



Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Synod Diversity Plan

S6.04***This Synod shall establish processes*** that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10% of its assemblies, 6 councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

†S6.04.01. It is the goal of this Synod that 10% of the membership of Synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards and/or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

†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 youth and young adults.
The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal.

Where were we?

In the past this synod has struggled and failed to achieve the constitutional requirement of 10% of the members of all boards and committees of this synod being persons of color and/or whose primary language is other than English. We had no particular plan in place other than to ask the nominating committee to do its best. That did not work and the language in the constitution was not helpful. At the Synod Assembly, *Justice and Joy*, April 17, 2021, the resolution to change the constitutional bylaw was passed. This resolution removed specific language about diversity and simply requires that the Synod have a plan to achieve the 10% diversity goal.

Where are we?

In S9.03 the constitution states that there will be a Nominating Committee appointed by the synod council.

S9.03. There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of 7 members who shall be appointed by the Synod Council to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. This Committee shall prepare a slate of nominees for each election to be held by the Synod Assembly, except as other-wise provided in this Constitution and Bylaws. Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections.

It has been difficult to find members to serve on the nominating committee who both knew leaders across the whole synod and understood the need to look for diverse candidates.

We have seven conferences and seven Deans or Co-Deans. It is the staff recommendation that the Conference Deans function as the synod nominating committee. They are serving in the area, have a working knowledge of all the congregations and regular contact with rostered and lay leaders in their conference.

As rostered leaders, the conference deans have opportunity for diversity/racial equity training and are in regular conversation with the bishop and synod staff about the diversity goals. The staff recommends that the Conference Deans serve as the synod nominating committee.

Part 1 of THE PLAN-THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Engage intentionally with the Deans through their work as a nominating committee on the diversity goals of the synod. The synod council will vote to approve the conference deans as the synod's nominating committee.

Where are we going?

- † Create The PLAN to increase diversity among members of the synod council, synod assembly and other boards and committee. The outline/first draft of a plan will be presented to the synod council. Sept 2022.

The Challenges

- † We recognize that we do not have many authentic relationships with the members of our synod who are persons of color or whose primary language is other than English.
- † At the moment, it appears we do not have the capacity to meet the 10% requirement. We are concerned about tokenism, appearing to simply fill slots meet the quota without an authentic relationship or leadership skills.

How will we get there?

PART 2 OF THE PLAN-CREATE CAPACITY

The bishop will continue to lead conversations with the staff, conference deans, synod justice team and synod council to gather thoughts and insights about how we might create capacity for more diverse leadership in our synod. The following are initial steps that may increase our capacity for identifying more diverse leadership.

- † Recommend all rostered leaders and SAMs take the three part Intercultural Diversity Inventory training to be completed to comply with the Racial Justice Education Resolution passed at Synod Assembly 4/17/21.
- † Use the synod's Racial Equity Statement as a teaching document widely across the synod.
- † Grow relationships with members of our congregations who are persons of color and whose primary language is other than English. Introduce the concept of Marnita's or Katie's Table to the synod. This is a series of meals, with intentional conversation, for members of the local Lutheran church and the members of multicultural community. [FAQ | Marnita's Table \(marnitastable.org\)](#)
- † Grow relationships with members of our congregations who are persons of color and whose primary language is other than English by working with our Latinx ministry, Neighbor-to-Neighbor to provide antiracism training in our congregations. [Northwest Synod of Wisconsin | Neighbor to Neighbor \(nswi.org\)](#)
- † Provide leadership training for BIPOC youth and youth whose primary language is other than English. Encourage BIPOC youth to serve on the Synod Youth Board, attend synod youth events, Bible Camps, and The Gathering.
- † Invite youth to attend The Gathering's Multicultural Youth Leadership Event in Minneapolis July 2022. Encourage BIPOC youth in our congregations to attend MYLE by offering full or partial scholarships. Set a goal of 7-10 to attend from our synod, at least one from each conference. Allies, friends who are not BIPOC can also attend. Adopted, biracial, first nation youth, and friends of members of our church are invited. Sustained extra effort will be devoted to recruiting and communicating about the MYLE event by the synod Gathering Team and synod staff. [ELCA Youth Gathering](#)

Are we getting there?

Bench mark 1: One out of ten voting members at the synod assembly will be BIPOC primary language other than English. **2024**

Bench mark 2: 10 high school aged students attend MYLE and The Gathering July 2022

Bench mark 3: All actively serving Rostered Leaders and SAMs (150) participate in IDI or equivalent anti-racism or diversity training by 2024

Bench mark 4: Racial Equity Statement is highlighted on our synod website. Create a study guide explore ways to live out this aspirational document Oct 2022

Bench mark 5: One out of 10 members of the synod council and other standing committees of the synod will be BIPOC or whose primary language is other than English. 2024

Synod Council Approved on 9/25/2021 with edits