

Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



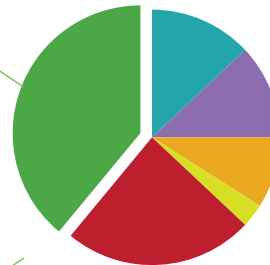
Your Mission Support Matters.

Thank you for the Mission Support your congregation shares with this synod. Each Mission Support dollar becomes love and care for God's people in local communities and throughout the world. For Fiscal Year 2028, the synod anticipates receiving \$1.6 million in Mission Support gifts – the largest source of giving. Thank you! In addition, we are grateful for special gifts from individuals, congregations, and grants.

Thank you! Together, all these gifts make these ministries possible:

Budgeted **expenses** Feb. 2027 - Jan. 2028

Check out the ELCA Mission Support Deep Dive handout to learn more about how your gifts support ELCA ministries here and abroad.



- Equip Leaders – 13%
- Empower Congregations – 12%
- Youth & Families – 9%
- Care for the world – 3%
- Strong Infrastructure – 24%
- Mission Support to ELCA – 39%

Your Mission Support dollars empower ministries here in the U.S. and around the globe. We are budgeting to share 47% of the Mission Support gifts we receive through ELCA ministries here and abroad – the equivalent of 39% of our total budgeted expenses.



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 Synod Authorized Ministers (SAMs) for Synod-authorized Ministry Congregation Sites. This happens through investment in Luther Seminary, a Wartburg Seminary grant, a robust candidacy process (guided by Heather Culuris, Synod Minister for Engaging Leaders), and training for lay ministers and SAMs.

The Synod supports these leaders as they do God's work. The Continuous Growth Pathway provides important opportunities for reflection, support 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 churchwide system that nurtures thousands of rostered ministers. Right here in our Synod, 168 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 Zoom and in-person 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 is deployed to our Synod to provide vital support to strategic and 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, and 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.

Your Synod provides financial support for our campus ministries; 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 other ministries of compassion and mercy. The Southwestern Minnesota Synod joins in this critical work through an investment in Lutheran Advocacy, and the Minnesota Council of Churches. We value our partnerships with Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota and Global Refuge. We engage with synod networks such as the Hunger Team and EcoFaith Team, uniting individuals across the Synod who give of themselves for 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, growing in accompaniment and connections. ELCA Global Mission invited and hosted our team of four to South Africa this past December, energizing this vital relationship once again.

Provide a strong infrastructure to make it all possible

A strong infrastructure and resources are the scaffolding that makes all our ministries possible. The synod council and committees tends to the synod's mission. Our infrastructure provides for essentials like utilities, building & property costs, internet, phone, and all of our communications. It also include spartnering with Region 3 Archives. Infrastructure includes vehicle maintenance and car insurance so staff can travel to congregations, and the use of zoom meetings to allow us to keep the cost of travel lower for group meetings and staff travel. Careful stewarding of administrative costs allows for the most fruitful use of your Mission Support dollars. 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, together with the synod pastoral staff, so that all in this synod might be grounded in hope in Jesus Christ. And because we can't say it enough, *"Thank you for your generosity!"*