



*“For we are God’s servants, working together,  
 you are God’s field, God’s building.” - 1 Corinthians 3:9*

When a seed is planted and tender shoots start to emerge from the soil, it’s hard to imagine the plant that will grow there. Corn or beans, daffodils or iris bulbs, tomatoes or pumpkins, these small beginnings grow into plants that can be tall and beautiful and capable of sustaining life.

When one begins to lay a foundation for a building, it’s hard to envision the structure that will rise there. A sanctuary or office, a home or garage, a grain elevator or community center, the stability of the structure depends upon its strong foundation.

St. Paul uses both of these metaphors to describe the church. And for the church in 2021, both seem appropriate.



We are a church emerging from a global pandemic that sped-up the rate of change churches were already experiencing. None of us can see exactly what the church of the future will look like, but the examples of innovation and creativity being shared across our congregations show that by God’s grace, the church will emerge so that more and more people know life abundant in Jesus Christ.



We are a synod building on a strong foundation as we move forward with unprecedented changes in congregational leadership, retirements, synod staff, and the Office of the Bishop. Many of our congregations are celebrating 150 years of standing on a strong foundation of faith. The pandemic reminded us that indeed, the church is not a building – it is people! And God is building all of us in new ways to serve God’s preferred and beautiful future.

*We are doing all of this as God’s servants  
 working together - because “synod” literally means  
 “walking together” as the church in a changing time.*



We believe that God has planted our congregations in cities, farms, and towns together, and that by God’s grace, together we have what we need. Each of our congregations has unique gifts from God – gifts we can discover and appreciate even more in the coming years. The strength of our entire synod depends upon the strength of each of us, and the relationships of all of us, together. Your prayers, partnership, and Mission Support allow us to walk together so that congregational ministries remain vital as **God’s field, God’s building.**

Here are some of the inspiring ways our ministries are being lived out together:

- Synod staff are walking with the highest number of congregations ever who are seeking interim and settled-call pastors.
- New synod staff members are being called.
- Area ministry partnership conversations are emerging .

- Lay members of congregations are adapting to new circumstances, imagining ministry in new ways, and embracing their leadership with passion and deep faith.
- The online presence of congregations is reaching people who are homebound, on the road, and on the other side of the globe.
- Candidates for ministry are beginning the candidacy process and preparing for their first call.
- Synod staff are providing pastoral care for leaders in times of illness or crisis.
- New ministries are continuing to flourish.
- Relationships with ministry partners like LSS and outdoor ministries are being strengthened.
- The Synod Council is organizing itself following an online Synod Assembly, ensuring that our governance is well-led and managed with diligence and care.
- Rostered ministers gathered for a second online Fall Theological Conference, deepening relationships and being equipped for leadership in this changing time.
- Our new bishop and synod staff are leading worship, meeting with congregations, and listening for how God is at work in each of their varied contexts.

In challenging circumstances, our congregations and our synod are living with change in the same way the church always has: remembering that it is GOD who has planted us, and GOD who is building us. On our part, we have the privilege of being God's servants working together with one another.

Thank you for walking together with the other 230 congregations who are part of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA. We knew we were "church together" before, but as COVID-19 kept us apart, God has shown us how truly connected we really are. During this time of emerging from the global pandemic, your gifts for Mission Support have never been more vital and more important.

Your offerings become Mission Support as you share a portion of those gifts to invest in the ministries of our synod locally, across the ELCA, and around the world. These shared gifts enable us to work together in ways no individual or congregation can do alone. Your intention to support an estimated \$1.65 million in Mission Support for 2022 makes it possible for us to live as God's servants, working together.

Our synod's financial partnership for national and global ministry is 51.5% of the Mission Support our congregations send on to the synod. Through these financial gifts, we plant new congregations like Reborn Lao Lutheran in Waite Park, support missionaries and the restart of Young Adults in Global Mission. Your generosity makes it possible for us to support shared ministries like Luther Seminary, our candidacy process, campus ministries, and partners like Lutheran Advocacy and the Minnesota Council of Churches.

Thank you for your generosity and for your partnership. As a church emerging from a pandemic, we give thanks that it is God who is the actor in the story of Life in Christ.

**You are God's planting, you are God's building.**

Thanks be to God!



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**Southwestern Minnesota Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

# Shaping Your Congregation's Plan for Mission Support

As your congregation prepares a spending plan for 2022 and considers your Mission Support commitment, please take time as a Council to discuss and reflect on the following questions:

- In what ways does your congregational leadership exemplify being “God’s servants, working together”? How does your congregation exemplify being “God’s field, God’s building”?
- What do you see as the new passions motivating people in your ministry setting?
- What one thing have you discovered about your congregation and your synod during the past year?
- What new ideas for ministry in your setting is God planting and building in you?

Please register your 2022 Mission Support Intent online by using the link below, or by returning this paper form to the synod office.

**Online:** Visit this quick link - [https://swmnsynod.formstack.com/forms/mission\\_support\\_2022](https://swmnsynod.formstack.com/forms/mission_support_2022) or follow these steps:

1. Go to [www.swmnelca.org](http://www.swmnelca.org)
2. Click on Annual Meeting Resources under Quick Links on the homepage.
3. Register the proposed amount you believe will be approved in your upcoming annual meeting.

## Use the columns below to indicate your congregation's current level of Mission Support and your 2022 Mission Support

	2022 Projected Intent	Projected Intent Percent
Regular offerings received from members	\$	%
Mission Support* budgeted for sharing with the synod and churchwide ministries	\$	%

\* Mission Support is the portion of regular offerings that your congregation shares for synod and churchwide ministries for God's mission beyond the local congregation. For specific information about the ELCA churchwide budget, visit [ELCA.org/resources/financial](http://ELCA.org/resources/financial).



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