



A world in need now beckons us to labor, love, and give to make our lives an offering to God, that all may live. The church of Christ is calling us to make the dream come true: a world redeemed by Christ-like love; **all life in Christ made new.**

-As Saints of Old, ELW 695

Dear friends in Christ,

God has this amazing dream for our world. You know it; it's why your congregation exists: **life made new in Jesus Christ.**

The Southwestern Minnesota Synod is here to walk with you so that generations yet to come know the good news of **life made new in Jesus.** It's why synod ministries exist.

As you consider your congregation's Mission Support for 2025, will you prayerfully consider growing that Mission Support for the coming year? We are called to join in God's work in the world using all the gifts God has entrusted to our care. We encourage your church to increase your percentage or level of Mission Support as you make your financial decisions for next year. Whatever amount you share, we are one in our dedication "to make our lives an offering to God, that all may live."

The enclosed resouces makes clear the ways that the generous Mission Support from congregations across the synod impacts people's lives from the southwestern portion of Minnesota to the ends of the earth.

It is an honor and a joy to walk with you in ministry. If you have any questions about these opportunities, please reach out. dee.pederson@swmnelca.org. I'd love to listen, learn from you, and share more! **Thank you** for your partnership in God's mission. We plan, and work together that all people might know "a world redeemed by Christ-like love; all life in Christ made new."

+ grace and love in Christ,

Bishop Dee Pederson
Rev. Dee Pederson, D.Min.
Bishop, Southwestern Minnesota Synod, ELCA



Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

What is Mission Support?

“Mission Support” is the portion of offerings that ELCA congregations share with synods and then synods share a percentage of this through the churchwide organization.

Why do we have Mission Support? Because the needs of people of our communities call us to work and give in love, for Jesus’ sake. We are committed to God’s life-giving work and believe we can do more together than we can do alone.

What does Mission Support do? It makes possible ministries close to home, across the ELCA, and around the world. It comes back to equip your congregation to share life in Jesus as it:

- **Expands the capacity of congregational lay and rostered leaders.** If you have attended a training for lay or rostered leaders, consulted with synod staff about a call process or conflict, participated in synod assembly or fall theological conference, or benefited from the work of Luther Seminary or The Continuous Growth Pathway.... your Mission Support makes these ministries possible.

Synod ministers and the bishop attend monthly rostered minister gatherings. One of our pastors wrote: *“It’s helpful to have information that you share, but even more, your presence is encouraging.”*

“The synod was very supportive throughout the call process. They provided clear guidelines as to how the call process works and what steps need to be followed in order to successfully call a Pastor. Most importantly, the synod was very helpful in supporting the call committee throughout the decision-making process. They provided a listening ear and helped us to work through challenges as they arose. The call process can be very stressful, and it was reassuring knowing that we had the synod’s support.”

– Call Committee Chair

- **Provides grants that truly make a difference for rostered ministers and congregations.** Grants for rostered ministers are funded by the Gifts of Grace program and by synod endowments. Congregational Mission Grants are funded by synod endowments. All funds are administered and supported by the Gifts of Grace staff, Endowment Fund Committee, and synod staff.



“This project had a wide-ranging impact on the community. A spirit of cooperation and excitement prevailed as we planned and implemented the garden.” – Congregational Mission Grant recipient: Grove City Sharing Garden.

- **Connects you to the support of synod and ELCA staff.** Congregations aren’t alone! You have real, live human beings here to walk with you in ministry. *“Thank you for bringing the continuing resolutions to the Secretary of the ELCA... We appreciate your valuable ministry and your continued partnership with our congregation.”* – Congregation Member



Synod Council & the LYO Board



People who call in for resources that the synod or churchwide offices make available—whether guidance on roster matters, financials, coaching, audits, record retention, updating constitutions, compensation guidelines, etc., —benefit from being part of a larger church system. We hear your appreciation for helping you access these resources.

- **Communication and Administrative Support.** This synod provides an abundance of learning and growth events to share with leaders, and these events require registrations and answers to questions. We bring a spirit of hospitality and a commitment to listen to you - a welcome contrast to the increasingly automated customer service landscape out there.
- **Grows the faith of youth.** We frequently hear congregation's concerns about supporting youth & families and the leaders who work with them.



If your congregation sends young people & adults to the Jr. & Sr. High Youth Gatherings, National Youth Gathering, or connects youth leaders through the Youth Ministry Network...These ministries in the synod and beyond happen because of your Mission Support.

- **Invests in evangelism and outreach.** ELCA grants support new mission congregations. Your synod convenes area partnership conversations as we see a greater number of transitions.

If you're curious about evangelism and what's new for the future, we have stories to tell! Reborn Lao Lutheran in St. Cloud regularly welcomes adults through baptism. House of Grace in Montrose provides a food ministry that truly makes a difference in the community and larger area. Many congregations are considering how to partner in a variety of ways with others in the area. All of this, thanks to your Mission Support.

- **Connects us to ministry partners close to home and around the globe.** Through our ELCA partners, we do together what we could not do as congregations alone.

Ever wonder how you can have relationships with Lutherans around the globe? Well, know that you do already! Visits by our friends from South Africa last fall and for Synod Assembly 2024 are rebuilding relationships with our global partners. You send missionaries, partner with churches around the globe, work to alleviate poverty, bring healing in disasters, and send hope - along with quilts - through Lutheran World Relief. With our hands, we do God's work of restoring and reconciling communities throughout the world..... thanks to Mission Support.

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