Building on the Foundation

Nebraska Synod Assembly
May 31- June 2, 2018
Kearney, Nebraska

Bulletin of Reports
Nebraska Synod, ELCA
Hope ... Connect ... Go.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.
# Table of Contents

Tentative Agenda 5  
Assembly Speakers and Highlights 7  
2018 Worship Offering 7  
Top Ten Expectations of Nebraska Synod Voting Members 9  
Adoption of Assembly Rules of Procedures 10  
Report of: Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton 12  
Report of: Bishop Brian Maas 16  
Celebrate and Remember 18  
In Memory 20  
Report of: Vice President Dara Troutman 21  
Report of: Synod Council 22  
Report of: Synod Treasurer 28  
Proposed 2019 Budget 29  
Resolutions for 2018 42  
Report of: Budget and Finance Committee 47  
Report of: Candidacy Committee 48  
Report of: Director of Development 49  
Report of: Director of Faith Formation 50  
Report of: Good Samaritan Society 51  
Report of: Immanuel 52  
Report of: LSTC and WTS Seminaries 54  
Report of: Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska 56  
Report of: Lutheran Planned Giving Services 59  
Report of: Lutheran Service/Lutheran Volunteer Corps 60  
Report of: Midland University 61  
Report of: Mission Investment Fund 63  
Report of: Mosaic 64  
Report of: Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministries 65  
Report of: Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries 69  
Report of: Nebraska Synod Stewardship Table 71  
Report of: Nebraska Synodical Women’s Organization 72  
Report of: Nominating Committee 74  
Report of: Oaks Indian Mission 75  
Report of: Outreach Table 76  
Report of: Parish Ministry Associates Program 77  
Report of: Portico Benefit Services 78  
Report of: Rural Ministry Network 79  
Report of: Seeking the Spirit Within 80  
Report of: Synod Visioning Oversight Team 81  
Report of: Tabitha 85  
Report of: World Hunger Network 87  
2019 Compensation Guidelines 88
**Tentative Agenda**

**Thursday, May 31st (Pre-Assembly Day)**

- 2:30 pm – 4:00 pm  
  “Draft of a Social Statement on Women and Justice” Workshop

- 10:00 am – 4:00 pm  
  Synod Council

- 12:00 pm – 7:30 pm  
  Registration

- 6:30 pm  
  Meet the candidates for elections *(Appetizers provided)*

**Friday, June 1st (Assembly Day 1)**

- 7:30 am  
  Registration

- 9:00 am – 10:15 am  
  Opening Worship

- 10:15 am  
  Welcome and Announcements

- 10:30 am – 11:45 am  
  **Assembly Business Session I**
  - Formal Opening of Assembly
  - Report of Committee on Registration & Attendance
  - Synod Council Resolution 1 – Assembly Agenda
  - Synod Council Resolution 2 – Assembly Rules of Procedure
  - Bishop Election Instructions *(Registration will freeze until completion of 1st ballot)*
  - First Ballot for Bishop
  - Instructions for General Elections *(Registration re-opens)*
  - General Elections

- 12:00 pm – 1:15 pm  
  Willing Witness Luncheon/General Luncheon

- 1:15 pm  
  Deadline for Resolutions to the Resolutions Committee

- 1:15 pm – 4:30 pm  
  **Assembly Festival Session I**
  - Video Presentation
  - *other*
  - 3:00 pm – Break
  - 3:30 pm – KEYNOTE

- 4:30 pm  
  **Assembly Business Session II**
  - Report on First Ballot
  - Special Instructions
  - Action on En Bloc Items
    - Receipt of the Reports of Vice President and Synod Council
    - Synod Council Resolution 3 – Authorization for Specified Agencies and Causes to present their needs to the Congregations of the Nebraska Synod for Special Offerings
    - Synod Council Resolution 4 – Authorization for Synodically- Authorized Worship Communities
5:30 pm – 8:00 pm  
**Assembly Festival Session II**  
- *Dinner on your own*  
- Reception/Partners in Ministry Banquet *requires an additional ticket*

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**Saturday, June 2nd (Assembly Day 2)**

7:30 am – 11:30 am  
**Assembly Festival Session III**  
- 7:30 am  
  Synod 5K Fun Run & Walk  
- 9:00 am  
  Ministry Fair Activities begin  
- 11:30 am  
  Lunch  
- Video Presentation – “We Are Lutheran/We Are Church Together”

12:30 pm – 2:00 pm  
**Assembly Business Session III**  
- Video Presentation  
- Report on Second Ballot  
- Synod Council Resolution 7 – Proposed 2019 Budget  
- Late Assembly Resolutions  
- Bishop Election Instructions  
- Third Ballot for Bishop *if necessary*  
- Top three candidates address Assembly *if necessary*  
- Fourth Ballot for Bishop *if necessary*  
- Fifth Ballot for Bishop *if necessary*  
- Bishop’s Report  
- **ELCA Presentation: Bill Horne – ELCA Vice President**  
- Report on General Election  
- Report of the Committee on Minutes

2:00 pm  
**Assembly Festival Session IV**  
- 2:00 pm – KEYNOTE  
- 3:00 pm – Closing Worship with Holy Communion
Rev. Dr. Chris Alexander, was raised in Columbus, OH where she received her Bachelor’s degree from Capital University in Columbus OH. She pursued a Master’s Degree in Theology and Literature from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, which she completed in 1987, and in 1988 Chris married her husband, Rev. Dr. Scott Frederickson. Chris and Scott enjoy spending time with their two daughters and grandson. Chris served many program ministry and church administration positions before realizing her call to ordained ministry. In 2005 Chris returned to seminary within the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries Program at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley CA, to complete the requirements for ordination. She performed her internship with Faith Lutheran Church in Bismarck ND in 2006, and was formally ordained by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) on January 18, 2007, after being called by Faith Lutheran as their Associate Pastor. Chris joined Countryside Community Church in December 2010 and now serves as their Associate Minister and the Director for Center For Faith Studies. As Countryside is the Christian partner in the Tri-Faith Initiative, Chris has had a great many opportunities to experience Spiritual Practices of differing faith traditions and exploring methods for intentional listening to God in inter-faith conversation and rituals. She earned her Doctor of Ministry in Congregational Mission and Leadership from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN, in 2017. Her dissertation is entitled Opening To Revelation: Building Discernment Processes From Practices That Best Inform Communal Decision Making.

William “Bill” Horne, II, was elected the Vice President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on August 12, 2016, at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in New Orleans. He followed Carlos Peña, who served for 12 years. A member of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Clearwater, Florida, Bill has served as City Manager of Clearwater, Florida since 2001, 15 years! He is also an officer of the US Air Force. Bill has served on the ELCA Church Council, 2009-15. He was the Florida-Bahamas Synod Vice President 2005-09. He has also been president of his congregation. Bill holds an M.A. Political Science from Auburn University in Montgomery, an M.A. Human Resources Management from Pepperdine University, and a B.S. in Chemistry from the University of Tulsa. He sits on the board of directors of Lutheran Services of Florida, the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary Advisory Council, the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative and the Clearwater Jazz Holiday Foundation. He is known for his empathy, executive decision-making, leadership, integrity, transparency, trust, experience in managing large organizations, ability to work with diverse populations and individuals, and problem-solving.

Jonathan Rundman has been writing songs and performing across the country since he was 18 years old. He emerged on the national music scene as a Chicago-based touring artist, generating rave reviews in Billboard, the New York Times, Performing Songwriter, Paste, and countless regional publications. Now living in Minneapolis, he continues to tour and record. Jonathan’s songs can be heard on radio stations across America, in Scandinavia and England, and have been featured on television’s Ellen Degeneres Show and CBS This Morning. He has performed live on NPR’s Mountain Stage Radio Show, and on Iowa Public Television.

2018 Worship Offering
The Worship Offering collected at the 2018 Nebraska Synod Assembly will go to the Synod Mission Field Nebraska Fund and the Campaign for the ELCA's Fund for Leaders.

Mission Field Nebraska is thirteen of our newest and most innovative ministries in the Nebraska Synod. It supports worship and learning in at least eight languages among immigrants, refugees and Natives, and its efforts are geared toward raising up lay leaders, pastors and deacons from within these diverse communities where the Church has traditionally been unfamiliar.

The Campaign for the ELCA's Fund for Leaders is investing in the future of the church by supporting outstanding leaders as they answer the call to serve this church and the world.
Special Assembly Rate
12 months for just
$12.95
Reg. $19.95
This offer ends July 15, 2018
Living Lutheran is your complete source for news, reflection and stories from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its local and global companions.
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Visit LivingLutheran.org/subscribe; use code: Assembly or call 800-328-4648.
Top Ten Expectations of Nebraska Synod Voting Members

Together as Synod Council members and voting members of the Nebraska Synod Assembly, we share the following expectations of ourselves. We expect that:

1. We are Disciples of Jesus the Christ!
   • growing in faith;
   • spiritually connected;
   • regular in worship and Eucharist, centered in Christ;
   • daily nourished by God’s Word and prayer.

2. We filter every task/decision through a mission focus, prayerfully asking:
   • How is Jesus served through this?
   • Does this witness to and lift up the calling of our Lord?
   • Are people connected to God through this action? Are disciples grown by this?

3. We have passion
   • for God! Fresh in our love affair with the Triune God;
   • for the church! Believing in the church’s purpose, even though the Church is comprised of sinners such as us;
   • for people! Especially the lost, the last, the least, and the lonely;
   • as stewards of God who love and live under God’s grace.

4. We are deeply involved in the life of the church
   • informed, inquisitive, and inspired;
   • excited about what is and what can be;
   • committed to see the church be what God wants it to be!

5. We see the big picture
   • focused not only on our own congregations but the wider church as well;
   • seeing things not only as a single issue, but looking at what is for the good of the church;
   • committed to building up the Body of Christ;
   • “for the good of the kingdom”.

6. We are servant leaders of the church
   • modeling ourselves after the servant nature of Christ;
   • working together with all our sisters and brothers in Christ;
   • seeking opportunities to connect with others, to talk, question, and share.

7. We are transparent, authentic, honest and real
   • integrity is our goal;
   • without any hidden agenda;
   • understanding the Assembly is governed by a democratic process but is not a political gathering.

8. We wisely share our perspectives
   • understanding the difference between “majority rule” and God’s rule;
   • respectful of other’s opinions and willing to share ours with others “in love”;
   • prayerfully discerning of God’s will for us and for God’s church.

9. We are sensitive to and supportive of the Nebraska Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
   • understanding that the church is made up of people who are at the same time both saints and sinners;
   • brought together through Holy Baptism, united in Christ in one body, brothers and sisters of the same Heavenly Father;
   • deeply desirable that the church be faithful and fruitful, the means of grace for salvation given by God to a hurting world.

10. We are joyful
    • because Jesus is Lord.
Adoption of Assembly Rules of Procedures

1. Adoption of the Agenda

2. Adoption of Rules of Procedure
   The following Rules of Procedure for the 2018 Nebraska Synod Assembly be recommended to the Synod Assembly.

   1. Any voting member of the Synod Assembly who desires to add an item of new business to the agenda of the Synod Assembly shall present such item by 1:15 p.m. Friday, June 1, to the chair, who shall immediately refer it to the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee.

   2. A two-thirds vote of the Synod Assembly shall be required to add an item of new business to the agenda.

   3. The Synod Assembly may consider and act on business agenda items en bloc, provided those business agenda items were recommended for such consideration by the Synod Council. En bloc business agenda items shall be acted upon without debate or amendment. Upon the request of a Synod Assembly voting member and a second by nine other voting members, any agenda item may be pulled from en bloc consideration and be considered and acted upon separately following action on the remainder of en bloc business agenda items.

   4. Voting members desiring to present resolutions shall submit them to the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee by 1:15 p.m. Friday, June 1. These resolutions (submitted after the 90-day deadline) will be brought to the Assembly and require a majority vote to be debated on the floor and a two-thirds majority vote for passage. Any resolution properly before the Assembly and recommended by the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee, but not disposed of by the end of the time allotted for action on resolutions will automatically be referred to Synod Council for study and action at its next regular meeting.

   5. The Synod Assembly may consider and act on resolutions en bloc, provided those resolutions were recommended for en bloc consideration and approval, either as submitted or amended, by both the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee and the Synod Council. En bloc resolutions shall be acted upon without debate or amendment, except that the presiding officer may allow the introducer of each en bloc resolution to speak to his or her resolution once for no longer than two minutes. Upon the request of a Synod Assembly voting member and a second by nine other voting members, any resolution may be pulled from en bloc consideration and be considered and acted upon separately following action on the remainder of en bloc resolutions.

   6. All speeches in debate shall be limited to two minutes.

   7. No motion or parliamentary action, other than a motion to adjourn, shall be in order outside of the time scheduled on the Assembly agenda entitled Assembly Business Session.
8. The ELCA churchwide representative to the Assembly will chair all portions of the business sessions that are related to the Bishop’s election.

3. Agencies and Causes: The following agencies and causes are authorized to present their needs to the congregations of the Nebraska Synod and that congregations be encouraged to receive special offerings for them in 2019:

- Immanuel
- Lutheran Family Services
- Midland University
- Mosaic
- Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministries
- Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries
- Oaks Indian Mission
- Tabitha

4. The following assemblies are reauthorized as Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities:

- United Asian Evangelical Lutheran Ministry, Dakota City
- Fontenelle Community Church, Omaha
- Nile Lutheran Chapel, Omaha
- Sudanese Lutheran Fellowship, Grace Lutheran, Omaha
- Sudanese Messiah Worshiping Community, Ralston
- Spirit of Grace Lutheran Church, Holdrege
- Lakota Lutheran Chapel, Scottsbluff
- Iglesia Luterana San Andres, Omaha
- Followers of Christ, Lincoln

5. The 2019 Compensation Guidelines for Pastors and Deacons be approved and presented to the Synod Assembly.

6. The auditor’s report for 2017 be approved once the report is received, conditional upon such report being a clean opinion.

7. The 2019 proposed budget be approved by the 2018 Nebraska Synod Assembly.
Dear Friends in Christ,

We are Lutheran. For the past year it has been “all Reformation all the time!” So now what? The Lutheran Confessions teach that God freely and graciously creates a trusting relationship between us and Jesus. As we gather to meet in synod assemblies, let us remember that our hope is in the living Christ and share that assurance with the joy of the gospel.

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are free of the burden of making ourselves acceptable to God. The cross of Christ and the living Christ assure us that God’s final word for us is life and freedom in Christ. Lutherans confidently and enthusiastically claim this promise: “For freedom Christ has set us free” (Galatians 5:1). How does this claim affect your faith journey as an individual, a congregation, synod or member of the church universal? Through his death and resurrection, we have a truly living Lord who meets us, forgives us and calls us to follow, and in that we find our freedom.

Because we are set free in Jesus Christ, we are free from trying to save ourselves and free for loving and serving others. As a church, we walk by faith, trusting God’s promise in the gospel and knowing that we exist by and for the proclamation of this gospel word.

“Future Directions 2025”
Through “Called Forward Together in Christ – Future Directions 2025,” we are addressing the challenges and embracing the opportunities of the church we are becoming – a church that is confident about who we are in Christ and what God is calling us to do. I invite you to lift up these goals and engage how we journey forward in Christ as church together. You can learn more by visiting ELCA.org/future.

ELCA Youth Gathering
Many of us will be together at the ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston June 27-July 1, 2018. I look forward to sharing in the excitement and energy of our young people as they experience the wonder and joy of being with more than 30,000 Lutherans and grow in their faith formation. For information and resources on the Gathering, go to ELCA.org/gathering.

The Campaign for the ELCA
We are in our final year of Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA. Help us rally to the end! As of Dec. 31, the campaign has received more than $138.6 million in cash and multiyear commitments, representing 70 percent of our $198 million goal. Read more about the campaign’s progress at ELCA.org/campaign. Thank you for your continued support!
“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday
Sept. 9 is our suggested date for the 2018 dedicated day of service. If your congregation cannot participate on this date, please consider another day. “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday is an opportunity for us to explore one of our most basic convictions as Lutherans: that all of life in Jesus Christ – every act of service, in every daily calling, in every corner of life – flows freely from a living, daring confidence in God’s grace. To order T-shirts or download resources, go to ELCA.org/dayofservice.

Join the conversation
There are two opportunities for you to provide feedback about what this church says on important issues. One is “Draft of a Social Statement on Women and Justice.” The draft is in two sections: basic theses and fuller explanations, which speak about how sexism harms us all in church and society. The task force wants to hear from you about the content of the draft and this innovative format. Find the draft, supplementary materials and order information at ELCA.org/womenandjustice. The other is on the draft of “A Declaration of our Inter-Religious Commitment: A Draft Policy Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.” The comment period is open from now until June 30, 2018. Visit ELCA.org/ecumenical for more information and the document.

I have shared some of the ways we are loving and serving our neighbor. This is what being free in Christ looks like. This is part of our Lutheran story. This is part of your congregation’s story and your synod’s story.

Wherever you are for your synod assembly, from the Alaska Synod to the Caribbean Synod, there is something that we all have in common – our life in Christ. We have our life in Christ – in the crucified and risen Savior, in the one who poured out his life for us, the one who gave himself away for the life of the world so we may be free. As Lutheran Christians, we live in the freedom of Christ.

With gratitude,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
“Porque por gracia ustedes han sido salvados mediante la fe; esto no procede de ustedes, sino que es regalo de Dios”.

– Efesios 2:8

Estimados amigos en Cristo:

Somos luteranos. El pasado año las cosas han sido “¡todo Reforma todo el tiempo!” Y entonces, ¿ahora qué? Las Confesiones Luteranas enseñan que Dios crea, gratuita y misericordiosamente, una relación de confianza entre Jesús y nosotros. Mientras nos reunimos en las asambleas sinodales, recordemos que nuestra esperanza está en el Cristo vivo, y compartamos esa seguridad con el gozo del evangelio.

Por medio de la muerte y resurrección de Jesucristo somos libres de la carga de tratar por nosotros mismos de ser aceptables ante Dios. La cruz de Cristo y el Cristo vivo nos aseguran que la palabra final de Dios para nosotros es vida y libertad en Cristo. Los luteranos reclamamos con confianza y entusiasmo esta promesa: “Cristo nos libró para que vivamos en libertad” (Gálatas 5:1). ¿Cómo afecta esta declaración su jornada de fe como individuo, congregación, sinodo o miembro de la iglesia universal? Por medio de su muerte y resurrección, tenemos un Señor verdaderamente vivo que nos encuentra, perdona y nos llama a seguirlo, y en ello encontramos nuestra libertad.

Porque somos hechos libres en Jesucristo, somos libres de tratar de salvarnos a nosotros mismos, y libres para amar y servir a otros. Como iglesia caminamos por fe, confiando en la promesa de Dios en el evangelio, y sabiendo que existimos por y para la proclamación de esta palabra del evangelio.

“Futuras Direcciones 2025”
Por medio de “Llamados a Seguir Adelante Juntos en Cristo – Futuras Direcciones 2025,” estamos abordando los retos y aceptando las oportunidades de la iglesia en la que nos estamos convirtiendo – una iglesia que confía en quiénes somos en Cristo y en lo que Dios nos está llamando a hacer. Le invito a que se una a nosotros en la consecución de estas metas a medida que avanzamos en nuestra jornada en Cristo. Puede obtener más información visitando ELCA.org/future.

Asamblea Juvenil de la ELCA
Muchos de nosotros estaremos juntos en la Asamblea Juvenil de la ELCA en Houston, del 27 de junio al primero de julio de 2018. Anhelo ser parte de la emoción y energía de nuestros jóvenes mientras experimentan el asombro y la alegría de estar con más de 30,000 luteranos y aumentan la formación de su fe. Para información y recursos sobre la Asamblea, visite ELCA.org/gathering.

La Campaña para la ELCA
Estamos en nuestro año final de Siempre Siendo Hechos Nuevos: La Campaña para la ELCA. Ayúdenos a reunir hasta el final. Hasta el 31 de diciembre, la campaña había recibido más de
$138.6 millones en efectivo y compromisos multianuales, lo que representa el 70 por ciento de nuestra meta de $198 millones. Lea más sobre el progreso de la campaña en ELCA.org/campaign. ¡Gracias por su apoyo continuo!

**Domingo de “La obra de Dios. Nuestras manos”**


**Únase a la conversación**

Hay dos oportunidades para que usted haga sus comentarios sobre lo que dice esta iglesia acerca de asuntos importantes. Una es el “Borrador del pronunciamiento social sobre la mujer y la justicia”. El borrador tiene dos secciones: las tesis básicas y las explicaciones exhaustivas, las cuales hablan de cómo el sexismo nos hace daño a todos en la iglesia y la sociedad. El grupo de trabajo desea oír de usted con respecto al contenido del borrador y a este formato innovador. Encuentre el borrador, los materiales suplementarios y la información para pedidos en ELCA.org/womenandjustice. La otra es el borrador de “Una declaración de nuestro compromiso interreligioso: Borrador de la declaración de la política de la Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en América”. El período de comentarios está abierto desde ahora hasta el 30 de junio de 2018. Visite ELCA.org/ecumenical para obtener más información y el documento.

He compartido algunas de las formas en que estamos amando y sirviendo a nuestro prójimo. Así es como se ve el ser libres en Cristo. Esto es parte de nuestra historia luterana. Esto es parte de la historia de su congregación y de la historia de su sínodo.

Dondequiera que usted esté en la asamblea de su sínodo, ya sea en el Sínodo de Alaska o en el Sínodo del Caribe, hay algo que todos tenemos en común – nuestra vida en Cristo. Tenemos nuestra vida en Cristo – en el Salvador crucificado y resucitado, en el que derramó su vida por nosotros, aquel que se entregó por la vida del mundo para que seamos libres. Como cristianos luteranos vivimos en la libertad de Cristo.

Con gratitud,

La Rvda. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Obispa Presidente
Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en América
According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

We gather under the theme “Building on the Foundation.” No one would argue that “the church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord,” to quote the hymn. Yet while we are confident of our foundation, some may wonder how the rest of the structure is holding up. Certainly focusing on some measures could lead one to worry. The numbers within and without—declining membership, shrinking and aging communities—aren’t encouraging.

However, without denying the need to be mindful of those trends, there are abundant reasons for hope. Jesus Christ is the foundation of our work, and on that foundation, remodeling, improvements and new construction are happening all over the Nebraska Synod.

Hope is the first of three primary efforts of our ongoing Strategic Vision to Build on the Foundation. We recognize that we have a hope that will not fail and that no one else can offer. In the face of mass manipulation and manufactured fear, we declare a simple, consistent gospel of hope: “for God so loved the world …” That hope draws us, fills us, transforms us and sends us. As ELCA Christians, we recognize that God’s expectations of us are high; and that the tide of God’s grace is even higher. We are not about “anything goes” but about “everyone comes.”

Our hope is in the privilege of sharing Christ’s wide-open welcome to all. There’s room even for us. And welcome is only the beginning. As the saying goes, “God accepts us as we are, but loves us too much to leave us that way.” Through life-changing faith formation, life-giving fellowship in community, and life-transforming service to others, God shapes us into disciples. We become God’s partners in serving and changing the world.

In the Nebraska Synod, that invitation, welcome and transformation have become real through things like Seeking the Spirit Within and the spiritual practices it teaches and fosters in individuals, groups and congregations all over the synod. It is expressed through Sow the Seeds, our intentional effort at identifying and inviting individuals into leadership; God’s IDEA, our program for those exploring vocation; ever-expanding opportunities for Candidacy and Theological Education to ensure those who feel called to receive seminary education have access to it; Faith Formation and youth events like MSG (Middle School Gathering), LYON High School event and The Journey (cross-generational servant event); the Generation Together multi-generational video and study resources, and so much more. Invited graciously and deeply into discipleship, we are ever more aware of the hope that is our foundation.

Building on that hope, we Connect with one another in congregations, clusters, our Serving Arms ministries, the Nebraska Synod, the ELCA, ecumenical partners and the worldwide Lutheran fellowship that includes our Companion Synods, the Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and IELU, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina and Uruguay. In the midst of the conflict that daily pits people against one another and tries to draw us to polarization and division, we dare to connect. We dare to join one another at the Lord’s Table and in the Lord’s work.

Through our connections we cannot only do more than any of us can alone, we are more than any of us can ever become alone. As the reports in this Bulletin will show, “we are the church together,” as our children still sing. The Nebraska Synod is not an administrative unit, a distant office or a vague concept. The Nebraska Synod is us—all of us, together. One congregation’s loss is a loss for all of us; one congregation’s celebration is a celebration for all of us. Because we are connected, we share one another’s burdens and joys. Every congregation has access to resources, ideas, efforts, partnerships and so much more through this incredible body. The Nebraska Synod is blessed with incredible history, resources, faithfulness, generosity, connection—and a hope-filled future. What’s more,
through the ELCA we are connected to more resources, opportunities and people than most of us ever imagine.

What we don’t connect with so well is that very story—the story of who we are, how we’re connected, and what we do daily to make Christ known in word and deed. It’s my daily prayer that we will grow not only closer in our connections to one another, but deeper in our awareness of our story. It is—honest to God—a story the world is longing to hear.

Rooted in Hope, invited to Connect, we are inspired to **Go** to live and share that very story. To **go** is to move outside our doors and walls. It’s to tell others our story and invite them to be part of it. It’s to discern God’s call and follow wherever it leads. It’s to see need and respond to it; to perceive injustice and stand up to it; to stare into despair and shout “Christ is Risen!”

This is no small call. But it’s the one we share—not only with one another, but with the God who ever accompanies, empowers, encourages and upholds us. I think Marianne Williamson is right: “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.” Because we are so connected, we dare to **Go**, and as we do, things happen!

We go to respond to disasters wherever in the world they happen; we go to feed the hungry; we go to shelter and feed those made homeless by earthquake, famine, war and persecution; in partnership with our Serving Arms, we go to serve those with disabilities, those in need of mental and physical health care, the elderly, children, youth, campers, students, seminarians, Native Americans and new Americans, and more. In our own communities, we go to operate food pantries and backpack programs, teach English, provide tutors, serve those in need, visit the imprisoned, pray with the sick, embrace the grieving...the list is nearly endless.

**Hope. Connect. Go.** It’s what we do. Because of who we are. Because of whose we are.

The details of all of these ministries—facts, figures, people, projects—are to be found throughout this Bulletin of Reports. This report is intended not so much to summarize as to invite; to invite you to learn more about this ministry, our ministry, us—the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Learn our story, know our story, share our story, live our story; for it’s a story Christ died (and rose!) to tell, and that the world is dying to hear.

Finally, some closing requests. Please:

- hear my personal and sincere gratitude for the great privilege of serving as your bishop for the past six years. This is a great and undeserved call.
- know too that it’s a call I’m able to serve only through the renewal of the constant love, grace, encouragement and support of my wife, Debbie, who has a graduate degree in counseling and a doctorate in pastor-spousing. I am blessed and deeply grateful.
- take a moment to greet and thank the members of the Nebraska Synod staff, who serve us all so well in the faithful fulfillment of their calls.

> “I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you.” — Philippians 1:3-4

Gratefully submitted,

Bishop
Nebraska Synod, ELCA
Celebrate and Remember

Anniversaries of Ordination, Commissioning or Certification

10 years - Ordained/Commissioned/Certified in 2008
Rev. Darrell Anderson
Rev. Charles Bentjen
Rev. Michelle Carlson
Rev. John Eggen
Rev. Lance Ferguson
Rev. Juliet Hampton
Rev. Connie Raess
Rev. Randy Rasmussen
Rev. Soriya Roeun
Rev. Karen Rupp
Rev. Jim Spanjers
Deacon Rita Borgstadt
PMA Patrick Gregory
PMA Sandra Terry

15 years - Ordained/Certified in 2003
Rev. Eric Bostrom
Rev. Rhonda Bostrom
Rev. Kimberly McSheehy
Rev. Judith Rainforth
Rev. Maria Szurpicki
PMA Karen King
PMA Keith Rabe
PMA Susan Urbanec

20 years - Ordained in 1998
Rev. Jon Bustard
Rev. Milana Joseph
Rev. Dr. Amy Krejcarek
Rev. James Lindberg
Rev. Neal Mather
Rev. Russell McDowell
Rev. Gatha Rathjen
Rev. Beverly Rautenberg-Panko
Rev. Marty Tollefson
Rev. Jodi Wangness

25 years - Ordained in 1993
Rev. David Christenson
Rev. Mary Grundman
Rev. Peggy Hall
Rev. Megan Morrow
Rev. Glen Thomas
Rev. William Voss

30 years - Ordained in 1988
Rev. Ethan Feistner
Rev. Patti Byrne

35 years - Ordained/Commissioned in 1983
Rev. Marsha Anderson
Rev. Dr. Richard Carlson
Rev. James Holthus
Rev. Terry Pool
Sister Anne Hall
Deacon Bonnie Larsen

40 years - Ordained in 1978
Rev. David Assmus
Rev. Donald Duy
Rev. David Evenson
Rev. John Gosswein
Rev. Robert Oleson
Rev. Edgar Schambach
Rev. Lyle Von Seggern

45 years - Ordained in 1973
Rev. Raymond Hagberg
Rev. Jonathan Jensen
Rev. Larry Lepper
Rev. Robert Novak
Rev. Henry Thorberg

50 years - Ordained in 1968
Rev. Robert Buschkemper
Rev. Elwood Hipple
Rev. Ronald Nelson
Rev. Robert Rademacher
Rev. Robert Stenson

55 years - Ordained in 1963
Rev. Dr. Dennis Anderson
Rev. Richard Jessen
Rev. William Jurgens
Rev. Kenneth Marquardt
Rev. K. David Nordstrom
Rev. Larry Spomer
Rev. Nathan Wadewitz
Rev. Don Wilken

60 years - Ordained in 1958
Rev. Norman Freund

65 years - Ordained in 1953
Rev. Jack Berry
Rev. Harlan Brei
Rev. John Nielsen
Rev. Alton Schwandt

Retirements
Deacon Bonita Johnsen, 7/1/17
Rev. Kenneth Wittrock, 7/1/17
Rev. Ruth Boettcher, 8/1/17
Rev. Helmut Yurk, 9/1/17
Rev. David Evenson, 10/1/17
Rev. Jonathan Jensen, 1/1/18
Rev. David Sites, 1/1/18
Rev. Gretchen Ritola, 1/1/18
Rev. Sylvia Karlsson, 1/1/18
Rev. Chris Farmer, 1/1/18
Rev. Maria Szurpicki, 2/1/18
Deacon Carl Rick Strong, 4/1/18
Rev. Russell McDowell, 5/1/18

2018 Nebraska Synod Assembly
Welcome to the Nebraska Synod!

ORDINATIONS AND COMMISSIONINGS
Rev. Cara Jensen
Rev. Leah Lawson
Rev. Robert Schlismann
Rev. Kelly France
Rev. Megan Clausen
Rev. Suzanne How
Rev. Steven Neal
Rev. Sergio Amaya
Rev. John Gok Kuany Badeng
Rev. Terris Krueger

RECEIVED BY TRANSFER
Rev. Richard Carlson
Rev. Michelle Carlson
Rev. Olaf Roynesdal
Rev. Ethan Feistner
Rev. Mary Frohs

PMA CERTIFICATION
Janet K. Anderson

Those Leaving the Nebraska Synod

LETTERS OF TRANSFER ISSUED
Rev. Phillip Brumback to Delaware-Maryland Synod
Rev. John Brink to Greater Milwaukee Synod
Rev. Melody Brink to Greater Milwaukee Synod
Rev. Kelley Pedersen to Western Iowa Synod
Rev. Michael Ostrom to Oregon Synod
Rev. Jean Vargo to Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod
Rev. David Frerichs to Central States Synod
Rev. Gretchen Ritola to Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod
Rev. Matthew Hacker to Greater Milwaukee Synod
Rev. Andrew Dietzel to Southwestern Texas Synod

RESIGNED FROM THE ROSTER
Rev. Sergio Amaya

REMOVED FROM THE ROSTER

CONGREGATIONS CLOSED
St. James, Edgar

CONGREGATIONS LEAVING THE ELCA
Immanuel, Ceresco
Reverend John Plowman
Rev. John William Plowman was born March 19, 1947, in Carmel-By-The-Sea, California, to Donald and Helen (Trygstad) Plowman. He was raised in Monterey and graduated from California Concordia High School in 1965, where in Oakland, California, he also obtained his associate's degree at Concordia College in 1967. John married Carol Mann on June 15, 1968 in Sunnyvale, California at St. Mark Lutheran Church. In 1970, John earned his bachelor's degree in Psychology at St. Francis College in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. John was in management at the JCPennys in Salinas, California, when he was called into the ministry. He earned his Master of Divinity in 1984, after an internship at St. Paul's Lutheran Church outside of Gilead, Nebraska. He died October 26, 2017.

John is survived by his wife Carol of 49 years who lives in Council Bluffs; son, Matthew and wife, Laurie Plowman of Des Moines; daughter, Rebecca and husband, Todd Ashby of Bettendorf; daughter, Heather and husband, Benji Harold of Crescent; grandchildren Jocelyn Plowman, Miley Ashby, and Johnathan, Austin, and Amalia Harold; brother Michael Plowman; sister Anne and husband Jim Shaff; brother Glenn and wife Terry Plowman; brother-in-law Richard and wife Elizabeth Mann; nephews Ethan Kemp, Joshua Plowman, Daniel Plowman, Eric Plowman; nieces Poppy Martinez, Jeanine Kemp, and Ricci Mann. John joins in death his parents, brothers-in-law Kenneth Mann and Dennis Kemp, and nephew Patrick Kemp.

Reverend Justin Wiese
Rev. Justin Ryan Wiese was born on Nov. 29, 1980, in Osmond, the son of Jerry and Debra (Loewe) Wiese. He was raised in Randolph and graduated valedictorian in 1999. He continued his education at Dana College in Blair and graduated valedictorian in 2003. He died October 2, 2017. Justin entered Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, in the fall of 2003. He completed his internship in Madison at Immanuel Lutheran Church. He returned to Wartburg for his senior year, graduating in 2007. On June 18, 2005, Justin married Jillian Scheerhoorn in Sanborn, Iowa. Justin was ordained on May 27, 2007, in Randolph at St. John's Lutheran Church. Following his ordination, he returned to Immanuel Lutheran Church in Madison.

Pastor Justin is survived by his spouse, Jillian; their children, Jalen and Jeryn; his parents, Jerry and Debra Wiese; his brother, Jason (Sarah) Wiese of Arlington; his nephew, Michael Wiese of Arlington; his in-laws, Verlyn and Sheryl Scheerhoorn of Sanborn; his sister-in-law, Tallie (Mark) Nelson of Franklin, Tenn.; nephew and niece Logan and Lauryn Nelson; his grandfather, Virgil Loewe Sr. of Wisner; his grandmother-in-law, Adeline Traver of Paulina, Iowa; and a multitude of family and friends.
Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Thank you for the privilege of serving for the past year as Vice President of the Nebraska Synod. I am completing the final year of my four-year term. To Bishop Maas, fellow members of the Synod Council, Synod staff, and the community of believers gathered in Kearney for the 2018 Synod Assembly, I am honored to have been in partnership with you.

Elsewhere in this bulletin of reports, you may read in greater detail about motions approved by Synod Council since the last Synod Assembly. But I would like to call to your attention the following actions:

- Approving sabbatical leave proposals for Assistants to the Bishop Juliet Hampton and Megan Morrow and Director of Faith Formation Lisa Kramme
- Extending numerous Synod Council calls, including to the Reverend Kristen Van Stee to serve as Bishop’s Associate for Mobility and Congregational and Rostered Minister Care
- Releasing Immanuel Lutheran Church of Ceresco from the roster of congregations of the Nebraska Synod and the ELCA
- Accepting the 2016-17 fiscal year audit report prepared by Seim Johnson
- Amending the 2018 budget by reducing anticipated revenue from Mission Share and Development activities and making corresponding adjustments to expenses
- Discussing at length the financial sustainability of Mission Field Nebraska ministries and moving various funds to support their operations
- Moving funds to help grow the Parish Ministries Associates program and authorizing an increase in the PMA Administrator’s hours
- Moving nearly $330,000 of Council Designated Funds to the Endowment Fund to be utilized to support the ongoing operations and ministries of the Synod
- Approving an increase in the defined compensation provided to Bishop Maas
- Making grants of $20,000 from the Nebraska Disaster Fund to Lutheran Disaster Response or the Synods most significantly impacted by the 2017 hurricanes

In spite of certain challenges facing us over the past year, I remain optimistic and enthusiastic about where the Spirit is calling us for ministry in the Nebraska Synod and throughout the ELCA. The Strategic Mission Vision Plan, approved by the Assembly in 2015, is a helpful guiding document calling us to Hope – Connect – Go!

I had the opportunity in the fall to attend a meeting of Synod Vice Presidents at the Lutheran Center in Chicago, the second such meeting I have attended during my tenure. The winter and spring brought several conversations with church-wide officials regarding the process to elect the Bishop, which formally got underway with cluster meetings in February.

In closing, I would like to say a word of gratitude to our hard-working, talented, and dedicated Nebraska Synod Staff and to the members of Synod Council for their faithful service. Please hold us prayer for the wisdom, strength, and commitment to carry out this work in His name.

Respectfully submitted,
Dara L. Troutman
Vice President
Meetings of the Synod Council of the Nebraska Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America were held on June 1, 2017, Younes Conference Center, Kearney; September 9, 2017, Messiah, Aurora; December 1, 2017, Mosaic Office, Omaha; and March 9, 2017, First, York.

PART I – INFORMATION

Assembly

1. Appointed the following individuals as initial members of the 2019 Synod Assembly Planning Team, to be joined by up to five additional members appointed by the Executive Committee:
   - Patrick Gregory, St. Thomas, Omaha
   - Ramona Edwards, St. Timothy, Omaha
   - Sherrill Echternkamp, Zion, Clay Center
   - Lynn Echternkamp, Zion, Clay Center
   - Cheryl Gerdes, First, Kearney
   - Tom Garvey, St. Michael’s, Omaha
   - Mildred (Millie) Winkler, Our Savior’s, Broken Bow

2. Authorized the 2018 Synod Assembly offering to be dedicated to the Mission Field Nebraska Fund and the Fund for Leaders/Always Being Made New Campaign for the ELCA.

3. Ratified the following committee members:

   Minutes
   - Cheryl Gerdes, First, Kearney, Chair
   - Karen Melang, Synod Council Secretary
   - Diane Harpster, Support Staff Liaison
   - two additional members to be determined
   - Ron Gunderson, St. Paul’s, Grand Island
   - Janet Byars, St. John’s, Beatrice
   - Bill Koeber, Our Savior, Wayne
   - Bill Biggs, Synod Council Liaison
   - Pr. William Shaner, First, Lincoln
   - Pr. Ann Sundberg, Immanuel, Chadron
   - Pr. Steve Meysing, Staff Liaison

4. Granted voting privileges to the following persons at the 2018 Synod Assembly (Synod Constitution provision S7.26):
   - United Asian Evangelical Lutheran Ministry, Dakota City
     Two lay members (to be identified)
   - Fontenelle Community Church, Omaha
     Two lay members (to be identified)
   - Nile Lutheran Chapel, Omaha
     Two lay members (to be identified)
   - Sudanese Lutheran Fellowship, Grace Lutheran, Omaha
     Two lay members (to be identified)
   - Sudanese Messiah Worshiping Community, Ralston
     Two lay members (to be identified)
   - Spirit of Grace Lutheran Church, Holdrege
     Two lay members (to be identified)
   - Lakota Lutheran Chapel and Center, Scottsbluff
     Two lay members (to be identified)
   - Iglesia Luterana San Andres, Omaha
     Two lay members (to be identified)

5. Granted voice and vote at Nebraska Synod Assemblies to the Rev. Robert Schlismann of the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska, while he serves as Pastor of St. Luke Lutheran Church, Stanton.

6. Approved the recommendation and rationale of the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee pursuant Synod Assembly Resolution 2018:1.

7. Approved the recommendation and rationale of the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee pursuant to Synod Assembly Resolution 2018:2.
8. Pr. Stephanie Tollefson as chair of the Nominating Committee and Ramona Edwards as chair of the Registration Committee.

**Congregations**

1. Approved constitutions/bylaws/continuing resolutions for the following congregations:

- St. John’s, Daykin
- Rejoice!, Omaha
- American, Fairbury
- Trinity, Cordova
- St. John’s, Cozad
- American, Filley
- Messiah, Grand Island
- St. Thomas, Omaha
- St. John’s, Eustis
- Immanuel, Wymore
- Concordia, Concord
- Messiah, Aurora

2. Approved the transfer of Luther Memorial, Syracuse, from the Rolling Hills Cluster to the Lincoln Area Mission Cluster.

3. Approved the relocation of Trinity Lutheran Church from its two campuses at 330 W. Halleck Street and 520 W. Lincoln Street, Papillion, to the southwest corner of Hwy 370 and 90th Street in Papillion.

4. Released Immanuel Lutheran Church of Ceresco, Nebraska, from the roster of congregations of the Nebraska Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**Synod**

1. Approved the certification of Janet K. Anderson as a Parish Ministry Associate.

2. Approved moving $15,000 from Frerichs Memorial Fund, $5,000 from Leadership Development Fund, and $5,000 from Faith Formation Ministry Fund ($25,000 total), all Council Designated Fund categories, to the Parish Ministries Associates fund.

3. Authorized the expenditure of up to $35,000 from LMM dedicated funds to provide for the razing of the LMM building adjacent to Fontenelle Community Church/Nile Lutheran Chapel.

4. Approved revisions to the 2018 Synod Assembly Agenda.

5. Approved amendments to the Synod constitution which arose from the 2016 Churchwide Assembly action.

6. Approved amendments to the Synod constitution by the Synod Council.

7. Approved supporting Augustana’s (Omaha) application to be a Horizon Internship Site and provide $11,000 from the Equity and Synod Properties Fund to support this internship.

8. Approved the Rural Ministry Network as an official Ministry Network of the Nebraska Synod.

9. Approved the status as Ministry Networks to synod committees eliminated in the 2017 changes to the synod constitution: Justice, Outreach, Stewardship, Global Missions, World Hunger.

10. Approved moving all but $1,000 of designated All the Children of God funds to the general Mission Field Nebraska account.

11. Approved RARE (Racism Awareness Reconciliation and Engagement) as a special synodical committee and approved Miriam Blair and Brad Johnson as its co-chairs.

12. Accepted the Seim Johnson audit report of the 2016-17 fiscal year of the Nebraska Synod.

13. Approved the sabbatical leave proposed by Assistant to the Bishop Juliet Hampton for the approximate period March 1 through April 30, 2018, and granted up to $1,500 in reimbursements for expenses related to the sabbatical.

14. Moved approximately $5,662 of Council Designated Funds, made up of Bridgebuilders Fund ($123), Synod Clergy Spouse Retreat Fund ($875) and Video Fund ($4,664) to Mission Field Nebraska (MFN) to support the operations of the ministries included under MFN.

15. Moved approximately $329,474 of Council Designated Funds, made up of Nebraska Missions Fund ($48,499) and Evert F. and Tena L. Frerichs Memorial Fund ($280,975), to the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Endowment Fund (Endowment Fund)
16. Moved approximately $1,500 of Council Designated Funds, made up of Women in Ministry Fund ($478) and Renewal Retreat Task Force ($1,022) to the Faith Formation Ministry Fund.
17. Empowered the Executive Committee to oversee the bishop nomination and election processes, either directly or via the appointment of a Bishop Election Committee or a combination thereof.
18. Approved grants that in total will not exceed $20,000 to Lutheran Disaster Response or the Synods most significantly impacted by the recent hurricanes from the Nebraska Disaster Fund for Hurricane Disaster Relief.
19. Authorized an increase in the PMA Administrator’s hours from approximately 8.33 hours per week to administer the Program to approximately 16 hours per week, the additional cost of which will be approximately $6,200 annually and to approve the expenditure of $1,099.45 for additional DVDs to expand the PMA library.
20. Approved housing allowance requests for rostered synod staff members.
21. Approved the sabbatical leave proposed by Assistant to the Bishop Megan Morrow for the approximate period June 15 through August 19, 2018, and granted up to $1,500 in reimbursements for expenses related to the sabbatical.
22. Approved the sabbatical leave time for Lisa Kramme for the period and activities outlined in her sabbatical proposal and to provide up to $1,500 in sabbatical expense reimbursements.
24. Approved the transfer $30,000 from the Lutheran Metro Ministries designated fund and $30,000 from the American Missions restricted fund to support Mission Field Nebraska ministries for 2017.
25. Reduced the 2017-18 Mission Share by a proportion equivalent to $20,000 should a grant agreement for that amount not be reached with churchwide grant-makers.
26. Approved a grant of $5,000 for the Project Embrace programs at Augustana, Omaha, and First Lutheran, Omaha.
27. Approved housing allowance for Pr. John Badeng.
29. Authorized Rev. Kristine Schroeder to be available for a call as a Pastor at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Marquette, Nebraska, should the congregation seek to consider her for a call following the conclusion of her term as Interim/Transitional Pastor there.
30. Approved a 2.5% increase in compensation for Bishop Brian Maas, including defined compensation, cost increases for benefits, and an increase in retirement benefits for a total of $139,080 for 2018-2019.
31. Authorized the following as Mission Field Nebraska ministries through March 2019:
   - Followers of Christ Prison Ministries, Lincoln
   - Fontenelle Community Church, Omaha
   - Iglesia Luterana San Andres, Omaha
   - Lakota Lutheran Center and Chapel, Scottsbluff
   - Sudanese Messiah Worshipping Community, Ralston
   - Nile Lutheran Chapel, Omaha
   - Sudanese Lutheran Fellowship, Grace Lutheran, Omaha
   - United Asian Evangelical Lutheran Ministry, South Sioux City
   - Spirit of Grace Lutheran Church, Holdrege
   - Seeking the Spirit Within
   - Table Grace Café, Omaha
   - All the Children of God (formerly Todos los Hijos de Dios), Fairbury
   - The Welcome Center, Lexington
   - Lutheran Service Corp, Omaha

**Appointments, Nominations, Elections, Calls**
1. Approved the following pastors/rostered leaders for On Leave from Call status for one year:
   - Nicholas Cordray
   - Janice Heidlberger
   - John Eggen
   - Randall Herman
   - Casey Lieneman
   - Rachel Ziese Hacker
   - Melody Brink
   - Tim Eighmy
   - Inba Inbarasu
   - Peter Speiser
   - Bogart Nomad
   - Beth Ann Lechtenberger Stone
2. Approved an extension of On Leave from Call status for the following rostered person for one year, pending approval from the Conference of Bishops, and to forward this request to the Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops: Jennifer Wallwey

3. Issued calls to:
   - Pr. Kristine Schroeder to Transitional/Interim Ministries
   - Pr. Steve Berke to Transitional/Interim Ministries
   - Sr. Anne Hall to Transitional/Interim Ministries
   - Pr. Amy Krejcarek as pastor, Immanuel Fontenelle Care Community of Immanuel, Omaha
   - Pr. Jody Wangsness as pastor, Immanuel Pathways, Omaha
   - Pr. Kimberley McSheehy as pastor, Immanuel Pathways Southwest Iowa
   - Pr. John Eggen, Major Gifts Officer, Midland University, Fremont
   - Pr. Kristen Van Stee as Bishop’s Associate for Mobility and Congregational and Rostered Minister Care
   - Pr. John Gok Kuany Badeng as Mission Developer at Nile Chapel, Omaha
   - Pr. Mary Frohs to Transitional Ministries

4. Confirmed the retirement of the following rostered persons:
   - Ron Youngerman
   - Bonita Johnsen
   - Ken Wittrock
   - Ruth Boettcher
   - Helmut York
   - David Evenson
   - Jonathan Jensen
   - Gretchen Ritola
   - David Sites
   - Sylvia Karlsson
   - Maria Szurpicki

5. Approved the appointments of:
   - Pr. Ellen Stelzle as chair of the Candidacy Committee
   - Rob King as chair of the Audit Committee
   - Pr. Bob Hayden as chair of the Budget & Finance Committee
   - Pr. Sylvia Karlsson as chair of the Stewardship Committee
   - Pr. Sheryl Kester Beyer to the Strategic Mission Vision Oversight Team

6. Elected the following Synod Committee members:
   - **Audit Committee**: Rebecca Hittner, Marsha McKinsey
   - **Budget & Finance Committee**: Pr. Robert Hayden
   - **Candidacy Committee**: Pr. Ron Drury, William Huelle, Pr. Inba Inbarasu, Beth Meyer, Deryl Nissen
   - **Global Mission Committee**: Sharon Carlson, Pr. Jeanne Madsen
   - **Justice Committee**: Sonya Buskirk, Pr. Justin Eller, Pr. Andrew Kitzing, Adam Vander Tuig
   - **Leadership Support Committee**: Sunni Richardson, Maurine Roller, Brenda Tophoj
   - **Committee for Outreach**: David Hingst, Dennis Remington, Pr. Bill Schroeder, Pr. Eric Spruth-Janssen
   - **Nominating Committee**:
     - Elkhorn Valley/Crossroads: Pr. Cara Jensen
     - Lincoln Area: Gary Hein
     - Metro Urban: Greg Stoj
     - Northeast: Pr. Patti Meyer
     - Saunders/Metro South: Brandy Dietzel
     - Tumbleweed/Pony Express: Pr. Tim Eighmy

7. Elected Jan Peterson, Sarah Ruch, and Pat Gregory for one-year terms to the Executive Committee.
8. Elected Steven Peeler, Cindy Settje and Francisco Salazar to one-year terms on the Immanuel Vision Fund Review Committee; Sarah Ruch to two-year term on the Immanuel Vision Fund Review Committee.

9. Renewed the Synod Council call to:
   - Pr. Ted Carnahan – Spirit of Grace, Holdrege, Pastor, for one year
   - Pr. Will Voss – Lakota Lutheran Center and Chapel, for three years
   - Pr. Charles (Chip) Borgstadt – Transitional/Interim Ministries, for three years
   - Pr. Myron Meyer – Transitional/Interim Ministries, for three years
   - Pr. Heather Grell – Non-stipendiary call for short-term ministry

11. Appointed the following people to the We Are Church Together Working Group: Martha Atkins, Peggy Hall, Melvin Blair, Sheryl Kester Beyer, Miriam Blair, Kathryn Montira, Baron Cole, Bob Schlismann, Nancy Cole, Kristen Van Stee, James Fruehling, and Heidi Wallace.

**Agencies and Institutions**

1. Approved the appointment of Sharon Arganbright, Robert Ball, Lawrence Chatters, Linda Miller, Danielle Hatfield, and Linda Kenedy to the Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Board of Directors.
2. Approved the appointment of Linda Montag, Pr. Paul Coen, and Mike Bokoven to the Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministry Corporation Board of Directors.
3. Approved the appointment of Brian Lund to the Lutheran School of Theology Board of Directors.
4. Approved the appointment of Michael W. McDannel, Cynthia A. Alloway, George A. Grieb, and Clarence L. Nichols to Immanuel Board of Directors.

**PART II – RECOMMENDATIONS**

Synod Council recommends the following resolutions for action by the 2018 Nebraska Synod Assembly:

1. RESOLVED, That the proposed Synod Assembly agenda be adopted as the order of business for the 2018 Synod Assembly being held May 31-June 2 and that the proposed agenda be presented to the Assembly for adoption.
2. RESOLVED, That the following Rules of Procedure for the 2018 Nebraska Synod Assembly be adopted by the Synod Assembly at the time of the adoption of the agenda:
   1. Any voting member of the Synod Assembly who desires to add an item of new business to the agenda of the Synod Assembly shall present such item by 1:15 p.m. Friday, June 1, to the chair, who shall immediately refer it to the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee.
   2. A two-thirds vote of the Synod Assembly shall be required to add an item of new business to the agenda.
   3. The Synod Assembly may consider and act on business agenda items en bloc, provided those business agenda items were recommended for such consideration by the Synod Council. En bloc business agenda items shall be acted upon without debate or amendment. Upon the request of a Synod Assembly voting member and a second by nine other voting members, any agenda item may be pulled from en bloc consideration and be considered and acted upon separately following action on the remainder of en bloc business agenda items.
   4. Voting members desiring to present resolutions shall submit them to the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee by 1:15 p.m. Friday, June 1. These resolutions (submitted after the 90-day deadline) will be brought to the Assembly and require a majority vote to be debated on the floor and a two-thirds majority vote for passage. Any resolution properly before the Assembly and recommended by the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee, but not disposed of by the end of the time allotted for action on resolutions will automatically be referred to Synod Council for study and action at its next regular meeting.
   5. The Synod Assembly may consider and act on resolutions en bloc, provided those resolutions were recommended for en bloc consideration and approval, either as submitted or amended, by both the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee and the Synod Council. En bloc resolutions shall be acted upon without debate or amendment, except that the presiding officer may allow the introducer of each en bloc resolution to speak to his or her resolution once for no longer than two minutes. Upon the request of a Synod Assembly voting member and a second by nine other voting members, any resolution may be pulled from en bloc consideration and be considered and acted upon separately following action on the remainder of en bloc resolutions.
   6. All speeches in debate shall be limited to two minutes.
   7. No motion or parliamentary action, other than a motion to adjourn, shall be in order outside of the time scheduled on the Assembly agenda entitled Assembly Business Session.
   8. The ELCA churchwide representative to the Assembly will chair all portions of the business sessions that are related to the Bishop’s election.
3. RESOLVED, That the following agencies and causes be authorized to present their needs to the congregations of the Nebraska Synod and that congregations be encouraged to receive special offerings for them in 2019:
   - Immanuel Communities
   - Lutheran Family Services
   - Midland University
   - Mosaic
   - Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministries
   - Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries
   - Oaks Indian Center
   - Tabitha Health Systems

and that this resolution be presented to the Synod Assembly.

4. RESOLVED, That the following assemblies be reauthorized as Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities:
   - United Asian Evangelical Ministry, Dakota City
   - Fontenelle Community Church, Omaha
   - Nile Lutheran Chapel, Omaha
   - Sudanese Lutheran Fellowship, Grace Lutheran, Omaha
   - Sudanese Messiah Worshiping Community, Ralston
   - Spirit of Grace Lutheran Church, Holdrege
   - Lakota Lutheran Chapel, Scottsbluff
   - Iglesia Luterana San Andres, Omaha
   - Followers of Christ, Lincoln

5. RESOLVED, That the 2019 Compensation Guidelines for Pastors and Lay Rostered Persons be approved and presented to the Synod Assembly.

6. RESOLVED, That the 2019 proposed budget be approved by the 2018 Nebraska Synod Assembly.

7. RESOLVED, That the auditor’s report for 2017 be approved once the report is received, conditional upon such report being a clean opinion.
Synod Treasurer’s Report

As Treasurer of the Nebraska Synod, it is my duty to oversee the receipt and disbursement of all Synod Funds and to appropriately invest unexpended funds, as authorized by the Synod Council. It is also my duty to ensure that such funds are properly accounted for and appropriately reported to the various constituencies on a periodic basis, including the Synod Council of the Nebraska Synod, the Budget and Finance Committee of the Synod, the congregations within the Synod and the Treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Additionally, I collaborate with the staff and the Budget and Finance Committee to prepare an annual budget in relation to current and future income and expenses of the Synod.

I also work to ensure that the assets of the Synod are reasonably protected by utilizing various means, including internal accounting controls, insurance programs, contracts and agreements, and trusts and other funds that are deemed prudent to provide for such protection. Together with the Audit Committee, we obtain an independent audit each year of the financial position of the Synod and the results of its operations, to be presented to the Synod Council.

Respectfully submitted,
Dan Friedlund
Synod Treasurer

Synod Audit Committee Report

The Nebraska Synod Audit Committee met twice in 2017 to discuss the audit of the Synod financial statements and other financial matters of the Synod. The first meeting was held in March 16, 2017 to discuss planning for the audit of the financial statements for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2017. The partner from the accounting firm was present to discuss the timing and scope of the work to be performed and to answer any questions. The Committee met again on July 17, 2017 to receive the report of the auditor, who was present at the meeting to discuss the financial reports and recommendations resulting from the audit.

This year, the Committee met on April 26, 2018 to discuss planning for the audit of the financial statements for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2018. The senior manager from the accounting firm was present to discuss the timing and scope of the work to be performed and to answer any questions and seek input from the Committee regarding the audit.

Members of the Audit Committee are: Rob King, Marsha McKinsey and Rebecca Hittner.
### Proposed 2019 Budget

#### Nebraska Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
2019 Operational Budget
Synod Assembly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Revenues</strong></td>
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| **Expenses** |      |      |      |
| Churchwide Ministries | 1,788,451 | 1,795,124 | 1,800,297 |
|   Percent of Mission Share | 54.1% | 54.1% | 54.1% |
| Nebraska Synod Ministries |      |      |      |
|   Oaks Indian Center | 18,291 | 18,358 | 18,400 |
|   Midland University Campus Ministry | 17,167 | 17,215 | 5,000 |
|   Lutheran Family Services | 175,736 | 176,383 | 176,400 |
|   Lutheran School of Theology | 66,219 | 66,473 | 66,500 |
|   Warburg Theological Seminary | 66,219 | 66,473 | 66,500 |
|   NE Lutheran Outdoor Ministry | 83,320 | 83,615 | 75,000 |
|   NE Lutheran Campus Ministry | 166,673 | 167,297 | 172,000 |
|   Mission Field Nebraska | 86,811 | 86,811 | 92,000 |
|   Lutheran Metro Ministries | 12,997 | - | - |
|   Seeking the Spirit Within | 24,278 | 24,278 | 24,300 |
|   **Percent of Mission Share** | 21.7% | 21.3% | 20.9% |
| **Planning and Programming** |      |      |      |
|   Rural Ministries | 2,832 | 6,000 | 6,000 |
| **Congregational Ministries** |      |      |      |
|   Stewardship | 368 | 2,000 | 2,000 |
|   Outreach | 425 | 2,000 | 2,000 |
|   Learning Ministries & Events | 744 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
|   **Total Congregational Ministries** | 1,537 | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| **Leadership Ministries** |      |      |      |
|   Candidacy | 21,997 | 20,000 | 20,000 |
|   Operation Idea | 4,330 | 5,000 | 5,000 |
|   Parish Ministry Associates | - | - | 5,000 |
|   Seminarian Visitations | 3,467 | 4,000 | 4,000 |
|   First Call Mentoring | 4,665 | 6,000 | 6,000 |
|   Global Mission | 325 | 6,000 | 6,000 |
|   Cluster and committee expense | 1,078 | 2,000 | 2,000 |
|   Communications | 29,153 | 30,000 | 30,000 |
|   **Total Leadership Ministries** | 65,015 | 73,000 | 78,000 |
| **Salaries and Operations** |      |      |      |
|   Staff Salaries and Benefits | 723,011 | 721,000 | 738,500 |
|   Office Operations | 213,100 | 210,000 | 211,000 |
|   **Total Salaries and Operations** | 936,111 | 931,000 | 949,500 |
| **Total Expenses** | 3,511,657 | 3,517,027 | 3,534,897 |
| **Net Income (Deficit)** | (5,299) | 473 | 103 |
(1) Mission Share Revenue – The proposed budget for 2019 Mission Share revenue is $3,330,000, which reflects the trend in Mission Share revenue (see graph below) and is comparable with 2017 actual ($3,308,000) and the 2018 budget ($3,320,000). The proposed budget in 2019 is slightly higher than 2018 and 2017 and provides a realistic estimate of the amounts that may be expected in 2019.

(2) Investment Income – Income from invested assets in the proposed 2019 budget is similar to the 2018 budget and is based on the current allocation of our invested assets.

(3) Development Revenue – Development revenue represents the unrestricted (“where needed most”) gifts and donations that can be used to fund operations and the various ministries supported through the operating budget of the Synod. The amount proposed for 2019 is based on a realistic expectation of the ability to generate gifts for these purposes. Our Director of Development will continue to seek unrestricted gifts and donations, but will also seek gifts that may be restricted as to use by the donor.

(4) Churchwide Ministries – The amount that will be forwarded for Churchwide Ministries is based on the same percentage of Mission Share revenue (54.1%). As a result, the amount budgeted for 2019 ($1,800,000) is similar to 2017 actual and the 2018 budget.
(5) Nebraska Synod Ministries – The total expenditures for Synod Ministries in the proposed 2019 Budget are less than 2017 actual and the 2018 budget due to the planned reduction in the grant to Midland University from $17,500 to $5,000 and the reduction in the funding for the LMM pantry, which will be funded from restricted funds in both 2018 and 2019. We have also adjusted the allocation of grants among Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministries and Mission Field Nebraska in 2019 versus 2017 actual and the 2018 budget. All the other ministries are budgeted to be funded at levels similar to the 2017 actual and the 2018 budget. Overall, the Ministries percentage of the Mission Share Revenue in the 2019 budget is 20.9% compared to 21.7% in 2017 and 21.3% in the 2018 budget.

(6) Congregational and Leadership Ministries – Expenses in support of Stewardship and Evangelical Ministries are budgeted to be similar to 2017 actual and the 2018 budget. These ministry expenses are intended to supplement the substantial funding grants from Immanuel Vision Foundation and Churchwide. While these grants underwrite most of the staff compensation, benefits and expenses, there is a need to fund other expected program expenses related to these positions.

Recently, the Parish Ministry Associate Program of the Synod has seen significant growth. As a result of this growth and the desire to support this very important program, $5,000 was added to the 2019 proposed budget.

(7) Salaries and Office Operations – Staff salaries and related benefit expenses are budgeted to increase in the 2019 budget compared to the 2018 budget as a result of expected merit increases and the trend in staff benefits. Staff levels will remain at the current levels into 2019. Staff salaries and benefits have steadily declined since 2009 (see graph below) in response to declining Mission Share revenue.
Office operation expenses for 2019 are budgeted to remain relatively consistent with 2017 actual and the 2018 budget.

Summary
The proposed budget for 2019 reflects the trend in Mission Share, projects a small positive bottom line, provides a strong and realistic foundation for the future, provides nearly 75% of Mission Share in support of Churchwide and Nebraska Synod Ministries, supports our leadership programs and ministries and maintains administrative expense at a reasonable level.
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| $3,296,731.74 | $3,368,393.38 | $3,352,783.06 | $3,427,551.56 | $3,414,169.92 |
Resolutions for 2018

RESOLUTION 2018:1

WHEREAS, Society is extremely divided over political and social issues and public policy, and

WHEREAS, The church is not of this world, but is in this world and the Nebraska Synod, in S6.02(c) of its Constitution is committed to: "Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs," and,

WHEREAS, Pastors and other rostered leaders are called to preach and teach "publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God’s love for the world, witnessing to the realm of God in the community, the nation, and abroad," (Synod Const. S14.32(c)," but they are not specifically trained to preach or teach about how our faith informs public policy or how to address the dominant culture that is co-opting our faith. Further, they are at least tacitly discouraged from doing so lest they offend someone. Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Nebraska Synod of the ELCA will form a task force made up of at least 5, but not more than 15, pastors, other rostered leaders, and laypeople, all chosen by the Bishop, from across the Nebraska Synod to meet, discuss and to make recommendations to the Nebraska Synod Assembly, and possibly the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, to strengthen the commitment of the church in addressing the political, social and ideological divisiveness in our society through our faith, and to discuss how to better equip Pastors and others to effectively preach and teach prophetically to a world in need.

RESOLVED, That said task force meet at least four times in person, via phone conference, or through electronic media between now and the next Synod Assembly and prepare a written report on its work to the Bishop and the next Synod Assembly, with recommendations and resolutions, if any.

Submitted by:
Rev. Chuck Bentjen
Emmanuel Lutheran Church
Beatrice, Nebraska

RECOMMENDATION & RATIONALE OF THE NEBRASKA SYNOD COUNCIL: That resolution 2018:1 not be adopted by the 2018 Nebraska Synod Assembly, but that the Synod’s Justice, Hunger and Global Mission Team be directed by the Synod Council to identify resources that could be used by rostered leaders in dealing with ideological divisiveness in our society to assist our congregations.
RESOLUTION 2018:2

Memorial on the ELCA’s 50th anniversary of the ordination of women

Whereas in 1970 both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church in their national conventions voted to ordain women; and

Whereas the ELCA rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and will recognize the 50th anniversary in 2020 of the ordination of women; and

Whereas we express our profound gratitude for the many and varied ways the gifts of ordained women have advanced God’s mission through this church; and

Whereas we learned in the research related to the 45th anniversary of women’s ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education (http://search.elca.org/Pages/Results.aspx?k=45th+anniversary+of+women%27s+ordination); and

Whereas the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

Whereas the church is called to reflect in church and society its roles of advocate and model for the respect, dignity, and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

Whereas this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women;

Be it resolved that the Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to call upon all synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice; and be it further

Resolved that the Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in our church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts to celebrate and recognize the importance and contributions of ordained women; and be it further

Resolved that the Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to call upon all members of this church to examine our consciences, and confess our sins and complicity in whichever circumstances by the outright or silent actions women have faced including barriers, discrimination, or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church; and be it further

Resolved that the Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to urge all congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization in 2020 to conduct conversations and develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus on addressing the areas of preparation for ministry, call
Resolved that the Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to call upon each synod to establish goals and strategies of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024, reporting the outcome of this action step at the Churchwide Assembly in 2025; and be it further

Resolved that the Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls; and be it further

Resolved that the Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

Submitted by:
Diane Brauer
Our Savior's
McCook, NE

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE OF THE NEBRASKA SYNOD COUNCIL: That Resolution 2018:2 is appropriate for the Assembly to discuss and take action upon.
RESOLUTION 2018:3

Resolution to the ELCA Church Council on the ELCA’s 50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women

Whereas in 1970 both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church in their national conventions voted to ordain women; and

Whereas the ELCA rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and will recognize the 50th anniversary in 2020 of the ordination of women; and

Whereas we express our profound gratitude for the many and varied ways the gifts of ordained women have advanced God’s mission through this church; and

Whereas we learned in the research related to the 45th anniversary of women’s ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education (http://search.elca.org/Pages/Results.aspx?k=45th+anniversary+of+women%27s+ordination); and

Whereas the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

Whereas the church is called to reflect in church and society its roles of advocate and model for the respect, dignity, and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

Whereas this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore be it

Resolved that we call upon our seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods, and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women’s ordination has brought to our church; and be it further

Resolved that we call upon our seminaries to include intentional coursework and resources to equip pastoral leaders in identifying and ministering in situations of gender-based discrimination and violence; and be it further

Resolved that we call upon the churchwide expression’s Domestic Mission Unit to develop, undertake, and successfully complete a strategy specifically related to the debt of women of color after seminary within the overall issue of debt after seminary; and be it further

Resolved that we call upon all candidacy committees to examine their practices in light of the findings in the 45th anniversary research; and be it further

Resolved that we request the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide in 2025 updated research on achievement of these initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church; and be it further
Resolved that we request all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome these barriers; and be it further

Resolved that the Nebraska Synod Assembly direct the Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council’s Executive Committee for referral and disposition to the appropriate unit or office of the churchwide organization in accordance with the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

Submitted by:
Diane Brauer
Our Savior's
McCook, NE

RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE OF THE NEBRASKA SYNOD COUNCIL: That Resolution 2018:3 is appropriate for the Assembly to discuss and take action upon.

To view the Women and Justice Social Statement Draft, click here. (ELCA Website: http://www.elca.org/womenandjustice?_ga=2.236331585.1726022359.1524074472-137724018.1466020981)
First and foremost, the Synod Budget and Finance Committee thanks you for your on-going financial support of your Nebraska Synod and the larger church of the ELCA.

Your Nebraska Synod Budget and Finance Committee has submitted a proposed budget for fiscal year 2019 to the Synod Council for their review and consideration. The Synod Council then presents the proposed 2019 budget to the Synod Assembly for consideration, discussion, modification, and approval.

Throughout the year, the budget committee meets to review our budget expenditures and Mission Share Contributions in an effort to remain responsible stewards of our synod’s finances. We have also adopted a policy to avoid using contingency funds to balance our budget.

With the undeniable fact that benevolence giving has at best been flat and at worse, been in decline, (certainly when comparing benevolence numbers from the past ten years) this committee has had to make difficult decisions in allocating assets. This committee continues to look at possible different options and sources to finance our ministries.

Budget committee members for 2018-2019 are: Bill Biggs, Omaha; Teri Dreesen, Yutan; Wayne Grupe, Omaha; Rev. Matthew Hacker, Bertrand; Connie Jacobson, Holdredge; Kevin Karas, Gretna; Rev. William Koeber, Wayne; Martin Malley, Papillion; Tom Ochsner, Waverly; Kathy Overfield, Fremont; Rev. Robert Hayden, Wahoo.

Synod Staff Liaisons: Bishop Brian Maas; Bill Biggs, Synod Counsel; Stephanie Lusienski, Synod Administrator; Dan Friedlund, Synod Treasurer

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Bob Hayden
Chair
Greetings from the Nebraska Synod Candidacy Committee!  

Candidacy is the process by which the church continually seeks men and women who will serve as faithful, bold witnesses to the good news of Jesus Christ. Candidacy is the thorough and thoughtful process of discernment and preparation that leads individuals to approval for the public ministries of this church and participation as called leaders in the work God is doing in communities throughout the world. To learn more, please go to http://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Leadership/Vocation-Become-a-Leader/Candidacy.

In response to the growing request for seminaries to provide education for students in their home context, several programs have recently emerged on the seminary landscape. One of these programs is Distance Learning, or DL, and it allows students to remain at home while participating in a learning cohort. A cohort is a group of students who meet at the seminary several times throughout the year and then communicate with their instructors and each other online throughout the term. While this type of learning is appropriate for some candidates, it also highlights a greater need for internship sites here in Nebraska. One of the gifts that the Nebraska Synod can give the larger church is congregations willing to support candidates during their internship year. The Candidacy Committee encourages all congregations to consider hosting an intern as a way of developing future leaders.

Summary of our work in 2017-2018

We met four times this year for training, planning and panels to make decisions regarding candidates. Included in these meetings was a yearly retreat for candidates and spouses or significant others. In addition to our regular panel interviews and discussions, we also helped coordinate dispersion of scholarship funds from Lutheran Men in Mission and other sources. Thank you to all who support our seminary candidates!

Currently, we have a total roster of approximately 28 candidates to both the rosters of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service ministry. We approved 9 candidates for service in the ELCA. God has blessed us with 6 new individuals discerning their call to ministry.

Members of the Candidacy Committee include: Pr. Keith Brozek, Jennifer Carnahan, Pr. Ron Drury, Janice Gengenbach, Merlyn Gramberg, Bill Huelle, Pr. Inba Inbarasu, Faye Koehn, Dr. Julie Krull, Beth Meyer, Deryl Nissen, Sue Olson, Pr. Glenda Pearson, Rex Rogers, candidacy coordinator, Pr. Ellen Stelzle, committee chair, and Mike Unverferth. Dr. José David Rodriguez is the seminary representative from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and Pr. Cherlyne Beck met with us as ELCA liaison for candidacy. We thank the committee for their service and pray blessings for those who will transition off the committee this year.

The committee works hard to walk alongside our candidates helping them discern what is best for the candidates and their families, and ultimately what is best for God’s church. The Candidacy Committee asks you and your congregations to support our candidates and our work by praying for us regularly. May God continue to raise up leaders with a heart and passion for ministry in the church!

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Ellen Stelzle
Chair
Report of: Director of Development

“Philanthropy is the mystical mingling of a joyous giver, an artful asker and a grateful recipient.”

I continue to give thanks for the opportunity to partner with you to serve the congregations and members of the Nebraska Synod ELCA. My immediate challenges for this position are as follows:

- Explore new sources and means for support for the Nebraska Synod
- Lead and coordinate the above efforts
- Build a culture of generosity and excitement through philanthropy within the Nebraska Synod

Over the last year I have:
- Launched the Synod Endowment Fund with an address to the Synod Assembly 2017
- Finalized the 2017 Annual Fund
- Implemented and promoted a giving effort for the Tanzania Hunger project
- Continued to participate with the Synod Staff in the Companions in Christ study
- Joined the “Sow the Seeds” team as a member to help encourage people into ministry
- Participated in the Staff ACS program training
- Sought new revenue sources to support the mission and vision of the Nebraska Synod
- Attended on-line webinars focused on the use of data, e-mail and giving trends to enhance fundraising
- Attended the Association of Fundraising Professionals annual convention
- Attended meetings of the Association of Lutheran Development Executives
- Visited many of the Nebraska Synod ministries and congregations to provide help and resources
- Developed and implemented a plan for the yearly, Synod-wide, Annual Fund
- Visited personally with pastors and donors about their giving needs in order to build relationships
- Worked with Ministry Directors to find finances to be used in specific areas

Ongoing and future work includes:
- Continue to contact and visit current donors
- Cultivate/steward current donors
- Seek new prospective donors
- Lead successful Annual Fund campaign
- Lead successful Endowment campaign
- Work with other Synod ministries to assist in funding needs
- Work with churches to build/enhance Planned Giving programs
- Enhanced communication Synod-wide regarding Development program

Respectfully submitted,
Ted Asay
Director of Development
The Nebraska Synod’s faith formation ministries hosted or took part in the following since the 2017 Synod Assembly:

- **June 2017:** Eighty people participated in The Heart’s Journey on June 11-16 in Omaha. The Journey was intentionally designed to be cross-generational this year, and there were middle school-age youth through adults who attended. While the number of registrants was smaller than typical Journeys, connections were deep. Service learning partners included First Lutheran Church, Fontenelle Community Church, Holy Cross Food Pantry, Iglesia Luterana San Andres, Immanuel Pathways, Lord of Love Garden, Lutheran Family Services, Mosaic, Nile Lutheran Chapel, Project Embrace, Project Hope and Table Grace Café.

- **July 2017:** A grant from Immanuel Vision Foundation supported a new venture called Lutheran Youth of Nebraska (LYON) Listen & Lead. Seven high school youth from Chadron, Dakota City, Lincoln, Plymouth and Wausa, along with three adult leaders traveled to Oaks Indian Mission in Oaks, Oklahoma for a cultural immersion experience from July 24-30. Before leaving for Oklahoma and after returning, the group took part in trainings led by Inclusive Communities. While in Oklahoma, Cherokee culture was explored in a variety of ways and with a number of people. Youth returned to Nebraska with an invitation to lead listening efforts in their own communities among people who are of varying backgrounds or cultures.

- **November 2017:** Two youth and three adult leaders attended the ELCA Youth Leadership Summit and Synod Day training in Houston, Texas. The Youth Leadership Summit focused on faith formation and leadership development, and the Synod Day training helped prepare people for Synod Day worship and fellowship activities that will take place during the ELCA Youth Gathering in July 2018. Also in November, the LYON Leadership Team hosted the Lutheran Youth of Nebraska (LYON) Assembly. This was November 17-19 at St. Pauls Lutheran Church in Grand Island. The theme was “Be the Change” and highlights included a presentation on a sewing ministry with refugees in Kansas City and a focus on Martin Luther and the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

- **January 2018:** The Middle School Gathering (MSG) was held January 13-14 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Omaha. 253 youth and adult leaders from 27 congregations gathered for 28 hours to focus on the theme “GO!” and Matthew 28:16-20. The MSG planning team was granted funds from the Immanuel Vision Foundation to purchase supplies needed for service learning projects. In addition, the congregations that took part in the MSG were asked to listen for needs in their community and consider what they could do with $250 to help meet those needs. Eleven congregations submitted a proposal for using $250, and each received that money to help meet the identified need.

- **February 2018:** A Faith Formation Discernment Team was formed and is made up of people from across the state who are laypersons and pastors that range in age from recent college graduates to grandparents. This team started monthly online meetings in February and held a face-to-face meeting in April. In the early months, information about what is currently taking place with synod-wide faith formation was shared. At the April gathering, people who represent ministries that pertain to faith formation were invited to share what it is they are about so all those present can have a big picture view of what is offered. After these early meetings, the team will dive more deeply into listening for how God is inviting faith formation staff and programs into the future. The important detail to note is that this work is not about doing more. The work of the group will be about learning, listening and tuning in to God’s call for what’s next.

- **April 2018:** The Nebraska Synod worked cooperatively with the Central States and Western Iowa Synods to host a Faith Formation Summit at Carol Joy Holling on April 27-28. The focus was on transforming relationships and digital engagement and pertained to faith formation for all ages.

- **June 2018:** Please keep the participants of the ELCA Youth Gathering, the Multicultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE) and the tAble in your prayers along with the people of Houston who will be their hosts. MYLE and the tAble will be held June 24-27, and the ELCA Youth Gathering will be held June 27-July 1. For more information and to take part in the portions of the Gathering that will be streamed live, go to http://www.elca.org/YouthGathering
Good Samaritan Society is Changing Senior Care Landscape

The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society is one of the nation’s largest not-for-profit organizations providing innovative senior care and services with more than 200 locations nationwide. The Society offers post-acute care, rehabilitation/skilled care and home- and community-based services, as well as senior living and affordable housing communities. Founded in 1922, the mission is to share God’s love in word and deed by providing shelter and supportive services to older persons and others in need, believing that “In Christ's Love, Everyone Is Someone.”

As the national healthcare system continues to face uncertainty in an ever-changing regulatory environment, the Society is exploring new and innovative growth alternatives through traditional and non-traditional alliances, partnerships and acquisitions that will expand our capacity to share God’s love to more people in more places. We continue to be guided by truths that show us the way forward — turning every change and challenge into an opportunity to move forward and advance the Society’s mission.

As healthcare and its delivery and payment systems are undergoing tremendous, unprecedented change, the Society is in discussions with Sanford Health about combining the two non-profit organizations into one enterprise. Today’s healthcare landscape requires new ways of thinking, with the right partners.

This transformational opportunity will give both organizations the ability to deliver an even more comprehensive, mission-driven approach to those we serve, with an even greater reach to share our mission with more people. The Society and Sanford are also marked by an acknowledgement of and appreciation for common elements from a shared heritage, including Lutheran roots and an unwavering commitment to care for and share God’s love with all whom we serve and those who serve.

Now more than ever in the Society’s 95 year history, we are transforming the aging experience. As we listen to those we serve today and will serve tomorrow, we see a profound opportunity to help our country wrestle with what it means to care and to serve. Our values will help the Society and our country drive change in a better way — through every choice we make, action we take and word we speak.

Together, the Society can ensure that all Americans feel loved, valued and at peace as they age. By engaging with others, the Society is building services in a way that reaches beyond its locations, collaborating to impact policy decisions that the country is making and learning how people can innovate and come together around new solutions that impact the well-being of entire communities.

As the Society embarks on this journey, there are dedicated supporters who will help us achieve our goals and will be with us on this endeavor. Most importantly, we have a supremely qualified guide above who will shine a light on our path now and into our future.
Throughout our 130 years since our founding, our purpose holds steadfast—to serve our neighbors. If you stop an Immanuel employee in the hallway of one of our retirement communities, walk into one of our Pathways (PACE®) centers or connect with one of us on the phone, you’ll find this commitment to living out Christ-Centered Service to Seniors, Each Other and the Community thriving today as it did when Pastor Fogelstrom and the Deaconesses started the organization in 1887.

Driven by Mission
Our mission guides everything we do—from the direction of our organization to the day-to-day decisions made by our people. In our care, we are about respecting and providing dignity, safety and wellness for those we serve and those who serve. In 2017, we served 1,349 residents through independent and assisted living, memory support, affordable housing and long-term care in Omaha, Papillion and Lincoln, Nebraska, and today we have 435 participants enrolled in our innovative PACE programs in Omaha, Nebraska and Council Bluffs and Des Moines, Iowa.

Putting people first is always at our center and we’re committed to providing a healthy and safe place to work, where employees are empowered and encouraged to live healthfully and residents are given the support to create a retirement uniquely their own. In 2017, resident satisfaction at Immanuel communities was 91% throughout independent living, assisted living and memory support.

Being Non-Profit Makes Us Different
Commitment to the ELCA and Nebraska Synod means we’re driven by a higher purpose to do things right. We serve seniors with compassion and devote resources to bettering our communities. The Immanuel Vision Foundation was created to extend Immanuel’s mission through the community by contributing to Nebraska ELCA Synod and related ministries, community organizations and senior centers. Funding in fiscal years 2016 and 2017 awarded over $4 million to local charitable organizations.

IMMANUEL VISION FOUNDATION
$4,071,348
Funding in fiscal years 2016 and 2017 in support of the ELCA and local charitable organizations.

- 49% Nebraska ELCA Synod and Related Ministries
- 38% Community Organizations (NE & IA)
- 13% Senior Centers

Here is a partial list of congregational outreach efforts recommended by a Synod Review Team and supported by the Immanuel Vision Foundation:
- American Lutheran, Ashland
- American Lutheran, Cozad
- Concordia Lutheran, Concord
- First Evangelical Lutheran, Nebraska City
- First Lutheran, Allen
- St. Mark’s Lutheran, Bloomfield
- First Lutheran, Omaha
- Immanuel Lutheran, Glenvil
- Kountze Lutheran, Omaha
- St. Timothy Lutheran, Fremont
- American Lutheran, Filley
- Followers of Christ, Lincoln
- Lakota Lutheran, Scottsbluff
- Rejoice! Lutheran, Omaha
- St. Paul’s Ev. Lutheran, Emerson
- Trinity Lutheran, Omaha
Nobody knows what the future holds. That’s why we created the Immanuel Community Foundation, funded by Immanuel and supported through residents and employees. The foundation’s Resident Assistance Fund helps seniors who experience financial difficulties or have unexpected expenses remain in their Immanuel Community. The foundation’s Helping Hands Assistance Fund helps Immanuel employees who need financial assistance due to an unforeseen situation or event. In fiscal year 2017, the Immanuel Community Foundation provided $344,633 in support of residents and employees.

**On the Cutting Edge of Senior Care**

We are constantly evaluating the needs of seniors to offer the latest in a broad range of care options, like breaking ground on Lakeside Lofts in 2017, new luxury apartment homes geared toward younger, empty nesters in Omaha, or obtaining land in Council Bluffs, IA, to expand affordable housing. In October 2017, Immanuel was proud to acquire Clark Jeary, expanding choices for seniors in Lincoln. Last fall we also partnered with ELCA affiliate Tabitha, to open Tabitha at Williamsburg - Harbor House on Immanuel’s Williamsburg campus in Lincoln. Revolutionizing the “nursing home culture” Harbor House was built on the shared ideal of empowering seniors to make their own choices. These communities provide skilled nursing support in a small environment with all the comforts of home.

Operational procedures are continually refined to utilize state-of-the-art technology and best practices to provide the highest level of care to residents and participants, and optimal working conditions for employees.
Joint Report to Synods from LSTC & WTS Seminaries

Dear Partners in Ministry in the Nebraska Synod:

We know that you seek out and value excellent leaders for your ministries. Wartburg Theological Seminary (WTS) and the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC), the two seminaries that the Nebraska Synod supports, are dedicated to forming such leaders. This report reflects the spirit of collaboration between our schools and highlights the benefits of the distinctive ways we form leaders.

Of all ELCA students enrolled in our church’s seven seminaries, 29% of them attend LSTC or WTS. In fall 2017, WTS saw a 77% increase in enrollment in the first year class over the previous year, with many of those students enrolled in the distributive learning program. The two schools have over 150 students who hail from our 18 supporting synods in Regions 4 and 5.

The distinctiveness of our locations and programs mean that those following their call to leadership in the church can find the best fit for their circumstances and passions.

LSTC is located in a bustling, racially and ethnically diverse neighborhood on the south side of Chicago. As the ELCA seminary with the highest percentage of residential students, students are able to take advantage of all of the resources and learning opportunities the Chicago area has to offer. LSTC’s new strategic plan for 2018-2020 focuses the school on being a community that forms leaders to form communities. In a time of deep polarization in our society, we believe that Christian leaders will play a crucial role in bringing people together. This emphasis is part of LSTC’s innovative public church curriculum.

WTS has been forming leaders for over 160 years. Our deep roots allow us to be nimble and explore new ways of preparing people to lead. Although the central location is a castle in Dubuque, Iowa, the technology within these stone walls is far from ancient. In classrooms equipped with newly updated video technology, students from Florida, Colorado, Iowa, Texas, and around the country learn together in real-time. This allows students in our Master of Divinity – Collaborative Learning (CL) program to serve in a congregation or other ministry all four years while learning via video technology. With this program and the help of our partners, we are able to address nearly every education expense a student faces in considering seminary – housing, insurance, tuition, and fees.

Whether face-to-face or online, outstanding faculty and staff at our seminaries form leaders in critical ways.

Gordon Straw, Cornelsen Chair for Spiritual Formation and Coordinator of Candidacy at LSTC, draws on his Native American roots to communicate to this students that spiritual formation is about how we live our lives every day, and that how we live honors God, those around us, and (continued next page)
ourselves. We are formed through life experience, he says, as much as through traditional spiritual practices.

Lindsey Queener, WTS Director for Admissions joined the team in early 2018. She said, “When I joined the Lutheran church, our congregation used to pray this prayer: ‘Bring to this church those who will be nourished here, and those who will nourish us.’ That prayer is my prayer as I begin my work on the WTS Admissions team; that this next generation of leaders will be formed in all kinds of new ways, and we too will be formed in all kinds of new ways by them.”

Finally, we’d like to introduce you to just one alum from each of our seminaries.

JustChurch is the name of an ELCA Saturday evening worship service supported by Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Iowa City, Iowa. “We offer gritty preaching, engaging those uncomfortable, authentic and exhilarating places where the world intersects the kingdom of heaven, those same places where God calls us to be. Just church,” Rev. Sarah Goettsch, WTS ’01 explains. “We commend it to those who find themselves disenfranchised from organized church, who feel harmed or skeptical towards denominational religion, who are seeking to worship, but not necessarily join.”

While a youth director, Kara Baylor was called on to preach when the pastor was ill. That sermon must have gone well, because after that Sunday she had plenty of people urge her to consider seminary. The idea wasn’t new to her, of course, but it made her seriously consider it. “The call of the community to leadership is very important to me,” said Baylor, who graduated from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago in 2000. She is now campus pastor at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wis., where she “loves the opportunity to be on the faith journey with students, faculty and staff. The college environment is a place where we are supposed to ask big questions and do it within community. It is a great place to help constructive conversation take place.”

We invite you and members of your congregation to visit our seminaries to participate in worship, attend a continuing education event, discern a call to ministry or visit with some of the future leaders that you and your synod support through your gifts to Wartburg and the LSTC. To learn more about your seminaries and the innovative and distinctive ways that we are forming leaders, please visit www.lstc.edu and www.wartburgseminary.edu.

Your partnership is essential for LSTC and Wartburg to continue our shared mission of providing effective theological education and developing leaders for the many ministries of your congregation, synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Yours in Christ,

James Nieman
President
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Louise N. Johnson
President
Wartburg Theological Seminary
Farewell
Ruth Henrichs, Retiring President & CEO

“We are not called to be comfortable, but faithful!”

As I enter my final month of service at Lutheran Family Services (LFS), I am reminded of how powerful those words have been throughout LFS history. What began as two orphanages has grown into a major human care organization that serves children, youth, families, adults, refugees, immigrants and persons struggling with mental health and substance use problems. From orphans to veterans to children who have been sexually abused, LFS has served for 125 years with moral courage and integrity.

I want to personally thank each one of you for helping LFS celebrate our 125th anniversary during 2017. I pray and trust that you will continue your passion for our work, beginning with a warm Nebraska welcome to Stacy Martin, our new President & CEO. Much has been accomplished during my time at LFS...and much remains to be done in this next century of service as LFS continues to stand with all God’s people in their quest for safety, hope and well-being!

“May those who come behind us find us faithful!”

Welcome
Stacy Martin, President & CEO

In Florida, Stacy served as Executive Vice President of Programs, overseeing 600 employees and programs very similar to those at LFS of Nebraska. Stacy holds an MBA from Eastern University and a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Please join us in welcoming Stacy to LFS and the Nebraska Synod!
Children Services (2,694 clients in 2017)

99% of the 437 families receiving Right Turn® post-adoption / guardianship services remained together

617 served in Children’s Behavioral Health programs; 260 were in the LFS RSafe® sexual abuse treatment program

130 children served through 79 foster care homes

9 infants placed in adoptive homes

Community Services (7,294 clients in 2017)

Homelands of the 897 refugees resettled by LFS in federal fiscal year 2017

From Oct. 1, 2017 through Feb. 28, 2018, only 150 refugees were resettled in Omaha and Lincoln

Behavioral Health (8,337 clients in 2017)

Healing Veterans: Kent Stahl
Clifford L. Johnson Center for Healthy Families® in North Platte, NE

“I started using drugs in junior high and continued using them throughout my time in the Navy. I put my wife and kids through hell. In January 2016, I hit rock bottom. My boss discovered my drug addiction. Instead of firing me, he connected me to the LFS substance use treatment program. LFS gave me the support and tools I needed to fight my addiction. My life is better, my marriage is the best that it has ever been, I am drug free and am a more caring person than I have ever been.”

Kountze Commons
26th & Douglas Streets, Omaha, NE

- A collaborative effort between Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church, LFS and Methodist Health System
- Eight licensed behavioral health therapists providing individual and family therapy, trauma-focused/ informed care, and post-crisis response services
- Projecting to serve 1,000 clients in first year

2018 Nebraska Synod Assembly
## Lutheran Family Services of NE, Inc

**Statement of Activities**

For The Year Ended December 31, 2017

### Support and Revenue

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>Contributions - ELCA Nebraska Synod</td>
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<td>Contributions - LCMS Nebraska District</td>
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<td>In Kind Contributions</td>
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<td>Private Grants</td>
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<td>Government Grants</td>
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<td>United Way</td>
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<td>Program Service Fees</td>
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<td>Purchase of Service Contracts</td>
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<td>Interest and Other</td>
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**Total Support And Revenue**

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### Expenses

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<td>Occupancy</td>
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<td>Other Operating Expenses</td>
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<td>Travel and Mileage Expenses</td>
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<td>Direct Client Assistance</td>
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**Total Expenses**

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### Net Surplus (Deficit)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(129,420)</td>
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</table>
Report of: Lutheran Planned Giving Services

Your Resource for Creating a Legacy for Ministry

“For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people.”

2 Corinthians 8:3-4

LPGS MISSION
To educate, motivate and help people develop planned gifts in support of ELCA Ministries as tangible expressions of gratitude for God’s blessings.

2017 LPGS SERVICES
- Assist individuals & couples in the creation and updates of wills & estate plans.
- Advanced planning with individuals & couples establishing planned & life income gifts for family & ministry.
- Assist congregations in establishing & promoting endowments.
- Seminars for congregations wishing to promote charitable estate planning.

2017 WILLING WITNESS COMMUNITY
A Willing Witness is a person who has included an ELCA Ministry and/or Congregation in their estate plan.

The LPGS Willing Witness Community has helped more than 1100 families develop more than $170 million in planned & outright gifts to benefit hundreds of ministries of the church. Additionally, we have hundreds of willing witnesses on our Honor Roll, those saints who have passed to life immemorial having included ministry in their estate plans.

In conjunction with the Synod Assembly, the Willing Witness Community will gather for a luncheon on Friday, June 1, 2018, at Younes Conference Center in Kearney.

2018 Nebraska Synod Assembly

2017 LPGS MEMBER AGENCIES & INSTITUTIONS
Lutheran Planned Giving Services provides free, confidential services to Nebraska Synod congregations and members through the support of the following ministries:

- Blue Valley Lutheran Homes
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Community
- ELCA Foundation
- Immanuel
- Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska
- Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
- Midland University
- Mosaic
- NE Lutheran Campus Ministry
- NE Lutheran Outdoor Ministries
- Nebraska Synod, ELCA
- Oaks Indian Mission
- Tabitha
- Wartburg Theological Seminary

If you have remembered one or more ELCA affiliated ministries in your estate plan, and have not received an invitation to our annual luncheon, please notify us so you may be included as a Willing Witness.
Lutheran Service Corps/Lutheran Volunteer Corps: A 501(c)(3) in Omaha, Nebraska that operates as a subsidiary of Lutheran Volunteer Corps. Our volunteers and year-long program are led by LVC while LSC continues to fundraise and support volunteers locally.

In 2017/2018 LSC held three fundraisers:
• Beer and Wine Tasting Event (February)
• Golf Tournament (May)
• Spaghetti Dinner (October)

We would also like to thank our individual and congregational donors. Their support is greatly appreciated by the board and staff of LSC.

LVC Across the Nation:
LVC unites full-time stipended volunteers with financial supporters, non-profit organizations and ministries to work for peace with justice across the nation. LVC volunteers live together in intentional household communities of 4-7 people to encourage simple, sustainable living.

LVC is recognized as a social ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a Mission Field Nebraska ministry, and is a member of both Lutheran Services in America and Catholic Network for Volunteer Service.

LVC is on a Journey to an Inclusive Community, forming and strengthening alliances among people of many cultures and communities, and intentionally dismantling racism in our organization, the church and society. As a Reconciling in Christ organization, LVC welcomes and encourages the full participation of people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.

Omaha LVC Office: 6220 N. 30th St., Omaha, NE 68111 ~ (402) 457-5890
National LVC Office: 1226 Vermont Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20005 ~ (202) 387-3222
For more information: www.lutheranvolunteercorps.org or Omaha.dev@lutheranvolunteercorps.org
Friends and Partners,

Midland University continues to celebrate a recent history of strong enrollment and investments in Midland’s programs and facilities. While Midland continues to move forward, we are deeply rooted within our Lutheran tradition and proudly celebrate the ways in which we serve on behalf of the congregations and partners of the ELCA and the Nebraska Synod and are excited to share more about who and how we serve.

Who Comes to Midland: Midland University continued strong enrollment with 1386 students registered for 2017-2018. These students come to Midland University taking an average of 15.8 credit hours per semester, experiencing a 16:1 student:faculty ratio, and 95% of students involved in a co-curricular activity. The vast majority (87%) of these students will be involved in an internship, practicum, student teaching or clinical experience during their time at Midland. Students continue to come to Midland from diverse religious and socio-economic backgrounds with approximately 25% Lutheran, 25% Catholic, 17% with no religious identity, and the remainder from various Christian backgrounds. Approximately 475 students will become first-generation college graduates. A large majority, 78%, of our students come to Midland with financial need. Because of the generosity of our friends, alumni and partners, Midland was able to award $18 million in scholarship funds and grants to students in 2017-2018.

What Graduation from Midland Means: Ninety-one percent of the 2017 class at Midland University found success within six months of graduation. Of those graduates, 80% were employed and 10% were enrolled in a graduate program. Midland is proud to share that while 61% of our students enrolled are from the state of Nebraska, 88% of students stay in Nebraska following graduation. This means that the skills and talents of these students are retained in our state, benefiting our local economy and serving as a net importer of college graduates in Nebraska. The average Midland University graduate will have a starting salary of nearly $40,000.

Engaged Alumni: Midland University celebrates increasing engagement among its alumni groups. Over the past year Midland has had over 30,000 active engagements with alumni, including hosting alumni events in Arizona, Texas, Colorado, Kansas, California and across Nebraska. There have been over 1,000 new donors supporting Midland students in the past two years. Together, Midland friends and alumni have committed over $25 million towards a comprehensive campaign to raise scholarship funds and continue campus improvements.

Campus Improvements: Because of the generosity of our alumni, friends, and partners Midland celebrates two major investments in Fremont. Students returned in August 2017 to a $1.5 million renovation of campus dining common space. This newly renovated space added booths, community seating, a wood stone pizza oven and a chef expo table and is not just about food, but about community. “What we really wanted to do is have this space be a place where students can congregate; a place where they feel welcome and where they want to hang out,” said Andrew
Strecker, Director of Dining Services. “They can sit in here and do homework while building lifelong friendships..” Students will return in Fall 2018 to a newly renovated student commons, the Eikmeier Commons. This renovation re-imagines the student center by adding new game tables, TVs, group study areas, and a small performing arts stage.

**Athletic and Academic Excellence:** Midland proudly celebrates the success of our student athletes in competition and in the classroom. Midland has 66 NAIA Scholar-Athletes. The Midland Volleyball team was the NAIA 2016-2017 scholar-team of the year. Midland had 16 teams earn scholar-team honors and 13 NAIA All-Americans.

**Leo Kirchhoff International Studies Program:** Midland continues its rich legacy of international study and is proud to announce the naming of this program as the, “Leo Kirchhoff International Studies Program” in honor of long-time friend of Midland, Dr. Leo Kirchhoff. During the past year students from Midland University travelled to Europe, Australia, and Guatemala. These international study experiences enable Midland students to learn *in the world.* Midland is grateful for support from the Kountze Memorial Foundation, and many individual supporters, for the opportunity for Midland students to participate in international studies.

**Relentlessly Relevant:** Midland continues to serve as an ELCA affiliated school and continues its mission to “… inspire people to learn and lead in the world with purpose.” During the past year Midland has also adopted a vision statement to, “Provide relevant, innovative, and dynamic learning experiences for our students by working from the marketplace back to ensure their career readiness.” This vision statement drives forward thinking development of educational programs within the liberal arts tradition that ensure Midland students are ready to enter the workforce and serve their communities. Over the past year this vision has driven the development of two highly successfully adult learning programs, the Para-Teacher program and Code Academy. Both programs meet students where they are and prepare them with relevant career skills to grow in their careers.

**A Proud Partner:** Midland University is proud to be a serving arm of the ELCA and the Nebraska Synod. Midland looks forward to an ongoing partnership in serving the world on behalf of the church through education. Thank you to all of the friends, alumni, and partners who have so generously supported our student body.

Yours in Christ,

Jody Horner
President
Midland University
The Mission Investment Fund (MIF) is the lending ministry of the ELCA. MIF makes low-interest loans to ELCA congregations and ELCA-related ministries for building and renovation projects. With MIF loans, congregations and ministries can purchase property, construct new buildings, and expand or renovate existing facilities.

MIF loans expand the capacity for ministry. MIF loans help create expanded worship spaces, updated space for education and youth ministry, new kitchens for community meals and soup kitchens, affordable housing units for the community and much more.

At year-end 2017, MIF had 888 loans outstanding, totaling $539.1 million.

To fund these loans, MIF offers a portfolio of investments for congregations, their members, synods and ELCA-related ministries to purchase. At year-end 2017, MIF investments totaled $506 million.

MIF is a financially strong and stable organization, with a record of steady, controlled growth. With total assets of $715.7 million and net assets of $203.9 million at year-end 2017, MIF maintains a capital ratio of 28.5 percent—positioning MIF in the top tier of well-capitalized church extension funds. For more information, visit mif.elca.org.

MIF loans and investments in the Nebraska Synod (as of December 31, 2017):

- 13 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of $8,360,653
- $12,108,564 in Mission Investment Fund investments

MIF representative:
The Rev. Pamela E. Dorman, Regional Manager, Tel: (224) 935-7243; email: pam.dorman@elca.org

Mission Investment Fund | 8765 West Higgins Road | Chicago, Illinois 60631 | Tel: 877-886-3522 | Web: mif.elca.org
Dear friends,

Our work at Mosaic is filled with surprising, spontaneous moments that regularly remind us why we do what we do. As example, the following conversation took place after a woman Mosaic supports surprised everyone with her piano talent, playing a wide repertoire of songs.

Employee: Shari, did you have a piano growing up?
Shari: Oh, no.
Employee: Did you ever take piano lessons or have a piano teacher?
Shari: No. No, I didn’t.
Employee: Did anyone in your family play the piano?
Shari: No. Just me.
Employee: So Shari, who taught you how to play? How do you know all those songs?
Shari: God. God teaches me how to play. He teaches me the songs I need to know.

People of faith know that God is always at work—and sometimes works to surprise us!

We have many stories similar to Shari’s and we share them to help people understand Mosaic’s mission of service and advocacy: We provide a meaningful life in a caring community, giving a voice to people’s needs. How that happens looks different for every person we serve.

Shari lives on her own but can’t be fully independent. We work with her about 15 hours a week, helping her with the things she can’t do, like finances, doctor’s visits, etc. Mosaic also serves people who need assistance 24 hours a day, every day.

It is a mission we could not fulfill without you, our church partners. We are grateful for the many churches and faithful people who support our ministry across the United States. Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,

Linda Timmons, Mosaic President and CEO
As a fellow member of the body of Christ, Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministry (NeLCM) is led by our mission: We invite people in academic settings more deeply into Jesus Christ and the community which bears His name, so that all may discover and fulfill their vocation as disciples. Our campus pastors and staff are blessed to witness the power of the Holy Spirit guiding people’s lives along this faith journey. We give thanks for your prayers and support, and are blessed to serve as partners with you in the Nebraska Synod!

NeLCM is present in multiple communities across Nebraska, serving academic settings, partnering with congregations and enhancing the community in a multitude of ways. Our ministry locations include: Beatrice (Southeast Community College), Chadron (Chadron State College), Kearney (University of Nebraska Kearney), Lincoln (University of Nebraska Lincoln), Norfolk (Northeast Community College, UNMC), Omaha (Creighton University, University of Nebraska Omaha, College of Saint Mary, Metro Community College, Iowa Western as well as congregational connections), Peru (Peru State College), Wayne (Wayne State College) and an emerging campus ministry site located at Western Nebraska Community College (Scottsbluff/Gering).

This year, NeLCM has added some new faces to our staff. In September, Pastor Jim Holthus joined our team, and leads our Omaha metro-area campus ministry. In addition to this part-time role, Pastor Holthus also serves as the transitional minister for Trinity Lutheran Church in Omaha. Jim's many years of experience in serving and leading campus ministry has helped to build upon the growing participation in our campus ministry of young adults in the Omaha metro. In April, Mr. Ric Miller accepted the position of Director for Planned Giving Development. This one-year, part-time appointment was made possible by a generous gift from the Immanuel Vision Foundation. In this role, Ric will help to grow the support and sustainability for campus ministry in the Nebraska Synod by working with individuals in exploring the different ways legacy goals can be fulfilled. Ric has a wealth of knowledge and experience in non-profit fundraising, is an active community leader and will be a great addition to our staff as we serve out our mission in Christ! In addition to joining NeLCM, Ric is in the PMA program through the Nebraska Synod. He and his wife, Pam, are members at Morning Star Lutheran Church in Omaha.

Over the past several years, NeLCM’s strategic vision has focused on developing and training student peer ministers to extend our human resources in reaching students more effectively on the campuses and in the communities we serve. In addition, we continue to work on sustainability for our ministry locations through the addition of new revenue streams. This includes partnerships with other serving arms of the Nebraska Synod, programming models, and community-based partnerships. An example of this is a recent partnership with Mosaic. Through a donor-funded lease agreement, Mosaic now has a base of operations in Kearney serving out of Campus Lutheran, our residential campus ministry site serving the University of Nebraska Kearney.
The Lutheran Center, our campus ministry at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln continues to grow momentum on another major investment in the lives of young people—the Cross at the Heart Campaign! This project will provide a new campus center to serve the largest residential campus in Nebraska. With gifts and pledges now totaling over $3.7 million, the vision to offer sustainability for campus ministry through intentional faith community has people across the Synod excited to join with us in assuring campus ministry's presence for the next century and beyond. The goal is to complete construction and invite students into a new Lutheran Center in the Fall of 2020. To learn more, go to www.lutherancenterunl.com. Thank you for your continued prayers for this important project!

Across the Synod, our mission to invite others to Christ continues. I'd like to offer a very special thank you to our pastors and staff and local governance councils, who are the eyes, ears, hearts and energy that propels campus ministry forward. Thanks and gratitude also to our NeLCM board members: Mike Bockoven, Pr. Paul Coen, Jordan Grummert-Rasmussen, Lisa Kramme, Pr. Beth Ann Lechtenberger Stone, Bishop Brian Maas, Linda Montag and Pr. Adam White who help guide the vision; and sincere thanks for the service and leadership of Pr. Roger Sasse and Diane Shubert, who provide amazing support for our Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministry.

Together, through the Holy Spirit, we bring Jesus into the lives of many people each and every day. Thank you, Nebraska Synod, for your heart for college-age young adults! This would not be possible without the generosity of individuals, congregational gifts, and prayerful support from wonderful people of faith…namely, YOU!!!! Thank you!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jon Fredricks
Executive Director
Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Feb'17 - Jan'18</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>% Over Budget</th>
<th>% of Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>300 - JUDICIARY INCOME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301 - Churchnet</td>
<td>9,415.00</td>
<td>9,415.00</td>
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<td>100.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>302 - Nebraska Synod</td>
<td>367,957.60</td>
<td>150,000.00</td>
<td>173,957.60</td>
<td>111.97%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total 300 - JUDICIARY INCOME</td>
<td>377,372.60</td>
<td>159,415.00</td>
<td>173,957.60</td>
<td>111.26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>305 - General Endowment Distributions</td>
<td>4,586.35</td>
<td>4,826.00</td>
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<td>310 - GIFTS-UNRESTRICTED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320 - GIFTS-Unrestricted</td>
<td>86,008.49</td>
<td>100,000.00</td>
<td>-13,991.51</td>
<td>86.01%</td>
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<tr>
<td>322 - Designated GIFTS</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>108.33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>335 - Recovery-Cost of Fundraising</td>
<td>4,163.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>102.72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total 310 - GIFTS-UNRESTRICTED</td>
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<td>100,108.49</td>
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<td>90.28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>385 - REIMBURSEMENTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>386 - Miscellaneous</td>
<td>255.25</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>387 - Reimbursements</td>
<td>135.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>101.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 385 - REIMBURSEMENTS</td>
<td>391.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>101.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>390 - MISCELLANEOUS INCOME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>391 - Interest</td>
<td>2,164.13</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
<td>164.13</td>
<td>108.21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total 390 - MISCELLANEOUS INCOME</td>
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<td>2,000.00</td>
<td>164.13</td>
<td>108.21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Income</td>
<td>274,800.27</td>
<td>266,851.00</td>
<td>8,799.27</td>
<td>102.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Profit</td>
<td>274,800.27</td>
<td>266,851.00</td>
<td>8,799.27</td>
<td>102.39%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Feb'17 - Jan'18</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>% Over Budget</th>
<th>% of Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>400 - ADMINISTRATION-OPERATIONS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>401 - Data-Forums-Memberships</td>
<td>825.84</td>
<td>1,200.00</td>
<td>-374.16</td>
<td>68.82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>411 - Insurance</td>
<td>10,144.00</td>
<td>11,800.00</td>
<td>-1,656.00</td>
<td>85.97%</td>
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<tr>
<td>421 - Postage-Printing-Paltry-supply</td>
<td>5,667.66</td>
<td>3,800.00</td>
<td>1,867.66</td>
<td>149.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>430 - Telephone</td>
<td>4,122.79</td>
<td>4,000.00</td>
<td>122.79</td>
<td>120.32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>440 - Travel</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>441 - Board-Council-Committees</td>
<td>3,068.16</td>
<td>3,000.00</td>
<td>68.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>442 - Staff</td>
<td>7,584.49</td>
<td>10,000.00</td>
<td>-2,415.51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total 440 - Travel</td>
<td>10,652.65</td>
<td>13,000.00</td>
<td>-2,347.35</td>
<td>80.27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total 400 - ADMINISTRATION-OPERATIONS</td>
<td>32,202.94</td>
<td>33,800.00</td>
<td>-1,597.06</td>
<td>95.28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>500 - EQUIPMENT &amp; FACILITIES</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>510 - Equipment</td>
<td>587.10</td>
<td>500.00</td>
<td>87.10</td>
<td>117.42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>580 - Vehicles</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>582 - Maintenance-Repairs</td>
<td>177.92</td>
<td>800.00</td>
<td>-622.08</td>
<td>22.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>583 - Vehicle Replacement Fund</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
<td>2,500.00</td>
<td>-500.00</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>584 - Cap Emergency Fund</td>
<td>2,500.00</td>
<td>2,500.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 580 - Vehicles</td>
<td>5,177.92</td>
<td>5,800.00</td>
<td>-622.08</td>
<td>89.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>585 - Corporate Office Expenses</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>900.00</td>
<td>-900.00</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 500 - EQUIPMENT &amp; FACILITIES</td>
<td>5,177.92</td>
<td>5,700.00</td>
<td>-522.08</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>600 - PERSONNEL</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>410 - Staff</td>
<td>224,302.65</td>
<td>224,287.00</td>
<td>15.65</td>
<td>101.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 600 - PERSONNEL</td>
<td>224,302.65</td>
<td>224,287.00</td>
<td>15.65</td>
<td>101.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>650 - PROFESSIONAL SERVICES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>653 - Lutheran Planned Giving Service</td>
<td>10,929.00</td>
<td>10,629.00</td>
<td>300.00</td>
<td>102.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>655 - Outsourcing-IT Records</td>
<td>768.50</td>
<td>1,100.00</td>
<td>-331.50</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>656 - Outsourcing-Payroll</td>
<td>1,210.96</td>
<td>1,300.00</td>
<td>-89.04</td>
<td>93.23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total 650 - PROFESSIONAL SERVICES</td>
<td>12,905.46</td>
<td>13,029.00</td>
<td>-123.54</td>
<td>99.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6600 - Payroll Expenses</td>
<td>208.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>104.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800 - MARKETING-DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>820 - Special Projects-Fundraising</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>800.00</td>
<td>-800.00</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>830 - Recognition-Volunteers</td>
<td>1,567.26</td>
<td>1,200.00</td>
<td>367.26</td>
<td>130.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>840 - Donor Software</td>
<td>1,030.96</td>
<td>1,440.00</td>
<td>-409.04</td>
<td>71.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 800 - MARKETING-DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>2,603.22</td>
<td>3,440.00</td>
<td>-836.78</td>
<td>75.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900 - MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900 - MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expense</td>
<td>277,897.27</td>
<td>278,635.00</td>
<td>-667.73</td>
<td>99.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Income</td>
<td>-3,187.00</td>
<td>-12,554.00</td>
<td>9,367.00</td>
<td>25.35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Nebraska Synod Assembly 2018

## Balance Sheet

**As of Jan 31, 2018**

### Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Assets</th>
<th>Equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Checking/Savings</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 - Farmers &amp; Merchants Check Acct</td>
<td>29,167.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>183 - Mission Investment (MIF) Ckng</td>
<td>276,175.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Checking/Savings</strong></td>
<td>305,343.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Current Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160.1 - Payroll Receivables</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160 - Payroll Receivable-Kearney</td>
<td>96.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161 - Payroll Receivable-Lincoln</td>
<td>5,298.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163 - Med Flex Savings</td>
<td>-2,942.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164 - Kearney Visa Payable</td>
<td>50.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other Current Assets</strong></td>
<td>2,503.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Current Assets</strong></td>
<td>302,008.17</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190.1 - CM Mission Endowment Fund</td>
<td>96,771.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190.2 - Partner Ministry Endowment Fund</td>
<td>11,169.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other Assets</strong></td>
<td>107,981.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>409,989.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Liabilities & Equity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liabilities</th>
<th>Equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Current Liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24000 - Payroll Liabilities</td>
<td>506.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>2403 - NE withholdings</td>
<td>506.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 24000 - Payroll Liabilities</strong></td>
<td>506.16</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other Current Liabilities</strong></td>
<td>506.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Current Liabilities</strong></td>
<td>506.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td>379,375.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY**

409,989.21
Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries is the camp, conferencing and retreating center of our Nebraska Synod. On behalf of the Board and staff of NLOM, thank you to the people all across Nebraska for making our camp and retreat operations so strong and so successful!

The 2,000+ Carol Joy Holling, Sullivan Hills and Day Camp campers who attended NLOM camp sessions during the summer, will remember the 68 exhuberant summer staffers who made a difference in their lives. They will remember powerful worship and Bible study experiences and the awesome songs that made camp so much fun. They’ll remember the zip lines, the swimming, archery, night hikes, human foosball, stargazing and trail rides on horseback. And they will never forget some of the friendships they made. Indeed, Summer Camp 2017 was powerful!

NLOM’s Retreat & Conference ministry is now reaching nearly 20,000 people of all ages as they take some time away for growth. In 2017, we continued our emphasis on NLOM-programmed retreats and results are encouraging. Watch for more in 2018!

The “Faithfully Forward” campaign has been an amazing success … thanks to all who participated! We now have the new Living Water Retreat House and Monke Lodge at Carol Joy Holling Camp. A new shelter/picnic pavilion at the Family Campground will be added in 2018 and some badly needed “new to us” used vehicles have been purchased due to the campaign and other special gifts. It was exciting for NLOM to contract with ELCA’s Mission Builders for the second year in a row as they returned to construct Monke Lodge. We were blessed to have many volunteers join with the Mission Builders on the construction efforts.

For all of us privileged to serve on the NLOM year round staff and the dedicated Christians who make up our summer ministry team …THANK YOU! It is our joy to be your hands doing God’s work!

In Christ,

David C. Coker
Executive Director
# NEBRASKA LUTHERAN OUTDOOR MINISTRIES, INC.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>$350,094</td>
<td>$482,908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions receivable</td>
<td>$46,326</td>
<td>$44,553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments, primarily assets limited as to use</td>
<td>$1,432,246</td>
<td>$1,376,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property and equipment, net</td>
<td>$6,386,642</td>
<td>$6,022,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts</td>
<td>$669,010</td>
<td>$602,965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial interest in charitable trusts</td>
<td>$239,308</td>
<td>$228,752</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$47,222</td>
<td>$74,152</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total assets</strong></td>
<td>$9,170,848</td>
<td>$8,832,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred revenue</td>
<td>$138,106</td>
<td>$124,695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other liabilities</td>
<td>$69,713</td>
<td>$74,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total liabilities</strong></td>
<td>$207,819</td>
<td>$199,366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>$6,076,248</td>
<td>$5,696,522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted - board designated</td>
<td>$417,383</td>
<td>$432,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily restricted</td>
<td>$1,347,553</td>
<td>$1,448,343</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permanently restricted</td>
<td>$1,121,865</td>
<td>$1,055,820</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total net assets</strong></td>
<td>$8,663,069</td>
<td>$8,633,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total liabilities and net assets</strong></td>
<td>$9,170,848</td>
<td>$8,832,419</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Condensed Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

For the Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>REVENUE AND OTHER SUPPORT</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp fees and retreats</td>
<td>$1,249,530</td>
<td>$1,261,261</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual, group and</td>
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<td>congregational gifts</td>
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<td>Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America</td>
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<td>Change in value of beneficial interest in perpetual trusts</td>
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<td>Special events</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td><strong>Total revenue and other support</strong></td>
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<td><strong>EXPENSES:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>INCREASE IN NET ASSETS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>NET ASSETS, beginning of year</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NET ASSETS, end of year</strong></td>
<td>$8,963,029</td>
<td>$8,633,053</td>
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Report of: Nebraska Synod Stewardship Table

We believe that stewardship has everything to do with how we respond to all that God has done, continues to do, and promises to do for us—through the way we live our lives, and use our time, talent, passions, vocations, resources, and money, through the love of God in Christ.

To this end your Stewardship Table works together to find and develop quality, usable stewardship resources for the congregations and pastors of the Nebraska Synod. The table works in partnership with the Director for Stewardship, Deacon Timothy Siburg. Together we work as a resource and partner to help congregations practice and understand stewardship as something holistic and year-round. Together as a table we work to promote that culture shift, building on the great sense of generosity we see and feel across Nebraska.

In the past year:
- We provided a half-day pre-assembly workshop on *Stewardship for All Seasons*, a focus on thinking about stewardship year-round in the congregational setting.
- We presented a day-long stewardship event with stewardship authors and thinkers Rev. Chick Lane and Mrs. Grace Duddy Pomroy on May 18, 2018 at Camp Carol Joy Holling.
- With the help of Deacon Timothy, we have developed some “best practices” for congregational stewardship, which are being shared widely through meetings with congregational councils and stewardship teams, as well as at workshops and other gatherings.
- Resources have been developed related to answer questions about stewardship and mission share, as well as creating a Narrative Budget. These resources and more are available on the synod stewardship website.
- Deacon Timothy was on the go, visiting congregations across the synod and preaching in many them, while other members of the Table and Stewardship “Speaker’s Bureau” have visited many more, and have also preached in many congregations.

In the year ahead:
- We look forward to implementing more of a vision for stewardship across the synod in conjunction with Deacon Timothy’s planning and leadership.
- From the May 18th stewardship event, relationships have formed to create a pilot stewardship program of study across the synod, with mentoring and coaching especially for first call rostered ministers. This will lead to developing and piloting more stewardship resources.
- We plan to lead another pre-assembly workshop at the 2019 Assembly.
- We will discern, develop and co-sponsor more stewardship workshop gatherings based on input received especially from those who attended the May 18th event.
- We will continue to offer stewardship coaching.
- We look forward to continuing to grow our web presence through sharing more resources widely on the synod stewardship website, and continuing to grow it.
- We look forward to more invitations to preach and visit at the many congregations in the synod.

The Stewardship Table is comprised of eight regular attenders from across the state, holding our meetings by electronic means (GotoMeeting) and in person at the Synod Office. Our members hail from rural and urban towns, large and small congregations, and are a mix of laypersons and rostered ministers. We are hopeful to welcome a few new members in the year ahead. Please let Bob or Deacon Timothy know if you are interested.

Respectfully submitted,
Your Stewardship Table Team
Bob Bauerle, Chairperson, bob@nebraskagolf.info, 402-416-0210
Deacon Timothy Siburg, Director for Stewardship, timothy@nebraskasynod.org, 402-896-5311
The Triennial Convention and Gathering was held July 11-16 in Minneapolis. The theme was “All Anew” as we looked at life in a new way. We had over fifty ladies from Nebraska attend with many opportunities that allowed for growth of our faith. ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton thanked Women of the ELCA voting members for their work in the church. She said, “You lead the church in so many ways. You are mobilizing our congregations and communities through prayer, ministry and political action.” She thanked the organization for working to educate others about human trafficking. She praised our president, executive board, and staff for being instrumental in helping the ELCA work with international leaders—women, a program where women from our companion synods across the globe have a chance to further their education. There are now twelve young women who have studied in the United States. Another group is coming over this year. They receive four year scholarships. Our ELCA colleges and universities provide half, and the international leaders—women program provides the other half. These are amazing leaders who are committed to going back to their home countries and their home churches. Eaton praised Women of the ELCA for getting solar power to Phebe Hospital in rural Liberia. An ebola epidemic hit that country, and Phebe Hospital was a major place for treatment. Women of the ELCA helped raise money to install solar panels. Not only are we providing healthcare, we are providing sustainable, renewable energy.

A Saved To Serve Opportunity (STSO) assisted Spirit of Grace Lutheran Church in Holdrege on September 23-25. Cards, care kits, cleaning, and crosses sum up the serving efforts of the participants. According to Pastor Ted Callahan and others involved at the church, outreach is a consideration in all they do. This STSO was designed to assist the growing congregation publicize their new fall programs. Participants wrote and addressed personalized invitation cards to those who had previously come to Spirit of Grace. In a joint effort on Saturday, the area used for worship became a busy assembly line where people of all ages prepared 300 personal care kits for shipment to Lutheran World Relief. Supplies for the kits came from individuals, churches, and Nebraska Women of the ELCA units with some help from Thrivent Action Team funds. The STSO women also thoroughly cleaned the area called Spirit Kids which is used by the youth. All the toys were sanitized and the room was cleaned for the Spirit Sprouts nursery. Another form of caring was directed toward the residents of Mosaic in the area. Small palm crosses were sanded and combined with a small card of blessing for each resident of the three Mosaic group homes in Holdrege. Birthday and other greeting cards were organized for residents in Holdrege and Axtell, particularly for those who do not receive cards from others. Laughter came easily throughout the event, especially during dinner at a local restaurant and during an evening of playing “classic’ relay and guessing games. During the weekend, DeAnna Tuttle led the devotions, reminding everyone that “God didn’t create us to sit, but to serve.”

The NSWO Biennial 2017 Convention was held September 28-30 at Carol Joy Holling Camp. Our theme was “As Children of God we face Changes, Challenges and Choices,” based on Isaiah 30:21. It was interesting to see the women’s responses to having convention at camp. Lots of positive comments seem to say that it was a good idea. What a treat to be able to spend time with friends from past NSWO gatherings and to make new friends. Sharing worship experiences is so special in the camp setting. Singing together all the songs we have known since childhood, we sounded like a choir. In the Servant Room, thirty-five fleece blankets were tied for Lutheran World Relief. In the Sole Hope workshop, pieces for the tops of one hundred pairs of shoes were cut. Fabric strips were made into a prayer chain that were used when we all prayed together for peace. Those strips were made into a quilt that was shown at each Spring Gathering and donated to the Carol Joy Holling Quilt Auction held in July.

Officers and Board Members were elected:
President, Nancy Johnson; Vice President, Elysia McGill; Secretary, Carol Bosshardt; Treasurer, Sandy Terry
STSO participants gathered with students October 20-22 at The Lutheran Center in Lincoln to transform bits and pieces of fabric, and cups and teaspoons of ingredients into textile and culinary creations. An awesome altar cloth ablaze with reds, yellows, and golds was created by the participants just in time for remembering the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The reverse side of the cloth was pieced in green fabrics for use at other times during the church year. The group also prepared the foundation for two matching banners. Some students wanted to learn how to make their own soup, so tips for making soup were provided and several soup recipes were prepared in the kitchen at the Center and eaten for lunch. Participants also shared learning to cook experiences as they prepared tasty salads, desserts, and other foods for the community meal served after the Sunday worship service. Pastor Adam White’s passion for campus ministry was clear as he informed the participants of the history and mission of The Lutheran Center saying it provides students a place that feels like home during their college years. Boxes and bags of paper products, hygiene items, soaps, and packaged foods were brought to the event for the Open Shelf Campus Pantry to meet the needs of those Husker students with food or hygiene insecurities. The weekend also included sharing some thought provoking devotions, having lively discussions with students, hearing extraordinary violin music, completing a few school kits, attending a moving worship service, and concluding that there are some amazing young men and women at The Lutheran Center on the UNL campus.

Winter Retreat was held January 20 at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Grand Island. Psalm 34:3 was the theme verse: “Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together.” We had a wonderful day being “Made Anew in Christ” with Connie Stover, Director of Seeking the Spirit Within, as our guest speaker. We enjoyed soul searching, meditating, enjoying new friendships, and renewing old friendships all while “Seeking the Spirit Within”! Bishop Brian Maas joined us with a thought provoking Bible Study and there were many talented people of all kinds to entertain us.

It has been a very busy spring with our seven Spring Gatherings. The 2018 theme of “Daughters of the Spirit” was based on 3 John 1:4 CEV, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth”. Our song is “Children of the Heavenly Father.” Our offering was distributed 50% to Churchwide Women of the ELCA, 25% to NSWO, and 25% to Seminarian’s Scholarship Fund. We were very impressed with the Bible Study by Bishop Maas. Bishop Maas always enlightens us, even when he can’t physically be there. I would like to give a huge thank you to Synod Council member Elysia McGill for her attendance at all the Spring Gatherings to make sure the DVD worked and to lead the discussions. She did an excellent job! I am always amazed at how each conference makes this day special in their own unique way. Each is very different. The weather cooperated and we had many ladies at each event. The dates were as follows:

March 3, 2018, High Plains—Our Saviors/McCook
March 17, 2018, Southeast—Grace Lutheran/Cook
March 24, 2018, Central—Messiah/Grand Island
April 7, 2018, Midlands-Grace/Lincoln (with Spirit of Hope)
April 14, 2018, Southern Prairie—Trinity/Hildreth
April 21, 2018, Metro East—Shepherd of the Hills/Omaha
April 28, 2018, Northeast—Immanuel/Coleridge

Our Human Trafficking Task Force has been busy trying to inform the Nebraska Synodical Women of general information about trafficking while trying to find new ways to help the children and women in Nebraska that are being trafficked. The Nebraska Women of the ELCA Human Trafficking Task Force includes: Barb Fanning (bflann7@msn.com), Phyllis Eriksen (jperiksen14@yahoo.com), Mary Mayfield (mayfieldim@cox.net), Chrissy Garton (chrissyllovescake@gmail.com), and Nancy Johnson (nancy.johnson5@cox.net).

God’s Blessings,
Nancy Johnson
President
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

What does this mean?

I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens and makes holy the whole Christian Church on Earth.

The Nominating Committee of the Nebraska Synod gathers together with the Holy Spirit to call forth leadership for service on committees, synod council, and other entities related to our Church. This year we were also privileged to raise up delegates for the Churchwide Assembly in 2019.

Nomination forms were distributed through the Nebraska Synod electronic newsletter, the synod website, and other mailings to ministry leaders. Mission Clusters had opportunity to submit recommendations as well. Upon receipt of the forms, the Committee met on March 12, 2018 to discuss the nominations, make additional suggestions for positions still needing nominations, and to identify those eligible for re-election.

The Committee met two additional times, March 26 and April 9 to finalize the nominations which were then submitted to either the Synod Council or Synod Assembly for election.

I believe that the Holy Spirit calls, gathers and enlightens us for service both by internal and external measures. It was a privilege to gather as a committee and affirm the Spirit’s work. A note of gratitude to the Rev. Megan Morrow who helped lead us through the process and to a great nominating committee. It was a joy and delight to work with you!

In Christ,
Rev. Stephanie J. Tollefson
Chair
Greetings from Oaks Indian Mission! Or, as you will often hear in this community, Osiyo, which is a very warm hello in Cherokee, a word that conveys the hospitality the folks here are known for. It is part of why those first missionaries from beyond the great waters were treated so respectfully once they arrived in the land of the Cherokee and welcomed into their midst. Why eventually Springplace Mission was established there in Georgia for the purpose of nurturing Cherokee children, a partnership between the church and the tribe that has survived and, indeed, thrived to the present day, well over two centuries, a rather unique history, in many ways. There may be older missions in these United States, but few of those are still fulfilling their original mandate, their calling, continuing to minister out of that same partnership created so long ago.

So it is we get excited about sharing such a story as is the Oaks, and not just because we celebrate the past and these pioneers of faith, but there is also much to give thanks for when it comes to the present moment, the state of the Oaks today. Which is what we’d like to share with you here.

As always, our relationship with the Nebraska Synod remains strong and vital, dating back numerous decades now, across a couple of church mergers. For which we are most grateful. Not only for the various means of support, including financial, we receive from the Synod itself, but also the many generous gifts received from congregations and individuals within the boundaries of this Synod. And, in addition to all of that, the prayerful support that helps sustain us in our calling to serve Native children and youth from numerous tribes.

We’d like to lift up the members of one particular congregation in the Nebraska Synod, St. Paul’s of Hickory Grove, who have been so very present here on campus these past few years, repairing and upgrading our facilities. Last year, a group from St. Paul’s put a new roof on both the maintenance building, as well as Choctaw, our dining hall and common room, where many gatherings are held, saving us vast sums of money. This year already, a group from that same congregation returned to construct a barn that will house animals of various kinds, which the kids here at the Mission will tend to. It is going to be a welcome expansion of our childcare program, something we are very excited about … Thank you, dear and faithful friends.

Three other projects that we are particularly excited about here at the Oaks are the continued shaping of the vision and plans toward a new, state of the art cottage that will house children with special needs; restoration of the oldest structure on campus, very early twentieth century vintage, into a museum and cultural center; and the conversion of Chickasaw into a Student Life Center, equipped with laptops, a smart board, and other educational, recreational and musical resources. This latter project was made possible by a grant from the Immanuel Vision Foundation of Omaha which has been a wondrous benefactor these past few years, resulting in new vehicles to transport our children and upgraded kitchen and dining facilities here on campus. We treasure our on-going partnership with the Foundation, as well as the relationship we have with the Nebraska Planned Giving Services office and the stewardship they do on our behalf. We also value the opportunity this office has offered the Oaks to work together with the other social service agencies throughout the Synod. We are honored to be part of such a family of ministries. Indeed, what a blessing the Nebraska Synod has been to the Oaks Indian Mission … in so many ways!
The Nebraska Synod Outreach Table works with the Domestic Mission Unit of the ELCA to resource existing congregations in the areas of renewal, evangelism, and community engagement, to support emerging ministries (like Mission Field Nebraska ministries), and to help start new ministries. On the Synod website under the heading of Ministries, resources for congregations may be found by clicking on the tab labeled, Outreach.

During the past year the Outreach Table participated in the Ministry Fair at the Synod Assembly, asking participants to reflect on past, current and future families of faith they have experienced or hope to experience. This provided an introduction to the Transformational Ministry 2.0 process that is offered to all congregations in the Nebraska Synod through the Outreach Table.

The Transformational Ministry 2.0 process is open to congregations that are looking at renewing and transforming their ministry. As in 2016, this past year training sessions were held for congregational team members two times each, at a site in western Nebraska as well as a site in eastern Nebraska. Currently eight congregational teams have completed the two-year training process, and four congregational Transformational Ministry teams are half way through the training process. The congregational teams take the tools back with them to continue this process of transformation with their congregations. So far, four new congregations are entering the training process in August, 2018.

The Outreach Table also oversees the Nebraska Synod Renewing Congregations Grant that is available for Nebraska Congregations. This is an opportunity to receive assistance for a new or existing outreach, evangelism or renewal effort. Six congregations received renewal grants in 2017 with a total of $14,000 given for assistance for their efforts. The following congregations received grants for programs listed.

1) Messiah, Grand Island (Food & Hygiene Pantry, Clothes Closet)
2) Trinity, Omaha (Book Reading Program)
3) Salem, Fremont (ESL Classes)
4) Faith Ambassadors, Hooper (Kids for Christ / Neighbor to Neighbor)
5) American, Filley (Wednesday After School Program)
6) First, South Sioux City (Sent Laity & Pastor to Lombard Mennonite Peace Center for Mediation training)

Members of the Outreach Table include: Rev. Marcia Dorn, Wolbach; Rev. Lance Ferguson, Lincoln; Ron Lau, Omaha; Rev. Eric Spruth-Janssen, Humboldt; Rev. Andreas Stein, Bennington; Dennis Remington, Fremont; David Hingst, Hooper; Rev. Bill Schroeder, Grand Island.


Respectfully submitted,
Pr. Marcia Dorn
Chair
Report of: Parish Ministry Associates Program

Report to the 2018 Nebraska Synod Assembly

The Parish Ministry Associates Program provides theological education for lay people desiring to grow deeper in faith and in service to Christ and his church in our Nebraska Synod. Parish Ministry Associates (PMAs) always work in partnership with and support of pastors. Thirty-six credit hours of courses are required for PMA certification; courses are offered locally, available online or for self-study, all with the supervision of an ELCA pastor. Students have two to five years to complete their studies and apply for certification. Once certified, renewal of certification is applied for annually. A PMA completes about one-third of the course work of a pastor in our ELCA, is required to complete 12 hours of continuing education each year, has an ordained pastor as mentor or supervisor, and has an annual review completed by their mentor/supervisor and council.

Currently, there are 48 certified PMAs, the majority of whom make pulpit supply and volunteer ministry in their home congregation their primary way of serving. Ten certified PMAs and three students are assigned by our bishop to serve congregations that are unable to call a pastor; four serve in transitional ministry with congregations in the call process; one is in the TEEM program studying for ordination; six are on the staff of a congregation working along side a pastor, typically focused on a few areas of ministry. Most of these assigned and staff PMAs serve part-time, thus providing theologically-trained lay leaders that are not otherwise available. There are 21 active PMA students at this time and more are sought as demand for PMAs is greater than the supply. At www.nebraskasynod.org, click on the News & Resources tab, then choose For Those in Discernment to see information about the PMA Program.

In the past year, an experiment in accelerated training of students was conducted with a cadre of students in northeast Nebraska. While the pace of studies for these five courses was intense, the commitment of the students and their learning was noteworthy. These students are now eligible to provide pulpit supply needed in that area. Lessons learned from this experiment will be applied to training future cadres of students.

After close work with our bishop, policies and procedures for assigned PMAs to be trained and seek authorization to solemnize marriages, without the presence of an ordained pastor, were rolled out in January 2018. Ten assigned PMAs are in the process of seeking this authorization.

Finally, this year’s Synod Assembly is the first time that assigned PMAs attend assembly with the vote that would have gone to the pastor of that congregation, if there was one. Previously, assigned PMAs had to register as a lay voting member and this reduced the number of voting members that their congregation could send. This change was made possible by the revised synod constitution adopted at last year’s assembly.

In response to our synod’s “Sow the Seeds” campaign to raise up more ministers for the Church, our program is ready to welcome more students. Gifts received in 2018 will allow the program to grow, recruit and serve more students. The program has been self-supporting, outside of the synod budget since it was established approximately 25 years ago. Our synod’s proposed 2019 budget, if adopted, will directly fund a small portion of the program. We welcome the support.

Appointed by our bishop to serve our Nebraska Synod through the PMA Steering Committee this past year: PMAs Julie Schmidt (student, Minden), Brenda Tophoj (Lewellen), Gerald Toepfer (Blue Hill), Maurine Roller (Alliance), Ron Lau (Omaha), Kathy Salts (Broken Bow); Pastors Glenda Pearson (Ord), Baron Cole (Franklin). The part-time program staff are Pastors Steve Meysing (Program Director, North Platte) and Carol Mapa (Administrator, Gothenburg).

Respectively submitted,

Rev. Steve Meysing
Program Director

2018 Nebraska Synod Assembly
Report of: Portico Benefit Services

Spring 2018

We are church together.

This call from ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton is at the core of Portico’s identity: We serve those who serve the church, so they can serve others. Ecclesiastes 4:12 reads, “a three-fold cord is not easily broken.” Imagine, then, the resilience that comes from a community more than 50,000 strong that includes:

- Active and retired rostered ministers, lay employees, and family members
- Congregations, synodical and churchwide ministries, and social ministry organizations
- The dedicated and talented staff at Portico Benefit Services

Together, we pool our resources and carefully steward our gifts, leveraging our collective strength to provide the care our members need. Together, we walk the path toward financial, emotional, and physical well-being, so all might experience God’s abundant life. Together, we are church.

In 2017, our community’s size and scope allowed Portico to:

Deliver personalized support that helps our members live well.

- Skillful Portico Care Coordinators by Quantum Health helped more than 70% of members with ELCA-Primary health coverage navigate the complex world of health care.
- More than 400 members enrolled in Livongo’s innovative diabetes management program to make living with diabetes easier and more cost-effective.
- 35% of our sponsored members used Portico’s Retirement Planning Tool to get a comprehensive picture of how much they’re saving, and how it might last in retirement.
- 3,500+ members gained a better understanding of their financial picture after talking with our new in-house team of credentialed Portico Financial Planners.

Exceed our goals for practicing good financial stewardship.

- Over and above a record-breaking year for the markets, the expertise of our investment management team demonstrated our commitment to a long-term, diversified approach to investing.
- For the second year in a row, administrative efficiencies and innovative plan adjustments allowed us to hold our baseline increase for ELCA-Primary health benefits to 5% — below the national trend of 6.5%.
- Benefiting from the run of growth in the markets and strategic fund management, we announced a 4.0% increase in the ELCA Participating Annuity payments for 2018, the sixth consecutive annual increase.

Speak with one voice on behalf of those who serve the church.

- As part of the Church Alliance, Portico joined with 37 other denominations to advocate for legislation to protect 403(b)(9) plans designed to help church workers save for retirement.
- On behalf of ELCA investors, our shareholder advocacy team championed a history-making climate-change resolution at a major energy-producing company.

The church is a shining example of what happens when we come together to care for one another. Lives are changed, hearts are touched, hurts are healed, hope is shared. We are grateful to lead the ELCA in the good work of wellness, and thankful for your partnership that makes this possible.

We are church together — and together, in Jesus’ name, we are creating abundant life for those who serve.

In Christ,

The Rev. Jeffrey D. Thiemann
President and CEO, Portico Benefit Services

2018 Nebraska Synod Assembly
The Rural Ministry Network focuses on rural and rural ministry issues. This Network provides the much needed support, voice and action for rural life and ministry within our primarily rural synod. It is our goal to provide resources, insight, collaboration, and communication of rural ministry issues to foster understanding of the rural life to the various committees and networks of the NE Synod as they develop strategies, programs, and ministries through-out the synod. It would be our hope that other synod committees, Pastors and perhaps even congregations might seek our insight for fostering new or renewed best rural ministry practices.

An exciting staple of our Network’s work has been the Rural Immersion program that we have with Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. It provides a week long hands on learning lab for seminary students to gain insight into rural living and the unique opportunities for rural ministry. We will be hosting the 2018 Rural Immersion in May down in the Byron and Hardy area. The students will have home stays with rural families. They will experience life on the farm and have the opportunity to visit ag related businesses, rural schools and other major factors of rural living. This is a very important opportunity as 68% of ELCA congregations are in rural areas thus making one’s first call as a Pastor in the rural Church.

We are also busy working on expanding this Rural Immersion ministry to Wartburg Seminary students as well. We are hoping to mirror May’s immersion experience of Chicago’s students with Wartburg students in January of 2019.

We continue to foster the Rural Internship program as well. We do this on two fronts. We are willing to meet with and encourage a rural congregation to host an intern for a year. We also work to find ways to encourage seminary students to come to Nebraska for a rural intern experience.

Our network was chaired for many years by Rev. Gretchen Ritola who is a rural ministry expert in her own right. Gretchen retired this past December. She leaves a big hole in our network but her years of leadership have given this group a solid foundation.

Our current Network is made up of the following individuals: Dennis Gengenbach, Mary Crawford, Kathy Gundell, Pam Anderson, Jo Anderson, Jordan Rasmussen, Marlo Johnson, Rev. Brenda Pfeifly (chair), Rev. Steve Meysing (Synod liaison), and Rev. Breen Sipes (our 2018 Rural Immersion Host Pastor).

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Brenda Pfeifly
Chair
Seeking the Spirit Within: The Nebraska Synod Institute for Spiritual Direction Formation

The mission of Seeking the Spirit Within is to prepare people for the ministry of spiritual direction. The Institute was created by the Nebraska Synod in direct response to the stated need of rostered ministers for spiritual retreats and spiritual direction. An Advisory Board for the Institute meets quarterly. The current board members include the following individuals: Rev. Carmala Aderman, Rev. David deFreese, Ms. Wendy Grasz, Rev. Inba Inbarasu, Rev. Sylvia Karlsson, Bishop Brian Maas, and Rev. Judith Rainforth.

The members of the fifth cohort are steadily working towards their Certification Day, scheduled for June 11, 2018, at the Mosaic Chapel in Omaha. The biennial Discernment Retreat is scheduled for April 30-May 1 at the St. Benedict Retreat Center near Schuyler. Applications to become a participant in our sixth cohort will be received following that event, and personal interviews will be scheduled with each applicant. Commitment Day for members of cohort six is scheduled for August 20, 2018. There are several of our ministry clusters who do not yet have a certified spiritual director located in their geographic area. We invite your discernment about who in your congregation and/or community may have the gifts and passion for this ministry.

We offered a one day guided spiritual retreat (“Preparing the Way!”) on March 10, 2018, at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Grand Island. This year the synod staff hosted a leadership training event (“Following to Lead”) that ran simultaneously. This combination of events provided a strong message of the importance for leaders in the Church to be both grounded spiritually and trained effectively to hear and respond fully to God’s call. They had the opportunity to add a variety of tools (both spiritual and practical) to their leadership toolbox!

Quarterly meetings of Reflective Practices are provided for spiritual directors who are providing direction to others and meeting with their own spiritual director. Supervision is facilitated by our three trained supervisors: Carmala Aderman, Wendy Grasz, and the Director of the Institute. A synod ministry network for all spiritual directors who have completed our formation program or who have been certified by other programs and are currently members of Nebraska Synod congregations has been established and is proving to be effective in facilitating communication and enhancing support for the ministry of spiritual direction in our synod.

As directed by the synod’s strategic vision plan, Seeking the Spirit Within continues to be called upon to provide spiritual direction resources to congregations in transition. A grant from the Immanuel Vision Foundation, awarded in December 2015, is providing financial resources to stipend directors for two meetings with a congregation in the call process and to provide a book of spiritual exercises for call committees to use as they do their work of discernment.

Drinking From the Well will have completed its initial year by the end of April 2018. This is a program for adults who are desiring to grow in their experience of the Divine. We had thirty-eight individuals, including both clergy and lay people, from across the state participate in the monthly online/recorded instructional webinars and monthly small group meetings with a spiritual director. Evaluation forms will be distributed to participants as we prepare for the second year of this program. More information and online registration for the 2018-19 Drinking From the Well opportunity is now available at www.seekingthespiritwithin.org. People of all Christian denominations are welcome to participate!

The synod staff has designated time at each of their meetings to intentionally engage with each other in a yearlong process of faith formation. Diane Harpster and Lisa Kramme, who are staff members and certified spiritual directors, are providing the leadership for this process, along with Rev. Rich Sheridan and the Director of the Institute.

The Advisory Board scheduled a day of retreat and discernment for April 4, 2018. Seeking the Spirit Within will be entering the tenth year of ministry in 2019. It is an appropriate time for us to remember where we have been and give thanks, as well as listen intentionally for the Holy Spirit’s direction in preparing the way for what God desires.

The Director of the Institute is available for Sunday preaching, leading adult forums, facilitating retreats, providing names of certified spiritual directors in your area, and for conversation about the ministry of spiritual direction. I am excited to share that I was contacted by an editor of the Living Lutheran regarding their desire to feature a story in their magazine about the ministry and mission of Seeking the Spirit Within! I am currently in communication with the assigned writer.

Respectfully submitted,
Deacon Connie R. Stover
Director, Seeking the Spirit Within
The Nebraska Synod Strategic Mission Vision Plan was developed through internal and external assessments, study, discussion, and prayerful discernment in 2014. At Synod Assembly 2015, the plan was adopted and the work began in the three main areas of “Hope, Connect, Go” for guidance and inspiration through the years of 2015-2020. The entire vision can be found at: http://nebraskasynod.org/about-us/smvp/strategicplan.html.

- Hope… identity and purpose which flow from our theological foundations. We focus on the living hope in Christ to which we are born anew in the midst of a world too filled with fear and cynicism.

- Connect… which flows from our ecclesiological foundation as members of the Body of Christ—how we live out our unity as a witness in the midst of a world fractured by division.

- Go… which flows from God’s mission and the Holy Spirit sending us into the world to make disciples, serve, heal, reconcile. We are a people sent to GO into all the world!

The Oversight team has met six to eight times per year in the last three years. Their primary responsibility is to oversee all areas of the vision, recruit sub-committees or working groups for the carrying out of various strategies and goals, and to identify ways in which the Spirit is bubbling up and Christ is working in and through the Nebraska Synod. The team is to explore ways in which the vision needs to be implemented and carried out, as well as make minor adjustments to the vision through continued feedback, evaluation, and revision.

Listed below are the three main areas and descriptions of how many of the strategies and goals are being carried out.

**Hope (Identity and Purpose)**

A 1.1 Congregational Vitality Task Force—This appointed task force of Synod Council has provided the tools of a “Quick Check” survey for congregations, Synod Evangelists, and training in Transformational Ministry for several congregations. This work is ongoing and the strategy’s intent is achieved.

A.1.2 Nebraska Synod Ministry Assessment Team—A team was recruited and has met in order to assess synod ministries. An initial survey was sent out this last winter to various people, and a second round of surveys will be evaluated after Easter 2018.

A.1 “We are Church” Working Group concluded its work in 2017.

    Liaison, Pr. Greg Berger

A.2 “We Are Lutheran” Working Group

    Liaison, Pr. Tim Koester
The We Are Lutheran resource team has largely completed its work. Their developed materials were presented at the fall Theological Conference 2017 and made available for download from the synod’s website. In January, a hard copy was mailed to every congregation in the NE Synod with the hopes that each congregation will engage with our identity as Christians in the Lutheran tradition.

Reformation 500 Team

October 29, 2017 was the Reformation Commemoration Worship at St. John’s Parish on the Creighton University campus in Omaha. Ecumenical Prayer Services were held May 1 at St. Cecilia Cathedral, Omaha, and on September 11 at Kountze Memorial Lutheran, Omaha, in commemoration of the Reformation and in recognition of what Lutherans and Catholics share in Christ. Livestreaming was available for these events.

A.3 “We are Church Together” Working Group

Liaison, Pr. Sheryl Kester Beyer
The “We Are Church Together force began meeting in November 2017 to develop resources under the theme “We Are Church Together” as outlined in the Synod Strategic Mission Vision Plan. Reflecting on the Bishop’s election in 2018 and our theme, we created a devotion to be used by all Clusters at the Cluster Nominating Gatherings in February 2018. We also proposed the idea of having the Clusters sit together (as they did last year) at the 2018 Synod Assembly as a way to lift up our theme during this year’s Assembly. We have broken out the theme of “We Are Church Together” into 5 sub-themes which will guide the development of resources for use during 2019. Our sub-themes are: Gathered by the Holy Spirit, Shaped by Word and Sacrament, Diversity and Challenges, Joys and Burdens, We Are Connected. Also, we are in the process of developing a Synod-Wide Devotional for use during Lent 2019 reflecting on the above themes and will be recruiting writers of these devotions at the 2018 Synod Assembly.

Connect

B1.2 Call Process Support to Congregations

Spiritual guidance and direction has been implemented with the call process in order to help congregations in transition focus on “calling” rostered members through the Holy Spirit’s guidance rather than “hiring.” The Seeking the Spirit Within ministry of the Synod has enhanced the process alongside the assistants to the Bishop. Cluster deans are helping to provide follow up care and spiritual support to the newly called leader and congregation.
This process has been reviewed and considered complete at this point.

B.2, 2.1 Communications

The timeline for this goal is on-going. A new synod website has been launched.

B.3 Deans to Revise Deans’ Positions

The deans’ position description has been revised together with current deans and Bishop Maas. They continue to have a retreat in the fall and meet regularly.

B.3.1 Newly Formed Coalitions
Coalitions are self-forming groups of common interest that have access to synod resources-GoToMtg, staff as needed, but no budget from Synod. There are several coalitions that have formed. These coalitions are not bound to terms and geographic representation required by the committee structure.

B.5 Forming Intentional Conversations
We continue to be aware of opportunities for creating space for meaningful conversations as we gather to share information. TheoCon included open time for questions and conversation led by presenters. Several differences and misperceptions were addressed and the opportunity was appreciated.

Go

Stewardship Ministries of the Synod

A Stewardship Director was hired, Deacon Timothy Siburg. With his gifts and teaching, these goals were adjusted.

A re-wording of these goals were approved by Synod Council:

C.2 To revitalize Stewardship ministries of the Synod so that we build a culture of generosity and excitement about the God who first is generous with us, through mission partnerships, the stewardship of life and creation, and an understanding of year-round and holistic stewardship.

C.2.1: To develop a new, broader stewardship education program and refocus local congregational thinking about stewardship from being the fall giving campaign, to a spiritual exercise and a way of living out God’s call for each of us. This goal has remained the same.

C.2.2: Pilot a stewardship program through first-call (and other interested/invited) rostered ministers in 2018-2019.

C.2.3: Conduct a rallying event at which first-call (and other interested/invited) rostered ministers share, learn, and then are equipped to teach other identified or interested congregations.

C.3.1 Young Adult Working Group


The Young Adult Working Group began meeting regularly in early 2016. Early on, they developed and utilized a format for group members to meet with and listen to other young adults to learn more about their perspectives. Group members also met on two occasions with the SLIM (Senior Lutherans In Ministry) group for cross-generational conversations. Understanding that there can be no "silver bullet" answer to equip congregations to reach young adults and that Nebraska Synod congregations are found in a variety of settings with different kinds of assets, the team decided to develop a high-quality, video-based resource that could be used in numerous ways. The team applied for and received a $10,000 grant from Immanuel Vision Foundation at the end of 2016 to fund the project, and contracted with StoryHook of Lincoln to produce "Generation: Together". Now posted at http://nebraskasynod.org/learn/generation-together.html, this series of four videos, one trailer-teaser video, and a user's guide is available without cost to any congregation who wants to engage its leaders and membership in conversations about the ways people of different generations seek out and experience faith, church, and community. The videos feature members of three different Nebraska Synod congregations from five generational cohorts talking about their own viewpoints. Two Working Group members met with the Synod Council last summer to introduce the series; the trailer was featured at the 2017 synod assembly; and the completed series was posted to the synod website and featured in synod publications in the fall of 2017. The Young Adult Working Group met for the last time on September 12, 2017 to review its work and findings with Bishop Maas.
C.3.2. Seniors Working Group

Liaisons Pr. Sarah Cordray and Bishop Maas

SLIM (Senior Lutherans in Ministry) conducted an interactive survey at the 2017 Synod Assembly Ministry in order to discern ministries for seniors with others generations and ministries by, with, and for seniors. SLIM will be picking up on the Generation: Together videos and forming a pilot group of various congregations. These congregations will provide feedback to help this group create “Walking Together” a follow-up resource to be used by congregations after Generation: Together. They will be exploring areas of ministry by, with, and for Seniors next. Members of SLIM hope to apply for a grant and have a retreat for Seniors from various congregations so that congregations receive ideas and are empowered to grow ministries for their seniors of newly retired, silver years, and homebound.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Dr. Sarah Cordray
SVOT Chair
In celebration of 50 years, Tabitha Meals on Wheels invites Lincoln residents to be part of a community-wide March for Meals, with opportunities to give at local Russ’s Market and Super Saver grocery stores as well as through targeted corporate employee donation campaigns.

Tabitha serves as a sponsor to NET’s special screening and interactive conversation surrounding the documentary film, Alzheimer’s: Every Minute Counts. The evening spotlights the urgent need for resources to treat and cure this debilitating disease.

March for Meals campaign culminates with Tabitha’s first-ever 10K/2M Walk/Run/Race at Holmes Lake in conjunction with the Lincoln Track Club. Funds raised support Tabitha’s Meals on Wheels program. The event draws a crowd of over 500 participants, spotlighting Tabitha’s long-standing meal delivery program along with industry-leading continuum of services.

Tabitha honors generous donors and volunteers at our annual Into the Blue luncheon and raises nearly $40,000 to support services for Nebraska Seniors.

GracePointe Assisted Living & Memory Care Suites hosts an annual resident prom with a Paris-Boardwalk theme, complete with chalk murals, a menu of French cuisine and talented residents’ artwork on display.

Tabitha experiences an outpouring of support during Give to Lincoln Day, raising over $45,000 to provide loving, compassionate care that is otherwise unaffordable to many in the city.

The annual Gateway Sertoma Golf Event hosts nearly 200 golfers and brings in over $45,000 in donations for Tabitha’s long-running Meals on Wheels program.

Tabitha, in collaboration with Ageless Aviation Dream Foundation, takes flight over Lincoln, treating Tabitha residents (many of them veterans) to a ride in an open-cockpit biplane—an exceptional, once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Tabitha celebrates the contributions of TEAMembers, their families and those celebrating work anniversaries (ranging from 5-35 years of service) at the Tabitha Team Family Picnic at Antelope Park.

Tabitha is honored at Leading Age’s national conference and receives the prestigious Trusted Voice award. Tabitha is recognized as an expert ‘go-to’ for all things regarding Senior Care, providing outstanding services for the right reasons at the right time in the right manner.
Tabitha opens its doors to Harbor House, another premium residential-style skilled nursing and long-term care community (the eighth Tabitha Residence of its kind) located in south Lincoln’s Williamsburg neighborhood on Immanuel’s—The Landing campus.

Tabitha is awarded a 2-for-1 matching grant up to $1.5 million to help launch the first two years of its vital Workforce Development program. Gifts received or pledged by March 31, 2018, will receive the match. This strategic initiative is designed to better equip and support the growth and development needs of Tabitha’s dedicated team.

Tabitha President and CEO Christie Hinrichs pairs up with the Nebraska Hospice & Palliative Care Association to share a Conversation about Hospice on Lincoln’s LNK Health TV. The discussion sheds light on what hospice is and the benefits it brings those at the final stages of life and their families.

Tabitha fosters relationships with supporters and benefactors of Nebraska’s Seniors at the Country Club of Lincoln for Tabitha Foundation’s annual Signature Event fundraiser. Donations eclipsed $205,000 through sponsorships, auction items and other designated gifts.

Tabitha Meals on Wheels debuted new wheels. A brand-new 2018 Subaru Outback is now part of Tabitha’s fleet, courtesy of Meals on Wheels America and Subaru of America, Inc.’s #50CarsFor50Years campaign.

Tabitha participates for the first time in Giving Tuesday, an international drive to give during the holiday season, raising over $4,000 to provide compassionate care that may otherwise be unaffordable to many Seniors in the community.

Tabitha’s sixth-annual GIVE2LIVE initiative provides more than 1,200 Elders across the Tabitha Continuum with Christmas gifts.

**Annual 1 Anniversaries and Awards**

Tabitha celebrates:
- 50 years Meals on Wheels
- 20 years Service in the East Region

Tabitha receives honors:
- Trusted Voice – Leading Age National
- Best of Lincoln – Best Home Health Care provider – KFOR
- Best of Lincoln – “One of the Best” Retirement Complex/Community – KFOR
- Best of Lincoln – “One of the Best” Physical Therapy – KFOR
- Best of Grand Island – In-Home Care Company Runner-Up – Grand Island Independent
- Best of Grand Island – Hospice Care Company Runner-Up – Grand Island Independent
- Answers on Aging Blog – Top 60 Aging Blog in Country – Freedspot
This year the Nebraska Synod World Hunger Network has continued the process of selecting recipients for the One Another Hunger Grants program. These grants are available in amounts up to $1,000 and are geared predominantly to new efforts in communities aimed at ending hunger and poverty. These grants have helped with a new food pantry in a food insecure neighborhood, snacks for an English Language Learners class, and expanded services for a rural food pantry experiencing food insecurity.

This past year we worked with the Justice and Global Missions teams to create a "supergroup" of sorts called Micah 6:8. We are so excited to begin working together strategically to make even greater efforts and improvement on the areas in which we overlap. We are still identifying the priority areas for this first year of the combined group, but are looking forward to creating an action plan soon.

Finally, this year we continued developing and extending our Hunger Network across the state especially reaching out to include lay members in Nebraska churches who are dedicated to ending hunger and poverty within their communities. Please contact me if you would like to be included in this Hunger Network!

In peace,
Jenny Sharrick
Nebraska Synod Hunger Network Chair
Introduction

While being called “for specific ministries in this church” is righteous, it does not mean that those who are willing to serve should do so at personal financial sacrifice. While compensation of Ministers and Staff of the Church may not be a topic that is exciting to discuss, it is very important to the ministry of this Church that Ministers and staff are “fairly” compensated. To maintain a reasonable quality of life and to be able pay the cost of living and pay off debt incurred while receiving their education, it is critical that the individuals be compensated at levels that are commensurate with their education, and their years of experience and the hard work they perform as part of the ministry of this Church.

This document provides guidelines for congregations as they consider reasonable compensation, benefits and housing, whether paid or through a church-owned parsonage - see Section III, for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service (Minister). Congregations are also encouraged to use these guidelines for other professional lay staff who are not rostered. It is expected that this document be thoroughly reviewed annually by the council or appropriate committee and by the Minister. It is suggested that it be reviewed together as a way of “checking in” regarding the inclusiveness of the person's compensation and to address any concerns.

This document includes the following sections:

I. Salary
II. Reimbursements and Supplemental Benefits
III. Parsonage Guidelines
IV. Compensation Alternatives
V. Worksheet

Part I: Salary

Determining Salaries

The salary should be set by the Congregation Council. Staff salaries require careful study and deliberation. The congregation is too large a body for effective deliberation. Facts necessary for an informed decision are often not available to all members of the congregation. The staff member should have the privilege of discussing salary and related matters with the Congregation Council. For all practical purposes, staff persons are deprived of this privilege when salary and benefits are debated and set by the congregation, as a whole.

It is also recommended that a Compensation Committee (e.g., Personnel Committee or Executive Committee) be appointed by the Congregation Council to review with the staff both ministry and compensation. The staff person should have the opportunity to openly discuss salary and related matters with a smaller group
of representatives in which an atmosphere of trust has been established. This committee would provide input regarding compensation to the Council or the Finance Committee.

**Base Salary**

Base salary is the core of the compensation package. While it is not the only figure to be used in determining fair compensation, it is where most congregations will begin. The guidelines include a range for base salary. The first amount in the range is the minimum amount that should be considered. Congregations may wish to offer larger compensation based upon such factors as: local cost of living, scope of the responsibilities, and effectiveness of the person's work within the congregation. The schedules included in these guidelines recommend a range of base salaries based upon years of service and level of education.

As more and more "second career" people enter rostered ministry, previous experience in other capacities also needs to be considered. Ministers who enter the rostered ministry after years of work in other occupations should not be compensated at the beginning of the scale, but rather at a level that recognizes the value of their maturity, their work, and their congregational life experiences. Our Synod’s practice is to give one year of professional experience on the schedule for every three years of experience in another field.

**Housing**

When housing is provided for a Minister by the congregation, the congregation should follow the "Synod Parsonage Guidelines." (See Part III of this document.) Congregations that own a parsonage are also asked to provide a "housing equity allowance" of 5% of the base salary. This allowance, invested in a tax-sheltered account, will compensate for the lack of equity that would accrue if the Minister were able to own a home. This equity would be available in the future whenever the Minister needs to purchase a home.

When the congregation does not provide a house for the Minister, a housing allowance is provided by the congregation. A suggested range for housing allowances is included in the compensation guidelines. Local housing costs (purchase/rental values and utility rates) should be considered in determining the housing allowance.

For the Minister to maximize the allowable tax deductions, the Congregation Council should set a designated housing allowance based upon actual expenses. This figure may be greater than the suggested housing allowance on the enclosed schedule. If it is beneficial, the Minister should be allowed to increase the housing allowance through a salary reduction. Only the actual expenses for providing a home are deductible, and it is the Minister’s responsibility to keep adequate records and substantiate the deduction to the congregation or to the IRS. The proper designation of such an allowance in advance is required in order to qualify for this exclusion.

If a housing allowance is provided for Ministers of Word and Service, the IRS considers it a part of taxable income. If a house is provided for the convenience of the congregation, on church premises and the Ministers of Word and Service is required to live in the house, this housing may not need to be reported as taxable income. (Cf. Sec. 119 of IRS code.)

When a Minister needs to purchase a home, the congregation may provide mortgage assistance. If a congregation sells a parsonage, it is recommended that the assets be retained for the purpose of assisting a Minister in financing a home.

**Social Security Tax (SECA) Allowance**

Ministers of Word and Sacrament are self-employed persons for social security purposes and must pay the full amount of their self-employed Social Security and Medicare tax on a periodic basis. Since congregations are required to contribute half of this tax for lay rostered persons and other lay employees of the congregation, it is only equitable that the congregation provide a Social Security allowance for Ministers equal to the rate that it pays for other employees. The congregation cannot pay this tax directly. The allowance must be given to the Minister and is considered additional taxable income. To assist the Minister in paying their quarterly taxes, the congregation may consider withholding an amount from the Ministers compensation equal to the congregation’s portion of the tax, which would be provided to the Minister on a quarterly basis when the taxes are due. Upon receiving state and federal withholding amounts from the pastor, the congregation can withhold taxes and pay those taxes to the IRS and Nebraska Department of Revenue the same as can be done for any non-ordained employee.
Additional Resources

Compensation Planning for Pastors and Other Rostered Persons, (Code 69-2322) is no longer in print but can be found on the ELCA web page. Mutual Ministry Committee: A Vision for Building up the Body of Christ, (Code 69-6735) is no longer in print but can be found on the ELCA web page to download.

Salary Schedule for Ministers of Word and Sacrament

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For more than 25 years of service, a range of $500-$1000 a year increase is recommended.

Congregations may wish to offer more compensation because of local cost of living, scope of responsibilities, advanced degrees and effectiveness of the pastor's work within the congregation.

1 This figure is 30% of the base salary. Actual housing costs will vary from area to area.
2 This is figured at the rate of 7.43% of base salary and housing.

2018 Nebraska Synod Assembly
Part II: Reimbursement and Supplemental Benefits

Pension and Other Benefits Plans

Congregations are expected to enroll Ministers in the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Plan, which includes the Pension Plan, the Medical and Dental Plan, the Disability Benefits Plan, and the Survivor Benefits Plan. It is further expected that congregations enroll spouses and children in the Medical and Dental Plan to
provide assurance that they are protected from major economic impact that may occur from the lack of Medical and Dental coverage.

Retirement planning is extremely critical for the future well-being of the Ministers who serve in the Synod. Therefore, congregations are required to contribute 10% to the Pension Plan, but are highly encouraged to contribute twelve percent (12%) of the defined compensation (salary plus housing and social security allowance) for retirement for all Ministers, even when this amount is not required by the ELCA Pension Plan. Congregations and the Ministers may also make additional elective contributions to the Plan on a periodic basis and the Minister may designate a percentage of their salary as a pre-tax contribution to the Retirement Plan.

**Weekly Sabbath**

Nebraska Synod expects all Ministers, all other church professionals, and synod staff be able to observe and enjoy a weekly Sabbath. Ministers are to be given at least one full day for rest and renewal per week.

**Schedule Flexibility and Holidays**

Because the schedule and demands of parish ministry are fluid and ever-changing, care and conversation should guide the setting of schedules. A Minister’s office hours and availability need to be predictable and still flexible enough to permit responsiveness to pastoral needs as they arise. Additionally, flexibility for Ministers to attend to family needs and events, providing care is taken to make up the time elsewhere, is a valued benefit that congregations can offer without additional financial cost. Communication up front regarding expectations around schedule and flexibility will help both the Minister and congregation when unscheduled needs arise.

Regarding holidays, the local context should always be considered and, again, expectations should be clarified in advance. This is an excellent use of a Mutual Ministry Committee, or the Executive Committee when there is no Mutual Ministry Committee. The following is our recommended place to start the conversation with your Minister.

Salaried Ministers should receive paid holidays similar to those of other salaried professionals. As household needs and community expectations vary, care should be taken in establishing a calendar of holidays annually, especially when the Minister has school-age children. Salaried Ministers expect to work on some statutory holidays, particularly Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year’s Day, and Independence Day when it falls on a day with a regularly scheduled worship service. If there are services on those days, grant an agreed upon day before or after as a holiday.

Additional statutory holidays for salaried Ministers include: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, and Labor Day. If the community context expects a worship or prayer service on these days it is important to communicate that to the Minister in advance, including any information regarding rotational responsibilities with other clergy in the community. When your Minister leads services on one of those days, grant an agreed upon day before or after as a holiday.

**Automobile Expenses**

The most equitable way for a congregation to pay for the business travel expense incurred by the rostered person may be for the congregation to provide an automobile for business use. Any personal use (determined by allocating the value of the vehicle by the personal miles driven) must be included in the rostered person’s taxable wages. Thus, a log should be kept of all miles driven with church-owned vehicles.

If a church-owned automobile is not provided, the simplest way to reimburse staff for the use of a personal automobile is to pay them at the per mile rate allowed by the IRS. This should be done monthly. This method requires that the staff person maintain detailed records and report the business miles traveled for that month. Generally, the person should provide detail by day, listing the destinations, reasons for travel and the number of miles traveled.

Sometimes it is more equitable, but more complicated, for the congregation to provide an automobile expense allowance that allows the staff to take a deduction on the basis of actual costs. A fixed allowance should be avoided, if possible, because of recent rulings by the IRS. If a regular monthly allowance is paid, its
use must be substantiated. The IRS has strict regulations governing this method and it requires careful records and reporting either to the congregation or to the IRS.

Continuing Education
A fundamental expectation for all Ministers in the ELCA is that they continually grow in competence and understanding. The ELCA expects rostered persons to spend a minimum of 50 contact hours annually in continuing education. (A contact hour is defined as a typical 50-minute classroom session or the equivalent.) Such experiences enrich both the staff person and the congregation. Therefore, the costs of such continuing education should be shared.

In addition to their attendance at Nebraska Synod Assembly and Theological Conference, it is recommended that full-time professional staff be allowed a minimum of two weeks per year for continuing education. This can include up to 1 weekend (Saturday & Sunday) that is not counted as vacation time. This time may be accumulated up to three years or more to make possible more extended study. Decisions about study programs covering several weeks should be made jointly by the Minister and the Congregation Council.

A minimum contribution of $850.00 per year from the congregation and $400.00 per year from the rostered person is recommended for continuing education. These funds may be accumulated for up to three years as well. If the staff person accepts another ELCA position, all continuing education contributions should be transferred with that person.

Some congregations allow for sabbatical after a specified length of service in the congregation. Sabbatical time should be carefully planned to benefit the Minister, the congregation and the wider church. General guidelines for “Sabbatical Leave” are included in Section III.

Professional Expenses
A reimbursement of up to $500.00 per year should be allowed for the purchase of books, journals, vestments or other resources that remain the property of the professional. Allowances for these items are taxable, while a straight reimbursement of costs is not. Therefore, it is important to structure the payment of these expenses as reimbursements.

Assemblies and Conferences
Attendance of Ministers at Cluster gatherings, Synod Assemblies and the Theological Conference, is expected. This is part of the business of the congregation and expenses (e.g. registration, room, meals) should be budgeted separately from continuing education and paid by the congregation over and above the cost of continuing education.

Vacation
While it is generally understood that a call to serve in ministry will likely entail work weeks that equal or exceed 48 hours and often six-day weeks, congregations are expected to provide a minimum of four weeks (including four Saturdays and Sundays) per year of vacation with full pay for all Ministers, which is essential for the health and welfare of the Minister. All vacation should be used annually, with no more than two weeks of vacation days being carried over year-to-year so that the benefits of such time off can be achieved. This time is in addition to continuing education time, attendance at churchwide or synodical meetings and congregational retreats. Congregations are strongly encouraged to set up a policy in writing relating to pay for unused vacation days to the Minister upon leaving the call. It is recommended that vacation days be systematically accrued on a periodic basis beginning at the first of the year on January 1, from the first day of service or on a monthly or quarterly basis (with one week of vacation being accrued for each 13-week period served). With no more than two weeks of vacation days be allowed to be carried over, no more than six weeks of vacation should be available during a twelve-month period.

Sick Leave
Sick leave recommendation is one day a month, cumulative to 60 days. In the event of serious illness, and if the Minister is covered by the ELCA pension plan, the congregation shall assume responsibility for providing full salary and benefits for the first consecutive eight weeks of the illness at which time the ELCA
disability plan will take effect, if disability benefits have been applied for. It is recommended that no reimbursement be paid for unused sick days when a rostered person leaves his or her position.

Bereavement Leave

In the case of loss of spouse, child, parent or sibling, bereavement leave is not only necessary, it is compassionate caring for the person suffering the loss. Congregations are encouraged to provide support for their Minister(s) by allowing two weeks bereavement leave for the loss of spouse or child and one week for parents or siblings. Because each person deals with grief differently, it may be necessary to negotiate additional bereavement leave, depending on the individual and situation.

Parental Leave

Since the church places a high value on family, it is appropriate for congregations to provide maternity and paternity leave when a new child is added to the family. The following guidelines are suggested:

1. Six weeks of paid maternity or two weeks of paid paternity leave following the birth or adoption of an infant. For parents who adopt an older child, two weeks of paid maternity or paternity leave is suggested.
2. If both parents are serving the congregation(s), the weeks may be split between them.
3. Accrued vacation may also be used in conjunction with maternity or paternity leave. Ministers desiring additional leave, either prior to or following the birth of their child, may negotiate for unpaid leave.

Sabbatical Leave

Congregations are strongly encouraged to consider providing sabbatical leave for their Minister(s). In the long run, Sabbaticals are often cost effective. When burn-out causes an experienced Minister to leave, the congregation loses money during an interim period, incurs expenses for moving, has the potential loss of members in the interim and loses efficiency while a new relationship develops. Some of the other benefits to the congregation of such leave are:

- Sabbaticals offer an experienced Minister renewed energy and rediscovered zeal for ministry;
- Sabbaticals enable an opportunity to develop congregational leadership and to come to a greater understanding of the congregation's ministry by assuming some of the pastoral duties during the interim;
- Sabbaticals are often an occasion for the collective congregation to reflect and assess their partnership with the Minister and discover ways to strengthen and improve ministry;
- Sabbaticals provide the opportunity to show support and care for a beloved Minister and his/her family;
- Sabbaticals can be a time for individual congregational members to reconsider their commitment and to assess their relationship to the life and witness of the congregation;

Some of the additional benefits to the Minister are:

- Sabbaticals often provide a needed break from long hours, high pressure, personal sacrifice and the 24/7 nature of ministry;
- Sabbaticals can offer a unique opportunity for prayer, rest, study and renewal;
- Sabbaticals are often an opportunity for the Minister to discover more in depth the importance of what they do because of who they are rather than because of what they do;
- Sabbaticals provide the opportunity to develop greater self-awareness and spiritual depth.

Some suggested guidelines for sabbatical leave:

If sabbatical leave is offered, it should be offered to all full-time Ministers under the same policy guidelines. Such guidelines should be drawn up in advance and approved by the appropriate congregational committee or the Congregational Council.

The timing and length of sabbatical leave varies. For example, some congregations provide a two-month sabbatical leave after four continuous years of service to the congregation while others provide three-month sabbatical leave after five continuous years of service. A length of two months or more is recommended for the time to be productive. Both the timing and the length of leave should be determined by the congregation.
in consultation with the Minister and the congregational committee and take into consideration the needs of the congregation.

At a minimum, congregations should continue to provide full salary and benefits during the sabbatical. Travel mileage reimbursement is often suspended during this period. During the calendar year of the sabbatical, time normally allotted for continuing education is usually not granted. Continuing education funds allotted for that year are normally applied to sabbatical expenses. Vacation time should not be reduced because of sabbatical leave, however.

A written proposal for the sabbatical should be presented to the appropriate congregational committee by the Minister at least six months prior to the beginning of the sabbatical. The proposal should include a listing of desired outcomes, a description of activities planned during the sabbatical, a summary of travel plans (in general terms) and a listing of the church tasks that need to be cared for during the person’s absence. In addition, the Minister should develop some method to record and share significant key learnings gained during the sabbatical leave to the congregation following the sabbatical. For example, a presentation or class sharing what was learned and hopes for how this learning can be utilized in ministry.

To allow the congregation to benefit fully from the sabbatical, the Minister is expected to remain with the congregation for a period of at least a year following the sabbatical. If the person should leave earlier than that, financial arrangements for repayment of expenditures for the sabbatical may be made.

No hiring of permanent personnel should be considered in response to the sabbatical leave. The congregation may, however, consider adding short-term staff and/or additional compensation for other staff members whose responsibilities are increased during the sabbatical.

Pulpit Supply

It is suggested that remuneration be $175 for Sunday morning worship service, $50.00 for each additional same day worship service and $75 for an additional day worship service (i.e. Saturday or Wednesday Lenten Service), including multi-point parishes. Round trip mileage should be paid at the prevailing IRS rate. When necessary, overnight lodging and meals should be supplied. In the event worship is cancelled less than 24 hours in advance (for severe weather, for example), it is recommended that remuneration still be made in full, mileage optional, to the supply minister.

Part III: Parsonage Guidelines

A parsonage is the home provided by the congregation for its Minister. It should not only be a comfortable home for the Minister and his/her family, but one that also provides an environment that will be helpful to foster partnership and serve to enhance the ministry.

These guidelines are designed to help both the Minister and the congregation. Following them will help the congregation become aware of needed improvements and let it know if their parsonage meets the synod-wide standards for their Minister. These guidelines will also alert the congregation and Minister of any abuses of the parsonage property.

Since the parsonage is the Minister’s home, privacy should be respected. Members of the congregation should follow the same standards of politeness for such things as entering the parsonage as they would for any other home in the community. Because it is the home of the Minister, his/her desires should be consulted when changes are necessary. The quality of the parsonage should meet a standard set by the homes of the majority of the congregation’s members. The size should be adequate to accommodate families.

The tenant/landlord model may apply on occasion, but its application is quite limited. Contrary to renters, the Minister normally has little choice of residence. The relationship between the Minister and congregation is not based on a lease or rental agreement, but upon a common bond in the ministry of the congregation. These guidelines are suggested for congregations and their Minister to use to discuss the matters of maintenance, repair and responsibilities relative to a church-owned home.

1. Before a Minister moves into a parsonage, the congregation should see that it is thoroughly cleaned and may want to use this occasion to update and redecorate the parsonage.
• The colors, fabric, design, etc., selected in the redecoration would normally be selected by those who will be living in the house in consultation with the appropriate committee. The congregation, of course, shall determine the price ranges for these items.

2. Annual Inspection of the Parsonage and Dealing with Needs
• As part of the call process, the new Minister (and spouse) should tour the parsonage with a member of the call committee, Congregational Council chairperson and appropriate property committee person and agree as to what repairs and redecorating are to be done before the new Minister arrives.
• There should be an annual inspection of the parsonage by persons designated by the Congregational Council. The purpose of the inspection is to discover needed repairs, improvements, and refurbishing, and to make short-term and long-term plans for accomplishing these, with prompt attention given to safety and health factors. This annual inspection is important so that appropriate attention is provided to the home.
• Needs which arise between inspections should be taken care of promptly. It is the responsibility of the Minister to promptly make known to the council or appropriate committee the need for any repairs or improvements. It is expected that once a need is expressed, the council or committee will respond appropriately to the request and will coordinate with the Minister and family to schedule repairs.

3. It is expected that the following appliances be provided in the parsonage:
   • Stove with oven
   • Refrigerator
   • Dishwasher
   • TV antennae (unless cable or satellite TV is provided)
   • Air conditioning (usually central air conditioning is expected)
   • Humidifier/de-humidifier (if needed)
   • Soft water conditioner (if needed)
   • Washer & dryer

4. It is expected that the following utilities be paid directly by the congregation or an adequate utilities allowance be provided for the Minister to pay for them:
   • Electricity
   • Gas
   • Water/sewer/garbage
   • Telephone (except personal long distance)

5. Items that would normally be supplied by the congregation include:
   • Paint
   • Wall coverings
   • Floor coverings
   • Ceiling fans
   • Window coverings
   • Light fixtures

6. Appropriate to the community setting, the following are also recommended:
   • A two-car garage
   • An outdoor living space (such as porch, deck, or patio)
   • A safe and adequate area in which children can play

7. Services
   • An adequate supply of hot and cold water, in all rooms using water
   • Proper sewage system
   • Weekly trash pick-up when available
   • Water treatment if needed
   • Regular professional pest control if needed
   • Smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguishers, and radon inspection where deemed necessary
   • Outside water faucets and electrical outlets
   • Snow removal and lawn service to be determined at time of call
   • Internet service if the Minister maintains an office in the parsonage
• Every congregation should have internet service to the church office. Wireless modem application might be considered to broadcast to the Parsonage as well.

8. Maintenance and Improvements
• It is important to plan ahead for repairs and improvements. These should be a line item in the church budget in the amount of at least 1.5% of the insured value of the parsonage to take care of routine and emergency expenses. If these funds are not used in any given year, they should be held in escrow for when it is needed. There should be a clear understanding in writing of who can use these funds and to what extent they can be used without the consent of the appropriate committee.
• The electrical service should be inspected, and all wiring, including the installation of circuit breakers, required number of outlets, wall switches, and light fixtures are to meet the National Electrical Code.
• It is important in the interest of both comfort and stewardship that all windows and doors be weather tight, with either storms or thermopane glass, and that there be screens for all windows. If new windows are installed, they shall be high-performance energy efficient type.
• Both the interior and exterior of the parsonage should be kept in such repair as to preserve not only its physical condition, but also its aesthetic value, and this includes sensitivity to the historical design of a building when making changes. Painting and papering should be done regularly, in consultation with the parsonage family.
• It shall be the responsibility of the occupants of the parsonage to provide for the cleanliness of it and the repair of any damage that they or their pets have caused to the interior, exterior, or grounds. An exiting Minister shall also be responsible for removing swing sets, above ground pools, and other personal non-permanent additions. If, when leaving, the cleaning, restoration, and repair of damage have not been done, the Minister will be billed for it. If he/she does not pay this bill, or contests it, a recording of refusal or negations shall become a permanent part of the Minister’s record.

9. Safety and Security
• If security is an issue in the community, whatever is needed to make the dwelling secure should be provided, i.e. dead-bolt locks, security systems, outdoor lighting, etc. A key change is suggested at the time of change of call.
• To make access to the house safe for occupants and guests, the driveway and the steps and sidewalks to all doors need to be of an even surface and kept in good repair.
• All outside steps should have safe and secure railings.
• As noted above, radon detection kits, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors should be provided. Regular testing of detectors should be done, and it is strongly suggested that a mitigation plan be put in place of how to address radon concerns should they come up.

10. Pets in the Parsonage
While it is recognized that it is the right of the parsonage family to have pets, it is also recognized that the ownership of pets requires the Minister to assume responsibility for them. At minimum these responsibilities include:
• Caring for the pets in a humane and responsible manner.
• Securing permission of the local church for the construction of any needed facility.
• Assuming financial responsibility for the construction, maintenance, and eventual removal (at the time of a move) of any facility, such as a dog house, fenced enclosure, etc.
• Replacing/repairing any damage done by pets to the carpets, floors, drapes, doors, lawn, etc., as well as cleaning and deodorizing to the approval of the appropriate committee and the incoming Minister.
• Any cleaning, repair, or removal resulting from the ownership of pets that is not done by an outgoing Minister shall be billed to him/her.

11. A Parsonage Notebook or File
It is recommended that every parsonage family maintain and pass on the next Minister a notebook or file of records and helpful household data, including, but not limited to:
• A record of the date and place of purchase of all appliances and equipment. Manuals and service contracts for these are to be kept together.
• A record of the date and name of contractor and a description of any work done on the parsonage.
• A record of any decorating or refurbishing, to include paint color, type, brand, etc.
• Any special information necessary regarding shrubs, flowers, etc.
12. When a Minister moves out of a parsonage, and before all financial obligations are completed, there should be an inspection of the property to see that it is left clean and in good repair. The Minister should be held responsible for any excess wear or damage caused to the parsonage while he or she was living there. This would include any damage caused by children or pets.

13. The grounds around the parsonage are usually the responsibility of the congregation. The congregation should see that the lawn, shrubbery and flowerbeds are in good condition when a Minister moves into the parsonage. It should be determined if the Minister is expected to care for these grounds (mow, rake, remove snow, apply fertilizer, insecticides, herbicides) or the congregation will bear these responsibilities. (The Minister and a person from Congregational Council should negotiate the division of labor immediately after the Minister’s arrival.) Congregations should consider taking care of the grounds around the parsonage while the Minister is on vacation or study leave if it has been decided this is the Minister’s responsibility.

Part IV: Compensation Alternatives

In addition to salary and benefits, there are many other ways congregations can compensate Ministers. In fact, sometimes alternatives to salary may be attractive to the person being compensated. Congregations may wish to consider the following as ways to express to their Minister(s) that their ministry is valued and appreciated in addition to salary and normal benefits.

An (*) indicates those items which apply to Ministers of Word and Service as well as Ministers of Word and Sacrament.

- 1. Consideration may be given to granting the Minister an occasional weekend off in addition to regular vacation time.
- 2. 100% of the cost of Social Security could be provided. One half of this amount is deductible by the Minister. This money could be in addition to base salary. Currently, the Medicare portion of Social Security (2.9%) does not have an upper income limitation.
- 3. It is possible to pay medical and dental insurance deductibles to Ministers. A medical reimbursement plan could be established under Section 105 of the Internal Revenue code. Funding must be made by the church separate from and in addition to salary.
- 4. Additional disability and life insurance could be paid for the Minister.
- 5. Money could be set aside for the education of the Minister’s children.
- 6. Additional funds could be contributed to the Board of Pensions. Consideration may also be given to setting up an IRA for the Minister. If the Adjusted Gross Income of the Minister and spouse is under the amount allowed by the IRS, Federal income taxes may be reduced by using an IRA. Unfortunately, Ministers may lack funds for this purpose. The congregation might consider providing the money. Deferred compensation arrangements might also be considered.
- 7. Consideration could be given to providing expenses for the spouse of the Minister to attend conventions and conferences of the church.
- 8. Childcare allowances could be paid to the Minister on a pretax basis to save on federal income taxes if an appropriate plan is established. With a proper plan, you can also do this with medical and dental expenses. SECA and Medicare taxes would not be avoided.
- 9. Consideration might be given to increasing the reimbursements for continuing education.
- 10. Whenever possible, structure the payments for non-housing expenses in the form of reimbursements as opposed to allowances. Allowances are included in income for SECA and Medicare. Straight reimbursements are not. Ministers must keep records of their expenses for reimbursement in as much detail as possible.
- 11. Congregations are strongly encouraged to reimburse auto expenses at the IRS rate. (Occasionally, congregations under-reimburse these expenses.)
- 12. The housing allowance is subject to SECA and Medicare but not income taxes. A savings might therefore result by shifting a larger portion of the overall compensation package to the allowance. Ministers need to keep records on what was spent in order to substantiate the housing allowance.
The allowance is limited by the lesser of what was actually spent or the fair rental value of the home plus furnishings and utilities.

13. Where the congregation owns the parsonage, utilities should be paid directly or reimbursed and not paid in the form of an allowance. However, a furnishings allowance could be set up for incidental housing expenses the Minister actually incurs.

These salary alternative suggestions are by no means all-encompassing. Each individual congregation may be able to develop additional ideas based on its unique circumstances. It would be prudent, however, to check with a CPA, attorney or other tax professional before implementing one of these enhancements as some of these suggestions could add taxable income to the Minister. If you are unacquainted with a tax advisor, Sharon M. Schwarz, CPA, of Schwarz and Associates, 4620 S. 143rd St., Omaha, NE 68137, (402) 330-6880, continues to be available to discuss your questions.
### Part V: Compensation Worksheet

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<th>Compensation</th>
<th>2 Years Prior</th>
<th>Last Year</th>
<th>This Year</th>
<th>Proposed</th>
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<td>1. Base Salary</td>
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<td>2. Housing</td>
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<td>11. Automobile</td>
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