of vacation or continuing education this year to regroup , relax and refuel?

In the annual report to the bishop survey I asked leaders how they would describe their congregation’s vitality and the general mood of the congregation; the congregation’s attitude toward its future ministry. In the chart below you will see the responses. We had 89% of the pastors, deacons and SAMs completed this survey in our synod. This is a solid sample of the leaders of our 197 congregations in the NWSWI. The majority of the surveys were completed between January and March of 2022. Please note: some of the respondents gave two different answers because they serve 2 congregations. This is why the percentages are over 100%.

CONGREGATION’s VITALITY	135 RESPONDANTS	PERCENT
Growing/Thriving	20	14%
Stable	93	68%
Declining	34	25%
Dying	2	1.4%

CONGREGATION'S FUTURE		
Positive/Hopeful	39	29%
Faithful/Determined	80	59%
Worried/Weary	41	30%
Depressed/Despairing	2	1.4%

The truth of the matter is simple, COVID was harder on some our congregations and leaders than others. A few of our congregations are realizing that they have nearly finished the work that God had given them to do. There are a few congregations in our synod that may discern that their next most faithful step is to close their building. When a congregation has been faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ for generations, but because of a myriad of changes and circumstances it no longer has the energy to continue, than its work is finished. It has not failed, but rather it has finished. Here is a link to our EPIC video Holy Closure: Leaving a Legacy. <https://vimeo.com/692167467> To be clear, I'm not suggesting any congregation close. I do not want your congregation to close. However if you feel it is time to finish this resource may be helpful.

Part 3 Grateful for your partnership in ministry

Finally, a word of gratitude; I am grateful for all of you, for your partnership in ministry and for your faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ during some difficult days. I am grateful for our resilient leaders and I'm hopeful for the future. I am grateful for those who have served on the Synod Council, Justice Team, Mission Endowment Team, SAM Team, candidacy team.... Especially those who are going off the synod council and this is their last meeting. Thank you all for your financial and prayerful support of the work that do together as a synod. I am so grateful.

I am grateful for the wisdom of our synod ministers. They are dedicated, creative and do so much to encourage and inspire the whole church. I am hopeful for the future of our church and synod because of their wisdom and spiritual depth. The synod ministers are working to move the ministry of our whole synod forward in God's mission. I am hopeful because of Deacon Laura Ramlow's work on the Tri-Synod Youth Gathering in July and the Virtual Malawi Pastor's Academy in May. I am hopeful because of the work Pastor Erin Nelson is doing with Faithful Innovations, the Missional Leaders Cohorts, stewardship 101, Neighbor to Neighbor and the Area Strategies Conversations. I am hopeful because of the work Pastor Randy Olson is doing with the SAM Team, Congregational Resource Team, Call Process, First Call and Candidacy. I'm hopeful because of the work that Pastor Greg Kaufmann does with the Endowment Committee, the interim pastors, Lay School and support of the call processes. I am hopeful because of the work Liz Bartsch does to managing the financial aspect of the synod, managing call processes, candidacy, assembly, special events, and managing all of us. I am grateful to our Loving God for the Easter promises that ring especially true this year as COVID is waning and the Easter dawn brings hope for the new life Jesus promises.



The Next Most Faithful Step
Takin 'it to the Streets: Becoming a Public Church

Proverbs 1: 20 *Wisdom cries out in the streets. In the public places Wisdom raises her voice.*

2022 Report to ELCA Synod Assemblies

As I fulfill my last weeks as Augustana's president, I reflect on how challenging times bring to light new thinking towards the greater good. A pandemic is a strong reminder of how our work can serve the world's deep needs. Often, it's the kind of work fueled by gifts and talents beyond the academic, with results that expand any narrow definition of success.

At Augustana, Pastor Melinda Pupillo now meets regularly with our co-curricular leaders in student affairs. This collaboration is building a deeper understanding of what we offer students outside the classroom, and how those opportunities can lead to more fulfilling lives for graduates and those they serve.

I am excited about our new program for a community of sophomores called ALIVE (Augustana Leaders in Vocational Exploration), funded by Augustana's Presidential Center for Faith and Learning. ALIVE asks students, in the midst of their everyday lives, to consider the big questions about who they are called to be for the sake of the world. This year, 11 sophomores living in Swanson Hall met weekly for vocational conversation and learning, and designed and led programming for their peers.

Founders Hall, meanwhile, has been re-named The Steve and Jane Bahls Campus Leadership Center. Jane and I are deeply honored by this. Built 80 years ago, the building houses Ascension Chapel and various administrative offices, including the Office of the President. For 19 years this first-floor corner office has witnessed early-morning conversations, midday office hours with students, and planning through the dark hours. Now it will be renovated for incoming president Andrea Talentino, who begins on July 1.

Andrea Talentino becomes Augustana's ninth president in 162 years. She was unanimously recommended by the Augustana College Board of Trustees after review of a pool of candidates that far surpassed expectations. With 22 years of experience in higher education, Andrea arrives with the values, dedication and energy that will continue to build what she calls "transformative opportunity" for Augustana students, and for the world that needs our graduates.

As I have said ever since Andrea accepted the calling in January, I know that Augustana's best days are ahead. She is the ideal person to take Augustana College into the future.

Finally, I want to say what a privilege and joy it has been to serve at Augustana, one of 26 great institutions affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. May we all continue to serve with compassion and clear thinking for the times ahead.

Yours sincerely,



Steven C. Bahls



Synod Assembly Report 2022

This is the third academic year we have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. A large percentage of the Carthage community is vaccinated, so we are back in the classroom. Students were able to participate in a few study abroad programs during January Term to places like Peru and Spain, and most of the chapel programs have returned to “normal.” We are back to having chapel on Tuesday, Interfaith Lunch on Thursdays, and Roman Catholic Mass on Sunday evenings. Masks are required in all indoor spaces, and that is keeping everyone as safe as can be during this time of pandemic.

Other highlights of the past year at Carthage:

- The Christmas Festival was held in person and streamed online. The crowd in the chapel was small, but it was wonderful to be able to light candles and to lift them up in celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.
- A major change at Carthage was our new team name and mascot. We are now the Firebirds, and Ember is our new mascot.
- Shortly after the name change, the men’s volleyball team won Carthage’s first team national championship in May 2021. The team went undefeated. Way to go, team!
- In celebration of the company’s establishment of a major scholarship fund, the College dedicated the HARIBO Pool.
- Esports came to campus as our first coed varsity athletic team.
- Academically, we launched an engineering science major and a Bachelor of Music program in music education.
- Michele Hancock was named vice president of college culture for inclusion.

So, even in the midst of our third academic year in a pandemic, we continue to innovate and keep moving forward. Students are hungry to be together and are finding ways to continue to make a difference. Blood drives and other ways of volunteering continue to take place.

One of the exciting changes for the Center for Faith and Spirituality is a shared staff person with our Aspire Center. The new purposeful life and leadership coordinator creates programs that help students with undecided majors think about what their calling or vocation(s) may be. This person also helps to create programs that develop leadership skills in the student body. This is all a work in progress, but it is full of potential and possibility.

Thank you for your support of Carthage College and the work being done here. We continue to do the work we are called to do, which is to live out our mission of Seeking Truth, Building Strength, and Inspiring Service – Together.

In Christ,

Pastor Kara F. Baylor

LUTHER COLLEGE

Greetings from Luther College in the beautiful Driftless region of northeastern Iowa!

This 2021-2022 academic year has been one of renewed energy and celebration of the gifts of the Luther College community. We are grateful for the dedicated, thoughtful, and conscientious group of leaders who continue to monitor and manage our Covid-19 response. Because of their leadership, and because of the campus-wide shared commitment to healthy practices, we have been able to resume a fuller schedule of on-campus in-person events, from athletic events to Christmas at Luther to admissions events to our thriving Center Stage Series.

In fall of 2021, we hosted multiple homecoming weekend events, including a special in-person Commencement Celebration for the class of 2020. This spring, our music ensembles were able to resume touring. Symphony Orchestra, Jazz Orchestra, Concert Band, and Collegiate Choral toured a variety of locations in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Nordic Choir performed during February's American Choral Directors Association regional conference in Chicago and toured the Midwest in May. We hope some of you were able to attend one of these events.

We are happy to share with you that Luther College has received a NetVUE Reframing the Institutional Saga grant of nearly \$40,000 to prepare and publish a collection of essays that explore the college's identity as a Norwegian-Lutheran liberal arts college. The grant began in February of this year and runs through January 2024, when the anthology will be published and made available to the public.

We are also grateful to the many friends and alumni who helped us raise more than \$1 million for a major renovation of the Sports and Recreation Center, part of our campus athletic complex. Along with the renovation project comes the commemorative naming of spaces to honor Luther coaches who have made a lifetime of impact on their student-athletes.

The Office for College Ministries welcomed Pastor Melissa Bills as its new Director for College Ministries and College Pastor at the beginning of this academic year. College Ministries continues to sustain weekday chapel and special event worship services, as well as to support the ongoing spiritual needs of Luther's entire campus community - students, staff, faculty, and alumni/emeriti. A new student Council for Faith and Life has been convened as a way for students to more deeply engage with intersections of faith and learning and to serve as faith and justice leaders on campus.

We encourage you (and your high school students) to visit the Luther College campus and the Decorah, Iowa community. Please help spread the word that in addition to offering a series of Church Leadership Scholarships, Luther College participates in the EPIC (Educational Partners in Covenant) grant program, which matches up to \$1000 per year in support of each student from your congregation.

Luther College, like many congregations, communities, and institutions, has been challenged to show enormous flexibility and resilience during these last years. We remain committed to providing students a supportive, faith-grounded environment of academic excellence where they can learn, grow, and discern. We look to the future with great hope and possibility, focusing our energy on values of stewardship, integration, and adaptability, recognizing our mission as being both grounded and global. Thank you for your prayers and support for Luther College. We are grateful for your partnership.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Dr. Jenifer K. Ward
Luther College President



2022 joint report to synods from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago & Wartburg Theological Seminary

Dear Partners in Ministry in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin:

The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) and Wartburg Theological Seminary (WTS), the two seminaries that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin supports, stand united with a vision to form compassionate, ever-evolving leaders for a changing church.

The impact of the pandemic lingers, but both of our schools are thriving, having adapted well to a changing situation. We remain committed to forming leaders for the church who are deeply grounded in the gospel of Jesus Christ and well-prepared to accompany congregations and other church-related institutions into more diverse and adaptive ministries.

A few examples of these efforts by LSTC are highlighted below:

- LSTC joyfully began 2022 with the reinauguration of the Pero Center, renamed the Albert “Pete” Pero Jr. and Cheryl Stewart Pero Center for Intersectionality Studies, with Dr. Linda Thomas as the new program director. Also this past year LSTC’s Antiracism Transformation Team was commissioned, and Vima Couvertier-Cruz was appointed director of diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice. Two related strategic plan initiatives were also launched: “Pursuing Equity: Race, Sexuality, Gender” and “Authentic Diversity.”
- With LSTC’s announcement of the \$2 million endowed Damm Chair, we are searching for an effective scholar with a record of inspiring teaching who can help LSTC integrate leadership cultivation into all aspects of our curriculum. This newly established chair was funded by a generous gift from Larry and Christie Tietjen and will help prepare mainly MDiv, MA and MAM students for ministry. It will allow LSTC to reach additional audiences to enhance leadership across the church. The seminary is also underway with the search process for a professor of Lutheran Systematic Theology with an expertise in global Lutheranism.
- Motivated by the need to provide scholarships for our students, LSTC has engaged in multiple fundraising initiatives, the majority of which have been board-directed. We were especially grateful for a \$1 million gift in 2021 that catapulted us into a successful fundraising year.
- As LSTC reached the conclusion of two years offering all courses in a blended format (remote and in person), we are grateful for the generous grant from the In Trust Center for Theological Schools that enabled LSTC to consult with Learning Forte (Learning for Theological Education). The firm helps seminaries and schools of theology upgrade online learning tools. The upshot of this partnership was a transition of all online learning to Brightspace, a state-of-the-art online learning platform.
- The board of directors has also actively engaged its own improvement in shared governance and attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion by active participation in the Wise Stewards program sponsored by In Trust. LSTC was one of ten schools elected for this program.

A few examples of these efforts by WTS are highlighted below:

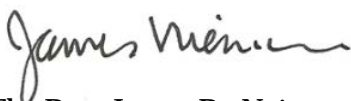
- WTS received a Phase II Lily Grant for \$725,000 in support of two initiatives that are meant to develop resources for both leaders and congregations that come from diverse backgrounds. The one program is “Journey Together,” a new competency-based TEEM program, which is offered fully in Spanish and English. The second initiative is a re-launch of LSPS, the Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest, which is expected in early July 2022.
- WTS has launched “Lead BOLDLY,” a \$28 million comprehensive campaign built around Scholarships and Innovation as the top priorities. A \$6-7 million remodel of Fritschel Hall, the seminary’s main academic building, is included in the innovation focus. With deep gratitude, they announced that \$20.5 million had already been received from lead donors.
- In December, WTS announced the formation of a new department, the Department for Vocation and Formation, led by Dr. Kris Stache, the Vice President for Leadership formation. This department was created to establish a more integrated network of support for students, from inquiry out into first call, as they are formed for a long career in public ministry.
- WTS called a new Hebrew Bible faculty member, Dr. Beth Elness-Hanson, who will join the faculty in July from her current position in Uppsala, Sweden. In other faculty news, long-time Hebrew Bible professor Ann Frischel will be retiring in July, and long-time dean, Craig Nesson, will be stepping down from the dean’s position at the end of June, but continuing his role as professor of contextual theology and ethics.
- Finally, the theme of the presidential inauguration in November was “Life Together in a New Day.” WTS has continued to live into that identity, grounded in its history but looking forward into the future, responding to the call of the Holy Spirit who is continually doing a new thing in our midst.

Please know that you are welcome at our seminaries at any time, online or in person! Participate in upcoming educational opportunities. Join us for community events. Worship alongside our students in chapel. Bring someone you know with gifts for ministry. Consider rostered ministry in the ELCA. Come create a meaningful connection with the future leaders that you and your synod support through your gifts to Wartburg and LSTC.

Your synod partnership is essential for LSTC and Wartburg to continue our shared mission of providing effective theological education and developing leaders for the many ministries of your congregation, synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We are so grateful for you and our shared collaborations for the sake of the gospel in service of the church and the world. We could not do this work without you! Thank you for your time, thank you for your talents, and thank you for your financial support.

To learn more about your seminaries and the innovative ways that we are forming leaders, please visit www.lstc.edu and www.wartburgseminary.edu.

Yours in Christ,



The Rev. James R. Neiman, Ph.D.
President
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago



The Rev. Kristin Johnston Largen, Ph.D.
President
Wartburg Theological Seminary



Report to the ELCA Synod Assemblies 2022

Founded in 1874, St. Olaf College shares with other ELCA colleges and universities a common calling to provide an education that is both “deeply rooted in the Lutheran intellectual tradition and boldly open to insights from other religious and secular traditions” (NECU, *Rooted and Open*, 2018). St. Olaf’s mission is to challenge students to excel in the liberal arts, examine faith and values, and explore meaningful vocation in an inclusive, globally engaged community nourished by Lutheran tradition.

Like colleges and congregations everywhere, St. Olaf made significant adaptations over the course of the global pandemic to enable safe delivery of its academic and co-curricular programming. Following the temporary closure of the campus in mid-spring and summer 2020, most students returned to campus in Fall 2020, and the college remained open throughout the 2020-21 academic year offering a combination of in-person, hybrid, and remote programming. This year the college is fully in-person with a variety of COVID safety protocols still in place. St. Olaf continues to attract a broad pool of talented students, currently representing 49 states and 87 countries. With an enrollment of nearly 3000 full-time undergraduates, our Fall 2021 incoming first-year students had an average high school grade point of 3.68 and a median ACT composite score of 31. Our first-years are diverse in a variety of ways, with 23% of incoming first-years self-identifying as domestic students of color, 10% as international students, 22% eligible for Pell grants, and 18% as first-generation college students. Within the student body as a whole, 19% self-identify as Lutheran and another 7% are members of a denomination in full communion with the ELCA. Among our Class of 2021 graduates, 86% had participated in an internship, mentored research experience, practicum, or other vocation-related opportunity, and two-thirds had studied off-campus. Among our Class of 2020 graduates, 95% were working, pursuing further education, or engaged in full-time military or other service program within the first six months of graduation.

St. Olaf continues to offer daily Chapel services led by the college pastors and featuring St. Olaf students, faculty, and staff as speakers and musicians. The St. Olaf Student Congregation and guests also gather for Sunday worship with Holy Communion during the academic year. All services at Boe Chapel are [streamed live](#) and then [archived](#) for on-demand viewing on the St. Olaf website. College Pastors Matt Marohl and Katherine Fick also host a chapel [podcast](#) on matters of faith and spiritual practice. Over the past three years, the College Ministry team has grown to include an Associate Chaplain for Jewish Life and an Associate Chaplain for Muslim Life, both of whom offer opportunities for worship, religious education, pastoral care, and interfaith engagement, not only for students who identify with those faith traditions but also for students of any identity.

The college also continues its weekly [Sing For Joy](#) radio program, broadcast on more than 150 stations in the U.S., the U.K., and throughout Africa, and streamed both live and on demand. Built around the Revised Common Lectionary for the church year, *Sing For Joy* integrates the best in sacred choral music with thoughtful commentary. The [St. Olaf Conference on Worship, Theology, and the Arts](#) hosted its first-ever [virtual mini-conference](#) in July 2021, welcoming more than 200 clergy and lay leaders from 41 states. The conference returns in-person on the St. Olaf campus July 25-28, 2022, with “Scatter the Imagination of Our Hearts” as its theme, and featuring theologian Willie James Jennings (Yale University Divinity School) and Professor of Homiletics and Liturgics Eunjoo Mary Kim (Ilf School of Theology) as guest keynoters.

The [Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community](#) is now in its third year of programming to advance a compelling vision for Lutheranism in the 21st century, foster inter-religious and inter-faith engagement, nurture vocational discernment, and provide national and global thought leadership across all its programming areas. The Conference on Worship, Theology, and the Arts is a program of the Lutheran

Center, and the two Associate Chaplains in College Ministry are supported by Center funding. The Center's programming for vocational discernment has been anchored by a two-year \$50,000 grant from the Council of Independent College's Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE), supporting a series of faculty and staff development activities designed to expand and broaden opportunities for student reflection on vocation, with particular focus on new requirements in the college's general education curriculum. Vocation has also been a central theme in the Center's recent thought leadership; over the past several months, Center Director Dr. Deanna Thompson has been speaking at a variety of colleges and universities, congregations, and ELCA synods on "Beyond Deep Gladness: Coming to Terms with Vocations We Don't Choose," bringing together Lutheran tradition, vocational discernment, and an understanding of trauma related to the pandemic and systemic racism, in seeking to meet the challenges of our time. In October 2021 Rev. Dr. Charlene Cox, an ELCA Minister of Word and Sacrament, joined the Lutheran Center staff as St. Olaf's inaugural Program Director for Congregational Thriving, leading the college's \$1 million five-year Lilly Endowment grant. Over the next few months, Rev. Dr. Cox will work with leaders in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA Churchwide, and the National Council of Churches to begin recruiting congregations into a process of vocational discernment guided by a series of high impact learning experiences that will engage them with their distinctive theological commitments, diverse communities, and dynamic contexts.

We look forward to welcoming you to campus, whether virtually or in person, and to welcoming the prospective students you introduce to St. Olaf.

David R. Anderson '74, *President*



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

With faith and finance at our core

The Mission Investment Fund, a financial services ministry of the ELCA, provides a strong, stable, faith-based way for individuals, congregations and ministries to achieve their financial goals.

MIF provides a range of investments for individuals, congregations and ministries. We put those investments to work to fund building and renovation loans for congregations and partner ministries, including social service agencies and outdoor camps.

The result? Impact investments, with a transformative impact on our communities:
Expanded worship spaces ... new space for education and youth ministry ... much-needed day care centers for working families ... industrial-grade kitchens and fellowship halls for community meals.

We were present for our investors and borrowers that needed assistance during the pandemic. We collaborated with our ministry partner, the ELCA Federal Credit Union, to offer expedited loans for congregations, ministries and individuals, as well as 360 Paycheck Protection Program loans totaling \$13.9 million. The PPP loans helped continue payroll for some 2,100 congregation and ministry employees and continued in-person and virtual worship and ministry services for more than 95,000 church members throughout 2020 and 2021.



MIF has a longstanding tradition of strength and stability. At year-end 2021, MIF had 820 loans outstanding, totaling \$575.4 million. Investment obligations totaled \$575.4 million. With total assets of \$822.0 million and net assets of \$226.4 million at year-end 2021, MIF maintains a capital ratio of 27.5 percent—positioning MIF in the top tier of well-capitalized church extension funds.

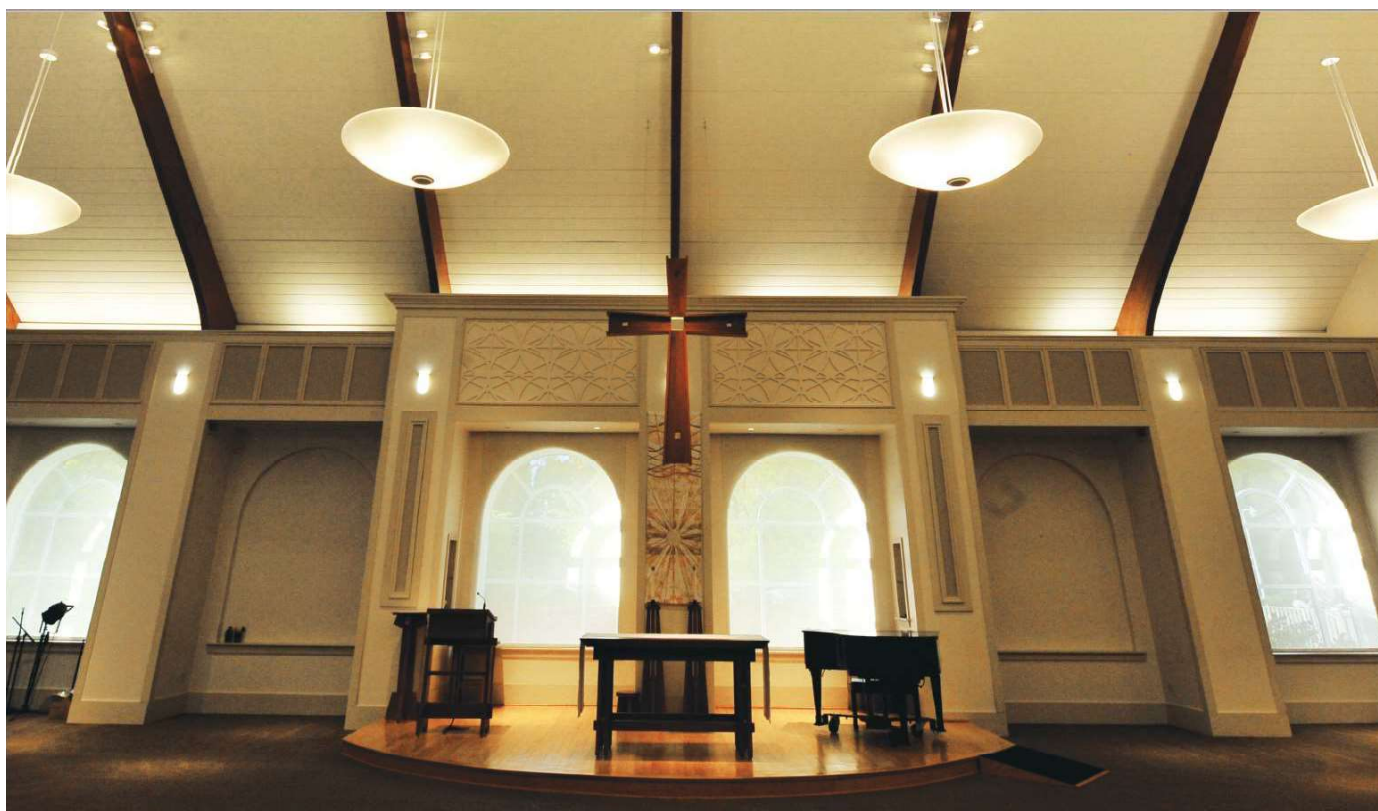
Our steadfast support continues for the members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA and the many ways you minister to a world in need. We are honored to walk alongside you as a trusted partner.

MIF at work in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin (as of December 31, 2021):

- 9 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of \$3,913,906
- \$7,282,236 in Mission Investment Fund investment obligations



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



The Mission Investment Fund can be your financial resource and partner of choice.

Why MIF?

MIF has demonstrated expertise in church and ministry financing. As a ministry of the ELCA with longstanding experience in congregation and ministry building projects, we're unique among lending institutions. We're prepared to listen to what you need, we understand your requirements, and we'll serve as your strategic partner.

We offer competitive rates and terms. MIF consistently offers competitive rates. And now, interest rates on loans remain at historic lows.

We offer a full suite of financial services. In addition to loans, MIF offers congregations, ministries and individuals a host of investment options. Our financial ministry partner, the ELCA Federal Credit Union, offers an additional array of financial services.

The faithful stewardship of Lutheran congregations and their members funds our loans. We use the money invested in MIF to finance hundreds of capital projects across the church.

For more information about MIF capabilities, please visit our website, mif.elca.org or contact your Regional Manager the Rev. Richard Wehrs: 708-475-2169 richard.wehrs@elca.org



ELCA Federal Credit Union
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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

The ELCA Federal Credit Union, founded in 2016, provides a full suite of financial products and services to members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA. We are the first of the ELCA's financial ministries to offer loans to individuals. The Credit Union offers a rich variety of products—from savings and checking accounts and CDs ... to loans, lines of credit and credit cards. We serve ministries with deposit accounts, a flexible credit card program, auto loans and unsecured ministry loans up to \$100,000 for small projects such as building repair and purchases. Our strong online presence allows members to access their funds anytime, anywhere—as consumers expect today.



Why choose the ELCA Federal Credit Union?

“To use and share what God has given for the sake of all.”

The ELCA Federal Credit Union supports the ELCA's mission of good stewardship. We provide full services to all ELCA members, congregations and related ministries.

Our mission is to offer the most competitively priced products and services. Because we exist solely to serve our members, we can offer better rates and lower fees than many traditional banks. We have demonstrated success in providing significant savings to our borrowers.

With the church as our sponsor, we operate in ways that are consistent with the church's values. We offer a socially responsible way to do your banking.



ELCA Federal Credit Union
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Throughout the past year, we continued to serve the church and its members.

The Paycheck Protection Program drew to a close in 2021. With assistance from the Mission Investment Fund, we provided loans in 2020 and 2021 to ELCA congregations and ministries that required financial assistance during the pandemic. Covering payroll and operating expenses, these PPP loans proved to be a lifeline to a number of congregations and ministries in need. The loans were particularly meaningful to smaller congregations that didn't qualify for loans from local or national banks. Over the course of the full PPP program, the ELCA FCU provided a total of **360 loans totaling \$13.9 million**. These loans **helped continue payroll for some 2,100 congregation and ministry employees** and continued in-person and virtual worship and ministry services for more than 95,000 church members throughout 2020 and 2021.

In 2021, we ushered in the third cohort of participants in the ELCA's Resourceful Servants program, designed to improve financial wellness and assist rostered leaders in building emergency savings funds. In this matching program, ELCA rostered leaders make ongoing deposits to their Credit Union emergency savings accounts, and our partner MIF matches those funds up to an established amount. Together, we already have served more than **645 rostered ministers** who, collectively, have made emergency savings deposits of more than \$1 million.

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

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



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



Updates from the ELCA Foundation

Synod Assemblies 2022

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

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

The ELCA Foundation exists to:

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

In 2021, the ELCA Foundation and our network of regional gift planners walked alongside 169 donors/families in developing their gift plans, resulting in \$65.4 million in future planned gift commitments. Over \$12 million in these commitments will go to provide direct support to individual ELCA congregations. The network generated \$107.9 million in total gifts and investment assets. This includes new planned gift commitments, \$14.9 million in current gifts, including funded trusts, gift annuities and individual endowments, and \$57.2 million new assets invested in the Ministry Growth Fund (previously known as Fund A). Thank you for the opportunity to work in your synod, trusting your endowment dollars to the ELCA Foundation, and allowing us to work alongside your ministries.

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

Contact your regional gift planner:

Cynthia (Cindy) Halverson
cynthia.halverson@elca.org
(773) 380-2572
[ELCA.org/Foundation](https://elca.org/Foundation)

Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, Mission Endowment Annual Report

Matthew 13:32 : "It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

I love this image of something so small growing into a vibrant support system. This, in many ways is symbolic of your Synod Endowment Fund. Since its planting in 2001, the Fund has continued to sprout new branches and has supported dozens of ministries by:

1. Encouraging whole life stewardship
2. Strengthen and resource the ministry of the synod
3. Enhance the ministry of the synod in addition to, and apart from, its yearly operating budget, with emphasis on, but not limited to:
 - Strengthening congregational vitality
 - Developing ministry for the next generation and
 - Equipping and supporting new leaders through seminary debt assistance, training, and lay leader development

Since inception, the fund has grown to almost a half million dollars and has gifted over two hundred thousand dollars. In the last four years, the Endowment Fund has made gifts to ministries totaling over \$150,000 with \$62,000 of that total given toward Seminary debt assistance.

In 2021, the Endowment Fund provided ministries with \$52,000 in support including:

- \$24,000 in Seminary debt assistance
- \$3,000 to Trinity Lutheran in McKinley for technology improvements
- \$2,500 to North Valley Lutheran for technology improvements
- \$20,000 to Neighbor to Neighbor for staffing and training of leaders throughout the synod
- \$2,500 to Lutheran Planned Giving to support the work of the ELCA Foundation

As you can see, the Endowment Fund has been actively supporting ministries throughout the church by not only speaking of God's Love but putting that Love into action.

The Endowment Fund is only able to do all this great work because of people just like you who chose to make a gift to the Synod Endowment Fund. Because of your generosity, incredible stories are unfolding, and lives are being touched. It is truly God's Work, Our Hands.

The image in Matthew 13:32 gives us a promise of new growth, strength, and support. We know that the church in ten years will look far different than it does today. We know that we need to do more to support those changes within ministries and prepare church leaders for the future. We can do more. Therefore in 2022, the Endowment Fund is announcing a fund appeal with the goal, over the next two years, of adding \$125,000 to the Endowment Fund and \$150,000 in future commitments. This exciting endeavor will be announced at the 2022 Synod Assembly.

Because of your generosity, the smallest of seeds can become the strongest of trees. Thank you for your continued support of the Northwest Synod Mission Endowment Fund.

Respectfully submitted by the Endowment Fund Committee,

Ted Hakala	Jim Christenson
Rev. Gary Hedding	Rev. Nancy Amacher
Jennifer Turcott	Rev. Peter Muschinske
Liz Bartsch	Synod Minister Greg Kaufmann
Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson	



Greetings from the Synodical Women's Organization of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin!

Like so many churches and organizations we too were not able to meet in person as a board during the height of the Pandemic until September 2021. At that time Lori Wells, our current President, resigned and I was appointed by the SWO Board to serve as Interim President until we could convene a convention to elect new officers and conference representatives.

From that meeting we have been able to go forward and:

- Publish our first electronic Northwester Newsletter.
- Seven Lay School Ministry scholarships were given out.
- Katie Wagner and Natilie Wussler seminarian students from our synod each received a \$500 scholarship for 2020-21 and 2121-22 for a total of \$1,000 each.
- Planning a mini convention along with the Chippewa Valley Women's Retreat which is being held on June 9th at Chetek Lutheran Bible Camp, Chetek, Wisconsin. At this event we will vote on SWO executive board officers, conference representatives, 12th Triennial Convention voting members and 2022 SWO budget.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barb Garling
SWO Interim President

Friends of Journey House in the NW Synod of Wisconsin!

The NW Synod of Wisconsin provides \$26,000+ annually, an amount which is over half of our annual budget. An additional \$1400 came directly from the ELCA and another congregation, Our Savior's Lutheran in Beldenville. Acting as agents for the synod, Ezekiel Lutheran Church and Hope Lutheran Church, both in River Falls, provide board members. Those individuals embody your commitment to campus ministry. As an RIC community, Journey House also stands alone as a ministry of affirmation and welcome to all of God's children at UW-River Falls.

Fall semester 2021 felt sort of like [but also not quite like] how campus life, teaching, and learning were before Covid 19 disrupted our lives. We are slowly reconnecting with students on campus and our partner congregations, including Ezekiel and Hope. The students and staff at Journey House continue to learn how God supplies the strength to continue to share the good news of God's unconditional love. We continue to learn how to live out God's welcome to all people.

This past semester the house was open for students two days a week. Because very few students dropped in during those hours, we will be shifting to other arrangements for the house during spring semester. We did have success with a weekly table in the University Center, so that is where we will put our time and energy during spring semester, along with more frequent student organization gatherings in the house. With the help of volunteers from Ezekiel, Hope, and Spirit of Grace, a partner congregation from the Wisconsin UMC, we will also be restarting our Monday evening suppers, with three on the schedule.

This spring, as the only staff member, I will focus on three primary areas: student outreach, collaboration and communication with congregations, and working with board members on development strategies [aka fundraising]. Because my contract is half-time, we hired a part-time Business Manager to take over responsibility for finances. Steve Jelinski, the Business Manager at Ezekiel, will be serving a few hours a month in that role.

If you have any questions, want to invite me to speak to any synod committees or groups, or if any members of the Synod Council or staff would like to join me for tea or lunch next spring, please contact me at 715.642.0109.

Journey House Dates and Events in 2022

- Monday Board Meetings: Jan 10, 14 Feb, 11 April, 13 June
- Monday suppers: 31 January, 7 March, 2 May [which is also the Eid al-Fitr celebration for Muslims]
- Immersion Trip to Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center & Pine Ridge Reservation: March 13-19

*Respectfully submitted,
Deacon David Rask Behling | he/him
Journey House Campus Ministry*



Thank you for taking the time to learn about the ministry of Region 5 as you prepare for and engage in the business of your synod assembly. This synod joins with eleven other synods in Wisconsin, Upper Michigan, Iowa, and Illinois to form Region 5: one of the 9 regions across the ELCA. The ministry of region 5 is roughly divided into 3 categories: convening synod ministry leaders; accompaniment of those preparing to become pastors and deacons; and tending to archival records.

As a region, your synod bishop, staff, and other leaders gather with their colleagues throughout the year. These gatherings are a way for them to support and pray with one another; and to share their ideas, experience and expertise with one another to faithfully minister in your synod. The twelve bishops, along with the regional candidacy manager, make up a regional steering committee. Their collegiality is important in establishing great working partnerships for years to come.

As with all ministry settings, Region 5 ministries shifted in the past 2 years due to the global pandemic. Bishop and their staff have taken this opportunity to connect online across synods more frequently. In 2021 Region 5 gathered for a Bishops and Staff retreat, the first of its kind since 2019. With masks and testing protocols, your synod leaders cherished the time to collaborate, learn, and worship together. The past few years have had a record number of bishop elections in the Region, thus making the in person gathering that much more helpful to the ministry that each synod has in common.

The Region 5 steering committee continued a collaborative grants program established in 2020. Funds are awarded for innovative collaborations involving two or more synods in Region 5. Currently, Region 5 is supporting projects aimed diversity and inclusion. 1) Diversity and Inclusion series of events for adults. 2) Multi-Cultural Youth Leadership Academy. Both projects will involve all three synods in Illinois and Northern Great Lakes Synod in Wisconsin/U.P. of Michigan.

As candidacy and leadership manager for region 5, much of my work is spent working with synod candidacy committees. "Candidacy" is the term used to describe our process of forming and preparing people to serve as a pastor or deacon in the ELCA. Ministry also includes training for new candidacy staff and committees. In 2022 candidacy committee ongoing education will focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

You have a part in raising up, nurturing, and sending those whom God calls into service as pastor and deacon. To that end, I commend to you a resource, "Called to Lead", available online at www.elca.org/resources/candidacy. This discernment guide is for those who are wondering about ministry as a pastor or deacon. As a leader in your congregation, it is also a resource for you as a helpful conversation tool when talking with people you know who have gifts for ministry in the ELCA.

As a region, we also share in the care of archival records. Region 5 archives are housed at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. Our archivist, Sue Dodd, collects records of and responds to inquiries concerning synods, deceased rostered personnel, and dissolved congregations within region 5. This work both preserves institutional records and documents the historical record of the institution within the context of the larger world. As congregations in the region make decisions to close, Sue is a resource to you in determining what records to save and how to transfer them to the archives.

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

Rev. Ramie L. Bakken, Candidacy and Leadership Manager ramie.bakken@elca.org
Sue Dodd, Region 5 Archivist sdodd@wartburgseminary.edu

In partnership with the Synods of
Metropolitan Chicago ~ Northern Illinois ~ Central/Southern Illinois ~ Southeastern Iowa ~ Western Iowa ~ Northeastern Iowa
Northern Great Lakes ~ Northwest Wisconsin ~ East-Central Wisconsin ~ Greater Milwaukee ~ South-Central Wisconsin ~ La Crosse Area

Benefit Stability in Uncertain Times

PORTICO®

Benefit Services | A Ministry of the ELCA

As the pandemic ebbed and flowed in 2021, Portico's benefits remained a reliable constant for ELCA congregations and organizations, affirming the importance of church together.

- ELCA-Primary health benefits helped to lower stress levels and provided virtual access to health care.
- The ELCA Retirement Plan continued to deliver strong investment returns while offering no- or low-cost access to financial planning and coaching services.

In recent years, we've brought added stability to our program by extending quality, cost-effective benefits to more of those who serve. As we include more ELCA-affiliated social ministry organizations, colleges, and universities, as well as full communion partner denominations, we grow the size of our pool, which, in turn, allows us to secure lower administrative fees and innovative benefits not typically available to smaller groups. In this way, we continue our mission to serve those who serve.



The Rev. Jeff Thiemann
President & CEO

Meeting the Need in 2021

869

Plays of New Portico Podcast

Hosted by an ELCA pastor on current issues impacting our faith community.

34%

Chose New Voluntary Benefit

Through our cost-saving vision care services provider.

643

Retired

In Portico's bundled benefits program — Well done, good and faithful servants!

7.3%

Annuity Payment Increase

Approved for ELCA annuitants in 2022.

2,564

Medical Visits via Text

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

8

Large Organizations Joined

In 2021 — 1 ELCA college, 6 ELCA-affiliated social ministries, and 1 full communion partner social ministry.

2,880

Classes Completed in 2021

On Burnalong, Portico's new online fitness and wellness benefit.

76%

More Accessed Financial Coaching

Through LSS of Minnesota in 2021 than during the same period in 2020.

87.8%

Very Satisfied

With our Customer Care Center service.



Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Siblings in Christ of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin,

2021 was many things – frustrating, surprising, heartbreaking, and heartening – to name a few. At Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, however, the word we find ourselves using the most is *transformative*.

Like all of you, we found ourselves facing parallel crises: the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, an influx of vulnerable immigrant children at our border, and the devastating refugee crisis in Afghanistan. While it was an incredibly difficult year in many ways, it was also one of the most inspiring in our 83-year history.

People of faith and communities like yours stepped up in ways that we never could have expected to meet this moment and fulfill our Biblical call to welcome the stranger. In the last year alone:

- **100,000 volunteers** signed up to support our refugee and immigrant neighbors
- Supporters provided more than **\$30,000 worth** of essential items like cell phones and gift cards to our Afghan brothers and sisters
- **14,000+ generous donors** opened their hearts to the ministry of welcome
- LIRS welcomed more than **10,500 Afghans** through our nationwide resettlement network
- Our team assisted in reunifying or placing nearly **33,000 children** in loving homes
- We sent nearly **20,000** holiday cards and **1,750+ gifts** to families affected by immigration detention
- LIRS launched several exciting new programs and offices, such as field offices in Northern Virginia and Fargo, ND; the New American Cities economic empowerment program; Mental Health services for refugee children and families, and more.

Our resettlement and immigration services were complemented by our ever-growing slate of annual programs, which offer the public opportunities to **ADAPT**: Act, Donate, Advocate, Pray, and Teach. We invite you to engage with LIRS, as an individual or community, through one of our five key programs:

- [Stand Up Speak Up](#) – Our interfaith advocacy program organized each spring
- [Gather](#) - A cultural education program hosted in the fall
- [Hope for the Holidays™](#) - LIRS' flagship winter program for supporting families impacted by immigration detention
- [EMMAUS Congregational Network](#) - Our network of congregations who receive resources and support from LIRS
- [LIRS Ambassador Network](#) - A community of change-makers from around the US

In 2022, we are deepening our commitment to the work of welcome and believe that together, we can realize Matthew 25:35 in communities across the United States. We are so grateful for your astounding support and look forward to welcoming our newest neighbors alongside you.

In peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristin Witte".

Dr. Kristin Witte, Director for Outreach

LSS Celebrates 140 Years!

2022 commemorates 140 years of Servant-Leadership for LSS. It's a celebration of vision, faith, courage, growth, innovation, partnership and impact. Everyone is invited to join in the festivities! The many activities and events planned for quarter one are highlighted below and designed to fit your life.

Whether you have just 140 seconds, 14.0 minutes or 1.40 hours – we hope you will find some time to Act, Serve and Lead in our love of shared ministry, advocacy and action! We will add more ideas throughout the year, so please visit our web page www.lsswis.org/140 often.

LSS WELCOMES REFUGEES FROM AROUND THE WORLD AND RESPONDS TO AFGHAN EVACUEE CRISIS



We've all been there—at a point in our lives when crisis occurred and someone helped us rebuild from the chaos. It's the beauty of God's work in action. And when members from the Northwest Synod of WI heard the news about those evacuated from Afghanistan they responded, "How can we help?" As a result a Co-Sponsor group was formed and received special approval to partner with LSS to serve Afghans in the Eau Claire area. Supporters from all over WI and the UP also helped in various ways. Generous donations of items, financial support to cover immediate expenses, and volunteered time all helped LSS welcome nearly 200 people from Afghanistan and almost 100 refugees from around the world in six months. We continue to stay tuned to crises in Ukraine and other areas and are ready to serve when called upon for this important ministry. Visit our website for the latest updates.



Contact

Sarah Halstead

Church Relations Liaison
sarah.halstead@lsswis.org
(920) 213-6078
www.lsswis.org

OUR VISION

Healthy communities filled with people using their God-given gifts to serve.

OUR MISSION

Act compassionately.
Serve humbly.
Lead courageously.



92% say
we improved
the quality of
their
lives



393
Volunteer
Hours

758
Employees

92% overall client satisfaction



Individuals Served
23,743



Served **614**
communities



38 board members
served 555.5 hours



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

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

www.lopepw.org (Search LOPPW on Facebook)

Submitted by Rev. Cindy Crane, Director cindyc@lopepw.org

Thank you for supporting the ELCA's advocacy ministry in Wisconsin with support to the UP! We especially express gratitude for Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson, the synod staff, and your dedicated NWSW representatives, Ms. Joyce Anderson and Rev. Lucas Ladnier, on the LOPPW council.

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

- Calling for an End to Hunger
- Addressing the Crisis of Human Trafficking
- Caring for God's Creation
- Supporting Immigration Reform
- Calling for Juvenile Justice Reform

Outreach: We reach our members via online action alerts, resources, weekly reflections, monthly updates with special interviews, and online and in-person trainings. In the last year, we led several virtual presentations and a few in-person workshops, including within the NWSW. In addition, we trained volunteers to lead trainings, and strategized outreach to youth.

Young Adults and Youth: Because several young people express interest in how to live out their faith as part of a public church, LOPPW has worked at creating space for youth voices. We received a full-time hunger advocacy fellow for 2020-2021 thanks to a grant from ELCA World Hunger. Kyle Minden was LOPPW's second fellow; our first was in 2018/19.

New: In 2021 and 2022, LOPPW facilitated several meetings with youth workers from all six synods. We are very grateful to Deacon Laura Ramlow for her leadership on our team! As a result, we have our first high school online events planned for 2022. We are also grateful to Deacon Ramlow for the graphics she designed for advertising our first events.

Examples of Advocacy on our Priorities in 2021

Calling for an End to Hunger: We supported an extension of the federal Child Tax Credit.

Addressing the Crisis of Human Trafficking: We supported legislation that funded the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families to do the following: 1. Prevent sex trafficking of children and youth. 2. Provide treatment and services for documented and suspected victims of child and youth sex trafficking. 3. Increase youth access to housing. 4. Prevent and reduce the incidence of youth alcohol and other drug use and abuse.

Caring for God's Creation: Our advocacy day, "Faith Advocacy for Climate Justice," on March 18, 2021, drew 88 participants. Our keynote speaker was Lt. Governor Barnes. Other speakers included Lutherans Restoring Creation Executive Director Phoebe Morad and Chief

Meteorologist and ELCA Member Bob Lindmeier, and a speaker from Renew Wisconsin. Most of the people remained for our post event with the Wisconsin 7, seven people, led by an ELCA pastor, who fasted for climate justice for 22 days. Our planning group included ELCA members from each of our six synods, including Rev. Tamra Harder from Faith Lutheran in Cameron, and leaders from three statewide interfaith groups. We advocated on renewable energy, grants for farmers to manage pollutants, and increased funding to support jobs in renewable energy.

Supporting Juvenile Justice Reform: We started a coalition that focuses on returning youth 17 years old to the juvenile justice system.

Immigration: We supported the Welcoming Evacuees Coming from Overseas to Mitigate Effects of Displacement Act of 2021, also known as the WELCOMED Act. We also have been supporting the Afghan Adjustment Act, which would assist Afghan refugees to secure permanent residency in the United States.

Other Advocacy: Even if an issue is not one of our priorities, we can give guidance on how to organize and advocate. In 2021, Rev. Peter Jonas from Trempealeau County who was already knowledgeable about 2nd Amendment Sanctuary cities/counties asked LOPPW for guidance in how to advocate against his county becoming a 2nd Amendment Sanctuary. Several local clergy and lay leaders organized, and in the end, the county dropped their proposal. Early in 2022, we interviewed Rev. Jonas and Rev. Jeff Wild (Madison) on Wednesday Noon Live.

Wednesday Noon Live: In 2021, our monthly FB live updates have included interviews with Attorney Ruth Ivory-Moore, ELCA Director of Environmental and Corporate Responsibility and Rev. Jonathan Barker (GMS) on climate change; Mr. Vance Blackfox, ELCA Desk Director for American Indian Alaska Native Tribal Nations; Mr. Ramiah Whiteside, a Milwaukee resident who was directly impacted by being tried in an adult court at age 17; Attorney Jan Miyasaki (Project Respect) on COVID's impact on sex trafficking; Mr. John Johnson, ELCA Program Director for Domestic Policy on supporting people experiencing poverty and the White House visit of Bishop Eaton and Bishop Curry (Episcopal Church).

Partners

LOPPW's director is on the steering team of the Wisconsin Climate Table and Raise the Age Coalition. LOPPW is also involved with coalitions related to hunger and anti-sex trafficking.

Join the Advocacy Network



Please consider going to loppw.org and click on to *Join the Advocacy Network* at the bottom right of our Home page. We'd love to share our Monday reflections, monthly updates, and action alerts with you.

Thank you again for your support as we continue working on our five priorities, broadening our outreach to adults, and creating more opportunities for youth. God's blessings!

