

EMPOWERED

2024 Synod Assembly

SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 2024 • LORD OF LIFE IN FAIRFAX, VA

[date], 2024

From: Barbara A. Bilodeau, Secretary

The Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, ELCA

To: Ministers of Word and Sacrament The President, Gettysburg College
Ministers of Word and Service The President, Roanoke College
Congregation Presidents The President, Thiel College
Unit Chairs The Coordinator, ELCA Region 8
Synod Council The Rev. Alex Stall, Assembly Coordinator
The President, United Lutheran Seminary
The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, Presiding Bishop, ELCA
Regional Representative, Portico Benefit Services

According to S7.13 of the Synod Constitution, “Notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be given by the secretary.” As such, I announce that the 2024 Synod Assembly will be held on Saturday, June 1 at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax, VA 22032.

All ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service on the roster of the Synod, except those who are on leave from call, are expected to be in attendance. If you are rostered with the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod and cannot attend the assembly, you must send a letter or email to the Bishop addressed to the Secretary of the Synod requesting to be excused.

Congregations are reminded to consult their congregation constitution with reference to those sections pursuant to election or designation of lay voting members to a Synod Assembly.

Chapter 7 of the Synod Constitution deals with the Synod Assembly. According to that chapter, sections S7.21.c, S7.21.A92, and S7.21.02:

- A minimum of one lay member elected by each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected by each congregation with more than 175 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 seek to ensure that at least 45 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be women and at least 45 percent shall be men. (S7.21.c)

- For the allocation of lay members of the Synod Assembly the most current church body statistics are the basis for determining baptized members. To achieve the proper ratio, each congregation of 450 baptized members will be entitled to an additional voting member and another voting member for each full 250 members over 450. (S7.21.A92)
- Congregations with a baptized membership which consists of at least 10 percent persons of color and/or whose primary language is other than English will be entitled to one additional member. That member will be a person of color or whose primary language is other than English. (S7.21.02)

While the Constitution requires a *minimum* of one voting member per congregation, †S7.21 indicates that the membership of the Synod Assembly should be composed of at least 60 percent laypersons. Towards that end, the Synod Assembly invites a minimum of *two* voting members per congregation. *Congregations are strongly encouraged to consider persons of color, youth, or young adults aged 30 and under in their voting members as well as the gender balance referred to in S7.21C (above).* Congregations may receive scholarships at 50% of the Assembly fee to encourage participation. Requests can be made to the Synod Treasurer, Julie Hamre, jhamre@metrodcelca.org.

Based on current congregational data (latest year of congregation report submitted is in parentheses following congregation name) and fulfilling the above-stated sections of the synod constitution, the following allocation of lay voting members of the 2024 Synod Assembly is shown below. The asterisk (*) indicates one additional member has been added for congregations fulfilling S7.21.02, but only if that member is a person of color and/or whose primary language is other than English).

<u>D.C. Conference</u>	Augustana (2022)	4*
	Christ (2022)	4*
	First Trinity (2022)	3*
	Georgetown (2022)	4*
	Grace (2022)	3*
	Holy Comforter (2019)	3*
	Luther Place (2022)	4*
	Oromo Evangelical Lutheran (2022)	3*
	Our Redeemer (2018)	3*
	Peace, Bermuda (2022)	3*
	Reformation (2020)	4*
	St. Matthew (2022)	3*
	St. Paul's (2022)	<u>5</u>
		46
<u>Fairfax Conference</u>	Abiding Presence, Burke (2019)	4
	Bethel, Manassas (2022)	4
	Bethlehem, Fairfax (2022)	3
	Christ, Fairfax (2022)	2

Covenant, Dale City (2022)	3
Epiphany, Dale City (2021)	2
Good Shepherd, Woodbridge (2022)	4
Lord of Life, Fairfax (2022)	6*
River of Grace, Manassas (2021)	3*
Shepherd of the Hills, Haymarket (2022)	4
St. Mark, Springfield (2022)	3
St. Matthew, Woodbridge (2022)	4
	42

Maryland
Conference

Abiding Presence, Beltsville (2022)	3*
All Saints, Bowie (2022)	3*
Good Samaritan, Lanham (2022)	3*
Good Samaritan, Lexington Park (2022)	2
Grace, Bowie (2022)	3
Grace, Ft. Washington (2022)	3*
Hope, Clinton (2022)	3*
Hope, College Park (2022)	3*
Peace, Waldorf (2022)	3*
St. John, Riverdale (2022)	3*
St. Michael's Truth (2022)	3*
St. Nicholas, Prince Frederick (2022)	2
Zion, Takoma Park (2021)	4*
	38

Montgomery
Conference

Christ, Bethesda (2021)	3*
Christ the Servant, Gaithersburg (2022)	3*
Emmanuel, Bethesda (2021)	6
Epiphany, Burtonsville (2021)	3*
Good Shepherd, Gaithersburg (2021)	7*
Living Faith, Rockville (2022)	3*
Prince of Peace, Gaithersburg (2022)	4
St. John's, Rockville (2022)	2
St. Luke, Silver Spring (2022)	9*
St. Luke's, Derwood (Redland) (2022)	3*
St. Stephen, Silver Spring (2022)	3*
Trinity, North Bethesda (2022)	4*
	50

Potomac
Conference

Advent, Arlington (2022)	3*
Epiphany, Alexandria (2022)	2
Faith, Arlington (2022)	3
Good Shepherd, Alexandria (2022)	3
Holy Trinity, Falls Church (2022)	4*
Hope, Annandale (2022)	3*
Nativity, Alexandria (2022)	2

	Peace, Alexandria (2022)	3
	Resurrection, Arlington (2022)	<u>4</u>
		27
<u>Virginia</u>	Bethel, Lovettsville (2021)	2
<u>Conference</u>	Christ the King, Great Falls (2022)	4
	Christ the Servant, Reston (2022)	2
	Community, Sterling (2022)	3
	Emmanuel, Vienna (2022)	5
	Holy Cross, Herndon (2022)	3
	Holy Trinity, Leesburg (2022)	4
	King of Kings, Fairfax (2022)	4
	New Jerusalem, Lovettsville (2022)	3
	Redeemer, McLean (2022)	7
	St. Andrew, Centreville (2022)	4*
	Zion, Lovettsville (2022)	<u>2</u>
		43
<u>Voting Members</u>	Ministers of Word and Sacrament (active)	86
<u>Summary:</u>	Ministers of Word and Sacrament (retired)	85
	Ministers of Word and Service (active)	7
	Ministers of Word and Service (retired)	7
	Lay Members	246
	Synod Council Lay Members	11
	Total	442

Registration and materials for the 2024 Synod Assembly can be found on-line at <https://metrodcelca.org/upcoming-events/2024assembly/>. Early Bird Registration will be available through April 1; regular registration will be available through Monday, May 1. Late registration closes after Monday, May 1. It is the responsibility of congregations and voting members to download their Assembly materials. Persons attending the assembly who are not voting members should register as a Visitor.

Schedule: A draft agenda will be made available later this spring on the website. However, please plan for a full day agenda from 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM.

Blessings,



Barbara A. Bilodeau
Secretary of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, ELCA



Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

EMPOWERED

2024 Synod Assembly

SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 2024 • LORD OF LIFE IN FAIRFAX, VA

BLESSING FOR SYNOD ASSEMBLY AND VOTING MEMBERS

A Reading from Ephesians

“I pray that God, out of the riches of divine glory, will strengthen you inwardly with power through the working of the Spirit. May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, so that you, being rooted and grounded in love, will be able to grasp fully the breadth, length, height and depth of Christ’s love and, with all God’s holy ones, experience this love that surpasses all understanding, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

To God—whose power now at work in us can do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine— to God be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus through all generations, world without end! Amen.”

The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation by Priests for Equality

Let us pray.

Eternal and Almighty God,

You root and ground us in love. Enable us in our ministry and life together through the work of the Holy Spirit. Make us ready to live the gospel and eager to do your will.

Grant us curiosity and compassion in our community, and continue to guide us in our work beyond our imaginations to grasp the extensive reach of Christ’s love. Through your breath,

Renew our strength

Provide your blessing on those gathering for the Synod Assembly and help us all to work together in ways that provide love and nourishment for the whole body.

Empower us for the journey ahead so we may engage the challenges and opportunities for our communities and this Synod with joy and hope.

Through your breath,

Renew our strength

Breathe on us and strength us with love and life for our communities, the world, and all of creation. Let this Synod Assembly be a time of empowerment - to confront and confess the difficult work we are called into, to nourish our faith, and to be sent renewed for such a time as this.



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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Today, we give thanks for those who will be sent from this congregation to serve as voting members to the Metro D.C. Synod Assembly on June 1st.

Bless *(insert names of voting members)* as they carry with them our prayers and blessings for the Metro D.C. Synod. In the moments of worship, fellowship and plenary, give them wisdom and courage to listen and to dream, to lament and to hope. May the insights and experiences they have during this gathering empower us for our shared mission together.

In all this we pray. **Amen.**

2024 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

RULES OF PROCEDURE

01. To the extent consistent with the following rules of procedure, *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern.
02. The Synod Assembly approves, upon the recommendation of the Synod Council, that a meeting of the Synod Assembly take place by means of a hybrid format in which some voting members are physically present while other voting members use an online meeting platform (such as Zoom webinar). This platform must allow that all participants who are entitled to voice and vote (whether physically present or using the online platform) can communicate with others in the meeting, in accordance with the Synod's governing documents and applicable Pennsylvania statutes.

Voice and Vote

03. All persons under call and retired on the roster of this Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, in attendance at this assembly, shall have voice and vote at the proceedings of this assembly. All interim pastors serving congregations of this synod, at the time of the assembly, shall have voice and vote.
04. Alternate lay members shall be seated if the regular lay members are unable to serve but only if any such alternate member is registered no later than the deadline established by the registrar.
05. Persons giving reports during this assembly's proceedings who are not members shall be given voice, no vote, during that portion of the assembly.
06. The parliamentarian appointed by the Synod Council shall be given voice, no vote (unless a member) during the proceedings of this assembly.
07. The Presiding Bishop, or his or her representative(s), and ecumenical representatives shall be given voice, no vote during the proceedings of this assembly.
08. Duly elected and serving members of the Synod Council shall have both voice and vote at the synod assembly, in accordance with **S7.28** of the constitution of the synod.

Quorum

09. One-half (1/2) of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.

Proxy

10. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of this synod.

Items of Business

11. With the consent of this assembly, the chair shall have the authority to call items of business before the assembly in whatever order is deemed by the chair most expedient for the conduct of assembly business. The chair shall limit discussions to items germane to the issues before the assembly.

Resolutions

12. Resolutions to be considered by the assembly shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Synod. In order to assure the resolution going to the floor of this assembly, such resolutions shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Synod prior to the promulgated deadline, which shall not be less than 30 days prior to the beginning of the assembly. The Secretary shall refer them to the Committee on Reference and Counsel. The Committee shall report to this assembly with its recommendations regarding the resolutions submitted, which shall constitute a motion to the floor of this assembly.
13. Any resolutions submitted after the deadline are not guaranteed a place on the agenda and must receive a two-thirds vote in order to be heard. Any resolution not receiving a two-thirds vote will be referred to the Synod Council for disposition.
14. Multimedia presentations will not be part of floor debate on resolutions.

Motions

15. All main motions, to be made, shall be in writing and presented to the Secretary of the Synod immediately (Constitution and Bylaw amendments require five (5) signatures of members).
16. A member who has spoken on the pending question(s) may not move the previous question(s).
17. A motion to end debate by moving the previous question shall apply only to the immediately preceding motion. A motion to end debate on all matters on the floor or more than the immediately pending question is not in order.
18. When a substitute motion is made, secondary amendments may be offered first to the original motion. After all secondary amendments to the original motion have been disposed of, secondary amendments to the substitute motion may be offered. When all amendments to the substitute motion have been disposed

of, the vote shall be taken on whether the substitute motion is to be substituted as the original motion or be rejected.

19. Debate shall be limited to two (2) minutes per person, per speech.

Elections

20. Ballots shall be accepted only from those members who are seated within designated areas of the assembly hall and have been validated as voting members.
 - a. In cases where electronic voting is used, access to voting software shall be granted only to, and may be used only by, such validated voting members.
 - b. In the event that access to voting software is unavailable for any reason, paper ballots will be supplied to voting members.
21. Nominations from the floor shall be accompanied by the copy-ready vita and the consent of the person to be nominated, both to be submitted to the secretary at the time of the nomination.

Minutes

22. Minutes of this assembly shall be available for review by the Synod Council by the September 30 immediately following the assembly.



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

April 8, 2024

“We have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them” (1 John 4:16).

Dear friends in Christ,

Thank you for your faithful and continuing partnership as we work together to help people discover the difference God’s grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.

Because God’s grace and love have made a difference in our daily lives, we want others to experience that same love and acceptance. There are many in our communities who feel alone and are searching for love and connection. Sometimes we feel at a loss to know how to make a difference — what do we say, what can we do, how do we share God’s love?

You share this love every day. When you invite others to join in your faith community, to worship, to participate in service activities, to pray together, to share their story — these are all ways our neighbors experience the love of God in community.

There are examples of God’s love throughout our church as we work for healing, peace and justice to make a difference in the lives of those around us.

The Spirit is calling us to move together as one church to share the grace and love we experience every day. May God bless your time together.

In Christ,

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



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

8 de abril de 2024

“Y nosotros hemos llegado a saber y creer que Dios nos ama. Dios es amor. El que permanece en amor, en Dios permanece y Dios en él” (1 Juan 4:16).

Estimados(as) amigos(as) en Cristo:

Gracias por su fiel y continua colaboración en tanto que trabajamos juntos para ayudar a la gente a descubrir la diferencia que la gracia y el amor de Dios en Cristo hacen en todas las personas y la creación.

Debido a que la gracia y el amor de Dios han marcado la diferencia en nuestra vida diaria, queremos que otros experimenten ese mismo amor y aceptación. Hay muchos que se sienten solos en nuestras comunidades y andan buscando amor y conexión. A veces nos es difícil saber cómo marcar la diferencia: ¿qué decimos, ¿qué podemos hacer?, ¿cómo compartimos el amor de Dios?

Ustedes comparten este amor todos los días. Cuando invitan a otros a unirse a su comunidad de fe, a adorar, a participar en actividades de servicio, a orar juntos, a compartir la historia de ellos —todas estas son maneras en que nuestro prójimo experimenta el amor de Dios en comunidad.

Hay ejemplos del amor de Dios en toda nuestra iglesia cuando luchamos por sanidad, paz y justicia para marcar la diferencia en las vidas de quienes nos rodean.

El Espíritu nos está llamando a movernos juntos como una sola iglesia para compartir la gracia y el amor que experimentamos todos los días. Que Dios bendiga el tiempo que pasarán juntos.

En Cristo,

La Rvda. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Obispa Presidente
Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en América



2024 Report of the Bishop

Grace and Peace to you from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:

As we review our year of ministry together and consider the year ahead, allow me to take a different approach to this report. I'd like to share some of my observations and discernment as we enter into our fifth year of ministry together. To do so I will take some risks and invite us to witness one of Jesus' most vulnerable moments. I'm speaking of his authentic response to the call he was empowered to inflesh and embody.

In Matthew Chapter 26 after sharing the last meal with his disciples and Peter vows he will never desert or deny him, Jesus goes with all his disciples to a place called Gethsemane.

Jesus knows where his journey will lead and in his distress, the text says, that he becomes grieved and agitated. Ultimately confessing, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." He goes a little farther from them and throws himself on the ground praying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want."

After an hour in this particular spirit of prayer, he takes a moment to meet with his disciples and finds them sleeping. He reprimands them and goes back to pray a similar prayer, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done. This dynamic happens a third and final time, where Jesus prays, reaches out to his sleeping disciples, and returns to pray the same words, "if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want."

Three times, face to the ground, grieved and agitated, Jesus pleads with the Creator, "must I really drink from this cup, which will inevitably lead to my demise? Is there any other way...?"

The symbolism of the cup points to the practice in royal courts where the king would have a cup-bearer. Because of the constant fear of plots against the king the cup-bearer would guard against poison in the king's cup and was sometimes required to swallow some of the drink before serving it to the king.

For Jesus there is no guessing game. He's fully aware of the poison in his cup; he knows he will be persecuted and ultimately die. Against his personal desire, he is called and empowered to drink from *this* cup.

There is something about drinking from a cup when you know that it's content leads to death. One would have to believe that the grief and sting of death will not have the final word...

Since September of 2019, I've had the honor of ordaining seventeen new deacons and pastors in our synod and we have installed thirty-four new ministers into their congregational settings. Five of those ordinations and six of those installations happened since we last gathered as an assembly in June of 2023. This means that 47% of the congregations in our synod have experienced significant transitions in leadership in just over four years- and I'm only reporting the transitions that required synod office involvement. One hundred percent of the congregations in our synod have been in consistent discernment; seeking the Spirit's guidance on how to be church today for the sake of tomorrow. These transitions and consistent discernment have happened in the midst of global pandemics: COVID, White Supremacy, and the Climate Emergency. They happened, and continue to happen in the midst of protests, and overstimulating news of civil unrest, war, genocide, along with the invitation and permission to become more and more politically polarized. They happened, and are happening, while we manage our grief of loss and are agitated by the unavoidable changes and shifts in life and ministry. Transitions are happening, ministry is happening, Church is happening in the midst of these threatening realities. And on this journey of faith we've discovered death to what once was for the sake of resurrection to what can be.

Like Jesus, some of us may have pleaded along the way and some of us may continue to plead with God, "let this cup pass from me." We confess, "We don't want change. We don't want another transition. We don't want to address the issues that underlie the realities that are hurting us. Oh please, God, we don't want to have another congregational meeting. We don't want to make this hard decision that will inevitably bring an end to our cherished and beloved expression of church."

This list of declarations; this list of what we don't want to do, live through, or endure is much of the work we've been called to this year; it's the work that we're called to each year before now and each year ahead; it's a call to death for the sake of resurrection; a call to employ our faith and believe that the hardship, the trial, the sting of loss and grief and discomfort, will not have the last word.

To be clear, the cup we are called and empowered to drink from is not Jesus' cup. Jesus drank his cup with great grief and agitation and his cup led to his death. It also led to his conquering death and the grave. His cup led to Easter morning where liberation, transformation, freedom, and new life became a promise for all God's beloved in the now and in eternity. His cup was his cup to bear.

Our cup, which we may also drink from with great grief and agitation, leads to a release of control, of fruitless nostalgia of the way things have always been. It will lead to dying to the idols we have created and worshiped for far too long: our buildings, our legacy, our possessions, the number of people, and programs, and money we have or don't have.

Our cup leads to the death of models or ambitions of ecclesial success that do not speak to or nurture a depth of faith and trust in the One who is lord over it all. Our cup empowers us to die to the expressions of church that no longer serve us and get in the way of living and leading in ways that are bold and courageous; in ways that require the audacity to believe that, “we *can* do all things through Christ who strengthens us” because in Christ, “we *are* the light of the world;” “we *are* the salt of the earth;” because “we have been clothed with power from on high” (Luke:24:49); We *have* been clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit.

These past years Jesus has given us permission to respond authentically to the call to death for the sake of resurrection. We have permission to throw ourselves on the ground in grief and agitation praying to our Creator, “Must we drink from this cup? Is there any other way?”

In the years ahead, Jesus will continue to give us this permission with the reminder that when we drink from the cup while knowing its content we are drinking from the cup in faith, believing that the grief and sting of death will not have the final word. Liberation, transformation, freedom, and new life await. We are drinking from the cup that is ours to bear; one that leads to our embodiment of resurrection hope in a world that is fractured and bleeding; a world in crisis and in need of a Church that has the audacity to believe that it has been called and clothed with power from on high for such a time as this; a time and season that requires death to all which keeps us from the fullness of life and insists upon resurrection to a new, inspired, and empowered life.

As we go forth in ministry together, may we observe the Spirit's invitation to take risks and let go, even as we discern and question, “Is there another way?”

And may we grow each day more and more audacious, bold, and courageous in response to the demands of the gospel for such a time as this.

With God's help and in Jesus' name. Amen.

En Cristo,



The Rev. Leila M. Ortiz
Bishop



Pastor Sarah Garrett Krey
Assistant to the Bishop for Mobility and Candidacy
Metro D.C. Synod Assembly Report – 2024
"EmPOWERed"

Beloved all,

As our synod has prepared to gather as the body of Christ around the theme of being "Empowered," I have been reflecting on the ideas of empowerment and power at their most basic levels. Specifically, what forces or energy sources give us the power to move, act, and be in the world? What is it that drives us? Propels us forward?

As a general rule, I try not to ask anyone to do mental exercises that I'm not willing to do myself first. So, I decided to take stock of some of my own recent work and ministry and pay attention to what has been driving me as of late – what I have been empowered by as I seek to live into this call to the Metro D.C. Synod. And what I found was, unsurprisingly, convicting.

Because I can very easily proclaim that what drives me – what compels me to engage in this vocation is the grace of God in Christ Jesus and the way that Christ's love liberates me to love and serve others. That is why I am here among you and serving in this particular expression of church.

But when I dug a little deeper and got really honest with myself, I discovered that that driving force was also tangled up in some other motivations. Some other things that were propelling me forward.

I recognized that I was often being propelled by fear, anxiety, and a sense of urgency. I was more frequently checking my email late into the night and working on sabbath days for fear of disappointing someone or to meet a deadline in a process where there actually are no predictable timelines.

I found, too, that I was often driven by attaching my worthiness to my productivity level. I needed to prove and tell people how hard I was working, how many of our 72 congregations I had visited, and how many meetings, phone calls, emails, and miles on the road I had logged. I was driven by the thought that the more I produced and the more busy I was, the more clearly I was called to and effective in my work.

Perhaps most sadly of all, I noticed times when the forces driving me were guilt and shame – where I felt like I had to be repentant for simply being a human who cannot be all things to all people at all times.

I have a sneaking suspicion that I am not the only person in our Metro D.C. Synod who has, at times, felt themselves being driven by fear or anxiety or guilt or an insatiable need to be productive. In fact, I know I'm not the only one because I know many of you – I have sat with you around conference tables and on Zoom calls, and I have spent time with deacons and pastors, seminarians, and church councils and call committees. I



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have prayed with you about the joys and the challenges of your ministry and wondered with you about where God is leading you as individuals and congregations. So, I know that I am not alone in finding that although we strive to keep our eyes on Jesus, our true driving force, we sometimes find ourselves motivated by other things.

Here's the thing, dear church: Fear, urgency, productivity, and guilt are all pretty effective in their ability to drive us. But effective does not necessarily mean life-giving. Effective does not mean faithful.

This year's theme of our synod assembly is a reminder to me that we can be empowered, driven, and propelled by many forces – some more helpful than others. My prayer for each of us this assembly is that we might take stock of what has been driving us as people of faith lately – and if what's driving us isn't Good News – then perhaps we can take this assembly as an opportunity to remember what it means to be empowered by the Holy Spirit for the sake of the Gospel.

To that end, I'd like to share with you where I have seen Spirit-empowered, faithful ministry in the life of our synod over the last year.

As Assistant to the Bishop for Mobility and Candidacy, I have the privilege of walking alongside individuals and congregations in seasons of discernment, transition, and change. And in the midst of that, it's easy to be driven by anxiety and urgency – particularly when we don't know what comes next. But I am daily inspired by the faith and courage I get to bear witness to in this work.

Our synod Discernment Cohorts have provided a space for individuals to engage in intentional discernment about their vocation. It has been a joy to walk alongside participants from Metro D.C. and Virginia Synods and witness their courage and faith as they ask the bold and often frightening question: "Where and to what is God calling me?" Some participants complete the discernment cohort and decide to enter into the candidacy process to pursue formal rostered ministry in the ELCA. Others complete the cohort with greater clarity about serving as faithful lay leaders in their contexts. All of our cohort participants, along with their discernment partners, fill me with hope at the possibilities that emerge when we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. I am grateful to my partners in facilitating these cohorts: Ms. Julie Jackson of our Metro D.C. Synod Staff, Pr. Kelly Bayer Derrick, and Pr. Alex Zuber of the Virginia Synod, who partner with us in this work.

For those who have discerned a call to rostered ministry, our Synod Candidacy Committee stands ready to accompany and encourage candidates in their formation. In the last year, the candidacy committee has entranced six new candidates, endorsed 3 to go on internship, and approved 1 for ordained ministry. I am immensely grateful for the diligent work of our synod's Candidacy Committee and for the leadership of our chair, Mr. Don Mullins, as well as Pr. Becky Resch, the Candidacy and Leadership Manager for Regions 7 and 8, Pr. Kate Costa, who serves as the chaplain of our committee, and of course to Julie Jackson, who does so much to keep our candidates and committee members up to date and prepared for each next step. Additionally, I



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am grateful to this synod's congregations and rostered ministers who continue to raise up new, gifted leaders in our midst.

As the landscape of the wider church continues to change, there has been no shortage of transition amongst the clergy of our synod, pastors, and deacons alike, as well as for the congregations and ministry settings they serve. There are around a dozen congregations in our synod that are in various stages of transition, whether their rostered minister has just announced their departure, or they are preparing for a congregational call vote, or they are somewhere in the liminal space in between working on Ministry Site Profiles or awaiting candidate names. In the last year, there have been eight positive call votes at congregations in our synod, with half of those being first calls, which meant that we celebrated four ordinations for new pastors serving in our synod this year.

As I accompany congregations through the call process, it is abundantly clear that congregations, councils, and call committees must fight the temptation to be driven by anxiety, urgency, and scarcity. When communities are empowered by the Holy Spirit and the Good News of Jesus and open to where the Spirit leads, I see them making truly faithful decisions and approaching the uncertainties of the call process with bold faith and a sense of peace that empowers and inspires me. I give thanks for the work of call committees, church councils, and staff, as well as our synod's interim pastors, conference deans, and supply pastors who help provide pastoral care, coverage, and support for congregations in transition.

As I begin my 3rd year serving among you in the Metro D.C. Synod, I have noticed that when I find myself being driven by that anxiety, that sense of urgency, or that compulsion to produce, produce, produce, it is bearing witness to the bold faithfulness of our Bishop, my fellow Synod Staff members, the rostered ministers, and faithful lay leaders of this synod that helps to reorient me to voice of Jesus and the movement of the Holy Spirit.

It is overhearing a conversation at our recent Bishop's convocation where a first-call pastor says to an interim pastor, "Our congregation has been in prayer for your congregation." It is seeing rostered ministers who spent their whole week at a synod event still show up on a Saturday to welcome their newest colleague at her installation. It is hearing our Bishop say time and time again – "we have been called to such a time and such a place as this with God's help and in Jesus's name." It is worshiping with you, communing with you, praying with you, discerning with you, dear church, that draws me back to center. To my driving force and purpose.

As we gather for this synod assembly, may we be empowered by nothing other than the Good News of Jesus and the boldness of the Holy Spirit as we work together to proclaim resurrection hope to this world God so loves.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Sarah Garrett Krey



Synod Assembly Report- June 2024
Director of Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ, our resurrected Lord and Savior!

I began this call as the Director of Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop, of the Metro DC Synod, in January 2024. In the past four months, I have concentrated on listening to the needs of the Synod, learning as much as I can about what has already been established and to create any new initiatives that can support our work together. When I began this call, Bishop Ortiz had expressed a desire for the DEM to concentrate on areas of Congregational Vitality and Stewardship. These areas have been my main focus while also uplifting the themes, priorities and vision of our Synod.

One of the greatest joys of this call is to work with our New and Renewing Mission Table. This Table exists to direct funding and support to new ministries and to help existing congregations find new and creative ways to revitalize their ministries. In February, the table met for an in-person retreat to discuss the vision of the Table moving forward. Together, we discerned that we wanted to concentrate our efforts on supporting our congregations to become more vital in their work and ministry. This vision will be lived out by continuing to use our established grants that support sabbath rest for our rostered leaders, work with campus ministries, new initiatives that engage intentionally with those outside the walls of the church and to help congregations that are in need of funding for building updates and projects. The Table also wanted to intentionally be in conversation with those that have received our initial partnership grants to see how we may be able to support and help fund the second phase of congregations working together to further the ministry of the Kingdom of God. We are excited to announce a new grant that just launched in May- "The Vitality and Growth Coaching Grant." These grants will support rostered leaders that would like to contract with a vitality coach, specifically for the purpose of growing their congregations and to further develop the vital ministries that are needed in our ever-changing world and culture. The funding for these grants is up to \$1,250 per grant and the applications are available now on our Metro DC Synod website. I want to thank the entire Table for your dedicated work and a special thanks to our chair, Pastor Kirstin Tannas who has done an amazing job shepherding this group.

I also have the joy of working with our Stewardship and Mission Support Table. This Table helps congregations improve their financial stewardship and inspires giving to the larger church through workshops and education. It has been a joy to get to know them over the past four months and to hear the history of this Table and the foundation that we are building upon. Recently, we have recruited four new members to serve on this Table. As the new members came on board we began talking about the future. Together we discerned that we would like to focus our work on supporting local stewardship in congregations and also supporting the stewardship of the Metro DC Synod. We continue to offer the two already established grants- The Educational and Teaching Grants and the Small Dream/Passion Project and Experimentation Grants. We are excited to announce another

grant that will be available later in the summer- “The Stewardship Coaching Grant.” These grants will be specifically for congregations that would like to contract with a stewardship coach to help work with your finance team and rostered leaders as you plan and implement your yearlong stewardship campaigns. The funding for these grants will be up to \$500 per grant and the applications will be available on our website by the beginning of August.

I also wanted to share a few updates from our Racial Equity Team. During my short time as DEM, I have seen the efforts they have made to focus our Synod on the needs of Racial Equity by offering guidance and resources in a variety of ways. This work has included the training and development of our Sacred Ground Groups, weekly prayer petitions that are offered to our Synod to be used in our worship services and working on developing resources to aid congregations and rostered leaders in our response to Christian Nationalism and White Supremacy-two areas of great concern for the Racial Equity Team. The Team also worked on developing a new statement of purpose that better reflects their mission. They have also continued building the Racial Equity Reading Library- a list of educational and insightful books that can help guide our leaders on your journey of racial justice and equity. This team continues to offer “Book Grants” to the Synod. \$250 grants are available to help build congregational racial equity libraries. I want to thank the entire Team and especially our chair-Pastor Karen Braun.

As I have listened to the needs of the Synod, one of the areas I have focused on is coaching. Many of our rostered leaders have expressed the desire to utilize a coach to help develop their skillsets in ministry. This past year, we began working with Jim Griffith, a church planting, redevelopment and vitality coach that I have known and utilized for over a decade. Jim was in our Synod in May to offer a “6 WOWS Every Guest Should Experience” workshop and will be back in August to participate in a day long stewardship workshop entitled “Stewardship for Today and Stewardship for Tomorrow.” As part of our vision for coaching, Jim and I are working together to launch two coaching cohorts. Our first cohort was launched in May working with our First Call Rostered Leaders. This is a cohort that will support rostered leaders in their first one to three years of ministry deepen their understanding of their context and to help develop skills to aid in leading vibrant and vital communities. A second Vitality Coaching Cohort will be launched later this year focusing on rostered leaders that have the desire to grow the hospitality and vitality of their congregations and would like to utilize coaching for this purpose.

Stewardship continues to be an important focus for the Synod. Over the last few months, I have worked with Bishop Ortiz, our Finance Committee, the Stewardship and Mission Support Table and Pastor David Shank, our ELCA Foundation Regional Gift Planner, to think through how we can better engage in stewardship both at the local congregational level and for the Synod. This work has included developing a year wide concentration on Mission Support, working with local congregations to develop a plan for investments and planned giving and developing strategies that will increase the financial viability of both local congregations and the Synod. The hope is that the work we do in stewardship will help further the ministry of our congregations as you are connecting with your communities, while also supporting the greater vision, themes and priorities of our Synod.

My work has also focused on the ways I can support congregations as you are envisioning your next faithful steps and reflecting on who you have been, who you are now, and who God is calling you to be in the future. I have visited sixteen congregations and have had the honor of meeting with many of our councils, rostered leaders, leadership teams and adult forums to discuss the call God has placed on your hearts to discern new ways of being the church, how to reach new people for the Gospel and to use the financial resources God has given you to further your vision.

I am extremely grateful to serve the Synod as the Director of Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop. It truly is an honor to serve the church in this way and to help support your ministries and the ways God has called you to move your congregations into the future. I am thankful for the work of our Tables, Teams, Committees and Synod Council for your willingness to vision, to dream and to serve in so many ways that makes the kingdom of God a reality in the communities where we live. A special thank you to Bishop Ortiz and the Synod Staff for your willingness to bring me on and to make my onboarding as easy as possible. It really is a joy to work with each of you. I look forward to continuing to serve this Synod and to work with all of you, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to cultivate a bold and boundless love for Jesus and God's beloved creation.

The Rev. Jason N. Shank



2024 Report from the Assistant to the Bishop for Youth + Family

This year in Youth + Family Ministry, we once again created spaces where young people could learn more about why it matters that *they* are created and beloved children of God. Throughout the program year, we welcomed a total of 142 youth in grades 3-12, 54 adult leaders, and three younger siblings at our events! Our 29 Lutheran Youth Organization members planned and led the bulk of these events, supported by 31 adult mentors and event staff.

In the next few months, Youth + Family Ministry will be engaged in an evaluation and visioning process with Deacon Chelle Huth, Director of Field Formation, Certificate Studies and Adjunct Faculty in Christian Education at United Lutheran Seminary. This will help us see where our strengths lie, and where we can make changes to better serve the children, youth, young adults, and families of our synods. If Deacon Chelle reaches out seeking your feedback, I hope you'll thoughtfully engage with her to add your voice and experience to this important process.

At the upcoming Assembly, you will hear more information about the Synod Youth + Family Ministry Committee that is being formed per the resolution passed at last year's Synod Assembly. We will be seeking members for this committee, and I encourage you to be in discernment about if you or someone you know might be interested in serving. My deep thanks to the task force that helped cast the vision for the scope of the committee's work: Pastor Grace Casola, Patty Craig, Alyssa Cobb, Valerie Mayer, Carrie Pritts, and Pastor Eric Randolph.

As you may have heard, I have accepted a new call as the Director of Children and Youth Ministry at First Lutheran Church in Ellicott City. This call to synod youth ministry has been an incredible privilege. I have gotten to work alongside some of the most gifted leaders (of all ages!) I have ever encountered, and I have experienced compassion and grace beyond what I could have imagined during the most difficult period of my life. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have served in this way, and for the honor of engaging with the deeply faithful young people and the adults who care for them in the Delaware-Maryland and Metro D.C. Synods.

Peace,

Deacon Julie Stecker (*she/her/hers*)

Assistant to the Bishop for Communications, Youth + Family Ministry for the [Delaware-Maryland Synod](#)

Assistant to the Bishop for Youth + Family Ministry for the [Metro D.C. Synod](#)

Learn more about Youth + Family Ministry [on our website](#)



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ROSTERED MINISTRY COMPENSATION GUIDELINES FOR 2025

ROSTERED MINISTRY COMPENSATION GUIDELINES FOR 2025

Updated May 2024

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INTRODUCTION

The Rostered Ministry Compensation Guidelines are offered to assist the members of a congregation in preparing an *initial* salary for Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Rostered Ministers of Word and Service. A compensation package includes, but is not limited to, salary (including the cost of housing), medical and dental benefits, social security offsets, and pension contributions.

There are separate guidelines for each of the following:

Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament;
Rostered Ministers of Word and Service; and
supply pastors and church musicians.

As with all matters, the consideration of the issue of rostered ministership compensation should be entered into prayerfully and in recognition of many factors. Congregations should consider the following as a goal:

A rostered minister's total compensation package should, as much as possible, be comparable to the compensation received by members of the congregation in professional occupations, considering level of education and the years of experience.

In determining the compensation package, congregational members and the rostered minister should express their views honestly and, at all times, speak to each other with the love of Christ.

COMPENSATION FOR ROSTERED MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

I. DETERMINING THE INITIAL ROSTERED MINISTER OF WORD AND SACRAMENT SALARY

This following material is designed to provide guidance in determining a salary package to a newly called Rostered Minister of Word and Sacrament.

Please refer to the Worksheet on page 8 as you review these instructions. A spreadsheet version of the Worksheet is available at <https://metrodcelca.org/congregational-resources/documents-forms/>. If you are using the spreadsheet, be sure to enter the information on the Data tab; the workbook will then make the calculations based on the information on the Data tab.

Section 1: Unadjusted Minimum Salary

The Unadjusted Minimum Salary is set annually by the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly for Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament. The Unadjusted Minimum Salary includes the base amounts for salary, the cost of housing, and the cost associated with Social Security offset.

Box 1: “Unadjusted Minimum Salary”

Write the 2025 minimum unadjusted salary amount of **\$73,495** in Box 1. If the terms of call are less than full-time, this figure should be adjusted accordingly in consultation with synod staff.

If use of a parsonage is included as a portion of compensation, enter the unadjusted minimum amount of **\$60,542** in Box 1. (Note that there is a separate worksheet in the Excel file to calculate compensation that includes use of a parsonage.)

Section 2: Regional Cost of Living Salary Modifier

There is great value in having the pastor living and identifying with the same parish community in which most of the members live. The Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod covers a large, economically diverse area where the cost of living varies widely within and between the Northern Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C. areas. A regionally-based cost of living modification to the unadjusted minimum salary acknowledges this diversity. The cost of living salary modifier does not generally change from year to year.

This section refers to the **cost** of housing, which is distinct from the housing **allowance**. Housing allowances are discussed more fully in the Benefits section.

Box 2: Housing Cost

Enter in Box 2 the median single-family home price near the congregation, using the primary zip code(s) served by the congregation. This figure can be obtained by contacting a local realtor or by using <http://www.zillow.com/home-values>. If several zip codes are involved, find the average of all codes.

In circumstances in which the pastor plans to live outside the parish community in which most members live, figure the cost of living salary modifier using the church zip code and the pastor's actual zip code. Average the two figures and insert that number in Box 2.

Box 3: Cost Over Threshold

The calculation uses \$250,000 as the minimum cost of housing in Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod. If the figure in Box 2 exceeds \$250,000 (the minimum cost of housing within the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod), subtract \$250,000 from Box 2 and enter the resulting figure in Box 3.

Box 4: Housing Cost Adjustment

Multiply Box 3 by .03 (3%) and write the result in Box 4.

(Example: The price of a median single-family home in the area served by the congregation is \$300,000. $\$300,000 - \$250,000 = \$50,000$. $\$50,000 \times .03 = \$1,500$ is recorded in Box 4.)

If use of a parsonage is included as a portion of compensation, a housing equity allowance should be calculated instead. This number will be a minimum of 30% of the amount determined above but may not be less than the amount the pastor is currently receiving (if any).

(Example: $\$1,500 \times .30 = \450 .)

Box 5: Regionally Modified Minimum Salary

Add Box 1 and Box 4 to obtain the Regionally Modified Minimum Salary for the congregation, and enter this figure in Box 5.

Section 3: Determining Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament Salary Adjustment

This section seeks to quantify the value of experience and education the pastor may possess and the unique aspects of the congregation. These factors will become a basis for adjustment to the minimum salary.

Box 6: Years of Pastoral Experience

As per most professional salary systems, the synod seeks to reflect the value of acquired skills, wisdom and experiences that can only come from actual pastoral experience. Credit one point for each year of service as an ordained pastor, up to 15, and enter in Box 6.

Box 7: Worship Attendance

Pastors of large churches often bear increased responsibilities and expectations. The synod seeks to acknowledge these responsibilities with this adjustment. Credit is given for primary leadership in congregations where the average weekly worship attendance exceeds 100 persons at a rate of one point for each 12 persons over the 100 worshiper threshold. Associate pastors would receive one-half point for each 12 persons over the 100 worshiper threshold.

To calculate the figure for Box 7, subtract 100 from the average number of worshipers (as reported on the congregation's annual parochial report). Divide that difference by 12, round to the nearest whole number, and enter the figure in Box 7.

(Example: Congregation reports an average of 265 worshipers. $265-100=165$. $165/12=13.8$. Round up to 14 points.)

Box 8: Advanced Education

Lutherans have long expected that their pastors be well-educated. This credit seeks to account for and encourage life-long learning for leadership in divinity or related fields. Credit is given (5 points) to those who have taken the time and made the commitment to earn a ministry-related degree in addition to the Master of Divinity.

Box 9: Longevity in Current Call

Research has established that vibrant, long-term pastorates are often associated with congregational growth. This adjustment seeks to reflect the shared valuing of healthy, longer-tenured pastorates. Credit one point for each year of service in the pastor's current call in Box 9, to a maximum of 5 points. After five years, consult Section II of this material.

Box 10: Related Non-Pastoral Experience

Increasingly, persons with prior experience in related fields are entering rostered ministry in our church. This adjustment seeks to acknowledge the value of prior experience in related fields that are helpful to the ministry (e.g. teaching, administration, financial, counseling, social work, etc.).

Generally this experience will be acknowledged by the Call Committee and will be recognized by the Church Council as it sets the rostered minister's first salary package.

Credit is given for each year of prior experience in a related field up to ten years. Multiply the pastor's years of significant prior experience by 0.5 (# years x 0.5) and write either that figure or the number 5 (whichever is less) in Box 10.

Box 11: Total Points

Add together the credits in Boxes 6 through 10 to create a point total and write that number in Box 11.

Box 12: Salary Adjustment

The number recorded in Box 11, multiplied by the predetermined adjustment factor of 1% of box 1. Transfer that dollar figure to Box 12.

Section 4: Determining Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament Salary Range

Box 13: Minimum Salary

By adding the Regionally Modified Minimum Salary (Box 5) and the Salary Adjustment (Box 12) figures together, the appropriate minimum salary limit is determined. Write that figure in Box 13.

Box 14: Median Salary

The median salary is calculated by multiplying Box 13 by 1.15 (15%). Enter that figure in Box 14.

Box 15: Upper Salary

The higher salary range limit is calculated by multiplying Box 13 by 1.30 (30%). Enter that figure in Box 15.

Box 16: Mutually-Negotiated Pastoral Salary

Although the synod may produce helpful guidelines and suggested ranges for appropriate salary, congregations need to review and revise compensation for their rostered ministers each year. Using the figure in Box 13 as a minimum and Box 15 as an upper range, it is the responsibility of the congregation to determine actual annual salary.

During the course of the conversation between the pastor and those responsible for annual salary recommendations, consider using the following questions as guides:

- Does our pastor bring any additional or special skills to the position that ought to be rewarded?
- Do we expect our pastor to take on any significant additional responsibilities as a leader of our congregation?
- Does the pastor face any unique financial issues that ought to be addressed by the congregation?

The figure entered in Box 16 represents the mutually-negotiated pastoral salary (adjusted accordingly if the terms of call are less than full-time).

ROSTERED MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT BENEFITS

Housing Allowance

The Housing Allowance is a separate calculation and relates solely to the individual pastor's tax situation. U.S. law provides that members of the clergy may exclude from their taxable income the designated Housing Allowance, provided that the congregation's Church Council/Board has made such a designation prior to the beginning of the year.

The amount of the Housing Allowance that is excludable from gross income is the LEAST of (1) the amount actually used to provide a home, (2) the amount officially designated as housing allowance, or (3) the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and utilities. The pastor will propose an amount to the Church Council; it may not exceed the salary paid.

Pension and Major Medical

Congregations are also responsible for providing pension and major medical coverage through Portico, the ELCA's benefits program. The pension allowance should be at least 10%. Health insurance should include medical and dental coverage for the pastor's spouse and children unless they have other employer-provided group medical insurance coverage and the pastor consents to waiving medical-dental coverage for them under the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program.

The cost of these benefits is based on the total salary package. The Portico website (<https://porticobenefits.org>) offers very useful calculators to determine the total cost of these benefits and their representatives are happy to assist in making these calculations.

Vacation

A minimum of four weeks of vacation shall be provided.

Study Leave

A minimum of two weeks paid study leave is recommended annually with the provision for the accumulation of unused study leave up to six weeks.

Parental/Family Leave

It is recommended that congregations develop a program for parental leave which includes childbearing and childcare leave. The program should include both the birth and adoption of children and cover full salary, housing and benefits with the understanding that the individual would return to work for a minimum of six months after taking the leave. It is recommended that congregations provide paid childbearing leave of at least eight weeks. This allows time to recover from the physical demands of childbirth as well as time for the emotional adjustment to a new child. It is also recommended that congregations provide paid childcare (for mother or father) leave of at least four to six weeks. This leave recognizes the need for parents to spend time bonding with the child. Childcare leave could run consecutively to childbearing or be split into smaller increments.

Congregations are encouraged to consider the provisions of the federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) which allow for up to 12 weeks leave (which can be a combination of paid and unpaid leave). FMLA leave can be used for personal or family member care situations.

Sabbatical

An extended leave/sabbatical of one to three months may be granted after the pastor has served the congregation for three to five years.

PROFESSIONAL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Automobile Expense

Pastors using personal cars for business shall be reimbursed for the actual costs they incur for church business, based upon the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) guidelines.

Continuing Education

A minimum contribution of \$500 per year toward the pastor's continuing education is recommended. This shall include participation in a First Call Theological Education Program, where applicable.

Books and Periodicals

A minimum book allowance of \$300 per year is recommended.

Conventions, Assemblies, and Pastoral Conferences

Coverage of expenses for official meetings of the synod is required.

Given the changing nature of ministry in response to COVID-19, congregations may want to consider how items like professional expenses and travel reimbursements should be adjusted. For example, if it is anticipated that a Rostered Minister of Word and Sacrament is working primarily from a home office, the congregation may want to consider reimbursing internet and cellphone costs. If travel is significantly reduced and digital worship services continue to be offered, the congregation may want to consider temporarily reducing a mileage allowance and shift that funding in 2025 to provide continuing education to support digital ministry.

2025 ROSTERED MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT SALARY RANGE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET

Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the ELCA

Section 1: Unadjusted Minimum Salary

Unadjusted Minimum Salary 1

Section 2: Regional Cost of Living Salary Modifier

Median Housing Cost 2

Cost Over Threshold (subtract \$250,000 from box 2) 3

Housing cost adjustment (multiply box 3 by 0.03) 4

(If parsonage provided, enter agreed upon housing equity instead.)

Regionally Modified Minimum Salary (add boxes 1 and 4) 5

Section 3: Determining Salary Adjustment

Years of Pastoral Experience (maximum 15 points) 6

Worship Attendance 7

Advanced Education 8

Longevity in Current Call (maximum 5 points) 9

Related Non-Pastoral Experience (maximum 5 points) 10

Total Points (Add boxes 6 through 10) 11

Salary Adjustment (multiply box 11 by 1% of Box 1) 12

Section 4: Determining Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament Salary Range

Minimum Salary (add boxes 5 and 12) 13

Median Salary (multiply box 13 by 1.15) 14

Maximum Salary (multiply box 13 by 1.30) 15

Mutually-Negotiated Pastoral Salary 16

II. DETERMINING ROSTERED MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT SALARY AFTER FIVE YEARS IN A CALL

After five years in the current call, the calculations indicated by Box 9 on the worksheet are no longer appropriate. Congregation and pastor should know each other's gifts, abilities, and needs well enough to make future compensation discussions deeply fruitful.

Near the end of the fifth year in a call, or during the next salary discussion after the fifth year anniversary, the Church Council should designate a group to develop goals and objectives with and for the pastor, for the congregation's leadership, and for the congregation itself. (The Church Council may decide to do this work.) Part of the goal- and objective-setting process will require careful description of when and how to review and re-evaluate the pastor and the process itself. Formal agreement between the pastor and the Church Council will be part of this process and will be recorded in the Church Council minutes.

Then after review, the pastor's salary should be increased in keeping with the accomplishment of goals and objectives that had been agreed upon. The increases may take the form of an additional percentage of the previous salary, of additional points on a re-worked "Salary Range Development Worksheet," or of a decision to move the pastor's compensation up through the minimum-median-maximum salary range.

The successful use of a goal-setting and evaluation process requires open-minded and honest negotiation by all the parties involved. The synod office is able to assist with this kind of negotiation, especially until everyone becomes accustomed to the process. The synod office also has tools to recommend for use in helping pastors, councils, and congregations set and pursue goals effectively and in a Christian spirit.

COMPENSATION FOR ROSTERED MINISTERS OF WORD AND SERVICE

In light of the ELCA's shift from lay to ordained status and their additional to rostered status, the Synod offers the following compensation guidelines to congregations for the initial compensation package of Rostered Ministers of Word and Service who are employed at least 20 hours per week in a paid position with programmatic responsibilities. In addition, the status of Rostered Ministers of Word and Service with regard to tax considerations (e.g., self-employment tax and housing allowance) is very much in flux and will continue to evolve over time. (Please see further discussion below in the Benefits section.)

Because of the diversity of skills, jobs and responsibilities, compensation guidelines for Rostered Ministers of Word and Service are more loosely framed and need to be subjected to a greater degree of interpretation than the Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament guidelines.

ROSTERED MINISTER OF WORD AND SERVICE SALARY

Following are considerations and instructions for completing "2025 Rostered Minister of Word and Service Salary Range Development Worksheet" (page 15).

Section 1: Unadjusted Minimum Salary

The Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly annually sets an Unadjusted Minimum Salary for rostered Ministers of Word and Service

Box 1: Unadjusted Minimum Salary

Write the baseline salary amount of **\$51,026** in Box 1

Section 2: Rostered Ministers of Word and Service Regional Cost of Living Modifier

There is great value in having the rostered minister living and identifying with the same parish community in which most of the members live. The Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod covers a large, economically diverse area where the cost of living varies widely within and between the Northern Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C. areas. Congregations are urged to include appropriate adjustments to cover the cost of housing as outlined below.

This section refers to the **cost** of housing, which is distinct from the housing **allowance**. Housing allowances are discussed more fully in the Benefits section.

Box 2: Housing Cost

Determine the median single-family home prices near the congregation, using the primary zip code(s) served by the congregation. The figure can be obtained by contacting a local realtor or by using <http://www.zillow.com/home-values>.

Box 3: Cost Over Threshold

The minimal amount required for a home in this area is \$250,000. Many of the regional areas in the synod have considerably higher housing costs. If the figure in Box 2 exceeds \$250,000, subtract \$250,000 from Box 2 and enter the resulting figure in Box 3.

Box 4: Housing Cost Adjustment

Multiply Box 3 by .03 (3%) and write the result in Box 4.

(Example: The price of a median single-family home in areas served by the congregation is \$300,000. $\$300,000 - \$250,000 = \$50,000$. $\$50,000 \times .03 = \$1,500$ is recorded in Box 4.)

Box 5: Regionally Modified Minimum Salary

Add Box 1 and Box 4 to obtain the Regionally Modified Minimum Salary for the congregation, and enter this figure in Box 5.

Section 3: Determining Salary Adjustment

This section seeks to quantify the value of experience and education a rostered minister may possess. These factors will become a basis for possible adjustment to the minimum salary.

Box 6: Years of Experience

As per most professional salary systems, the synod seeks to reflect the value of acquired skills, wisdom and experiences that can only come from actual rostered ministership experience. Credit one point for each year of service as a rostered minister, up to 15, and enter in Box 6.

Box 7: Worship Attendance

Rostered Ministers of Word and Service of large churches often bear increased responsibilities and expectations. The synod seeks to acknowledge such with this adjustment. Credit is given for leadership in congregations where the average worship attendance exceeds 100 persons at a rate of 1 point for each 24 worshippers over the 100 worshiper threshold.

To calculate, subtract 100 from the average worship attendance as reported on the congregation's annual parochial report. Divide that difference by 24 and enter the figure in Box 7.

(Example: Congregation reports average worship attendance of 155. $155 - 100 = 55$. $55 / 24 = 2.2$. Round to 2 points.)

Box 8: Advanced Education

Lutherans have long expected that their rostered ministers be well-educated. This credit seeks to account for and encourage life-long learning for leadership in Divinity or related fields. Credit is given (5 points) to those who have taken the time and made the commitment to earn a ministry related degree beyond the Master's level. Depending upon the types of tasks the congregation calls their rostered minister to perform; these degrees may be in music, counseling or other related fields. If such is the case, enter 5 points for each degree earned in addition to the Master's degree in Box 8.

Box 9: Longevity in Current Call

To effectively establish a vibrant and growing ministry, the synod seeks to recognize Rostered Ministers of Word and Service's long-term calls. Credit one point for each year of service in the rostered minister's current call in Box 9 up to a maximum of 5 points.

Box 10: Related Non-Pastoral Experience

Increasingly, persons with prior experience in related fields are entering Rostered Ministers of Word and Servicehip roles in our church. This adjustment seeks to acknowledge the value of prior experience in related fields that are helpful to the ministry of the rostered minister. Credit may be given for each year of prior experience in a related field up to ten years. Multiply the rostered minister's years of significant prior experience by 0.5 (# years x 0.5) and write either that figure or the number 5 (whichever is lesser) in Box 10.

Box 11: Total Points

Add together the credits in Boxes 6 through 10 to create a point total and write that number in Box 11.

Box 12: Salary Adjustment

The number recorded in Box 11, multiplied by the predetermined adjustment factor of **\$510**, generates the minimum salary adjustment. Transfer that dollar figure to Box 12.

Section 4: Determining Rostered Minister of Word and Service Salary Range

Box 13: Minimum Salary

By adding the Regionally Modified Minimum Salary (Box 5), the Salary Adjustment (Box 12) and the Specific Responsibilities Adjustment (Box 13) figures together, the appropriate minimum salary limit is determined. Write that figure in Box 14.

Box 14: Median Salary

The median salary is calculated by multiplying Box 14 by 1.15. Enter that figure in Box 15.

Box 15: Upper Salary

The higher salary range limit is calculated by multiplying Box 14 by 1.30. Enter that figure in Box 16.

Box 16: Mutually-Negotiated Rostered Minister of Word and Service Salary

Although the synod may produce helpful guidelines and suggested ranges for appropriate salary, congregations need to annually review and revise salary for the Rostered Minister of Word and Service. Using the figure in Box 14 as a minimum and Box 16 as an upper range, it is the responsibility of the congregation to determine the actual annual salary. During the course of the conversation between the rostered minister and those responsible for annual salary recommendations, consider using the following questions as guides for allowing one to move up or down in the range presented.

- What are the duties and responsibilities of the rostered minister in our congregation?
- Does our rostered minister bring any additional or special skills to the position that ought to be rewarded?

- Do we expect our rostered minister to take on any significant additional responsibilities in our congregation?
- Does our rostered minister face any unique financial issues that ought to be addressed by the congregation?
- Are we in an area where housing costs are unusually high and special consideration may need to be made?

The figure entered in Box 17 represents the mutually-negotiated rostered minister salary. If the terms of call are less than full-time, this figure should be adjusted accordingly.

ROSTERED MINISTER OF WORD AND SERVICE BENEFITS

Social Security Offset and Housing Allowance

It is an open question as to whether Rostered Ministers of Word and Service are subject to traditional Social Security (FICA) taxes or whether, like Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament, they are considered self-employed. Similarly, it is unclear if Rostered Ministers of Word and Service are allowed to claim a housing allowance. ***The ELCA has not taken a position on this issue.*** Congregations are referred to IRS Publication 517 (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p517.pdf>) for more information. The ELCA has informed the Synod that the IRS has made clear that it will not be issuing any additional private letter rulings on who qualifies as a minister for purposes of the housing allowance.

Pension and Major Medical

Congregations should also be responsible for providing pension and major medical coverage. Current contribution rates for the ELCA's Portico coverage can be found at <https://porticobenefits.org>.

Vacation

A minimum of four weeks of vacation shall be provided.

Study Leave

A minimum of two weeks paid study leave annually with the provision for the accumulation of unused study leave up to six weeks.

Parental/Family Leave

It is recommended that congregations develop a program for parental leave which includes childbearing and childcare leave. The program should include both the birth and adoption of children and cover full salary, housing and benefits with the understanding that the individual would return to work for a minimum of six months after taking the leave. It is recommended that congregations provide paid childbearing leave of at least 8 weeks. This allows time to recover from the physical demands of childbirth as well as time for the emotional adjustment to a new child. It is also recommended that congregations provide paid childcare (for mother or father) leave of at least four to six weeks. This leave recognizes the need for parents to spend time bonding with the child. Childcare leave could run consecutively to childbearing or be split into smaller increments.

Congregations are encouraged to consider the provisions of the federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) which allow for up to 12 weeks leave (which can be a combination of paid and unpaid leave). FMLA leave can be used for personal or family member care situations.

Sabbatical

An extended leave/sabbatical of one to three months may be granted after the rostered minister has served the congregation for three to five years..

PROFESSIONAL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Automobile Expense

Rostered Ministers of Word and Service using personal cars for business shall be reimbursed for the actual costs they incur for church business, based upon the IRS guidelines.

Continuing Education

A minimum contribution of \$500 per year towards the rostered minister's continuing education is recommended. This shall include participation in a First Call Theological Education Program, where applicable.

Books and Periodicals

A minimum book allowance of \$300 per year is recommended.

Conventions, Assemblies, and Conferences

Coverage of expenses for official meetings of the synod is required.

Given the changing nature of ministry in response to COVID-19, congregations may want to consider how items like professional expenses and travel reimbursements should be adjusted. For example, if it is anticipated that a Rostered Minister of Word and Service is working primarily from a home office, the congregation may want to consider reimbursing internet and cellphone costs. If travel is significantly reduced and digital worship services continue to be offered, the congregation may want to consider temporarily reducing a mileage allowance and shift that funding in 2025 to provide continuing education to support digital ministry.

2025 ROSTERED MINISTER OF WORD AND SERVICE SALARY RANGE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET

Metropolitan Washington, D.C Synod of the ELCA

Section 1: Unadjusted Minimum Salary

Unadjusted Minimum Salary 1

Section 2: Regional Cost of Living Salary Modifier

Median Housing Cost 2

Cost Over Threshold 3

Housing cost adjustment (multiply box 3 by 0.03)..... 4

Regionally Modified Minimum Salary (add boxes 1 and 4)..... 5

Section 3: Determining Salary Adjustment

Years of Experience (maximum 15)..... 6

Worship Attendance..... 7

Advanced Education..... 8

Longevity in Current Call (maximum 5 points) 9

Related Non-Pastoral Experience (maximum 5 points) 10

Total Points (Add boxes 6 through 10)..... 11

Salary Adjustment (multiply box 11 by \$510)..... 12

Section 4: Determining Rostered Minister Salary Range

Minimum Salary (add boxes 5, 12)..... 13

Median Salary (multiply box 13 by 1.15) 14

Maximum Salary (multiply box 14 by 1.30) 15

Mutually-Negotiated Rostered Minister Salary..... 16

SUPPLY PASTORS

Compensation to visiting pastors is the responsibility of the host congregation. Congregations should consider the following to be a guideline in compensating supply pastors:

One Service	\$200.00
Each additional service	\$ 50.00
Preparing for and Teaching Bible Class	\$ 50.00

Mileage over 25 miles round trip should be paid at the IRS approved rate for business travel.

CHURCH MUSICIANS

The makeup of individuals employed in the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod as a church musician has changed from predominantly Organists to Choir and Music Directors. Although this document cannot suggest specific salary information, the following should be taken into consideration:

Compensation should increase along with the congregation size. As with Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Rostered Ministers of Word and Service, the larger the congregation, the more likely the musician will lead choir(s) and have more responsibilities than simply instrumental. As such, the salary should increase along with the responsibilities.

Regional costs of living should be considered when setting a church musician's salary. Compensation should increase based on education. Individuals working in the church in the capacity of Music Director may have college and advanced degrees. This knowledge and background should be recognized in salary considerations.

Longevity in a position should be acknowledged in salary considerations. As with rostered ministers, length of service in a call should be considered in compensation discussions.

Benefits should be provided to church musician staff members that are in full-time roles. Fringe benefits should be comparable to that of rostered members of the staff.

Supply Organist

When the congregation needs a supply organist, they should be compensated a minimum of \$100.00 on any given Sunday. Of course, this compensation should be altered depending upon the number of services, requirement for choral direction and rehearsals.

Vice President's Report to the Synod Assembly

Jennifer Slagle Peck | June 2024

Dear Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod,

Greetings from your synod council! The synod council met five times between the 2023 and 2024 assemblies, including a full-day retreat in November 2023, and had numerous smaller group meetings to address particular projects and items of business in between meetings. Minutes from the council meetings are available here: <https://metrodcelca.org/about-synod/governing-documents-reports/>. Through these meetings, and regular connections, we have continued to focus on the work of the synod, being good stewards of the synod finances, building relationships, and focusing on ways we can move toward justice.

A few highlights from this year:

- We continued to discuss the **Land Bank Memorial** passed at the churchwide assembly in August 2022 and compiled resources. We adopted a practice of doing a land acknowledgement in the minutes of each of our meetings.
- We continued to consider and engage with the results of the **racial equity audit**. The Racial Equity Strategic Planning Team presented at the synod's October 2023 Learning Day.
- We updated our **synod employee guidelines** to bring them into alignment with current practices and make changes through the lens of racial and gender equity.
- We adopted a **Transgender Inclusion Policy** that was drafted by the Racial Equity Strategic Planning Team in light of observations from last year's racial equity audit. The policy addresses synod commitments as an employer as well as the host of many public events throughout the year.
- We received updates from the **church council** (the ELCA's council) and the **Commission for the Renewed Lutheran Church**.
- We provided **support** to congregations, including by reviewing and advising on changes to congregational constitutions.
- We created a **synod council playlist** of our favorite inspiring songs. You can take a listen here: <https://shorturl.at/lmQX6>.
- We **worshipped** together.
- We **prayed** for the synod, its congregations, and all our leaders and members.

This work, and all work of the synod, could not be done without the dedicated members of the synod staff and the synod council. Thank you to each staff member and council member! Furthermore, the work of the synod could not be done effectively without each and every member of our committees, tables, and teams. Each of you gathered for the assembly, or reading about and keeping the assembly in your prayers, is an integral part of the synod. As I have said before, and will say again, YOU are the synod. Thank you for your engagement, your curiosity, and your commitment to being in community so that we might share God's love throughout the world.

I look forward to gathering with you in assembly in June and working with you through the coming year.

Warm regards,



Jennifer A. Slagle Peck
Synod Vice President

TREASURER'S REPORT

2023 Fiscal Year

This report shows the financial activity during the Synod's last fiscal year (Feb. 1, 2023 – January 31, 2024) and the budget adopted for that year.

Income

The total received for Mission Support in 2023 fell short of 2022 support by \$60,500, a decrease of 4.6%. Nonetheless, congregations gave over \$1,283,000 and many thanks are due to the people of faith of our synod.

Synod Assembly registration fees were slightly less than expected. The conservative investment strategy adopted by the Synod resulted in unrealized gain of just over \$70,000. In addition, new cash management procedures adopted in 2023 resulted in a 10-fold increase in interest income over 2023 levels to \$33k

Expenses

The Synod provided full budgeted support to the programs devoted to developing congregations, ecumenical affairs, youth and campus ministry, our overnight camps, United Seminary, and scholarships to seminarians. Overall, the staff kept operating expenses below budget. In addition, the position of Director of Evangelical Mission was vacant for six months. While this clearly added to the responsibilities of other staff, it did result in significant savings.

Dedicated Fund Activity

The Synod received nearly \$56,000 in gifts designated for specific purposes. In keeping with the donors' intent, over \$191,000 was spent from those funds to support expanded missions, racial equity initiatives, youth ministry, relations with our companion synods, campus ministry, and seminary scholarships.

A list of the Synod's designated funds and their balances as of January 31, 2024, is included in this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie P. Hamre

Julie P. Hamre, Treasurer
jhamre@metrodcelca.org

	Feb '23 - Jan 24	Budget
Income		
40000 - Revenue		
41000 - Mission Support	1,283,928.78	1,450,000.00
41040 - Local Synod Ministry	4,644.56	2,500.00
41100 - Other Receipts	95,512.22	69,700.00
Total 40000 - Revenue	1,384,085.56	1,522,200.00
Total Income	1,384,085.56	1,522,200.00
Expense		
60000 - Expenses		
60050 - ELCA Churchwide Support	449,795.55	507,500.00
60100 - New & Renewing Missions	70,000.86	70,000.00
60300 - Stewardship	33,434.86	44,750.00
60400 - Synodical Ministry		
60410 - Ecumenical Affairs Office	4,750.00	4,850.00
60415 - Candidacy/Mobility	7,893.17	15,000.00
60420 - United Lutheran Seminary	40,000.00	40,000.00
60425 - Seminary Student Financial Aid	2,100.00	10,000.00
60430 - First Call / Region 8	0.00	6,500.00
60436 - Mental Health Support	0.00	3,000.00
60440 - Racial Equity Team	3,503.52	3,000.00
60441 - RIC Team	1,203.15	0.00
60445 - Youth Ministry	0.00	2,000.00
60455 - Other Synod Events	770.00	4,000.00
Total 60400 - Synodical Ministry	60,219.84	88,350.00
60500 - Global Mission	0.00	1,000.00
60600 - Camps & Campus Ministries	59,000.00	59,000.00
65000 - Administration and Operations		
65100 - Ordained Staff	382,924.82	468,556.00
65200 - Office Staff	237,513.70	264,768.00
65300 - Synod Operations	123,088.31	135,250.00
Total 65000 - Administration and Operations	743,526.83	868,574.00
Total 60000 - Expenses	1,415,977.94	1,639,174.00
Net Income	(31,892.38)	(116,974.00)

Budget deficit covered by unrestricted funds **31,892.38**

Statement of Financial Position

Jan. 31, 2024

ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
10010 · Operating Accounts	450,256.74
Total Checking/Savings	450,256.74
Accounts Receivable	12,341.33
Other Current Assets	
11100 · Reserve Investment Funds	2,616,529.11
15000 · Prepaid Expenses	5,963.14
Total Other Current Assets	2,622,492.25
Total Current Assets	3,085,090.32
Fixed Assets	
18500 · Fixed Assets	4,108.72
Total Fixed Assets	4,108.72
TOTAL ASSETS	3,089,199.04
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	98,298.48
Other Current Liabilities	
21000 · Payroll Liabilities	1,206.07
25000 · Funds Held for Others	36,331.32
Total Other Current Liabilities	37,537.39
Total Current Liabilities	135,835.87
Total Liabilities	135,835.87
Equity	
30000 · Net Assets	
31000 · Unrestricted Net Assets	462,278.98
31100 · Board-Designated Net Assets	612,841.03
32000 · Temporarily Restricted	1,101,089.16
33000 · Permanently Restricted	777,154.00
Total 30000 · Net Assets	2,953,363.17
Total Equity	2,953,363.17
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	3,089,199.04

DEDICATED FUNDS

Jan. 31, 2024

30000 - Net Assets	
31000 - Unrestricted Net Assets	462,278.98
31100 - Board-Designated Net Assets	
31120 - Capital Replacement Reserve	3,746.70
31200 - Congregational Mission Fund	609,094.33
Total 31100 - Board-Designated Net Assets	612,841.03
32000 - Temporarily Restricted	
32020 - Campus Ministry	25,518.95
32050 - Faith Fund	
32051 - Faith Fund - General	156,583.00
32052 - Faith Fund - Seminarian Support	8,994.48
32053 - Faith Fund - Mission Support	141,513.08
Total 32050 - Faith Fund	307,090.56
32100 - Ministry Funds	
32101 - Emch Memorial	1,227.24
Total 32100 - Ministry Funds	1,227.24
32200 - Global Missions	
32201 - Slovakia Companion Synod	10,185.46
32202 - Namibia Companion Synod	10,810.70
32203 - El Salvador Companion Synod	5,672.37
32204 - Global Mission General Fund	1,250.68
Total 32200 - Global Missions	27,919.21
32300 - Supporting Congregations	
32304 - Bethany Fund	320,903.23
32306 - Latino Ministry	7,068.69
32310 - Youth Ministry	233,770.79
Total 32300 - Supporting Congregations	561,742.71
32400 - Stewardship	
32403 - Stewardship Education	2,751.91
Total 32400 - Stewardship	2,751.91
32500 - Synod Office	
32503 - Bishop's Convo	4,064.21
32505 - Gifts of Hope Reserve	20,650.16
32507 - Bishop's Emergency Fund	1.55
32509 - Building Puentes	27,945.72
32520 - Synod Leadership Academy	6,173.73
32525 - Disaster Accompaniment Fund	116,003.21
Total 32500 - Synod Office	174,838.58
32600 - New Connections	0.00
Total 32000 - Temporarily Restricted	1,101,089.16
33000 - Permanently Restricted	
33040 - Faith Church Endowment Corpus	777,154.00
Total 33000 - Permanently Restricted	777,154.00
Total 30000 - Net Assets	2,953,363.17

Like many of our congregations, the Synod continues to adapt to the new realities of competing demands for financial resources.

In 2025, the Synod spending plan encompasses the following activities:

Support the National Church by forwarding a significant percent of congregational mission support to the ELCA.

Support the Synod staff with appropriate compensation.

Continue our partnership with the Delaware/Maryland Synod for Youth and Family Ministry and fund outreach to youth and young adults through youth ministry retreats, camps, campus ministries, and other initiatives.

Work towards racial justice through the Racial Equity Initiative

Encourage new and renewing congregational missions.

Seek interfaith understanding through participation in a range of ecumenical affairs organizations.

Provide significant financial support to local campus ministries and to Mar-Lu-Ridge and Caroline Furnace camps.

Support mission beyond our geographical area via our companion synods in El Salvador, Slovakia, and Namibia and through the *Building Puentes* outreach to the congregations in Puerto Rico.

Facilitate and expand a reimagined Gifts of Hope program.

Encourage future leaders in ministry through support of candidacy, the seminary, financial aid to seminarians, first call education, and Region 8 initiatives.

Sponsor important synod-wide events, including the annual assembly. The 2025 Synod Assembly will, for the first time in three years, be a two-day assembly because of the bishop election. These election assemblies cost significantly more than the one-day version due to the need to acquire sufficient space, provide adequate AV technology, offer additional meals, provide voting technology, and other expenses. Even with increased registration fees, we anticipate a \$30,000 deficit that will be covered by reserve funds.

Here is how the Synod will pay for these important activities:

The primary source of funding is church members who make all of this possible through their congregations' commitment to mission support, which is budgeted at \$1.275 million in 2025. Assembly registration fees, dues for the Gifts of Hope program, and interest income make up the other primary sources of new income.

However, this is not enough to fund all the work in which the Synod engages. Therefore, the Synod will use \$190,800 from various designated reserves and an additional \$45,000 from unrestricted reserves to carry out this program. The designated funds are reserved for specific purposes and it is important that these funds be used in a responsible way for appropriate programs. In 2024 and 2025, it is anticipated that 27% of the specified designated funds will be used to support ministry.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the Synod's Finance Committee: Susanne Blume, Sue Clark, Mike Gutzler, and Gene Kern. Special appreciation goes to Wendell Anderson, Finance Committee Chair, who has provided both wise counsel and invaluable expertise all year. My sincere thanks for their assistance.

Julie Hamre, Synod Treasurer

	25 Budget	Desig. Funds Amount	Fund Name
Income			
40000 - Revenue			
41000 - Congregational Support			
41010 - Mission Support	1,275,000		
Total 41000 - Congregational Support	1,275,000		
41040 - Local Synod Ministry	5,000		
41100 - Other Receipts			
41120 - Synod Assembly Reg & Fees	140,000		
41130 - Candidacy Receipts	5,000		
41145 - Gifts of Hope Dues	21,000		
41160 - Interest Income	30,000		
41165 - In-Kind Donations	12,000		
Total 41100 - Other Receipts	208,000		
41200 - Dedicated Funds	190,800	190,800	
41205 - Unrestricted Reserves	45,347	45,347	
Total 40000 - Revenue	1,724,147	236,147	
Expense			
60000 - Expenses			
60050 - ELCA Churchwide Support	446,250		
60100 - New & Renewing Missions	70,000	70,000	Cong. Mission
60300 - Stewardship			
60310 - Gifts of Hope	22,860		
60315 - Stewardship Table	10,000	10,000	Bethany Fund
60320 - Lutheran Development Alliance	10,250		
Total 60300 - Stewardship	43,110		
60400 - Synodical Ministry			
60410 - Ecumenical Affairs Office	4,000		
60415 - Candidacy/Mobility	9,000		
60420 - United Lutheran Seminary	20,000		
60425 - Seminary Student Financial Aid	10,000	10,000	Faith Fund
60430 - First Call / Region 8	5,000		
60436 - Creation Justice	500		
60440 - Racial Equity Team	4,000	4,000	Bethany Fund
60441 - RIC Team	7,000	7,000	Bethany Fund
60445 - Youth Ministry	2,000	2,000	Youth Fund
60455 - Other Synod Events	1,000		
Total 60400 - Synodical Ministry	62,500		
60500 - Global Mission	1,000		
60615 - Mar Lu Ridge (Synod)	6,000	6,000	Youth Fund
60620 - Caroline Furnace (Synod)	6,000	6,000	Youth Fund
60654 - University of Maryland	48,500	48,500	Youth Fund

65000 - Administration and Operations			
65100 - Ordained Staff	489,926		
65200 - Office Staff	274,411	27,300	Youth Fund
65300 - Synod Operations	106,450		
65365 - Synod Assembly Expense	<u>170,000</u>	30,000	unrestricted reserves
Total 65000 - Administration and Operations	<u>1,040,787</u>		
Total Expense	<u>1,724,147</u>	15,347	unrestricted reserves
Net Income	0		



Candidacy Committee Report

Don Mullins, Chair

Grace to you and peace from the Metro DC Candidacy Committee. I am pleased to share this year's Synod Assembly Report of the inspired work the committee has done over the past year. While I serve as chair, in reality the committee is guided by three of us working closely together. Rev. Sarah Garrett Krey is the Assistant to the Bishop for Mobility and Candidacy. Pastor Sarah is the primary liaison to those interested in candidacy and approved candidates in the first-call process. Julie Jackson is the Administrative Assistant for Candidacy and Mobility, who supports us with exceptional administrative and organizational skills and handles the logistical details of our quarterly meetings. I run the meetings, update the candidacy portal, and inform the candidates of our decisions. We are also grateful for the guidance and support to our process by The Rev. A. Rebecca Resch, Candidacy and Leadership Manager, Regions 7 & 8; if we ever have a procedural question, Pastor Becky knows how to find the answer!

The current candidacy committee is composed of the Bishop, five pastors, one deacon, a seminary representative, and three lay members; plus Pastor Becky attends our meetings. It is important to know that the members of the committee and the Synod staff that support us care deeply about the work of the committee and are committed to prayerfully guiding the candidates we shepherd through the steps of Entrance, Endorsement, and Approval. Members are always fully prepared for our meetings, coming to the table fully versed in the documents supporting the status of the candidate. We were able to resume in-person meetings at the beginning of 2023, but also use a virtual connection for those too far away to attend.

In collaboration with the Virginia synod, a discernment cohort begins each Fall and Winter. Cohorts meet once a month for five months each. The Committee believes strongly in the discernment process and the positive progress it makes in the maturity of a candidate. The intentional discernment process fulfills the candidacy manual's requirements for discernment before coming before the Candidacy Committee. The process—which includes reading, discussions, time with a mentor, Bible study, and prayer—results in candidates coming before the committee strengthened and confident in their call, or discerning that their path leads elsewhere. While realizing candidacy is not where they are headed can be a major life change, it is much better to do that work before entering candidacy and then needing to withdraw. The committee recognizes the candidacy process is demanding and challenging and is pleased to see the confidence that candidates exhibit and their strong belief that they are following God's path for them.

Over the last year, the Committee began assessing the questions asked during the entrance interview to ensure they are not biased or lacking in consideration of different

cultures. For example, in the U.S. a common interview question for almost any position is to ask a candidate for a self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses. However, in some African cultures, weaknesses are never discussed in public. We believe the questions we have agreed upon in the areas of theology, leadership, ministry, and wellness are appropriate for an entrance level interview and considerate of the differences among various cultures.

The committee continues to be impressed with the candidates that come before us. In addition to regular meetings to meet with and review candidates, committee members serve as relators to the candidates. Each member is assigned one or two candidates to support. Members stay in touch with the candidates to answer questions, provide advice, and pray regularly for their wellbeing. Candidates share what is happening in their lives and the work they are doing in seminary and/or in the field. At each committee meeting, members provide updates on the candidates. It is a gift from God to hear about some of the remarkable work our candidates are doing—both in their own faith and for others. I invite your prayers for all the candidates—those current and those to be who are in the process of discernment—and for the work of the committee and for its members. The committee relies on the Holy Spirit to support our work and guide our decisions. We want to be sure to equip the church with the best leaders available to spread the Gospel far and wide.



Creation Justice Report for 2023-2024

The Creation Justice Team was dedicated to continuing the goal of raising awareness for God's creation and to share stories of how others are pursuing this goal.

We featured two videos of team members who showcase their love of creation. One video featured Pr. Troy Jacobson at Good Samaritan Lutheran in Lexington Park, Md. Pr. Troy has converted his yard into flower beds and a vegetable garden which shows that we all have an option to cultivate these kinds of yards rather than grass lawns. Pr. Troy's yard provides an environment for butterflies, bees, and many spiders, in addition to growing vegetables for his family and numerous hot peppers.

Our second video featured Stashik Miller who is a gardener for the Smithsonian Institute. The properties he manages are the portrait gallery and the African American Cultural Museum in DC. Stashik in his video showcases many plants and vegetables that were grown by African Americans after arriving in America.

In February of this year, we featured a talk with Pr. Dick Hoehn and his book, 'We Carry the Fire'. This book shares his life as a pastor, professor, and working at Bread for the World, with stories that show his own love for advocacy and the joys and challenges of passing this forward to others, to 'carry the fire' for future generations.

In addition, the Metro D.C. team began making connections with members of the Delaware-Maryland Synod's Creation Care team, sharing ideas and strategies involved in sharing awareness and advocacy for God's beautiful creation.

The Creation Justice Team is now in need of someone new to "Carry the Fire" and take the lead for the Team.

Respectfully Submitted,
Brother Kenneth Taylor, OLF, pastor at Saint Nicholas Lutheran Church



Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

4005 Wisconsin Ave NW, P.O. Box 39105, Washington, D.C. 20016

metrodcelca.org

The Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations Committee A Report to the 2024 Assembly

The Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations Committee (EIRC) supports the bishop, congregations, rostered ministers and members of the synod in working toward unity among Christians.

We also work to promote mutual understanding and cooperation between Christians and people of other religions.

<https://metrodcelca.org/eirc/>

The committee mission we share is *thrilling* in its intent and spaciousness! And it is *daunting* in its immensity! But more important, it is the call of Christ, the playful work of the church and the inexhaustible vision of the Holy Spirit—and so it is our marvelous life together. Is that too much to say?

Think of it! Ecumenical relationships and inter-religious encounters exist and thrive through people like you and me. Relationships exist between *individuals* and often begin by chance introduction, curiosity, a marriage in the family, a neighbor's welcome, collegial affinity and friendship. They grow through the ministry of *institutions*—shared seasonal worship breaking tired parochial habits, congregations within a common community collaborating over hunger needs and gun violence concerns, church bodies aligning their advocacy efforts to practice social justice out of core faith commitments. And they stretch through *church-wide expression*—when global scholars meet to articulate and interpret the heart of our faith understandings, informed by history and humanity's varied, often fractured stories. All this, for the purpose of provoking one another to love in shoulder-to-shoulder ways and in joyful, cruciform lives.

The EIRC of Metro D.C. Synod has continued these efforts with you this year.

- Supported by NRMT Partnership Grant, EIRC prompted Conference deans to gather over lunch to *share* stories about faith relationships and companionship ventures (theirs or their congregations) to *imagine* future possibilities. We seek to recognize, affirm, inspire and build on what the Holy Spirit is nudging the church to be and do.
- We created a GoogleDoc to inventory and serve as a provocative resource of various partnerships and informed connections within the Synod to build on that. The hope is to multiply that effort broadly within the synod. Organized by Conference and congregation, leaders are invited to insert *abbreviated* references and notes. See <https://tinyurl.com/2h8sm7dh>



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- We are curating the EIRC webpage to offer links to ELCA-based and ecumenically-relevant references and organizations. So much is available. We want you to put your fingers on useful things, to connect with helpful people, to be inspired by thoughtful faithful commitments. And... without reinventing the wheel or bogging the mind.
- We've been stretched with possibilities beyond our imaginations. Happily our small team is growing, folks have been curious, and we invite new partners in this critical and joyful work! Consider being a branch with us in Christ the vine.
- We are delighted that Bishop Mariann Budde of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington will be with us for the June 1 Assembly! Building on a donor's gift to make 150 copies of her book *How We Learn to Be Brave—Decisive Moments in Life and Faith* available for \$5, we hope this might be stir leaders to invite an Episcopalian or other ecumenical leader to coffee or lunch and exchange the question; how is God calling *you* to be brave and how can I support you?

Metro DC EIRC continues to be a partner in several long-established and active networks nurturing unity, understanding and collaborative witness, both locally and nationally. Since the disruption and dislocation of the pandemic, efforts to regroup and reimagine have begun. Notably...

- The Virginia Episcopal-Lutheran Joint Committee (including three Virginia dioceses and Virginia and Metro DC Lutheran Synods) continues to build on the strength of our Called to Common Mission full communion relationship.
- LARCUM (Lutherans, Anglicans, Roman Catholics, United Methodists, geographically centered in eastern Virginia and DC), traditional host of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and learning events, is reassessing priorities and schedules for the future.
- The National Workshop on Christian Unity, in which our ELCA LEIRN Network has been a central participant, will reconvene its major annual event in November 2024 "Hear what the Spirit is Saying to the Churches" at the Lutheran Center in Chicago focusing on networking and practical ecumenism. We plan to continue our practice of sending at least one participant from Metro DC.

We are an ecumenical church around the world, a member church of Lutheran World Federation (Geneva CH) in which Bishop Leila Ortiz serves on the LWF Council. At the 2023 Assembly in Kraków, Poland, Roman Catholic keynote Tomas Halik urged the church to look beyond the 16th and 20th century reformations to what the 21st invites:



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The new Reformation must strengthen the consciousness of Christian co-responsibility for the whole “body” of which we are part through the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God: for the whole human family and for our common world. We must ask not only what “the Spirit says to the churches today” but also how “the Spirit, who blows where he wills” works beyond the churches. We need to have the courage to kinetically self-transcend the current forms and boundaries of Christianity... We strive for unity not to make Christianity more powerful and influential in this world but to make it more credible: “so that the world might believe.”

And so, let us provoke one another to love for Christ’s sake, for all creation’s sake!

With EIRC participants— Pr. Annabelle Markey, Pr. Amy Feira, Pr. Anna Anderson, Pr. Becca Vargas, Pr. Eric Randolph (Synod Council), Kristin Opalinski (ELCA LEIRN Network, Asst. to Kathryn Lohre), Pr. Christopher L. Weidner, Chair



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2024 Report of the Global Mission Committee of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, ELCA

Presented to the 2024 Synod Assembly of Metropolitan Washington, DC, ELCA

Respectfully submitted by Kathryn Tobias, Chair of the Global Mission Committee

It has been the primary function of the GMC to build and care for our synod's relationships with three Companion Synods in national Lutheran churches overseas and relationships facilitated through our partners in ELCA's churchwide offices. Our companion relationships are with the Lutheran churches in Namibia, the Lutheran church in El Salvador, and the Lutheran church in Slovakia. In addition, the committee has been the synod's contact with Lutheran churches in Palestine and more significant issues related to Palestine/Israel through the Middle East Working Group.

In the past and ongoing in areas to be identified, the committee has also provided places in the synod structure for related functions and interests, including the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and the work of a team dedicated to promoting interest and work on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The Metro DC Global Mission Committee met on April 20, 2024, to take stock of where we might go with these initiatives. About a dozen participants met in person and online. The next meeting is planned for late September 2024. For those reading this report who may be interested in participating or know more about any of these areas, especially in which little information is available, please get in touch with the chair at the email above.

El Salvador Pastor Christian Chavarria of El Salvador, Kathryn Tobias, and Julie Jackson from Metro D.C. participated in both the April meeting and the earlier Latin America and Caribbean International Companion Synod Consultation Oct. 31- Nov. 3 in Houston, Texas. The theme of that consultation was "Reconnect, Renew, Rise Again." Among the many US and Latin American companion synods, other companion synods with El Salvador from the Sierra Pacific, SW California, and Greater Milwaukee were also represented at the November meeting. At the April Metro DC Global Mission meeting, Pastor Christian reported on the planned transition to new leadership in the Salvadoran Lutheran Church following the conclusion of Bishop Medardo Gomez's 38-year tenure next year. The election is scheduled for Fall

2024, with the installation of a new bishop planned for January 12, 2025, at Resurrection Church in San Salvador. This process involved rewriting the constitution of the Lutheran Church of El Salvador. Pastor Christian reported ongoing interest in congregation-to-congregation relationships between Salvadoran and US Lutheran companion synod congregations.

Namibia. Namibia-ELCA companion synods have been discussing how to support Paulinum Seminary in Windhoek, Namibia. Themba Mkhabela provided information on the seminary's needs following the last Namibia Network Meeting in early 2024. ELCA holds quarterly Namibia Network Zoom meetings with the four US Namibia companion synods—Metro DC, NE Iowa, SW Washington, and New Jersey- and others involved or interested in Lutheran relationships with Namibian Lutherans. The Angolan Lutheran Church has also been added to the network. An in-person gathering of the network is planned for June 30-July 3, 2024, In Minneapolis, Minn. At the

April Metro DC GMC meeting, Mark Victorson reported on renewed activity to support the 18 hostels that make it possible for Namibian youth living in extremely remote areas to attend school. The possibility of a consultation in southern Africa continues to be discussed.

Slovakia. Of the three Metro DC companion synod relationships, Slovakia needs people with interest and energy to build the relationship. The pandemic created a lapse in having a contact to communicate with and build bonds. We have been introduced to some new contacts in Slovakia and hope to build on that relationship.

Middle East. Pastor Mark Brown, chair of Metro D.C.'s Middle East Working Group, reported on the current efforts to address the ongoing and worsening tragedy in Israel/Palestine. In light of the extreme difficulty of getting help to Gaza, he suggested that one of the best options for the church may be to bolster Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem. Pastor Mark has deep experience in the region, having served with Global Mission in the Middle East, with the ELCA Washington office focusing on the Middle East, Africa, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, and at Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem.

Ministries in Need of Information, Development, and Energy. Among our aspirational goals for relationships with our companion Synods, we hope to increase our cultural competency by growing our relationships with our Companion Synods. As we work toward growth in the spirit and our global relationships, we consider different ways the GMC can support the work of our Synod's other global connections. We continue to pray and give thanks for the much larger community of Lutherans and all the beloved of God around the globe.

In Jesus' name,

Kathryn Tobias, Chair, Global Mission Committee

Dear Partners in Ministry,

Grace and peace to you this synod assembly season. As you may know, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has embraced a new name: Global Refuge. Grounded in Psalm 46:1, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble,” we hope to enter our next 85 years with openness, building a bigger table to meet a growing need. Global Refuge was forged in faith. Our Lutheran heritage has always shaped our work of welcome and will continue to do so in years to come.

With the support of partners and Lutheran communities like yours, in 2023 we were able to...

- Help 17,000+ children reunify with their families or find loving foster homes
- Welcome 11,200+ refugees from countries across the world
- Assist 11,700+ people seeking safety from Central America and beyond

In a political season rife with anti-immigrant rhetoric and messages that villainize newcomers, we have a unique opportunity to change this narrative and refocus on all the gifts newcomers bring to community. We invite you to join us in this work!

- Share about Global Refuge in your church or [invite our team](#) to join you.
- Include Global Refuge [bulletin inserts](#) about our work in your bulletin.
- Start a [Circle of Welcome](#) to support newcomers in your community.
- Pack [Fresh Change](#) bags, a partnership with Border Servant Corps, to welcome our neighbors at the border with care and dignity.
- Sign up for our monthly e-newsletters for faith leaders and explore a [webpage specifically for congregations](#) which has the latest faith community resources.

Thank you for your continued support. The many ways Lutheran communities embody Jesus’ ministry through the work of welcome is truly inspiring.

Go in peace. Welcome the stranger.



Deacon Sarah Kretschmann | Congregational Engagement Specialist
outreach@globalrefuge.org

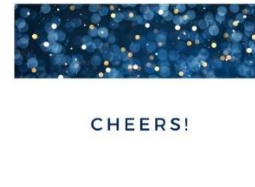


Report for the 2024 Synod Assembly

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

New in 2023

- We introduced printed birthday and celebration cards. A pack of five unique cards is only \$15 (\$10 goes to the fund that is split equally among all beneficiary organizations, and \$5 goes towards Gifts of Hope’s operating fund to help offset printing and shipping).



- We introduced print-at-home Christmas cards.
- Our beneficiary organizations were featured in the second season of the Synod Podcast, The World is About to Turn, which aired during Advent 2023.
- Southeast Ministry merged with another nonprofit, Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington.

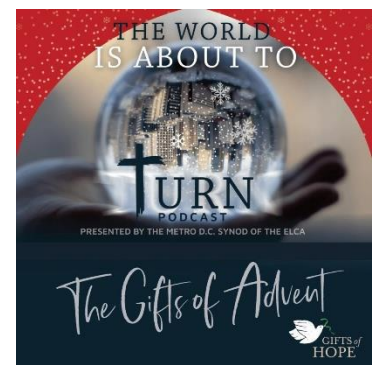


New in 2024

- We’re thrilled to welcome our newest beneficiary organization, Gracing Spaces! Gracing Spaces is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that furnishes homes to help neighbors transition from homelessness.

Continued in 2024

- Gifts of Hope will print and mail catalogs and Christmas cards to churches in the Metro D.C. Synod for Advent.
- Gifts of Hope offers digital cards for various holidays and occasions and creates new offerings every year. In 2023, we added a Thank You category featuring four new cards.





GENEROSITY

	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Total amount donated	\$39,338	\$45,600	\$49,002	\$41,142
Total number of gifts	133	131	145	124
Online Gifts (Square or Tithely)	71%	62%	61%	69%
Gifts by check	29%	38%	39%	31%
Gifts tied to a Metro D.C. Synod congregation	43%	65%	75%	68%
Churches in Metro D.C. Synod with gifts attributed to them	23	32	28	29
Challenge gift matching donations by lead donors	\$800	\$7,000	\$6,500	\$9,000

- Grand total of all fundraising from 1992 through FY23: **\$3,849,336**. Thank you!
- Churches with FY23 Gifts of Hope donors:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abiding Presence Lutheran Church (Beltsville) Advent Lutheran Church (Arlington) All Saints Lutheran Church (Bowie) Augustana Lutheran Church (D.C.) Bethel Lutheran Church (Manassas) Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church (Fairfax) Christ Lutheran Church (D.C.) Christ the Servant Lutheran Church (Reston) Emmanuel Lutheran Church (Vienna) Faith Lutheran Church (Arlington) First Trinity Lutheran Church (D.C.) Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (Alexandria) Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (Gaithersburg) Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (Woodbridge) Grace Lutheran Church (D.C.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (Falls Church) Hope Lutheran Church (College Park) King of Kings Lutheran Church (Fairfax) Living Faith Lutheran Church (Rockville) Peace Lutheran Church (Alexandria) Peace Lutheran Church (Waldorf) Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (Gaithersburg) Saint Luke Lutheran Church (Silver Spring) Saint Stephen Lutheran Church (Silver Spring) Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church (Haymarket) St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church (Rockville) St. Matthew's Lutheran Church (Woodbridge) St. Paul's Lutheran Church (D.C.) Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church (North Bethesda)
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How your church can help inspire generosity through the Synod's Gifts of Hope program:

- Before Advent, the Director will mail printed Gifts of Hope catalogs and Christmas cards to your church. Please display them in your narthex, fellowship hall, or anywhere where people can view the catalog and donors can pick up cards to tell loved ones they gave in their honor. If your church runs out of cards, donors can request more by emailing goh@metrodcelca.org.
- Support Gifts of Hope's operating fund with a mission endowment fund grant!
 - Gifts of Hope's mission is to maximize giving to our beneficiary organizations.
 - We fundraise to cover operational expenses so that 100% of donations go to beneficiary organizations and not toward administrative costs. Gifts of Hope covers things like printing and shipping cards, online payment and wire transfer fees, etc.
 - While beneficiary organizations do pay annual dues to participate in the program, we recently lowered and capped the dues, and we always ensure that the amount they pay in dues is exceeded by the designated donations they receive (so that at the end of the day, they're always "making money" from the program).



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New and Renewing Mission Table

The Synod's New and Renewing Mission Table (NRMT) exists to direct funding and support to new ministries and existing congregations to find new and creative ways to revitalize their ministries. Here are some ways that the Table has supported the ministries of the Synod this year.

New in 2024 Church Vitality & Growth Coaching Grants

Every congregation is called to be a vital congregation. Through vitality coaching, leaders and ministries are supported, challenged, and equipped to grow vital congregations. In 2024, NRMT is providing grants up to \$1,250 for eligible individuals in the Metro DC Synod to engage in a coaching relationship centered around church growth and vitality.

Mini Sabbath Grants

Sabbath rest and renewal lead to transformational leadership. In support of this Metro D.C. Synod priority of equipping and developing healthy leaders, the NRMT launched a second round of Personal Sabbath Mini-Grants. Any rostered minister called to a congregation or organization of the Metro D.C. Synod was invited to apply for a Sabbath mini-grant to support personal rest and renewal. Rostered ministers were encouraged to take time off and away, ideally on a Sunday or other primary work days. In 2023, 26 rostered leaders received a mini Sabbath grant, and through April 2024, 2 leaders.

"The Sabbath Grant allowed my husband to accompany me to the ALCM (Association of Lutheran Church Musicians) conference in Philadelphia. We both love church music and sing in the Adult Choir. It was a joy to learn about the resources and collegiality of the ALCM. It was a joy to participate in the educational sessions, the plenaries, and the special evening music events. We could never predict how much that joy would provide a reservoir of strength for facing a very difficult family situation just three weeks later. Thanks be to God for the opportunity to share in a learning, Sabbath time together as a couple."

- Rev. Betty E. Landis
(Photo: The Choral Arts Philadelphia concert in the Episcopal Cathedral)





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"With the help of the Sabbath Grant, I was on a silent, guided retreat at Loyola on the Potomac, a Jesuit retreat house in Maryland. The silence set the stage for a blessed time of rest and renewal. This time helped me establish helpful routines and practices that continue to draw me closer to Christ in daily life. It's been wonderful!"

-The Rev. Annabelle P. Markey

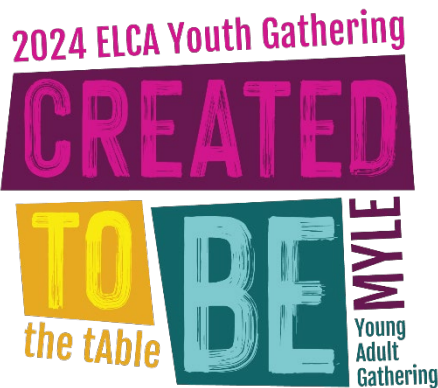
Partnership Seed Grants

Bishop Ortiz encourages leaders and congregations to dream and experiment---together boldly. A priority of the Metro D.C. Synod in the past year has been to empower and nurture vibrant ministries. In support of that, the NRMT held a workshop at the 2023 Synod Assembly and launched Partnership Grants to encourage congregations to seek ways to dream up partnerships with local faith communities. These grants allow congregations to dream, experiment, explore, take risks, build relationships, and see what happens.

In this first 'brainstorming' phase, creative configurations were proposed, including partnerships between multiple congregations, partnerships within conferences, and partnerships through a synod table. In 2023, 16 partnership grants were awarded.

Phase 2 Partnership Grants

To support partnership ideas that emerged from initial conversations in Phase 1, Phase 2 grants became available in 2024. These grants enable budding partnership ideas to come to life. Through April of 2024, 2 partnership grants have been awarded.



"I wanted to send you a note and thank you again for your support by providing my colleagues and I a partnership grant. Pastors and lay leaders from Faith - Arlington, Peace - Alexandria, Resurrection - Arlington, Holy Trinity - Falls Church, Hope - Annandale and Advent - Arlington all gathered for lunch at Panera in Bailey's Crossroad. We discussed all aspects of youth ministry including how our congregations partnered in the past and how we can develop new ministry in the next program year - including making plans for the National Youth Gathering. The whole group expressed their appreciation and gratitude. Thank you again."

-Rev. Mike Gutzler, Holy Trinity, Falls Church, VA.



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Mission Support for New Starts & Renewal

Swahili Congregation: Zone Ministry, Prayer & Retreat Ministry
King of Kings Dulles-South: Mission Developer Rev. Garrett Wolf - New Start
La Sagrada Familia: Silver Spring
Emmanuel, Vienna: Accessibility Grant
St. Stephen, Silver Spring: Technology Grant
Reformation, D.C.: Space for Grace Jazz Grant
St. Matthew's D.C.: Renewing and Revitalizing

The NRMT is composed of:

Rev. Kirstin Tannas, Chair,

Rev. Julie Bringman,

Rev. Brett Wilson,

Rev. Mike Gutzler,

Rev. Katherine Tuttle,

and Julie Jackson, liaison to the Synod Staff,

and in partnership with the Director of Evangelical Mission, Rev. Jason Shank.



Metro D.C. Synod Racial Equity Team

Our team has been active this past year focusing on support learning, reflecting and engaging.

Our effort to lead the Sacred Grounds small group process continues. The materials bring insight and understanding, and the group conversations are rich. Please consider hosting a group in your congregation this fall — we will help find facilitators for you. And the Synod Assembly will give a workshop that previews the material and the process.

We gave out almost 10 book grants this year. Congregations were happy to add to their racial equity libraries!

We had a facilitated retreat in the Fall with the Ship as our guest. From the gathering we confirmed our work as curating the Sacred Grounds small group ministry and seeking to expand it, writing monthly Racial Equity prayer petitions, and making the team more accessible to all ages by holding our meetings in the evening.

In order to welcome new people, we set time collaborating on a statement of who we are:

The Racial Equity Team leads, coordinates, and develops resources and actions for the congregations of the Metropolitan D.C. synod to confront racism and white supremacy in our society, communities, and ourselves; freeing us to live out our baptismal promises by centering equity and justice in our church and the world.

Our team is grateful for the work of:

- Rev Tom Knoll
- Rev. Renata Eustis
- Rev. Heidi Eickstadt
- Martin Steege
- Rev. Amy Reumann
- Shannon Spence
- Duke Taylor
- Katharyn Wheeler
- Donald S. Wallace
- Rev. David Trott
- Rev. Jeanette Surita-Vazquetelles
- Assistant to the Bishop Rev. Jason Shank

If you have interest in joining the team, please email me at seniropastor@lutherplace.org.

In hope,
Pastor Karen Brau, Chair



Annual Report of the Metro D.C. Synod RIC Team for 2023

Following the Concurrence of the Synod council, a RIC Team was created. As a RIC Synod, this team was to support Reconciling in Christ objectives within the synod. The team was to reach out to the LGBTQIA+ community in the synod, assuring that all are welcome. This fit with the renewed RIC statement of the Synod, including financial support for ReconcilingWorks.

Philip Moeller, who had served on the board of directors of ReconcilingWorks, was asked to be the chair. He agreed to serve in this capacity, but asked that Fred Bowell be a co-chair, focusing on activities for PRIDE. They were joined by Katharyn Wheeler and began fleshing out the structure and programming for the team.

One of the central perspectives of this core team was that the team and what it supported be owned by the LGBTQIA+ community in the synod. In order to assess the needs and interests of the LGBTQIA+ community three measures were taken. The first involved attempting to develop a data base using an open survey. This was the first step in the communication model for the team.

The second measure undertaken was holding zoom meetings. These two sessions enabled better identification of interested parties as well as giving voice to the needs of the congregations in the synod. The third measure included a presentation by the team chair at the synod assembly.

The team also used these measures to funnel the interest of the synod in RIC objectives. For the first time the synod provided some financial support for a synod presence in the Pride parade. Materials were printed by the synod for distribution both at the parade and at the festival the following day. It was hoped that this presence would be increased to synod support for the Lutheran float the next year.

The team noted a new consideration. Some congregations in more distant congregations found it difficult to navigate the congestion of the center city Pride events and joined Pride events in the suburbs. The team felt it needed to consider this issue, but was not sure it really had the resources to address such multiple augmented events.

One of the key issues identified in the surveys and zoom sessions, was the need for linkage between established RIC congregations and congregations considering or starting the process needed to become RIC. There was one example of this being done informally by Glen Sea and Phil Soucy. Institutionalizing this support process is desired, but it is complicated by the fact the process undertaken and the cultural context of the times faced by long standing RIC congregations are not only distant but also different from those of today.

The end of the year brought another opportunity to build presence in the synod. The RIC reached out to congregations about how to prepare for RIC Sunday, which technically falls on the last Sunday of January. The web site for ReconcilingWorks was cited as an excellent source for marking this as a special Sunday. The site offer both prepared liturgical and confessional materials.

The team was excited to see the energy expressed during the zoom meetings. Capturing this energy and set it into organizational action is a goal, but it is something not easily obtained. The team has found the beginning of its existence to be exciting, even as the vision of needs expands. Our objects for the next year are to tie additional synod members to the operation of the team and build support programs.

Philip W. Moeller, PhD., Chair of the Synod RIC Team



Stewardship and Mission Support Table 2023 Annual Report

This year the Stewardship and Mission Support Table found themselves without a chair and then in transition between Directors of Evangelical Mission. However, we did not allow that to keep us from meaningful ministry.

We started the year with a 6-week series “The Subversive Practice of Giving Thanks” based on Diana Butler Bass’s book “Grateful” using a film study guide created by The Work of the People. It was incredibly well attended, and participants freely engaged in the unrecorded zoom platform.

The Table created two new grants:

- **Stewardship Educational/Training Grants** given in \$150 increments per congregation. These grants can use any reputable source for their content, but the source should be shared as part of the plan outline.
- **Small Dream/Passion Project/Experimentation Grants** provided in tiers of \$250/\$500/\$1000. These grants are for new stewardship-related ideas that have not previously been implemented in your setting. This is an opportunity to try something new and different with support from the synod. Not all dreams need to be grand—this is a chance to focus on a small, achievable idea that your congregation could not try without some financial support.

The Table provided mentors for congregations or individuals to walk through the application process. We award five grants in this first cycle and look forward to seeing what fruits are generated.

We are very excited about new grants and coaching opportunities that we will soon be announcing to accompany Synod Stewardship Teams and leaders in 2024.

The Stewardship and Mission Support Table