



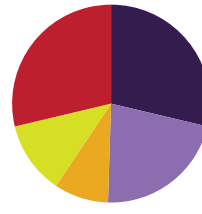
Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Your Mission Support Matters.

Each Mission Support dollar makes an impact, from communities right here in Southwestern Minnesota, to many across the nation, and throughout the world.

Together, our gifts for the Fiscal Year 2027 (starting in February 2026) will total \$1.6 million. The vast majority of that generosity comes from congregations. *Thank You!*

Total budgeted expenses for 2027:



- Equip Leaders – 29%
- Empower Congregations – 22%
- Youth & Families – 9%
- Care for the world – 11%
- Strong Infrastructure – 29%

Note: these percentages include ELCA ministries your congregation supports through Mission Support dollars given to the synod.



“The church is changing and alive.”

– Equipping Congregations Day participant



Raise up and equip pastoral leaders

Thriving pastoral leaders have the capacity to courageously guide congregations into God’s future.

The Southwestern Minnesota Synod nurtures and equips emerging new leaders, whether on the ELCA roster or Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAMs). This happens through investment in Luther Seminary, a robust candidacy process (guided by Heather Culuris, Synod Minister for Engaging Leaders), and training for SAMs.

The Synod supports these leaders as they do God’s work. The Continuous Growth Pathway provides important opportunities for reflection and equipping for rostered ministers, both in their first call and beyond. The Fall Theological Conference gathers leaders together for shared learning and mutual support.

In partnership with the ELCA, the Southwestern Minnesota Synod plays a vital role in identifying, equipping, and supporting leaders through a nationwide system that nurtures thousands of rostered ministers. Right here in our Synod, 173 ministers currently serve in active calls.

Empower congregations

God works in bold ways through the congregations of the Synod, ensuring lay leaders have the tools needed to live God’s mission in their communities.

The Southwestern Minnesota Synod, through the leadership of Bishop Dee Pederson, Pr. Heather Culuris, Pr. Seyward Ask, and Tammy Schacher support congregations through the call process, prayerfully helping congregations navigate transitions and consider their next pastoral leaders. The Synod provides important tools for congregations through Equipping Days and Zoom Gatherings for rostered ministers and lay leaders. In times of challenge or crisis, Synod pastoral staff walk closely with congregations, offering steady presence and compassionate support.

Through the ELCA, the synod develops and shares resources for faith, discipleship, prayer, and worship while also starting new congregations across the country. Pr. Troy Pflibsen, Director for Evangelical Mission and a member of the ELCA churchwide staff deployed to our Synod, provides vital support to emerging ministries such as Paz y Esperanza, House of Grace, and Reborn Lao.



Invest in passing on faith to the next generations

The Southwestern Minnesota Synod remains committed to passing on the faith through strong Children, Youth, and Family ministries. Pr. Seyward Ask, Synod Minister for Equipping Congregation Leaders, Rostered Ministers, Youth, & Families, dedicates significant time working in this area. Through the Lutheran Youth Organization board, the Synod hosts two major youth gatherings, one for junior high and one for senior high, creating meaningful spaces for faith formation, connection, and growth.

This Synod provides financial support for our campus ministries for LuMin, Morris and the St. Cloud LuMin, Young Adult Gather ministry. Through the ELCA, the Synod supports the ELCA Youth Gathering as well as new ministries focused on young generations.

Care for the world

Congregations throughout the Synod share God's love in their communities, following Jesus' call to provide food for the hungry, housing for those without, and many other essential acts of compassion and mercy.

The Southwestern Minnesota Synod joins in this critical work through an investment in Lutheran Advocacy, Lutheran Social Service, Global Refuge, and the Minnesota Council of Churches. It supports synod networks such as the Hunger Team, uniting individuals across the Synod who feel a strong call to serve in ministries of justice, compassion, and community care.

Through the ELCA, the Synod provides a framework for this work across the world, sending 230 missionaries to more than 48 countries, including more than 84 Young Adults in Global Mission in 11 country programs. Vital to our Synod is our Global Companionship relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa.

Provide a strong infrastructure to make it all possible

A strong organizational infrastructure makes all this ministry possible. These resources form a firm foundation on which all these ministries build. The synod council and committees tend to the synod's mission. Tammy Schacher (Executive Assistant to the Bishop), Kristin Bakeberg (Communications), and Maggie Berggren (Administrative Assistant) provide essential work to keep the synod's ministry running smoothly.

