



*Growing Disciples + Walking Together + Serving God's World*

---

## SYNOD COUNCIL REPORT

March 18, 2023

Nebraska Synod, ELCA  
6757 Newport Avenue, Suite 200  
Omaha, NE 68152-2191  
402.896.5311

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

AGENDA .....	3
REPORT OF THE BISHOP .....	5
EN BLOC .....	9
REPORT OF THE SECRETARY .....	12
TREASURER’S REPORT .....	16
STAFF REPORTS .....	23
MINUTES OF LAST MEETING .....	33
MOTIONS .....	38
MATERIALS FOR REVIEW .....	50

## NEBRASKA SYNOD EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA SYNOD COUNCIL AGENDA

March 18, 2023

Online via ZOOM

**Saturday, March 18, 2023**

9:30 am            **Executive Committee**

10:00 am            **Synod Council Gathers**

**Call to Order**

**Roll Call**

**Setting Agenda**

**Approval of Minutes of November 19, 2022**

**Opening Prayer**

**Bishop's Report**

- Additions to Bishop's Report
- En Bloc

**Staff Reports**

**Lunch**

**Report of Officers and Organizations**

Vice-President's Report

Secretary's Report

Treasurer's Report

Nebraska Synodical Women's Organization

Elysia McGill

Gwen Edwards

Dan Friedlund

Elysia McGill

**Action Items:**

MOTION 1: Mission Field Nebraska

MOTION 2: Assembly Rules of Procedure

MOTION 3: Waiver of provision C9/07 relative to Transitional/Interim Contract and Availability for Call for the Vicar Janet Anderson

MOTION 4: Accept FY2023 Proposed Operating Budget and Recommend for Approval by the Synod Assembly

MOTION 5: Transfers of funds to support Mission Field Nebraska ministries of the Synod

MOTION 6: Recommendation of an increase in the Bishop Scott Johnson's defined compensation effective February 1, 2023.

MOTION 7: Investment of funds with local financial institutions to increase return on investments.

MOTION 8: Motion to amend the FY2023 Assembly Approved Budget  
MOTION 9: Transfer FY2022 Net Operating Revenue to the Synod Contingency Fund  
MOTION 10: Release of Immanuel (Stateline), Wymore  
MOTION 11: Resolution 2023:1

Old Business

New Business

Open Comments/Feedback..... Questions, concerns, reflections

**Closing Prayer**

**Adjournment**

**Have you registered for Synod Assembly?**

- Rostered members serving in congregations and those elected as congregation voting members, please register through your congregation.
- For all others, contact Morgan for a registration code.

Synod Assembly Registration link: <https://nebraskasynod.org/event/nebraska-synod-assembly-2023/>

2023 MEETING DATES	
March 18	Online via ZOOM
June 1	Inclusive Communities Training in Person @ Kearney
June 2	Younes Conference Center, Kearney
October 14	Synod Office with ZOOM option

*“I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to the One who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.”*

Ephesians 3:18-20

The image that comes to mind as I continue settling into this new call is “drinking from a fire hose.” Six months in, I’m still working on staying ahead of the flow: information, emails, systems, personalities - it’s a heady mix. I have a new appreciation for this passage from Ephesians, which is also quoted in one of my favorite Rich Mullins songs, “Eli’s Song.”

The work continues, and perhaps the first pieces I want to highlight with you are some of the work we’ve been doing within the Synod office staff to ponder, pray, and discern how God is calling us to do our work in our current iteration. We’ve spent several sessions brainstorming the various “cards” we hold, who holds them, and how we can strategically align the gifts around our table with the responsibilities we carry. One piece we can share with you is some new language guiding us. In a session on January 10th, we identified three strategic core values for our work together:

### **Leadership, Accompaniment, Interpretation.**

We’ve also used our work with those three strategic core values to craft a new Synod staff mission statement for 2023 (and possibly beyond):

### **The Nebraska Synod Staff accompanies and empowers with Spirit-led joy, integrity, and accountability.**

In February we spent an afternoon doing a deep dive into restructuring how we relate to the various constituencies within the synod, moving some pieces around the table and clarifying who will be the point person in certain areas of ministry. We haven’t arrived at a finished product yet, particularly because there are some staff pieces yet to be added, but I feel good about the progress we’re making.

Here is a snapshot of what else I’ve been up to since my last report to you:

- In January we welcomed a new Communications & Event Manager, Laurel Berry. Laurel is a recent UN-L graduate originally from Bertrand.
- In March we welcomed Amy Buch to the Administration team in the Synod office. Amy is from Wahoo and will be working in a number of different mission areas, some of which are still evolving as we restructure how we do our work together.
- We’ve had two ordinations since November: Jacob Krueger on December 3rd (Jacob is serving Zion/Lincoln) and Paul Ozbun (Paul is serving Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd/Hastings)
- Many new bishops attempt to do an “all congregations” visitation plan within the first year of their ministry. While this would simply not be possible in the Nebraska Synod due to our geographic size and the number of congregations, I have been trying to get to congregations in short driving distance of the Synod office, and I will continue to widen that circle as time and travel allows.

- I've been able to lead worship and/or preach in 8 different congregations since November 20th: Sheridan/Lincoln, St. John/Shell Creek (Columbus), Christ/Pickrell<sup>1</sup>, Ng'uni Parish/ELCT Northern Diocese, Luther Memorial/Syracuse, Holy Cross/Omaha, Living Grace/Omaha<sup>2</sup>, Spirit of Grace/Holdrege.
- I attended the 2023 Bishops' Academy in Minneapolis Jan. 4-8. It was good to spend time with my colleagues, who are wise, kind, and deeply committed to exploring where God is calling the ELCA to go in 2023 and beyond.
- I was part of the Tanzania Vision trip from Nebraska to the Northern Diocese of the ELCT from Jan. 22 to Feb. 7. "Life-changing" would absolutely describe the experience. I've known about the long relationship between Nebraska and Tanzania for most of my life. Esther Oberg, a member of my home congregation, served as a missionary in Tanzania from 1951 to 1991, and would often return and give presentations about her work when I was a child. But hearing those stories is not at all the same as experiencing the gracious hospitality and infectious joy of the people of Tanzania in person. Some highlights of the trip for me included time spent with Bishop Frederick and Mama Janet Shoo in their lovely home, preaching at the retirement of a pastor who'd served congregations for 32 years, visiting and learning about the many different ministries of the Northern Diocese, spending time with Pastor Martin Russell, Dr. Bob Kasworm, and Dr. Rob Stuberger, all of whom have ties to Nebraska but currently serve in Tanzania in some capacity, getting to know the different members of our travel group, and enjoying safari experiences in Ngorongoro Crater and areas adjoining Serengeti National Park. It was a wonderful, exhausting 2+ weeks, and I look forward to returning sometime if possible, hopefully with my wife, Kristin.
- On Jan. 14 I led the opening worship session for the Middle School Gathering in Kearney and led a Bible study at the NSWOW Winter Retreat in Grand Island.
- Feb. 28-Mar. 4 was the spring Conference of Bishops gathering in Chicago. This was my second CoB gathering. Some highlights:
  - Worship was very impactful - Region 2 bishops did a great job curating that part of our time.
  - Conversation was honest but respectful, particularly in a conversation regarding online communion practices/principles (which may lead to a statement later this year), updates on a number of legal recommendations as we continue to work at handling misconduct better, and discussion related to an advocacy letter from the Conference to a Senate committee that has held up delivery of medical supplies to Cuba from the Florida-Bahamas Synod.
- I've also been learning more about all of our serving arms, including spending time at the Immanuel Board retreat in Las Vegas, attending the Table Grace gala on Mar. 10, and sitting in on several meetings when I'm able to do so.
- One negative report I want to highlight was the selection process for the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church. I was remiss in not getting the information out in a wider format. One piece I'll be working on for future projects of this nature is recruiting a staff member to be a co-driver who will help keep things on our radar as a Synod. I'm simply too scatter-brained to be the only one curating stuff this important to our future as a church. I feel good about our slate of

---

<sup>1</sup> Consultation prior to 2nd disaffiliation vote.

<sup>2</sup> Service of Holy Closure.

nominees, and I look forward to seeing who the ELCA Church Council selects for this Commission.

These are the major pieces of what I've been up to since our November meeting. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me (and it might be a good idea to copy Morgan Tranmer) at any time.

Blessings,  
Bishop Scott Johnson

## ADDITIONS TO BISHOP'S REPORT

**RECOMMENDED:** That the following rostered persons be approved for On Leave From Call status for one year:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
Marilyn Hasseman	11/5/2022
Ernesto Medina	3/7/2022, 2 <sup>nd</sup> yr. 2023
James Sells	1/1/23

**RECOMMENDED:** That the following rostered persons be approved for transfer to the retired roster:

Jon Mapa	12/1/2022
----------	-----------

**RECOMMENDED:** That a synod council call be extended to the following rostered persons:

Pr. Twila Schock, to serve MOSAIC, as Vice President of Church Relations and International Programming, effective March 6, 2023. *(pg. 75-76)*

Pr. Megan Morrow, to serve as transitional/interim minister, three-year renewable. She will serve as Pastor at St. John's, Alliance, effective January 6, 2023.

Pr. Glen Thomas, to serve as transitional/interim minister, three-year renewable. He will serve as Pastor at First, Blair, effective January 2, 2023.

To affirm the following motions approved by the Executive Committee at their January 25, 2023 meeting.

**RECOMMENDED:** To amend the motion to state that the diversity training will take place as a pre-assembly workshop on Thursday, June 1 in Kearney, NE as a full-day training in order to make it more broadly available throughout the synod to any interested persons or synod groups. *(pg. 50)*



# EN BLOC

## ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN EN BLOC

### 1. SYNOD ASSEMBLY ITEMS

- A. Agenda for the Synod Assembly – **June 2-3, 2023**  
(Proposed Agenda for 2023 Synod Assembly, pg. 52)

RECOMMENDED: That the proposed Synod Assembly agenda be adopted as the order for business for the 2023 Synod Assembly being held June 2-3 and that the proposed agenda be presented to the Assembly for adoption.

- B. Agencies & Causes:

RECOMMENDED: 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 2024:

Immanuel  
Lutheran Family Services  
Midland University  
Mosaic  
Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministries  
Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries  
Oaks Indian Mission  
Tabitha  
Blue Valley Lutheran Homes  
Table Grace Ministries

and that this recommendation be presented to the Synod Assembly.

- C. Committees:

RECOMMENDED: That the following committee members be ratified by the Synod Council:

#### **Minutes**

Ron Lofgren, St. John's, Norfolk  
Gwen Edwards, Synod Council Secretary  
Pr. Doug Hjelmstad, American, Gothenburg  
Pr. Day Hefner, St. John's, Schuyler  
Morgan Tranmer - Staff Liaison

#### **Resolutions, Reference & Counsel Committee**

Gwen Edwards, Lord of Love, Omaha  
Rev. Kathy Gundell, Sonrise Parish, Cozad  
Ron Gunderson, St. Pauls, Grand Island  
Dn. Timothy Siburg - Synod Staff Liaison

RECOMMENDED: That Ric Miller be appointed as chair of the Registration Committee.

- D. Auditor's Report:

RECOMMENDED: That the Synod Council recommend to the Nebraska Synod in Assembly that the auditor's report for 2022 be accepted once the report is received, conditional upon such report being a clean opinion

- E. Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities

(Criteria for Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities, pg. 56)

RECOMMENDED: Whereas the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Church Council April 2007, Exhibit G part 2, it is required that all Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities be approved annually by the Synod Council and Synod Assembly. Motion: that the following assemblies be reauthorized as Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities:

Followers of Christ Prison Ministry, Lincoln Iglesia Luterana  
San Andres, Omaha  
Lakota Lutheran Chapel, Scottsbluff  
Nile Lutheran Chapel, Omaha  
Sudanese Dinka Community (Formerly Sudanese Messiah Worshipping  
Community, Ralston)

And that this recommendation be presented to the Synod Assembly

F. Voting Privileges:

RECOMMENDED: That in accordance with Synod Constitution provision S7.26. (This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit representatives of congregations under development and authorized worshipping communities of the synod, under ELCA bylaw 10.02.03., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with \*S7.21.) the following persons be granted voting privileges at the 2023 Synod Assembly:

Iglesia Luterana San Andres, Omaha  
Two lay members (to be identified)  
Lakota Lutheran Chapel, Scottsbluff  
Two lay members (to be identified)  
Nile Lutheran Chapel, Omaha  
Two lay members (to be identified)  
Sudanese Dinka Community (Formerly Sudanese Messiah Worshipping Community)  
Two lay members (to be identified)

RECOMMENDED: By continuing resolutions of the Nebraska Synod Council adopted March 13, 2020, in accordance with S.7.21.c of the Nebraska Synod Constitution, persons serving as ministers of Nebraska Synod congregations by Authorization of the Bishop of the Synod are granted voice and vote in the Assembly, as are ministers of Word and Sacrament of Full Communion partners serving Nebraska Synod congregations, in accordance with 8.62.12 of the Constitution of the ELCA.

G. Assembly Offering:

RECOMMENDED: That the 2023 Synod Assembly offerings be designated to support the Nebraska Synod Mission Field Nebraska Ministries, to be split among its designated recipients.

2. 2023 COMPENSATIONS FOR ROSTERED PERSONS – including parsonage guidelines (*Proposed Compensation Guidelines for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service for 2023, pg. 57-70*).

RECOMMENDED: That the 2024 Compensation Guidelines for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service be approved and presented to the 2023 Synod Assembly.

3. CONGREGATIONS:

4. COMMITTEES:

5. AGENCIES & INSTITUTIONS:

RECOMMENDED: To affirm the Nebraska Lutheran Outdoors Ministries (NLOM) Board of Directors' recommendation of the following appointment to the board: *(pg 71-74)*

Deacon Coco Lyons, to complete a first three-year term on the NLOM Board commencing June 1, 2023 expiring in 2026, with the opportunity for an additional three-year term following. Deacon Lyons is a Campus Minister University of Nebraska-Lincoln Lutheran Center. Deacon Lyons is a member of Zion Lutheran Church in Lincoln where her husband, Rev. Jacob Krueger, serves as pastor.

Ms. Emily Meehan, to complete a first three-year term on the NLOM Board commencing June 1, 2023 expiring in 2026, with the opportunity for an additional three-year term following. Ms. Meehan is an alumnus of Camp Carol Joy Holling as both a camper and counselor. Ms. Meehan is a member of Life Church in Omaha.

Mr. Conrad "Ted" Swanson, to complete a first three-year term on the NLOM Board commencing June 1, 2023 expiring in 2026, with the opportunity for an additional three-year term following. Mr. Swanson grew up in Omaha, practiced law for 32 years in the Denver and Fort Collins area, and has served on numerous boards. Mr. Swanson is a member of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Fort Collins, CO.

# REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

## *(Synod Council – March 2023)*

### *(As of March 1, 2023)*

#### A. **Installations**

Jason Asselstine, December 4, 2023 @ St. John's Lutheran Church, Bennington, 322 N Molley, Bennington, NE 68007; Rev. Juliet Focken presiding; call to serve as Pastor, St. John's Lutheran Church, Bennington, NE, effective November 1, 2022

Evan Christensen, February 5, 2023 @ Calvary (Swede Home), Stromsburg, 950 129<sup>th</sup> Rd., Stromsburg, NE; Augustana, Genoa, 724 Webster Ave., Genoa NE; First English, Rising City, 840 Butler St., Rising City, NE; Pr. Heidi Wallace presiding; call to serve as Pastor, Calvary (Swede Home), Stromsburg; and contract with Augustana, Genoa; and First English, Rising City, NE, effective 10/7/22

Hillary Christensen, February 5, 2023 @ Calvary (Swede Home), Stromsburg, 950 129<sup>th</sup> Rd., Stromsburg, NE; Augustana, Genoa, 724 Webster Ave., Genoa NE; First English, Rising City, 840 Butler St., Rising City, NE; Pr. Heidi Wallace presiding; call to serve as Pastor, Calvary (Swede Home), Stromsburg; and contract with Augustana, Genoa; and First English, Rising City, NE, effective 10/7/22

Jacob Krueger, February 26, 2023 @ Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2244 NW 126<sup>th</sup> St., Lincoln, NE; Rev. Heidi Wallace presiding; call to serve as Pastor, Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lincoln, NE, effective 12/03/22

Paul Ozbun, February 25, 2023 @ Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 1338 N Saunders Ave., Hastings, NE, Bishop Scott Alan Johnson presiding; call to serve as Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Hastings, NE, effective 02/25/23

Sarah Ruch, December 4, 2022 @ Sheridan Lutheran Church, 6955 Old Cheney Rd. Lincoln, NE, Bishop Scott Alan Johnson presiding; call to serve as Pastor, Sheridan Lutheran Church, Lincoln, NE, effective 10/23/2022

#### B. **Calls (Word & Service Roster)**

#### C. **Transfers**

Timothy Stadem, to Northwest Intermountain Synod  
[Ellen Stelzle, to South Central Synod of Wisconsin \(Transfer form pending\)](#)  
[Steven Lindley, to South Dakota Synod \(haven't received a transfer form yet\)](#)

#### D. **Deaths**

Robert C. Johnson, December 26, 2022

#### E. **Resigned From Roster**

#### F. **Removed from Roster**

#### G. **Retired**

Jon Mapa, December 1, 2022

H. **Disability**

I. **Ordinations**

Jacob Krueger, February 26, 2023 @ Grace Lutheran Church, 2225 Washington St., Lincoln, NE; Bishop Scott Alan Johnson: call to serve as Pastor, Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lincoln, NE, effective 12/03/22

Paul Ozbun, February 25, 2023 @ Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 1338 N Saunders Ave., Hastings, NE, Bishop Scott Alan Johnson: call to serve as Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Hastings, NE, effective 02/25/23

**Pastoral Changes/Congregations Seeking Pastors**

**ALLIANCE, St. John's** – effective August 2022 (Pr. Brett Vander Berg, RCA)

**ASHLAND, American** – effective June 2022 (Pr. Suzanne How)

**BEATRICE, St. John** – (Assoc) effective July 2021 (Pr. Arden Dorn, part time)

**BYRON, St. Paul's and St. Peter, HARDY, St. Paul's (Tri Saints Parish)**– effective December 2020  
(PMAs Gerald Toepfer and Irvin Schleufer; Pr. Keith Brozek on call)

**COLERIDGE Immanuel** – effective February 2022 (pulpit supply)

**COLUMBUS, St. John's** – effective June 2021 (Pr. Chris Alexander)

**DALTON, United Church of the Plains** – effective August 2016 part time (Bud Gillespie, PCUSA, local pastor)

**DAYKIN, St. John's/GILEAD, St. Paul's** - effective November 2021 (Pr. Patti Meyer & Pr. Marilyn Haseman)

**DEWITT, St. Paul's (Soap Creek)** – effective March 2021 (Pr. Myron Meyer)

**FALLS CITY, St. Paul's** – effective April 2020

**FILLEY, American** – effective June 2021 (Pr. Jonathan Jensen)

**FREMONT, First (Sr)** – effective March 2022 (Pr. Duane Miller)

**GLENVIL, Immanuel** – effective March 2021 (Jonathan Jehorek, partnership with Immanuel, Glenvil)

**GOTHENBURG, American** – effective October 2021 (Pr. Doug Hjelmstad)

**GOTHENBURG, Zion** – effective June 2021 (Pr. Doug Hjelmstad, 1/mo; lay leadership)

**HAIGLER, Zion** – effective September 2020 (Dan Busse, PMA student)

**HAMPTON, United** – effective March 2021 (pulpit supply)

**HOLDREGE, Spirit of Grace** – effective September 2020 (Linda Jasch, PMA 1/x month supply)

**JOHNSON, St. Matthew's** - effective November 2015

**KEARNEY, Family of Christ** – effective May 2021 (Pr. Carl Sirotzki)

**KENNARD, Emmaus**– effective July 2019 (supply)

**KIMBALL, First English** - (part time) effective May 2019 (Bill Huelle, PMA 1<sup>st</sup> Sun.)

**LEIGH, St. John's/PLATTE CENTER, Zion** – effective Dec 2020 (Ron Lofgren, PMA)

**LINCOLN, First** – (Assoc) effective October 2020 (Pr. Suzanne How)

**LINCOLN, Friedens** – effective October 2019 (Pr. Bud Christenson, part-time)

**LINCOLN, Grace** – effective June 2022 (Pr. Emily Johnson)

**LINCOLN, Southwood** – (Lead) effective February 2022 (Pr. Eric Finsand)

**LINCOLN, The Lutheran Center** – effective June 2022 (Pr. Elizabeth Kocher, 1-year intentional interim)

**LODGEPOLE, Immanuel (Weyerts)** – effective July 2017 (Bud Gillespie PCUSA, local pastor)

**NIOBRARA, Faiths United Parish** – effective November 2021 (pulpit supply + area ecumenical leaders)  
**NORTH PLATTE, Messiah** – effective August 2021 (Pr. Anne Duboraw, pulpit supply)  
**OMAHA, Holy Cross** – effective February 2022 (Pr. Heather Grell)  
**OMAHA, Immanuel (BENSON)** – effective January 2022 (Pr. Kat Montira)  
**OMAHA, Kountze Memorial** – Sr. effective December 2021 (Pr. Steven Griffith)  
**OMAHA, Luther Memorial** – effective November 2021 (Pr. Cara Jensen)  
**OMAHA, St. Matthew's** – effective December 26, 2022  
**OMAHA, St. Paul's** – effective August 2021 (Pr. Andrew Kitzing)  
**PENDER, St. Peter** – effective January 2022 (Kathy Becker, PMA and shared ministry contract with St. Mark's an Pr. Karen McNeill-Utecht)  
**PIERCE, Christ** – effective July 2021 (Jacquie Samway, PMA)  
**PONCA, Salem** – effective April 2022  
**POTTER, Prairie West ELCA/UMC** – effective January 2021 (Warren Cico, UMC)  
**RALSTON, Messiah** – effective November 1, 2022 (Pr. Pam Ciulia)  
**RANDOLPH, S. John** – effective October 2021 (Dwight Brummels, PMA student; Dick Bloomquist, PMA, funerals)  
**SCOTTSBLUFF, Calvary** – effective September 2022 (Pr. Brett Vander Berg, RCA)  
**SOUTH SIOUX CITY, First** – effective November 2021 (pulpit supply, lay leadership)  
**STANTON, St. Luke's** – effective September 2021 (Nancy Jacobs, PMA)  
**TALMAGE, Faith/Christ** – effective August 2019 (Pr. Kate Woolf)  
**WAKEFIELD, Salem** – effective November 2021 (Pr. Ernesto Medina)  
**WAUSA, Thabor** – effective June 2021 (Richard Bloomquist, PMA)  
**WAYNE, Our Savior** – (Sr. Pastor) effective April 2020 (Pr. Jim Splitt, PCUSA)  
**WAYNE, Our Savior** – (Assoc. Pastor) effective March 2020 (Pr. Debra Valentine, UCC)  
**WISNER, Christ +UMC** – effective July 2022  
**WYMORE, Immanuel (State Line)** – effective September 2021 (lay member preaching)  
**WYMORE, Our Savior** – effective September 2021 (Pr. Carl Kramer, supply)  
**YORK, First** – effective November 2020 (Pr. Rob Garton)

#### K. **Congregations Served by Ministry Leaders/In Special Circumstances**

**ALLEN, First/CONCORD, Concordia** – effective August 2019 (Deb Hammer, TEEM Vicar)  
**ATKINSON, St. John's/BASSETT, St. Peter** - August 2017 (Nancy Moore, TEEM)  
**BENKELMAN, Zion** – effective September 2020 (Pr. Jim Gleason, CS Synod)  
**CENTRAL CITY, Grace** – effective May 2017 (Pr. Ruth Boettcher)  
**CHAPPELL, Berea/OSHKOSH, St. Mark's, St. Mark's Parish** – effective July 2017  
     (supply/Fr. J. Scotty Ray, ECC+USA)  
**BROADWATER, Messiah** - effective February 2001 (Bev Adam, PMA)  
**BROKEN BOW, Our Savior's** - effective August 2004 (Kathy Salts, PMA)  
**CALLAWAY, Callaway** - effective August 2004 (Joyce Kolbo, PMA)  
**CHAPPELL, Grace/LODGEPOLE, Gloria Dei-Tri County Parish** - effective July 2017 (Brenda Tophoj, PMA)  
**FALLS CITY, St. Peter's** – (part time) effective May 2015 (UMC student candidate Mike Hader, UMC local pastor, partnership with Barada UMC & Bethel UMC, Falls City)  
**GERING, Rejoice** – (part time) effective September 2017 (Tom Smith, PMA)

**GLENVIL, St. Paul's/HASTINGS, Immanuel** – effective January 2019 (Jonathan Jehorek, Presby.)  
**HAY SPRINGS, St. Peter's** – effective Jan 2009 (Pam Anderson, PMA)  
**HORDVILLE, Fridhem** - effective May 2017 (Janet Anderson, PMA, supply)  
**JOHNSON, Zion** – (Pr. Bob Rademacher & cluster pastoral care)  
**LEWELLEN, Grace**, effective April 2008 (Vonnice Brown, PMA student)  
**MADISON, Immanuel** – effective Sept 2010 (Susan Urbanec, PMA)  
**NEWMAN GROVE, Trinity** – effective November 2019 (Deacon Claire Meyer, modified CL/DL, ¾ time; Pr. Kat Montira, supervising)  
**OHIOWA, Grace** - effective January 2018 (Deb Rippe, PMA)  
**OHIOWA, St. John's, MCCOOL JUNCTION, First** - effective December 2016 (Jim Germer, PMA)  
**OMAHA, Bethel** – (Pr. Terry Tomlinson, UMC, until Oct)  
**OMAHA, St. Paul's** – Doug Rothgeb (CL-Assist.)  
**OTOE, St. John's** – effective December 2019 (Pr. Mary Grundman & Pr. LuRae Hallstrom, supply)  
**PALMYRA, Beautiful Savior** – effective December 2019 (Kim Bate, PMA student applying to Wartburg TEEM program)  
**PAXTON, Trinity/SUTHERLAND, Grace** – effective Oct 2010 (JA Welsh, SAM; w/St. Paul's Episcopal, Ogallala)  
**PILGER, St. Peter's** – effective January 2015 (partner with Our Savior's, Wayne)  
**RUSHVILLE, Immanuel** – effective August 2014 (Patrick Runkle, PMA)  
**SCRIBNER/UEHLING, Faith Ambassadors Parish** – effective August 2018 (Bob Ball, PMA and Sandy Terry, PMA)  
**SPENCER, Our Saviour's/BRISTOW, Trinity** - effective September 2004 (Glen Stahlecker, PMA)  
**TEKAMAH, Emmanuel** - effective January 2020 (Rex Rogers, TEEM)  
**WAHOO, Grace** – effective September 2020 (Gary Grinvalds, CL student/ Pr. Kris Bohac, supervising)  
**WALTON, Grace** – effective April 2019 (Kim Bate, PMA student/TEEM candidate)  
**WINSIDE, Trinity** – (Glenn Kietzmann, PMA)

**L. Congregations Organized**

**M. Received as a Congregation of the Nebraska Synod – ELCA**

**N. Congregations Withdrawing from the ELCA**

**Christ, Pickrell** (10202) – 2<sup>nd</sup> vote to disaffiliate with the ELCA; 67-Yes; 15-No,  
 Passed and Approved on January 22, 2023 by congregation (pg. 78)

**Immanuel (Stateline), Wymore** (10251) – 2<sup>nd</sup> vote to disaffiliate with the ELCA; 40-Yes; 6-No  
 on June 5, 2022

**Trinity, Bruning** (10036) – 2<sup>nd</sup> vote to disaffiliate with the ELCA; 77-Yes; 7-No, Passed and  
 Approved on January 15, 2023 by congregation (pg. 77)

**O. Congregations Closed**

**St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Pilger (03365)** – Special Congregational Meeting held on  
 December 18, 2022, to vote on a motion to close the congregation, effective March 1,  
 2023. Service of Holy Closure held on January 8, 2023.

# TREASURER'S REPORT

## Nebraska Synod

### Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

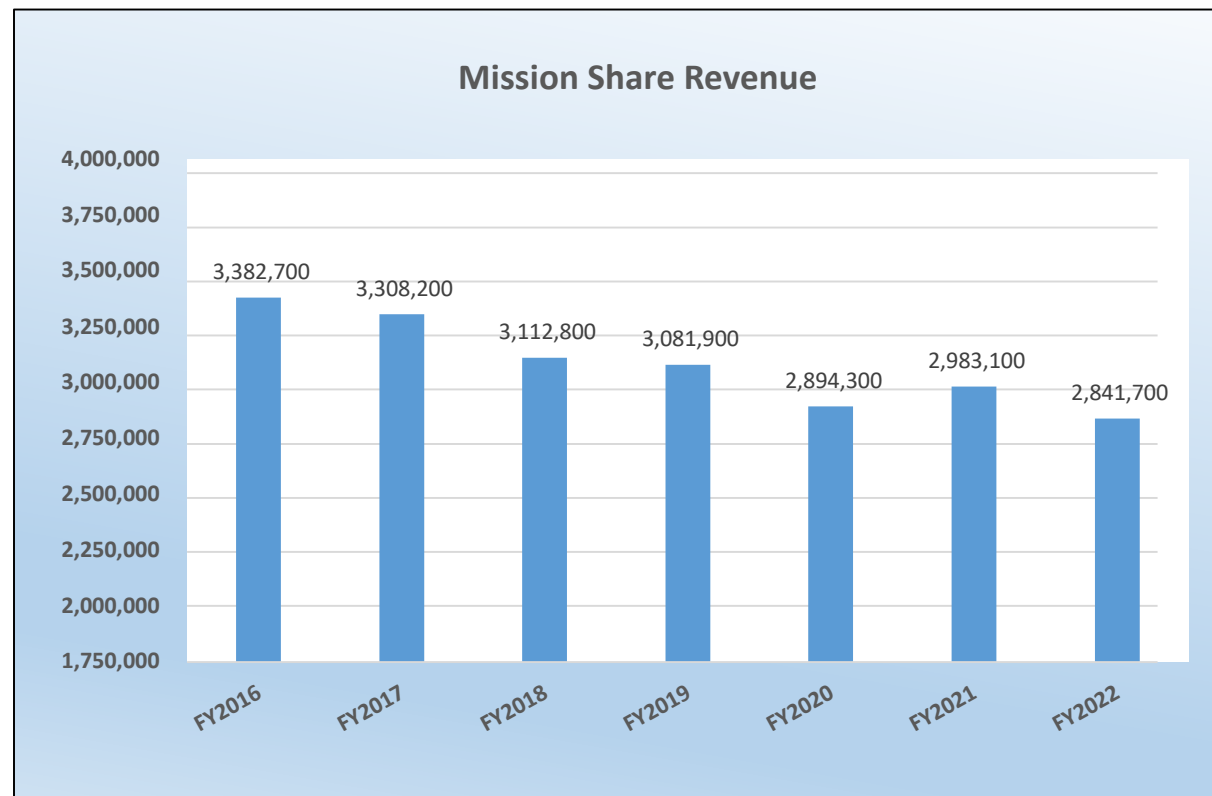
#### Treasurer's Report to the Synod Council

For the Twelve Months ended January 31, 2023 (FY2022)

#### Operations –

The preliminary **Statement of Activities** for the Operating Fund of the Nebraska Synod for the twelve months ended January 31, 2023, reflects net operating gain of \$57,900. This operating gain compares to a budgeted deficit for the period of (\$15,900) and to a gain of \$73,700 for the same period in FY2021. The following will discuss the reasons for these variances.

**Mission Share** revenue for FY2022 was \$2,841,700, which is less than the budgeted amount of \$2,900,000 by \$58,300 and is less than the FY2021 actual amount of \$2,983,100 by \$141,400. Mission Share revenue by year since FY2016 is shown in the graph below, which reflects the steady decline for the period.



**Other revenue** line items in aggregate are \$218,300, which is less than the budget of \$233,300, primarily due to the reduction in non-Mission Share giving, and is less than the FY2021 actual of \$244,500 due to the reduction in non-Mission Share giving and investment income.

As a result of Mission Share revenue being less than budget, **Churchwide Ministries** funding at 54.1% of Mission Share revenue, or \$1,537,400, is less than budget by (\$31,500) and is less than FY2021 by (\$76,500). **Nebraska Synod Ministries** expenses of \$606,800 were less than



budgeted amount of \$616,900 by (\$10,100) and were less than the amount for FY2021 of \$631,300 by (\$24,500), because of the Mission Share decrease. **Leadership Ministries** expenses of \$18,600 are under budget by \$16,900, due to reduced communication expenses charged to operations and are higher than FY2021 expenses by \$2,400 due to Candidacy and Global Mission expenses. **Salaries & Benefits** expenses of \$619,400 are under budget by (\$85,100) due to staff changes and timing of filling positions and are less than FY2021 by (\$62,900) due to staffing changes and timing. **Office Operations** expenses of \$220,100 are under budget by (\$3,300) and are higher than FY2021 expenses by \$9,700, as expected.

We have experienced **unrealized losses** for the period due to market fluctuations at year end on unrestricted investments of (\$179,400), which compares to \$74,400 in unrealized gains in 2021.

### **Net Assets –**

Council Designated, Temporarily Restricted and Permanently Restricted fund balances have increased by \$135,200. This net increase is largely the result of the following large items: 1) an increase in the **Synod Contingency Fund** of \$48,300 as of result of the transfer of the 2021 surplus to the fund – \$73,700, less expenses incurred of (\$25,400); 2) the receipt of gifts for the Maas Leadership Development Fund – \$52,000; 3) A net increase in the value of the **Endowment Fund** – \$32,800, resulting from undesignated bequests received of \$141,800 and current fund investment income of \$37,300, offset by market value declines in the investments (\$106,300) and operations funding (\$40,000); 4) an increase in **Spiritual Direction** of \$45,800 as a result of grants and contributions received and the timing of staff transition during the second half of the year; and 5) a net increase in funds received from **Immanuel Vision Foundation** of \$119,200 as a result of timing of grants versus expenditures. These increases were offset by the following large decreases: 1) Depreciation and expenses in support of the new mission start incurred by the **Equity in Synod Properties Fund** – (\$104,500); and 2) A net reduction in the value of investments and expenditures of the **Hunger and Disaster Endowment Fund** – (\$48,400).

We will discuss the financial results at the meeting. However, if you have any questions prior to the meeting, please feel free to contact me by email or on my phone at (402) 680-6882.

Thank you.

Dan Friedlund  
Treasurer

February 25, 2023

Preliminary

**Nebraska Synod of the ELCA**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
**As of January 31, 2023 and January 31, 2022**

	<u>January 31, 2023</u> (Unaudited)	<u>January 31, 2022</u>
<b>Assets:</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 485,879	\$ 385,729
Investments	4,869,853	4,989,636
Receivables	<u>599,810</u>	<u>606,675</u>
Total Current Assets	\$ 5,955,542	\$ 5,982,040
Property and Equipment, net	<u>458,351</u>	<u>494,115</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u><u>\$ 6,413,893</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 6,476,155</u></u>
<b>Liabilities:</b>		
Accounts Payable	\$ 365,075	\$ 367,259
Accrued Vacation Payable	<u>50,194</u>	<u>50,194</u>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<u>\$ 415,269</u>	<u>\$ 417,453</u>
<b>Net Assets:</b>		
Unrestricted	\$ 511,707	\$ 706,936
Equity in Synod Properties	1,285,228	1,389,745
Council Designated	1,813,435	1,718,924
Temporarily Restricted	2,357,156	2,210,404
Permanently Restricted Endowment	<u>31,098</u>	<u>32,692</u>
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<u>\$ 5,998,624</u>	<u>\$ 6,058,702</u>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<u><u>\$ 6,413,893</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 6,476,155</u></u>

**Nebraska Synod of the ELCA**  
**Statement of Activities - Operating Fund**  
**For the Twelve Months Ended January 31, 2023**

	For the Twelve Months Ended January 31, 2023		YTD Budget Variance Favorable/ (Unfavorable)	Annual Budget	For the twelve Months Ended January 31, 2022	Variance from Actual Prior Year Increase/ (Decrease)
	Actual (Unaudited)	Budget			Actual	
<b>Revenue:</b>						
Mission Share	\$ 2,841,730	\$ 2,900,000	\$ (58,270)	\$ 2,900,000	\$ 2,983,142	\$ (141,412)
General Fund	43,044	66,000	(22,956)	66,000	66,314	(23,270)
Property Interest Income	16,620	16,800	(180)	16,800	17,552	(932)
Endowment Income	40,000	40,000	(0)	40,000	40,000	-
Investment Income, net	62,016	57,000	5,016	57,000	68,278	(6,262)
Other Income	56,664	53,500	3,164	53,500	52,388	4,277
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 3,060,076</b>	<b>\$ 3,133,300</b>	<b>\$ (73,224)</b>	<b>\$ 3,133,300</b>	<b>\$ 3,227,674</b>	<b>\$ (167,598)</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>						
Churchwide Ministries	\$ 1,537,376	\$ 1,568,900	\$ 31,524	\$ 1,568,900	\$ 1,613,831	\$ (76,455)
<b>Nebraska Synod Ministries</b>						
Oaks Indian Center	15,686	16,024	338	16,024	16,466	(780)
Midland Lutheran College	5,000	5,000	-	5,000	5,000	-
Lutheran Family Services	150,526	153,622	3,096	153,622	158,012	(7,486)
LSTC & Wartburg	113,499	115,826	2,327	115,826	119,143	(5,644)
Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministry	63,996	65,315	1,319	65,315	67,178	(3,183)
Nebraska Campus Ministries	146,775	149,790	3,015	149,790	154,075	(7,299)
Mission Field Nebraska Support	87,000	87,000	-	87,000	87,000	-
Seeking the Spirit Within	24,300	24,300	-	24,300	24,473	(173)
Sub Total	606,783	616,877	10,094	616,877	631,348	(24,565)
<b>Leadership Ministries</b>						
Candidacy	7,703	5,000	(2,703)	5,000	3,608	4,095
Parish Ministry Associates	5,000	5,000	(0)	5,000	5,000	-
Candidate Visitations	-	1,500	1,500	1,500	-	-
First Call Mentoring	3,307	4,500	1,193	4,500	3,521	(214)
Rural Ministries	-	2,500	2,500	2,500	-	-
Global Mission	2,539	4,000	1,461	4,000	714	1,825
Cluster and Committee Expense	50	1,000	950	1,000	-	50
Communications	-	12,000	12,000	12,000	3,374	(3,374)
Sub Total	18,599	35,500	16,901	35,500	16,217	2,382
<b>Salaries &amp; Operations</b>						
Staff Salaries & Benefits	619,357	704,500	85,143	704,500	682,248	(62,891)
Office Operations	220,104	223,400	3,296	223,400	210,363	9,740
Sub Total	839,461	927,900	88,439	927,900	892,611	(53,150)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 3,002,219</b>	<b>\$ 3,149,177</b>	<b>\$ 146,958</b>	<b>\$ 3,149,177</b>	<b>\$ 3,154,007</b>	<b>\$ (151,788)</b>
<b>Net Revenue over (under) Expenses before Transfer to Contingency Fund &amp; Unrealized Gain (Loss) on Investments</b>	<b>\$ 57,857</b>	<b>\$ (15,877)</b>	<b>\$ 73,734</b>	<b>\$ (15,877)</b>	<b>\$ 73,667</b>	<b>\$ (15,810)</b>
Transfer to Contingency Fund	(73,667)	-	(73,667)	-	(150,595)	76,928
Unrealized Gain (Loss) on Investments	(179,419)	-	(179,419)	-	74,418	(253,838)
<b>Net Revenue over(under) Expenses</b>	<b>\$ (195,230)</b>	<b>\$ (15,877)</b>	<b>\$ (179,353)</b>	<b>\$ (15,877)</b>	<b>\$ (2,510)</b>	<b>\$ (192,720)</b>

**Nebraska Synod, ELCA**  
**Net Assets**  
**Totals as of January 31, 2023 and January 31, 2022**

	January 31, 2023 (Unaudited)	January 31, 2022	Change
<b>Unrestricted:</b>	\$ 511,707	\$ 706,936	\$ (195,229)
<b>Council Designated - Synod Properties:</b>			
Equity in Synod Properties	\$ 1,285,228	\$ 1,389,745	\$ (104,517)
	\$ 1,285,228	\$ 1,389,745	\$ (104,517)
<b>Council Designated:</b>			
All the Children of God	\$ -	\$ 1,150	\$ (1,150)
Assembly/Festival	27,782	31,602	(3,820)
Bequests Budget Finance Committee Discretionary	22,216	6,462	15,754
Bethel Trust	29,617	29,617	-
Ecumenical Boundaries Event	2,034	1,826	208
Enhancing Rural Ministry for Aging Adults	-	3,061	(3,061)
Faith Formation Ministry Fund	34,561	35,178	(616)
Fall Campaign/150th Anniversary	108,898	93,305	15,593
Financial Administration Fund	208	736	(528)
Interim Ministry of Nebraska	3,598	3,598	-
Justice Ministries/Public Advocacy	2,072	3,322	(1,250)
Leadership Development Fund	59,301	55,609	3,691
Lutheran Metro Ministries	89,241	95,480	(6,239)
Lutheran Youth of Nebraska	125	1,681	(1,556)
Middle School Gathering Fund	17,125	15,967	1,158
Mission Field Nebraska	10,160	755	9,405
NE Synod ELCA Endowment - Seg 1	169,027	184,788	(15,761)
NE Synod ELCA Endowment Dist - Seg 1	54,754	59,859	(5,106)
NE Synod ELCA Endowment - Seg 3	609,386	507,292	102,094
NE Synod ELCA Endowment Dist - Seg 3	23,769	70,638	(46,869)
Rural Immersion	1,150	1,050	100
Rural Internships	13,111	13,061	50
Rural Ministry Endowment Interest	1,237	1,168	69
Synod Contingency Fund	485,252	436,904	48,348
Synod Discretionary Fund	25,124	32,364	(7,241)
Ventures	7,225	7,225	-
We Do Mission	6,564	8,764	(2,200)
World Hunger One Another	9,900	16,464	(6,564)
	\$ 1,813,435	\$ 1,718,924	\$ 94,511
<b>Total Unrestricted &amp; Council Designated:</b>	\$ 3,610,370	\$ 3,815,606	\$ (205,236)

**Nebraska Synod, ELCA**  
**Net Assets (continued)**  
**Totals as of January 31, 2023 and January 31, 2022**

	January 31, 2023 (Unaudited)	January 31, 2022	Change
Total Unrestricted & Council Designated - forward:	\$ 3,610,370	\$ 3,815,606	\$ (205,236)
<b>Temporarily Restricted:</b>			
American Missions/New Mission	\$ 32,156	\$ 32,156	\$ -
Archives Grant Fund	2,948	-	2,948
Argentina	7,302	7,302	-
Candidacy Loan and Grant Fund	53,874	43,252	10,623
Candidacy Student Travel	5,000	-	5,000
Congregational Vitality	10,032	23,900	(13,868)
Director of Evangelical Mission	12,717	17,904	(5,188)
Emmaus Fund	9,501	8,287	1,214
Excellence in Leadership	3,909	7,444	(3,534)
Faith Partners of Nebraska	-	2,867	(2,867)
Gage County Seminarian Endowment	10,000	10,000	-
Gage County Seminarian Endowment Interest	5,614	5,543	71
Hunger and Disaster Endowment Fund	1,108,733	1,157,146	(48,413)
Immanuel Mission & Vision Initiative Grant	192,977	104,638	88,339
Immanuel Vision Fund 2022	45,544	14,678	30,866
Lakota Endowment Fund	2,163	2,155	9
Leadership Coaching Fund	6,650	6,875	(225)
Leadership Communications Fund	22,386	6,533	15,853
LMM Dayhouse Fund	26,604	26,604	-
LMM Dail Scholarship Fund	7,869	11,052	(3,183)
LMM Pantry Fund	304	15,610	(15,305)
LMM Urban Center	13,764	13,764	-
Maas Leadership Development Fund	52,033	-	52,033
Nebraska Disaster Fund	83,978	82,149	1,828
Parish Ministry Associate	32,561	39,832	(7,272)
Prison Ministry Chapel Renovation	51,466	51,466	-
SE NE Seminary Assistance	3,333	3,333	-
Seminarian Assistance	24,977	34,287	(9,310)
Spiritual Direction	125,136	79,332	45,804
Sudanese	50	-	50
Tanzania - Other Funds	120,350	84,410	35,941
Tanzania - Kasworm Funds	283,227	317,886	(34,658)
	<u>\$ 2,357,156</u>	<u>\$ 2,210,404</u>	<u>\$ 146,752</u>
<b>Permanently Restricted:</b>			
NE Synod ELCA Endowment - Seg 1	\$ 17,098	\$ 18,692	\$ (1,594)
Rural Internship Endowment	14,000	14,000	-
	<u>\$ 31,098</u>	<u>\$ 32,692</u>	<u>\$ (1,594)</u>
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<u><u>\$ 5,998,624</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 6,058,702</u></u>	<u><u>\$ (60,078)</u></u>

**Nebraska Synod of the ELCA**  
**Statement of Activities - Operating Fund**  
**FY2022 & 2023 & 2024 Projections**

	2024	2023		2022	
	Proposed Budget	Proposed Amended Budget	Approved Budget	Preliminary Actual	Budget
Revenue:					
Mission Share	\$ 2,620,000	\$ 2,692,000	\$ 2,900,000	\$ 2,841,730	\$ 2,900,000
General Fund	43,000	43,000	66,000	43,044	66,000
Property Interest Income	15,500	16,100	16,300	16,620	16,800
Endowment Income	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Investment Income, net	88,900	77,800	57,000	62,016	57,000
Other Income	63,000	65,000	66,500	56,664	53,500
Total Revenue	\$ 2,870,400	\$ 2,933,900	\$ 3,145,800	\$ 3,060,076	\$ 3,133,300
Expenses:					
Churchwide Ministries	\$ 1,391,220	\$ 1,456,372	\$ 1,568,900	\$ 1,537,376	\$ 1,568,900
	53.1%	54.1%	54.1%	54.1%	54.1%
<i>Nebraska Synod Ministries</i>					
Oaks Indian Center	14,332	14,875	16,024	15,686	16,024
Midland Lutheran College	4,950	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Lutheran Family Services	137,402	142,604	153,622	150,526	153,622
LSTC & Wartburg	103,596	107,518	115,826	113,499	115,826
Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministry	58,419	60,630	65,315	63,996	65,315
Nebraska Campus Ministries	133,974	139,046	149,790	146,775	149,790
Mission Field Nebraska Support	86,130	87,000	87,000	87,000	87,000
Seeking the Spirit Within	24,057	24,300	24,300	24,300	24,300
Sub Total	562,860	580,974	616,877	606,783	616,877
	21.5%	21.6%		21.4%	21.3%
<i>Leadership Ministries</i>					
Candidacy	6,500	6,500	5,000	7,703	5,000
Parish Ministry Associates	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Candidate Visitations	1,500	1,500	1,500	-	1,500
First Call Mentoring	4,500	4,500	4,500	3,307	4,500
Rural Ministries	2,500	2,500	2,500	-	2,500
Global Mission	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,539	4,000
Cluster and Committee Expense	250	250	1,000	50	1,000
Communications	12,000	12,000	12,000	-	12,000
Sub Total	34,250	34,250	33,500	18,599	35,500
<i>Salaries &amp; Operations</i>					
Staff Salaries & Benefits	648,373	601,126	726,000	619,357	704,500
Office Operations	243,207	236,124	226,700	220,104	223,400
Sub Total	891,580	837,250	952,700	839,461	927,900
Total Expenses	\$ 2,879,910	\$ 2,908,846	\$ 3,171,977	\$ 3,002,219	\$ 3,149,177
Net Revenue over (under) Expenses	\$ (9,510)	\$ 25,055	\$ (26,177)	\$ 57,857	\$ (15,877)

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **Pastor Gregory Berger, Assistant to the Bishop Report for the Synod Council Meeting, March 2023**

#### **For my first report, one word bubbles up: Grief**

I find the stages of grief helpful in understanding and working with congregations and leaders. The reality for us all is that almost nothing is the same. Loss is all around us. In the work I'm doing, there isn't a single community of faith that isn't grieving who they once were and trying to come to grips with what that means. And of course what remains the same in all the loss and change, is God's presence in the Holy Spirit with life giving grace, acceptance and love, calling, gathering, enlightening and sanctifying. What remains is our identity as the beloved. So as I relate to congregations, this seems to be the dance – working through grief while claiming and living in our identity. This creates wonderful opportunities for renewal and rebirth. My specific concern is for those communities who get stuck in their grief.

#### **Relating to Congregations**

My primary responsibility is walking alongside congregations who are served by a full time pastor or a staff. Other congregations we think of as “partnered congregations” in shared ministry. I can't think of a distinguishing term for the congregations I am relating to – I welcome ideas -- because of course no congregation is flying “solo.” We are all partnered and as I tell everyone I meet, we are walking together and we are better together!

#### **Congregations in Transition**

Relating to congregations in transition is a specific part of the above work. From when a pastor leaves, to transitional ministries, to the work of self-reflection, to being ready to welcome candidates, and the day of call. It is a joy and privilege to walk alongside these partners in ministry. Currently I am working directly with 25 congregations.

However it is no walk in the park! Anxiety is high – everywhere. To repeat the obvious, things have changed. Covid did not cause the changes but only accelerated what was already happening. Congregations tend to respond to their anxiety by wanting to get busy doing something! To quickly move on, working hard to build back or regain momentum. But in John 15 Jesus challenges and invites us to be in the rhythm of abiding and producing fruit, rest and work. Time without a pastor is a wonderful gift of abiding in Christ. But our culture pressures us to push the pendulum to work, not rest. One Council I met with, acknowledged in terms of personality types, except for one golden retriever, they were all beavers – workers, wanting to be busy!

#### **Transitional Ministry**

Bishop Johnson has set a direction for us regarding transitional ministry (TM). We are seeking to return to transitional ministers available for call at their contracted sights being the exception, rather than the norm. Bishop has asked me to help redefine transition ministry, training, and how best to minister with congregations. As with everything else these days, it's complicated. Rostered ministers who are specifically called to TM work, are fewer and far between. Yet the needs of congregations to have someone work through the rediscovery of their God-given identity as a community of faith has exponentially increased. Congregations are going through

all the stages of the grief I mentioned above – denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance – as they grieve who they were.

The first priority moving forward is to create an updated list of those doing and interested in TM. Thanks to Kristen, Heidi and Morgan for helping complete this priority.

The second priority is training. Through Interim Ministry Network (IMN), there are two online courses available at the introductory level, “Fundamentals of Transitional Ministry: The Work of the Leader” and “Fundamentals of Transitional Ministry: The Work of Congregation.” I’d like to make this mandatory for anyone doing TM, full or parttime. However, the rub comes that each course fee is \$750.00. We have left over dollars for TM, so we can offer some help. The current synod TM fund, I understand, is from donations some years back by congregations who went through TM and saw the value of the work or grants. So this becomes the 3<sup>rd</sup> priority -- fund raising.

We are also, along with Heidi and Sunni, experimenting with creating a hybrid TM of sorts. We’ve seen the overlap of TM with Team coaching and have asked, “With a shortage of rostered TM’s, can some of the role of TM be shifted to trained coaches? We have interest so will be moving forward!

Many thanks also to Glenn Schacht and Bob Oleson for helping out. They were both key leaders of TM ministry in prior manifestations.

### **Candidacy**

I recently took the hand off from Sunni to work with the Candidacy committee. This is familiar ground for me, having served on the committee and chairing in the past. Of course again, this work of the Church has gone through its own transformation. So it will be an adventure to rejoin this group and learn my new role.

Jesus has promised he will build the church (Mt 16:18). We are not in charge of preserving or insuring its existence. The future of the body of Christ has never been in question. The challenge remains: Are we willing to die to self and our vision of what that church should be? Are we able to commit to doing what Jesus has called us to: make disciples, love God and neighbor with bold faith and trust? Thank you for your faithfulness in the journey. We are better together!

In Christ’s service,

Greg



Reading is not happening at my usual pace as Zadie Grace, 7-month-old cocker, does not think reading is a fun thing to do at night – ha. I am, however, still reading. *The Starfish and The Spirit; Unleashing the Leadership Potential of Churches and Organizations* by Lance Ford, Rob Wegner and Alan Hirsch is a new read. The back cover reads, “*The Starfish and The Spirit*” is about creating a culture where church leaders view themselves as curators of a community on a mission, not a source of certainty for every question and project. Imagine a church led by a team whose gifts and talents are completely unleashed, enabling everyone to show up and step up with all they are. What would it be like to see this kind of healthy leadership reproduced for generations? The book is a wow! Love to discuss if you want to dive in with me.

### Projects, Programs, and Initiatives:

- Emmaus: Lifelong Learning --- The feedback on the quality learning opportunities offered has been overwhelmingly positive. The problem is Emmaus is a secret with information not getting to the person in the pew and some are assuming they aren't “qualified” to take a course. New or stronger marketing is needed. The planning team is always open to new If you have a need or have an interest in offering a course, please contact me.
- Coaching -- We have a growing number of ELCA certified coaches in the synod who are good coaches and really like coaching. We are in a position to launch the synod coaching program. By the time we hit Synod Assembly we will have a coaching system in place. On a personal note, I have been coaching a first call pastor through the Churchwide young adult coaching program and coaching in various ways in the synod.
- Nominating --- The role of Synod Council and the Nominating Committee is a concern. Synod staff cannot carry the key responsibility for the nominating process – it is not appropriate as it could be viewed as a conflict of interest.
- Candidacy – Pastor Greg Berger is now serving (March 1) in the role of staff liaison for Candidacy Committee. This links candidacy, mobility, and the Region 4 First Call process. Staff liaison role includes tracking inquiries, supporting the committee and chair, securing supervisors for TEEM, navigating connections with the seminary and the various programs for rostered minister candidates, and working with Morgan on the paperwork side of things. I will miss the conversations with candidates and hearing the stories of ah-ha moments and growth. The transfer is completed and thanks extended.
- Word & Service Ministers ... Pastor Heidi Wallace will be including connections with Word & Service Ministers (Deacons) with the work she is doing with pastoral care and cluster connections. Deacons are often left out of text studies and other cluster happenings, so I have been meeting with them on a regular basis to extend support and encourage networking. Deacons have been notified of the staff change. I will continue to serve as a deacon mentor through Churchwide and engage in other Churchwide and Region 4 deacon networking.
- Sow the Seeds & Ambassador Program ... Lisa Kramme had been working with both programs. Both were teetering due to a lack of energy and interest. Both have been laid to rest for now. Individuals have been notified.
- How, Then, Will Lead? ... This winter has destroyed our winter-spring session of How Then Will I Lead (HTWIL) We need a minimum of 12 participants to make the curriculum work and 4 sessions in a row so we can link the components effectively. We got snowed out January and February so we are starting over in the fall. Registration is on the website and new participants are invited to join Cohort #5.
- Raising Leaders ... Some of you may remember Operation IDEA and God's IDEA. Both used the acronym IDEA – Invite, Discern, Excite and Act to give intentionality to raising leaders for Christ's church. Jason Gerdes - NLOM and Jon Fredricks – NeLCM are working with me to develop a 3-way partnership to activate and hone our efforts on raising leaders. Conversations are amazing and we have all three said we leave fired up! Ideas include curriculum development for local leaders to integrate in their programs (confirmation), retreats and workshops, and resource sharing. Goal is to have a teaser to share at Synod Assembly.

### Leadership Development:

The conversations related to leadership are overwhelming on the plus and minus sides of the spectrum. I wander and ponder with the Leadership Team, a think tank that has been exploring the leadership skills and aptitude of pastors, deacons, and PMAs together for 4+ years. We generated this definition: “a leader is one who defines reality (Max DePree), and one who knows how to listen. A leader is one who recognizes gifts and strengths and creates the environment to grow into these gifts and strengths for self and others. Within a faith perspective, leadership is related to stewardship and discipleship, and leadership development is related to faith formation. As we grow into our strengths and passions, we grow deeper as a disciple with a sense of call and purpose as part of God's work.”

On the plus side we have:

- Many strong, faith-filled leaders who engage with servant hearts, theological grounding and professional skills as they support the congregation, community and other church leaders in the area

- More leaders participating in learning opportunities through synod, seminaries, and other ministries
- A willingness to experiment providing a learning environment that opens the door to move past tweaking to renovating our expectations and systems to ground us in discipleship
- An openness to partnerships and inviting others to utilize their gifts and resources – a new definition of stewardship is emerging
- Increased levels of vulnerability – naming fears, the lack of skills, worries and need for help.

We spent considerable time discussing key areas of concern:

- Lack of self-identity resulting in unprofessional communication, behavior, and relationships (key areas addressed in “How Then Will I Lead?”)
- Lack of accountability, unclear expectations across the board in the congregation and messy boundaries
- A “confirmation graduate” attitude vs a lifelong learning mindset and utilization of continuing education time and dollars
- The inability to engage in hard conversations, engage in discernment, articulate congregational vocation, cast a vision, and walk together in the wilderness
- Not equipped to do the work in the changing dynamics of our culture and societal demands
- Ongoing disappointment, frustration and hurts experienced by leaders which results in being stuck in a bad place and others are paying a price.
- Lost sense of spiritual grounding – sabbath, personal devotions and prayer time

Action Steps articulated by the Leadership Team:

1. Evaluation and honest assessment of current programs within the synod designed to support leaders including but not limited to cluster structure, synod wide gatherings and synod staff responsibilities.
2. Articulation of the role of the bishop in defining expectations and accountability moving us to a new understanding of leadership for pastors, deacons, PMAs and key congregational leadership including council leaders.
3. A shift in curriculum for the Synod’s First Call program based on feedback from current/participants.
4. An out of the box focus on clergy longevity to encourage growth and provide support for 3+year leaders to help them imagine and live into congregational longevity by retooling at the point in time when the trust and contextual understanding allows the congregation to address vocation, vitality and creative Spirit-led change.
5. Engage retired leaders (particularly pastors) as mentors, cheerleaders and prayers allowing them to use their gifts while supporting those coming up through the ranks.

**Leadership attributes as defined by the Leadership Team:**

RELATIONAL	CORE VALUES	VISION	GROUNDING	SKILLS/ABILITIES
Open	Courage	Direction	Faith/faith focused	Patiently impatient
Communicator	Integrity	Imaginative	Faith practices	Mercifully unkind
Contextually articulate	Sense of humor	Purpose/sense of purpose	Learner	Creative
Listener	Humble	Strategic	Servant	Competent
Follower	Loyal	Willingness to change and/or experiment	Dependable	Knowledgeable
Accompaniment	Caring	Sees the not so obvious/notices	Responsible	Flexible
Individualization	Supportive	Imagines beyond		Adaptive
Connective		Patiently impatient		Ability to organize
Collaborative				Critical thinker
Mercifully unkind				Summarizer
Dependable				Intuitive- other’s feelings, honors ideas of others, sees potential of others, awareness
				Follows through- dependable & responsible

Greetings Synod Council!

Happy New Year! I hope that your Lenten walks are off to a good start. I am looking forward to joining you for our next synod council meeting online. In preparation for the next meeting, here's a brief synopsis of some of the things I am working and focused on right now:

***Vitality Initiative for Congregations***

I like to ask others when out in congregations where they have seen God at work or where they have sensed God's movement and presence. For me, my current first answer to that question has to be through the Vitality Initiative. To say I'm overjoyed with the Spirit's movement through the Vitality Initiative is an understatement. Words fail to express just what is emerging among the eight congregations who have journeyed through the first cohort together. Culture change. Discerned congregational vocations. Deeper answers continue to emerge among these congregations to the questions: Who are we? Who are our neighbors? What might God be inviting? During the session on Sunday March 5<sup>th</sup>, the teams from Holy Trinity Lutheran (Sidney); Faith Lutheran (Seward); American Lutheran (Lincoln); St. Andrew's Lutheran (Lincoln); Messiah Lutheran (Ralston); St. Michael Lutheran (Omaha); St. Matthew's Lutheran (Omaha); and Immanuel Lutheran (Bellevue) will gather to share a bit of their stories of where they began this journey at and where they are now. This will conclude the more regular monthly cohort sessions that have been frequent and nearly consistent for the past 18 months. There will be two upcoming optional cohort sessions to continue the work with congregational coaches on Sunday April 30<sup>th</sup>, and Sunday August 20<sup>th</sup> which will serve as a celebration of two years together in this work.

I highly encourage you to check out some of the videos and resources developed through this process, on the Vitality Initiative Basecamp. If for some reason you do not have access to it, please let me know so that I can help you see and witness some of the amazing things I have had the privilege of seeing, along with the whole Vitality Steering Team (Deacon Sunni Richardson, Pastor Sarah Cordray, and myself) and cadre of congregational coaches. It is anticipated that learnings and findings from the first cohort will be shared at synod assembly for the whole synod, and these learnings will help shape some conversation with our assembly keynote presenter, Pastor Maristela Freiberg, my colleague DEM from the New Jersey Synod.

Applications are now being accepted for Cohort #2 of the Nebraska Synod's Vitality Initiative for Congregations. They are due May 1, 2023, for a cohort start in in September 2023. If you know of a congregation that would be a good fit for the initiative, please encourage them to have conversation with me or other members of the steering team, and to apply soon.

***Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM) Responsibilities and Updates***

I continue to regularly attend the weekly DEM meetings over Zoom following staff meetings on Tuesday mornings. I look forward to participating in the upcoming combined DEM and A2B Gathering scheduled for March 20-23, 2023, in Minneapolis along with Pastors Greg, Heidi, and Kristen. I'm also looking forward to the next Region 4 DEM Gathering scheduled for June 12-14, 2023, in Tulsa, Oklahoma; and the 2023 DEM Gathering in Chicago in October. These meetings and gatherings are opportunities to learn from each other, and opportunities to work to strengthen relationships and connections between the three expressions of the church and our shared ministry we're all a part of. This past Sunday (February 26<sup>th</sup>), I had the privilege of crossing the Missouri to attend the ordination and installation of Deacon Eric Haitz, who has been called to be the Western Iowa Synod DEM. I'm excited to welcome him as a DEM colleague, but also as one of at least now five Deacons (including me) serving as DEMs across the ELCA. No doubt this will spur more partnership opportunities between our two synods, and I'm excited for these possibilities for collaboration, experimentation, and resourcing.

## ***Growing Disciples and Strengthening Stewards***

### ***Building a Culture of Generosity***

The Nebraska Synod participated in a pilot cohort in 2022 with more than twenty other ELCA synods designed to support congregational stewardship and giving through a program called “Building a Culture of Generosity,” by Gronlund Sayther Brunkow (GSB). We are currently in the evaluation stage of what has emerged through this experience, but it seems clear that those congregations who really dove in and invested their time and energy are seeing positive benefits both among engagement among and within the congregation, but also a noticeable increase in financial participation, intent, and giving. I am especially overjoyed with what I have seen emerge among the congregations of Kountze Memorial Lutheran (Omaha) and Our Savior Lutheran (Lincoln) through this process. There were a handful of other congregations who journeyed through this process with mixed results, but I did hear additional positive feedback related to one of the resource books called *Abundance* by Pastor Mike Ward that helped guide and shape this effort. There will be more pilot cohort opportunities in the year ahead for this effort, and I look forward to discerning further participation in this effort among the congregations of this synod.

### ***Walking with God’s People and Visiting Congregations & Key Leaders***

I am fairly scheduled for visits through April, but after April my schedule is still mostly open for the year ahead visits wise. Collectively as a synod staff, we still are working to discern our visit and presence priorities for showing up among the congregations of the synod this year. That discernment will help shape where I visit over the year(s) ahead. Regardless, I am actively scheduling visits as able too. In addition to being present for Stewardship, Mission, Innovation and DEM related responsibilities, I am prioritizing visiting active participants in the Vitality Initiative to gain on-the-ground feedback regarding the process, learning, and outcomes. I am grateful and glad to be able to serve in this way, and as usual almost all congregational visits are a source of great joy and hope for me and my ministry. If you or someone you know would like to schedule me for a visit, please let me know. (Note, I try to stay present in my family’s congregation where my wife is the pastor so I’m on the road no more than twice a month generally.)

#### ***Recent Visits since last report:***

- Sunday January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023- American Lutheran, Lincoln- I led worship, preached, and led a conversation about vitality and what God’ might be inviting next for the congregation, as part of a visit related to the congregation’s participation in the Vitality Initiative.
- Sunday February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023- Messiah Lutheran, Ralston- I preached, and joined a conversation with the congregation’s vitality team over lunch processing where they have been and wondering about where God might be leading next, as part of a visit related to the congregation’s participation in the Vitality Initiative.
- Sunday February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023- St. Andrew’s Lutheran, Lincoln- I preached and joined conversation after worship, as part of a visit related to the congregation’s participation in the Vitality Initiative.
- Sunday February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023- St. John Lutheran, Council Bluffs- I joined the assembled rostered ministers for the ordination and installation service of Deacon Eric Haitz, called to serve as my colleague DEM of the Western Iowa Synod.

#### ***Upcoming and Potential Upcoming Visits:***

- Wednesday March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023- Messiah Lutheran, Grand Island- I have been invited by Pastor Steven Peeler to join worship and share a message about mission share, being church together, benevolence, and more. I am also excited to witness a bit of the new emerging ministry the congregation is preparing to help launch related to Latinx/Latino ministry in the Grand Island area with the partnership of Pastor Ricardo Riqueza.
- Sunday April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023- Spirit of Grace Lutheran, Holdrege- I will be preaching and leading worship as part of a day focused on the celebration of lay leaders and volunteers, affirming their gifts, and helping the whole congregation think about its shared ministry together.
- Sunday April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023- St. John’s Lutheran, Beatrice- I will be preaching on stewardship and mission as part of the congregation’s “Together for Joy” campaign and ministry focus for the year ahead.

- Sunday April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023- The Lutheran Center, Lincoln- I will be preaching and assisting in worship.
- Sunday October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023- Trinity Lutheran, Hildreth- I will be preaching on stewardship, and mission, likely as part of the congregation's Fall or Harvest Festival.
- Potential Visits that have been discussed tentatively but are not yet scheduled include: First Lutheran in Avoca; Immanuel Lutheran in Bellevue; St. Michael Lutheran in Omaha; St. Matthew Lutheran in Omaha; Faith Lutheran in Seward; Holy Trinity Lutheran in Sidney; Resurrection Lutheran in Gretna; St. John's Lutheran in Bennington; First Lutheran in Nebraska City; St. Peter Lutheran in Bassett; Bethany Lutheran in Axtell; and St. John Lutheran in Atkinson.  
*Visits that were postponed and need to be rescheduled:*
- First Lutheran in Wilber and Trinity Lutheran in DeWitt; St. Timothy's Lutheran in Omaha; and Peace Lutheran in Plymouth.

### **General Updates**

- **Assembly Planning Team-** It's a joy for me to be on the planning team again this year, and I'm so excited for the theme "Go And..." As part of this, I'm looking forward to inviting my DEM colleague Pastor Maristela Freiberg from the New Jersey Synod to be with us for assembly this year. I'm also grateful to be relating and serving alongside the Reference and Counsel Committee, considering any resolutions and memorials that may be brought forward for the assembly's consideration this year.
- **Communications Team-** It has been great to welcome Laurel Berry on to staff our new Communications Manager, and I am grateful to continue to help and serve as part of the synod staff's communications team.
- **Continuing Education Opportunities-** As I mentioned in previous reports, I am a trained *ELCA Level 1 Coach*. To stay current as a coach I participate in regular coaching triads with other coaches to practice coaching and am currently coaching one congregational team in the synod as well as at least one other rostered minister. In addition to seeking out continued coaching education, in the year ahead for continuing education I am hoping/planning: to attend the Rostered Ministers Gathering with my wife Allison in July, to participate (either online or in person) in the joint PCUSA/ELCA Stewardship Kaleidoscope to be held in Minneapolis in September, and of course Re:Formation in October. I also would like to be more intentional in plowing through my reading piles this year.
- **Mission Share-** Mission Share is down year over year, as you can see in the information provided by Dan. It appears that it will be going down further this year based on mission share intent forms for 2023 that have been received so far from congregations. This is largely due to a small group of larger congregations who are having to make some very large cuts this year. That said, smaller and rural congregations are more than pulling their weight in mission share for the year ahead, with many holding steady or even increasing their intents slightly. I give thanks for them and for all the faithful congregations who continue to support the work of the whole church in this and so many other ways. This trend though does mean we continue to need to innovate, experiment, and adjust accordingly as we strive to be responsive and good partners, while also serving as good stewards with integrity and efficiency.
- **The Nebraska Synod 4G Network: Growing God's Generous Generations-** The 4G Network continues to provide resources and experiences related to cross+generational ministry, stewardship, faith formation, and discipleship. The team met most recently on March 1<sup>st</sup> and is currently meeting about once per month. The team is sharing great resources for the seasons of Lent, Easter, and Pentecost/summer currently, and in discernment about what might be of further use and need in the months to come. It's also good to note that this effort has now expanded beyond the borders of the Nebraska Synod, and now also includes ministry leaders currently serving in the South Dakota Synod and Western Iowa Synod.
- **Outreach Table-** The Outreach Table met most recently on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and is scheduled to meet again next on Thursday March 30<sup>th</sup> at 3pm. The Table is currently engaged in much discussion about what the needs are now related the ever-evolving understanding of my role, the discoveries related to the vitality

initiative, and all the many mission and ministry related questions that have emerged over the past couple of years and those that are still emerging related to what God might be inviting next? Like many synod teams right now, the Outreach Table needs a few new members. If you are interested in joining as a liaison from synod council or know of a lay person, PMA, or deacon, who might be interested in serving on the table, we are looking for a few new people to add to the table. Please let me know.

- **Stewardship Table-** The Stewardship Table met most recently on February 23<sup>rd</sup> and is scheduled to meet again next on May 4<sup>th</sup>. The table has had some turnover with new members recently which has brought good energy and new questions and ideas for discussion related to the needs of the synod. We have had particularly rich conversations recently about what we might be learning given engagement (or lack thereof) in certain congregations among laity, and discoveries and trends related to mission share participation in different sized congregations. Like the Outreach Table detailed above, the Stewardship Table needs a few new members. If you are interested in joining as a liaison from synod council or know a lay person, PMA, deacon, or pastor who might be interested in serving on the table, we are looking for a few new people to add to the table. I am also continuing to work to ensure a relationship with the 4G Network.

If you have any questions, ideas, or would like to talk, please reach out to me anytime. Thank you again for your leadership and ministry as part of Synod Council.

God's blessings and peace,

Deacon Timothy Siburg

Director for Mission, Innovation and Stewardship (DEM Designate)

Office: 402.896.5311

Cell: 360.536.1963

[timothy@nebraskasynod.org](mailto:timothy@nebraskasynod.org)

Synod Council Report  
Assistant to the Bishop: Rev. Kristen Van Stee  
March 3, 2023

Congregations of the Northeast in Transition:

- Thabor in Wausa- PMA Dick Bloomquist serving as Transitional Minister; seeking candidates
- St. Luke in Stanton- PMA Nancy Jacobs serving as Transitional Minister; MSP done; in conversation with local UCC congregation
- St. John in Randolph- PMA Dwight Brummels serving as half-time Transitional; having conversation with neighboring congregations about shared ministry
- Salem in Wakefield- Pr. Ernesto Medina serving as TM; seeking candidates
- Faiths United Parish in Niobrara- Transitional Minister TBD; getting by on pulpit supply; working with LeaderWise for parish discernment
- First Lutheran in South Sioux City- Transitional Minister Pr. David Halaas (very part-time); getting by with pulpit supply
- Immanuel in Coleridge- pulpit supply; Pr. Marilyn Hasemann serving as Transitional Minister; in conversation with St. John Randolph
- Salem in Ponca- Transitional Minister needed; lay ministry and pulpit supply
- Christ Lutheran Wisner and UMC Wisner- UMC Pr. Chuck Rager part-time pulpit supply; UMC ministry appointment in process

Narrative Report:

Blessings to you all during this holy season of Lent! The mobility staff continue to live into this time of transition as we work to re-organize how we approach this important work. To that end, we are trying to be more collaborative and less geographically restricted. So while I continue to serve as the main contact person for the congregations in northeast Nebraska, Pr. Greg, Pr. Heidi, and I meet at least once a week to discuss our work and hand-off responsibilities as needed.

My contribution to the whole group is that I have taken charge of organizing our information in data sheets, combing through the ELCA database for potential candidates for call, and organizing our online orientations for congregations in transition. While I still am going out and making in-person visits as needed, I am thinking carefully about when something calls for a visit and when I can encourage a leader or congregation to meet with me over zoom. The time and mileage that in-person visits require balanced against our total staff people-power and funds available mean that we can't afford to drive everywhere for every issue.

Lent is a season of discernment as we listen carefully to the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to us in the wilderness. At the moment, I sense that the Spirit is inviting all our leaders and congregations to consider uncomfortable choices for their future together. With the clergy shortage and lower church attendance numbers causing real distress across the synod, I believe that more and more of our congregations will be forced to consider merging, yoking, selling their buildings, reorganizing, and other difficult choices...if they wish to continue as a congregation of disciples committed to the Gospel. My goal is to try to be a gentle, yet firm, guide to our

people, accompanying them through this difficult season of death and resurrection. I am confident that Christ's universal church will continue...but I also believe that in the process of living into that future, many of our congregations will no longer be able to do so as the comfortable and familiar family chapels they have been in the past.

Duties performed since November 2022

- In person visits with leadership of congregations for various concerns (Stanton, Coleridge, Randolph, Pender, Niobrara). Online visits with leaders of congregations (Ponca, First in South Sioux)
- Co-presided at a service of Holy Closure for St. Peter Lutheran Church in Pilger
- Many phone calls with individual pastors/leaders of the northeast
- Phone calls with lay members of the northeast
- Regular synod staff meetings and mobility team meetings
- Pulpit supply duties including help with Holy Communion coverage, preaching, etc.
- Shared ministry meetings with congregations and leaders
- Supervising PMAs serving in the northeast
- Attended ordination/installation of Paul Ozbun
- Re-organizing Mobility data sheets
- Organizing/leading online mobility process orientations for congregations in transition

Peace+

Pastor Kristen E. Van Stee



# MINUTES

**Nebraska Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Synod Council Minutes  
November 19, 2022  
DRAFT**

**Voting Members present:**

Tanny Akerson	Sharon Bohling	Pr. Sandra Braasch	Pr. Sarah Cordray
Gwen Edwards	Dan Friedlund	Blaine Jelden	Bp. Scott Johnson
Pr. Nathan Metzger	Gary Overfield	Pr. Travis Panning	Nathan Peterson
Sarah Purcell	Jim Yankech		

**Staff and Organizational Presidents present:**

Pr. Greg Berger	Pr. Juliet Focken	Stephanie Lusinski	Pr. Jon Mapa
Dn. Timothy Siburg	Dn. Sunni Richardson	Morgan Tranmer	Pr. Heidi Wallace

**Also Present** (briefly for a presentation):

Ramona Edwards

**Absent:**

Pr. Mariam Blair	Nancy Hinrichs	Pr. Cara Jensen	Elysia McGill
Joel Pedersen	Pr. Steven Peeler	R LaDene Rutt	
Pr. Kristen Van Stee	Anna Woods		

Bishop Scott Johnson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

The roll was called and a quorum was present.

MOVED and SECONDED to approve the agenda as presented and revised. APPROVED.

MOVED and SECONDED to approve the minutes of September 16, 2022, as amended. APPROVED.

Bp. Johnson led the group in a spiritual practice. Asking everyone “what are you thankful for”?

**Bishop’s Report:** A written report was available.

Bishop Scott was asked how his 2½ months have gone so forth. He shared his experience and next coming months for the staff.

### SC22.11.32: ADDITIONS TO BISHOP'S REPORT

**RECOMMENDED:** That the following rostered persons be approved for On Leave From Call status for one year:

Name	Date
Anna Rudberg Speiser	11/6/21 (Family Leave-6 yrs), 2022 2nd yr
Breen Sipes	12/1/20, 2021 2nd yr (Family Leave-6 yrs), 2022 3rd yr
Samantha Nichols	12/19/20, 2021 2nd yr. 2022 3rd yr (final)
Chris Alexander	1/1/21, 2022 2nd yr, 2023 3rd yr (final)
Juliet Focken	1/1/23 (study leave-6yrs)
Susan Claire Meyer	1/15/21, 2022 2nd yr, 2023 3rd yr (final)
Rob Garton	2/15/21, 2022 2nd yr, 2023 3rd yr (final)

**RECOMMENDED:** That the following rostered persons be approved for transfer to the retired roster:

Scott Frederickson 11/2/2022

**RECOMMENDED:** That the existing synod council call to the following rostered person be renewed:

Pr. Peter Jark-Swain to serve as Priest-in-Charge at Trinity Episcopal, Norfolk, three-year renewable call, effective December 3, 2022.

**RECOMMENDED:** That a synod council call be extended to the following rostered persons:

Pr. Amalia Spruth-Janssen, to serve Immanuel, The Landing, Lincoln, as Pastor, effective October 31, 2022.

Pr. Suzanne How, to serve American Lutheran, Ashland as 6-month Intentional Transitional Minister effective October 2, 2022.

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

### SC22.11.33: EN BLOC

#### 1. CONGREGATIONS

**RECOMMENDED:** That the constitution for Bethany Lutheran Church, Ord, be approved.

That the constitution for Immanuel Lutheran, Omaha, be approved.

#### 2. COMMITTEES

**RECOMMENDED:**

### 3. AGENCIES & INSTITUTIONS

#### RECOMMENDED:

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

**Staff Reports:** Written reports were available.

Bishop Scott reported **Pr. Juliet Focken** and **Pr. Jon Mapa** prepared their final reports as staff members and thanked them for this time of service to this organization. Both shared some words.

**Dn. Sunni Richardson** and **Dn. Timothy Siburg** indicated no need for verbal reports. **Pr. Greg Berger** shared some words regarding his first couple of weeks. **Bp. Scott Johnson** reported there are sixty-seven rostered openings in Nebraska churches. Reported they are interviewing for a new director of communications, there is a large pool of candidates.

#### **Reports of Officers and Organizations**

##### **Vice President's Report:**

**Secretary's Report:** Gwen Edwards reported the executive committee is still working synod council vacancies.

**Treasurer's Report:** Dan Friedlund reported FY 2022 had a deficient through August of \$25K. The "150 Campaign" exceeded \$150K. The Bishop Maas Leadership exceeded \$40K. 97.5% of congregations participated in Mission Share. Fall Campaign will be Nebraska Mission Field, a discussion was held. Nebraska Synod is one of the synods leading Mission Share to the ELCA.

**Nebraska Synod Women's Organization:** Gwen Edwards reported the women recently held their Autumn Renewal and there was 75+ ladies in attendance, they are ready to be back in-person. The draw to the event was the new Bishop leading the Bible study and the main speaker from Oklahoma, who many women already knew from their travels to Triennial Gatherings. Next event is Winter Retreat, and Bp. Scott is leading the Bible study.

**Seeking the Spirit Within Report** – Ramona Edwards, Advisory Board Member, shared the advisory board's membership has changed. There have been conversations with four interested persons for director. The full advisory board interviewed one candidate, Rev. David Pinkston, an offer was made in early October, he begins March 1, 2023. Plans deficient will shift to 2023 and 2024 with the new business plan being displayed.

**SC22.11.34 RECOMMENDED:** To approve the following rostered synod staff housing allowance requests, effective January 1, 2023, until changed by future action of the Synod Council.

Gok Kuany Badeng	\$20,000
Greg Berger	\$24,000
Robert Corum	\$50,000
Kristin Van Stee	\$ 6,000
Omar Sadi Vila	\$12,060
William Voss	\$36,400
Heidi Wallace	\$18,000

SPONSOR: Executive Committee

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

**SC22.11.35 RECOMMENDED:** That Eide Bailly be appointed auditors of the Nebraska Synod ELCA for the Year Ending January 31, 2023 (FY2022).

SPONSOR: Dan Friedlund on behalf of the Synod Audit Committee

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

**SC22.11.36 RECOMMENDED:** To extend a Synod Council call to Rev. Greg Berger to serve as Assistant to the Bishop

SPONSOR: Bishop Scott Alan Johnson

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

**SC22.11.37 RECOMMENDED:** To extend a Synod Council call to Rev. Heidi Wallace to serve as Assistant to the Bishop

SPONSOR: Bishop Scott Alan Johnson

MOVED – SECONDED – APPROVED

**SC22.11.38 RECOMMENDED:** To authorize changes to the authorized signers on the Synod's Wells Fargo checking account from Diane Harpster, Juliet Focken and Dan Friedlund to Timothy Siburg, Greg Berger and Dan Friedlund.

SPONSOR: Dan Friedlund on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee

MOVED – SECONDED          Discussion Held          APPROVED

**SC22.11.39 RECOMMENDED:** Pursuant to Section \*C.9.07, the Synod Council of the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America does hereby authorize Rev. Suzanne How to be available for a call as Pastor at American Lutheran Church in Ashland, Nebraska, should the congregation seek to consider her for a call following the conclusion of her term as interim pastor there.

SPONSOR: Bishop Scott Alan Johnson

MOVED – SECONDED          Discussion Held          APPROVED

**SC22.11.40 RECOMMENDED:** For Synod Council to invite interested persons, particularly the Synod Council justice committees and working groups to join the March 2023 Synod Council meeting for diversity training led by the organization INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES.

SPONSOR: Executive Committee

Discussion Held          APPROVED

#### **Old Business:**

- The executive committee reported the executive committee needed to be restructured as the ratio between lay persons and rostered leaders was not correct. Two ballots were casts: one for one additional roster leader between Pr. Nathan and Pr. Cara and the other for one additional lay person. Pr. Nathan Metzger and Tanny Akerson were elected.

- Discussion was held regarding upcoming Synod Council meetings dates and what to do in the future. It was noted the 2023 dates need to be set as soon as possible as other groups within the Synod set their dates around the Synod Council meetings.

**New Business:**

**Open Comments/Feedback:**

- There was a question regarding Faith Formation and going forward.
- Those speaking need to sit closer to the camera/mic so those online can hear.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen Edwards  
Secretary

## MOTIONS

### MOTION 1 Nebraska Synod Council

MEETING DATE: March 18, 2023

SUBJECT: Authorizing **Mission Field Nebraska** ministries of the Nebraska Synod

PROPOSED ACTION: to authorize the following as **Mission Field Nebraska** ministries through March 2024:

#### **Mission Field Nebraska**

Followers of Christ Prison Ministry, Lincoln  
Iglesia Luterana San Andres, Omaha  
Lakota Lutheran Center and Chapel, Scottsbluff  
Nile Lutheran Chapel, Omaha  
Seeking the Spirit Within, Statewide  
Sudanese Messiah Worshipping Community, Ralston

#### **Mission Field Nebraska Affiliates**

Barnabas Community, Lincoln  
Bridges to Hope, Lincoln  
Lutheran Service Corp, Omaha  
Serving Hands of Hope Foundation, Omaha

BACKGROUND: **Mission Field Nebraska** ministries were designated under guidelines adopted at the September 11, 2015 Synod Council meeting. Similar to Synod Authorized Worshiping Communities (SAWCs), which are to be reauthorized annually by Assembly action, these ministries are to be authorized annually in March by the Nebraska Synod Council. *Mission Field Nebraska* ministries are ministries directly funded in whole or in part by the Nebraska Synod and whose ministry is dependent on the continuing authorization of the Synod Council. *Mission Field Nebraska Affiliate* ministries are ministries whose mission aligns with that of the Nebraska Synod, are independently funded and operate independently of the Synod, and whose ministry is recognized as an Affiliate by action of the Synod Council.

SPONSORED BY: Bishop Scott Alan Johnson

**MOTION 2**  
**Nebraska Synod Council**

MEETING DATE: March 18, 2023

SUBJECT: Rules of Procedure for 2023 Nebraska Synod Assembly

PROPOSED ACTION: That the following Rules of Procedure for the 2023 Nebraska Synod Assembly be recommended to the Synod Assembly.

**2023 NEBRASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

**Proposed Rules**

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 4:00 p.m. Thursday, June 2, 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 4:00 p.m. Thursday, June 2. 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, except by the consent of the Assembly.

8. The ELCA churchwide representative to the Assembly will chair all portions of the business sessions that are related to the Bishop's election.

BACKGROUND: Each year, the rules governing procedure at the Synod Assembly are offered as a resolution by the Synod Council during the Assembly's first business session. The proposed set of rules in this motion would, upon approval by the Synod Council, become that proposed resolution.

SPONSORED BY: Bishop Scott Alan Johnson, on behalf of the Synod Assembly Planning Team



**MOTION 3**  
**Nebraska Synod Council**

MEETING DATE: March 18, 2023

SUBJECT: Waiver of provision C.9.07 relative to transitional/interim contract and availability for call for the Vicar Janet Anderson

PROPOSED ACTION: Pursuant to Section \*C.9.07, the Synod Council of the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America does hereby authorize Vicar Janet Anderson to be available for a call as Pastor at Christ Lutheran Church in Louisville, Nebraska, should the congregation seek to consider her for a call following the conclusion of her term as interim vicar there.

BACKGROUND: C.9.07 prohibits the call of a transition/interim pastor to a congregation following transition/interim service, unless a waiver is granted by the Synod Council. Vicar Anderson's experience prior to transitional service suggests she could potentially be a candidate, and this request is intended to keep that option available. The congregation will conduct a normal call process, and her candidacy is not presumed.

SPONSORED BY: Bishop Scott Alan Johnson

**MOTION 4**  
**Nebraska Synod Council**

MEETING DATE: March 18, 2023

SUBJECT: Motion to accept the Nebraska Synod FY2024 proposed operating budget and recommend to the Synod Assembly.

PROPOSED ACTION: That the Synod Council accept the FY2024 (year ending January 31, 2025) proposed operating budget as presented by the Budget and Finance Committee, and to recommend the proposed budget to the Synod Assembly for approval.

BACKGROUND: The proposed budget for FY2024 has been prepared and approved by the Synod Budget and Finance Committee and has been presented to the Synod Council for acceptance and recommendation to the Synod Assembly for approval.

SPONSORED BY: Dan Friedlund on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee

**MOTION 5**  
**Nebraska Synod Council**

MEETING DATE: March 18, 2023

SUBJECT: Transfers of funds to support Mission Field Nebraska ministries of the Synod

PROPOSED ACTION: To approve the transfer of funds to support Mission Field Nebraska ministries of the Synod for FY2022 (year ended January 31, 2023):

- To transfer an additional \$15,000 from the Director of Evangelical Ministries (DEM) Fund to support Mission Field Nebraska ministries,
- To transfer \$30,000 from the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign Fund to support Mission Field Nebraska ministries,
- To transfer \$20,000 from the Immanuel Vision Fund to support Mission Field Nebraska ministries, and
- To transfer \$10,000 from the Equity in Synod Properties Fund to support Mission Field Nebraska ministries.

BACKGROUND: During FY2022 (year ended January 31, 2023), the Synod expended funds in support of Mission Field Nebraska ministries which exceeded recurring income amounts. The recommended fund transfers noted above will be used to underwrite the deficits resulting from these ministries and activities in FY2022.

SPONSORED BY: Dan Friedlund for the Budget & Finance Committee

**MOTION 6**  
**Nebraska Synod Council**

**MEETING DATE:** March 18, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Recommendation of an increase in Bishop Scott Johnson's defined compensation effective February 1, 2023.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** Recommend to the Synod Council, a 3.5% increase in defined compensation for Bishop Scott Johnson for FY2023 starting on February 1, 2023.

**BACKGROUND:** The proposed 3.5% increase in Bishop Scott Johnson's defined compensation is within the policy approved by the Synod Council on March 19, 2022, to establish the new Bishop's initial compensation and establish guidelines for future compensation adjustments in ensuing periods (see attached). The increase is also consistent with the compensation increases for other Pastors on the Synod staff.

**SOURCE OF FUNDS:** 2023 Budget

**SPONSORED BY:** Executive Committee

**MOTION 7**  
**Nebraska Synod Council**

MEETING DATE: March 18, 2023

SUBJECT: Investment of funds with local financial institutions to increase return on investments.

PROPOSED ACTION: To allow the Budget and Finance Committee to transfer funds currently on deposit with the Mission Investment Fund (MIF) to local financial institutions in order to optimize the return on cash investments through the purchase of CD's or other money market instruments.

BACKGROUND: The Nebraska Synod has utilized MIF to purchase term and demand investments to create investment income for the Synod. While MIF has provided a reasonable alternative to investing cash assets in the past, their investment terms and rates are currently not competitive with local financial institutions, with the yield difference being significant. We ask that the Council authorize the Budget and Finance Committee to take the necessary action to invest funds in financial institutions that will provide competitive returns with minimal risk. The financial institutions to be utilized will be determined by the Treasurer, the Finance Committee chair and the Director of Finance and Administration. The authorized signers on the accounts will be the Treasurer Dan Friedlund, Rev. Heidi Wallace, Rev. Greg Berger or Deacon Timothy Siburg

SPONSORED BY: Dan Friedlund on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee

**MOTION 8**  
**Nebraska Synod Council**

MEETING DATE: March 18, 2023

SUBJECT: Motion to amend the FY2023 Assembly Approved Budget

PROPOSED ACTION: That the Synod Council adopt the FY2023 Amended Budget, as proposed.

BACKGROUND: The FY2023 operating budget was adopted by the Synod Assembly at its meeting on June 4, 2022. This Budget was based on the facts, circumstances and trends at that time and the assumptions appeared to be reasonable.

As a result of more current information, anticipated revenue and expenses for FY2023 have changed with a continued reduction in Mission Share revenue. The current financial projections for FY2023 reflect total revenue of \$2,933,900, including Mission Share of \$2,692,000. In addition, based on current facts and assumptions, Total Expenses will be less than the Assembly Approved Budget, with decreases in the broader Ministry Expenses as a result of the Mission Share decrease, and reductions in Salaries & Benefits as a result of staffing changes, reductions and timing. The result is a projected operating gain for FY2023 of \$25,055 versus an approved budgeted operating loss of (\$26,177). Therefore, an Amended Budget for FY2023 is recommended by the Synod Budget & Finance Committee for adoption by the Synod Council.

SPONSORED BY: Dan Friedlund on behalf of the Synod Budget and Finance Committee

**MOTION 9**  
**Nebraska Synod Council**

MEETING DATE: March 18, 2023

SUBJECT: Transfer FY2022 Net Operating Revenue to the Synod Contingency Fund

PROPOSED ACTION: To transfer the positive FY2022 (year ended January 31, 2023) net operating results, upon final determination, to the Synod Contingency Fund.

BACKGROUND: The final results of operations, before unrealized gains (losses) on investments and transfers, in the Nebraska Synod's Statement of Activities for the Operating Fund is expected to reflect a net operating surplus for FY2022 (year ended January 31, 2023). Upon final determination, this positive amount would be transferred to the Synod Contingency Fund to provide funding during future periods in which deficits occur or when other material unfunded needs arise. The current balance in the Synod Contingency Fund before this transfer is \$485,252.

SPONSORED BY: Dan Friedlund on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee

**MOTION 10**  
**Nebraska Synod Council**

MEETING DATE: March 18, 2023

SUBJECT: Release of Immanuel (Stateline), Wymore

PROPOSED ACTION: To release Immanuel Lutheran Church of Wymore, Nebraska, from the roster of congregations of the Nebraska Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

BACKGROUND: By overwhelming majorities at two congregational meetings held January 30, 2022 and June 5, 2022 (40 yes; 6-no to affiliate with LCMC) the congregation of Immanuel Lutheran in Wymore voted to leave the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to join another Lutheran body. Due to the congregation not accurately following their congregation's constitutional process, there is a constitutional requirement that the congregation be released by the Synod Council. There is no challenge to this release from members of the congregation who wished to remain affiliated with the ELCA.

SPONSORED BY: Gwen Edwards, Synod Council Secretary

**MOTION 11**  
**Nebraska Synod Council**

MEETING DATE: March 18, 2023

SUBJECT: Resolution 2023:1

PROPOSED ACTION: that the recommendation and rationale of the Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee pursuant to this resolution be approved.

BACKGROUND: The Resolutions, Reference and Counsel Committee have made the following recommendation: That Resolution 2023:1 be adopted by the 2023 Nebraska Synod Assembly. The committee suggests the Synod Council honor the request of the resolution sponsors, that this resolution not be considered for En Bloc inclusion, and thus be considered on its own before the whole of the assembly.

SPONSORED BY: Bishop Johnson on behalf of the Resolutions, Reference, and Counsel Committee

---

**RESOLUTION 2023:1**

How does this resolution enhance and forward the mission of the church and our synod?

- Unrecognized behavioral health issues among Rostered Ministers and Parish Ministry Associates create high levels of personal distress thus detracting from their capacity to minister. Adopting the guidelines that will be proposed by the committee will assist various people in the Synod to help with these issues. Having systems that will help in intervening with these issues early will have the impact of decreasing the amount of damage they do to the mission of the church. In some instances, earlier interventions will even save the individual's ministry.

What are the personnel implications within our synod - or Churchwide? Who will be responsible for implementation of the resolution?

- The same people who drafted this resolution are eager to serve in implementing it by developing the guidelines described in the resolution. Getting oriented and educated to make use of these guidelines would have a cost in terms of staff time. We would expect to see gains in efficiency among Synod staff and others who would be helped by following the proposed guidelines. We would also anticipate cost savings as we become more proficient at helping Rostered Ministers and Parish Ministry Associates who are troubled by behavioral health issues.

What, if any, is the financial impact of this resolution on our synod budget? If expenditures are required, what are the sources of income anticipated to accomplish the purpose of the resolution?

- We do not foresee any change in a line item of the Synod's budget.

## THE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, we are people of God, and we seek to minister to one another with love and compassion; and

WHEREAS, Rostered Ministers and Parish Ministry Associates are human and therefore subject to behavioral health issues such as substance use disorders, other addictions, and mental health disorders; and

WHEREAS, the recent pandemic has created more stress in the professional work of Rostered Ministers and Parish Ministry Associates increasing their behavioral health issues; and

WHEREAS, most employers have policies or guidelines regarding the proper care of staff; and

WHEREAS, the Synod has not had any guidelines and therefore has been inconsistent in addressing the behavioral health issues among Rostered Ministers and Parish Ministry Associates;

now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Nebraska Synod in assembly direct the Bishop of the Nebraska Synod to appoint a committee to address the issue of Rostered Ministers and Parish Ministry Associates whose work is impaired by behavioral health issues; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this committee research guidelines currently used by other Synods and church bodies regarding Rostered Ministers and Parish Ministry Associates whose work is impaired by behavioral health issues; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this committee develop guidelines to address these issues; and be it further

RESOLVED, that there be various guidelines to guide anyone who is concerned re: the behavioral health of a rostered minister or Parish Ministry Associate. Specific guidelines would be developed for each of the following: Synod staff, colleagues of impaired rostered ministers, elected congregational leaders, congregational members and family members; and be it further

RESOLVED, that there be a guideline for interim Rostered Ministers and Parish Ministry Associates when they follow a ministry that has been damaged by behavioral health issues, and be it further

RESOLVED, that this committee recommend the guidelines above to Synod Council for adoption in the Nebraska Synod, and be it further

RESOLVED, that this committee recommend to the Synod Council an education or orientation process so that these guidelines can be implemented effectively at both the Synod and congregational level.

Submitted by:

Rev. Otto Schultz, Nebraska Synod Substance Abuse Resource Person



Rev. Glenn Schacht, Morning Star Lutheran Church  
Dr. Julie Taylor-Costello, Lutheran Family Services  
Rev. Gregory Berger

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Rev. Otto Schultz  
Our Saviour's Lutheran Church  
Lincoln, Nebraska  
ottoschultz@outlook.com  
402-770-1974

It is the recommendation of the Resolutions, Reference, and Counsel Committee that resolution 2023:1 be adopted. The committee suggests the Synod Council honor the request of the resolution sponsors, that this resolution not be considered for En Bloc inclusion, and thus be considered on its own before the whole of the assembly.

## **MATERIALS FOR REVIEW**

### **MOTION**

Nebraska Synod Council Executive Team

**SUBJECT:** To offer diversity training for the Synod Council, justice committees, working groups, and interested persons

**PROPOSED ACTION:** Amend the motion to state that the diversity training will take place as a pre-assembly workshop on Thursday, June 1 in Kearney, NE as a full-day training in order to make it more broadly available throughout the synod to any interested persons or synod groups.

**BACKGROUND:** The original motion states: Motion 7: Executive Committee moves that the Synod Council invites interested persons, particularly the Synod Council, justice committees and working groups, to join at the March 2023 Synod Council meeting for diversity training led by the organization Inclusive Communities.

**SPONSORED BY:** Bishop Scott Johnson

## **MOTION 10**

### **Nebraska Synod Council**

MEETING DATE: March 19, 2022

SUBJECT: Defined Compensation and Benefits for the New Bishop

PROPOSED ACTION: To approve the policy for determining the defined compensation and benefits for the new Bishop of the Nebraska Synod.

BACKGROUND: The Nebraska Synod (Synod) will be calling a new Bishop (Bishop) effective September 1, 2022. In an effort to be fair and equitable in establishing the level of defined compensation and benefits for the Bishop, the following policy will be followed in making this determination.

POLICY: Defined compensation shall include base salary, housing allowance (as determined by the Bishop and approved by the Synod Council) and Self Employment Compensation Act (SECA) payments. Defined compensation for the Bishop will be based on the highest of the following:

- Defined compensation of \$100,000 annually.
- Using the published “2022 Compensation Guidelines” table for Ministers of Word and Sacrament, defined compensation will be based on 115% of the sum of the “High” amounts presented in the table for the three components of defined compensation, based on the number of years of service, as defined.
- Defined compensation at the Bishop’s current call.

Annually, defined compensation will be adjusted to reflect a minimum increase of 2% or the product of the calculation in the second bullet above based on the updated Synod Compensation Guidelines for the applicable year.

Benefits for the Bishop will include 1) Portico Benefits in accordance with the Plan option selected by the Synod and the level of benefits elected by the Bishop, 2) a continuing education allowance of \$850 annually, 3) use of a Synod owned vehicle and mobile phone, 4) spousal travel and expenses for the ELCA Bishops’ Academy, 5) a sabbatical leave after four years as set forth in the Synod Employee Handbook, and 6) other applicable benefits set forth in the Synod Employee Handbook.

This policy may be amended from time-to-time by the Synod Council upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

SPONSORED BY: Dan Friedlund, Treasurer

## Tentative Agenda

**2023 Nebraska Synod Assembly**  
**June 2 – June 3, 2023**  
**Younes Conference Center, Kearney, NE**



### **Thursday, June 1, 2023**

4:00pm	Late Resolutions Due
--------	----------------------

### **Friday, June 2, 2023**

8:30am – 12:00pm	Registration
11:30pm – 1:00pm	Willing Witness Luncheon
1:00pm – 2:15pm	Opening Worship (with Communion)
2:15pm – 2:30pm	Welcome & Announcements
2:30pm – 3:30pm	Quorum, Agenda, Actions on En Bloc, Budget Report & Presentation, Proposed Resolutions
3:30pm – 4:00pm	Break Time
4:00pm – 5:00pm	Keynote – Pr. Maristela Freiberg
5:00pm – 5:10pm	Body Prayer / Movement
5:10pm – 6:00pm	Bishop's Report
6:00pm – 7:30pm	Dinner + Open Cash Bar

### **Saturday, June 3, 2023**

8:30am – 8:45am	Morning Devotion
8:45am – 9:00am	Welcome & Announcements
9:00am – 10:00am	Round 1 – Workshops & Ministry Fair
10:00am – 10:30am	Break
10:30am – 11:30am	Keynote – Pr. Maristela Freiberg
11:30am – 12:00pm	Acknowledgements
12:00pm – 1:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm – 2:00pm	Round 2 – Workshops & Ministry Fair
2:00pm – 3:00pm	ELCA Representative – Rev. Christopher Otten
3:00pm – 3:30pm	Vote on 2024 Budget, Late Resolutions
3:30pm – 4:00pm	Closing Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No Communion</li></ul>

## **Mission Field Nebraska**

### **Definitions and Guidelines**

The ministries of *Mission Field Nebraska* are independent ministries in relationship to the Nebraska Synod whose mission aligns with that of the Synod and who stand outside of a formal congregational, synod or churchwide structure and who have been so designated by the Synod Council. These ministries are identified within two types of ministries and are differentiated as follows:

*Mission Field Nebraska* ministries are ministries directly funded in whole or in part by the Nebraska Synod and whose ministry is dependent on the continuing authorization of the Synod Council. *Mission Field Nebraska Affiliate* ministries are ministries whose mission aligns with that of the Nebraska Synod, are independently funded and operate independently of the Synod, and whose ministry is recognized as an Affiliate by action of the Synod Council.

In an effort to clarify and standardize relationships between these ministries and the Nebraska Synod, the following Definitions and Guidelines are offered as the minimum requirements of a ministry being (or becoming) a *Mission Field Nebraska Ministry of the Nebraska Synod*.

**Relationship:** the ministry states in its organizational documents its Synod Council authorized relationship to the Nebraska Synod (i.e., whether it is a ministry founded and/or funded by the Synod, affiliated with one of its ministries or congregations, etc.)

**Representation:** the Nebraska Synod has representation on the governing body of the ministry—board, council, etc. —at least one of whom is approved by the Bishop or Synod Council.

**Accountability:** the ministry submits an annual report of financial and ministry activities to the Nebraska Synod Council. The ministry forwards financial review summaries to the Synod annually.

**Mission Interpretation:** the ministry and the Synod shall communicate one another's mission to their respective constituencies.

**Resource development:** the ministry may be authorized by Synod Council to receive financial support via the Nebraska Synod through designated offerings, *Mission Field Nebraska* offerings, and/or through direct financial support from the Synod.

**Memo of Understanding:** each ministry shall have a Memo of Understanding specific to its ministry and its relationship to the Nebraska Synod, approved by the ministry and the Synod Council. That Memo may be changed periodically as needed by mutual consent.

Revised and Approved by the Synod Council  
March 20, 2021

## **SYNOD ASSEMBLY VOICE & VOTE CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

### **MOTION 3 Nebraska Synod Council**

MEETING DATE: March 13, 2020

SUBJECT: Granting Assembly Voice and Vote to Full Communion Clergy serving as ministers of Nebraska Synod congregations

PROPOSED ACTION: to grant voice and vote at Nebraska Synod Assemblies to all rostered ministers of denominations with which the ELCA is in Full Communion who are serving as ministers of Nebraska Synod congregations. This permission shall be granted for each Assembly beginning in 2020 and until such time as this continuing resolution is amended or revoked.

BACKGROUND: as noted below, the ELCA Constitution permits synod assembly voice and vote privileges to be extended to clergy of Full Communion partners serving congregations of that synod. The Synod Council has this authority. There is no automatic process for such privileges being granted. Fr. Schlismann began his service at St. Luke in late 2016, Fr. Medina began his service at St. John in March 2019, and Pr. Hileman at St. John/St. Paul in July 2019.

8.62.14 A minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be granted the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation of this church, in accord with ELCA churchwide bylaw 8.62.12.

Currently, these ministers include: the Rev. Robert Schlismann and the Rev. Ernesto Medina of the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska, and the Rev. Kristine Hileman of the Presbyterian Church USA, serving as Pastors of St Luke Lutheran Church in Stanton, St. John Lutheran Church in Beatrice, and St John Church, Daykin/St Paul Lutheran Church, Gilead, Nebraska, respectively.

**MOTION 4**  
**Nebraska Synod Council**

MEETING DATE: March 13, 2020

SUBJECT: Granting Assembly Voice and Vote to persons serving as ministers of Nebraska Synod congregations in special circumstances

PROPOSED ACTION: to grant voice and vote at Nebraska Synod Assemblies to those persons who, by authorization of the Bishop of the Synod, are serving as ministers of Nebraska Synod congregations. This permission shall be granted for each Assembly beginning in 2020 and until such time as this continuing resolution is amended or revoked.

BACKGROUND: consistent with the intent of the Synod Constitution (S7.21.1) that congregations include in their voting member delegation those ministers by whom they are served, and with this Synod's constitutional provision to grant voice and vote to PMAs—that is, non-rostered persons authorized by the bishop—currently serving as ministers of congregations (S7.22.4), and in recognition of the increasing variety of ways by which congregations are being served by authorized ministers in special circumstances, this motion is intended to provide a consistent means by which such persons may be granted voice and vote at synod assembly. This is offered as a continuing resolution which would stand until amended or revoked.

Such persons may include but not be limited to: Candidates in the ELCA's Theological Education for Emerging Ministry (TEEM) program, Wartburg Seminary's Collaborative Learning (CL) program, similar programs of congregation-based pastoral formation in which an individual, with appropriate authorization, serves as a congregation's minister, or clergy from other denominations in the process of joining the ELCA roster.

†S7.21. The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:

1. All ministers of Word and Sacrament under call on the roster of this synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.
2. All ministers of Word and Service, under call, on the roster of this synod shall be voting members in the Synod Assembly, in addition to the voting membership of lay members of congregations provided in item †S7.21.c.

S7.22. In addition to those individuals listed in †S7.21, the following individuals shall serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with the provisions of †S7.21c and provided they are registered in attendance at the Synod Assembly:

.....

4. Parish ministry associates who have been authorized by the Bishop of the Nebraska Synod to serve a congregation in lieu of a rostered minister.

SPONSORED BY: Bishop Brian Maas

## ATTACHMENT

### CRITERIA FOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SYNOD AUTHORIZED WORSHIPING COMMUNITIES

a. The primary criteria for acknowledgment of such synod authorized worshiping communities, under the governing documents of this church, include agreement to:

- (1) Accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith of this church (Chapter 2 of the churchwide constitution);
- (2) Accept and adhere to the Statement of Purpose of this church (Chapter 4 of the churchwide constitution);
- (3) Be served by leadership appointed or called on an annual basis by the synod under the criteria of this church;
- (4) Be subject to the discipline [pattern of order] of this church;
- (5) Be evaluated annually by the synod to determine next year's status; and
- (6) Function under the corporation established through the guidance of the synod.

b. Other criteria for such synod authorized worshiping communities (hereafter known as "chapels," unless otherwise designated) include:

- . (1) Participatory worship for the chapel, consistent with Lutheran expectations, provided under the leadership of a pastor of this church or a licensed lay person;
- . (2) Ability to be a financially self-supporting ministry, unless other arrangements are made in accord with policies of the Division for Evangelical Outreach policies and Congregational Mission unit on developing ministries;
- . (3) Participation in benevolent ("mission support") giving to the synod and churchwide organization, with the expectation that 15 percent of the offerings of (2) such chapels will be provided to the respective synod as a sign of commitment to the overall ministry of this church;
- . (4) Commitment to evangelical outreach to unchurched persons within the area of the chapel;
- . (5) Authorization by the synod for a specified duration, generally for one year, subject to possible renewal following evaluation jointly by the synod and the Division for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit;
- . (6) Maintenance by the leadership appointed or called to serve the chapel of a listing of regular participants to be filed annually with the synod<sup>1</sup>;
- . (7) Proper recording of such pastoral acts as baptism (see item 4.b.1.); and
- . (8) If an authorized worship community is discontinuing, refer remaining participants to a regularly recognized congregation of this church for possible membership.



## **2024 COMPENSATION GUIDELINES & PARSONAGE GUIDELINES**

### **For Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service**

### **Nebraska Synod -- ELCA**

*The gifts he gave were that some would be . . . evangelists, some pastors, some teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-12)*

*This church affirms the universal priesthood of all its baptized members. In its function and its structure this church commits itself to the equipping and supporting of all its members for their ministries in the world and in this church. It is within this context of ministry that this church calls some of its baptized members for specific ministries in this church. (ELCA Constitution 7.11)*

#### **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, their years of experience and the hard work they perform as part of the ministry of this Church, knowing that Ministry is a calling that may require working up to six days a week. These guidelines should also apply to Ministers who may not be directly serving a congregation, but are serving in a capacity that is consistent with their education, responsibilities and years of experience as a Minister.

Compensation should be looked at in total, to include not only compensation paid directly to the Minister or through a church owned parsonage (“Cash Compensation or Defined Compensation”), but also includes benefits through the ELCA Retirement Plan and other benefit plans provided by Portico Benefit Services, continuing education, professional expenses and vacation and other leave (Supplemental Benefits). While Cash Compensation can be readily determined, the cost of supplemental benefits may vary significantly based on the insurance needs of the Minister (i.e. coverage for spouse and/or children) and/or level of insurance chosen and may have a significant economic impact on the congregation’s finances. Compensation should be addressed in totality to include all aspects of compensation (“Total Compensation”). It is important and informative to have a thorough discussion regarding all aspects of total compensation and the options that may be available in determining the components of compensation for the Minister.

This document provides Salary Schedules for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service (Minister), which provide guideline ranges from Low to High amounts of Cash Compensation for congregations to consider as they determine reasonable Total Compensation, as applicable, including base salary, SECA allowance, supplemental 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). Low Cash Compensation amounts provide the minimum that should be considered and should be adjusted within the guideline ranges for various factors, including performance, education and training, local cost of living, overall responsibilities, supervision, administration, demographics, etc.

Congregations are also encouraged to consider these guidelines, as applicable, for other professional lay staff who are not rostered but perform the role of leadership and pastoral services for the Congregation. 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 Minister’s Total Compensation and to address any concerns.

This document includes the following sections:

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

## **Part I: Salary**

### **Determining Salaries**

The salary should be set by the Congregation Council. Minister salaries require careful study and deliberation, and 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 Minister should have the privilege of discussing salary and related matters with the Congregation Council. For all practical purposes, Ministers 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 Minister both ministry performance and total compensation. The Minister should have the opportunity to openly discuss total compensation 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 base of the compensation package. While it is only a part of compensation to be used in determining fair total compensation, it is where most congregations will begin. The guidelines include a range for base salary. Compensation is always a matter of discussion and agreement between the Minister and the Committee. The first or low amount in the range corresponding with the years of service, is the minimum amount that should be considered. Congregations should consider larger compensation based upon other factors such as: education and training, local cost of living, overall responsibilities, effectiveness of the Minister's work within the congregation, supervision, administration, demographics, etc. The schedules included in these guidelines recommend a range of base salaries based upon years of service and the factors noted above for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service. It is the general practice of the Synod to recommend base salary in the middle of the range as a standard and based on the factors noted above.

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 full-time experience in another field.

### **Housing**

When housing is provided for a Minister of Word and Sacrament 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, which will fund an account administered by Portico Benefit Service, will compensate for the lack of equity that would accrue if the Minister of Word and Sacrament were able to own a home. This equity would be available in the future whenever the Minister of Word and Sacrament needs to purchase a home.

When the congregation does not provide a house for the Minister of Word and Sacrament, 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. The first or low amount in the range is the minimum amount that should be considered.

For the Minister of Word and Sacrament to maximize the amount excluded from taxable income, the Congregation Council should approve a 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 of Word and Sacrament should be allowed to increase the housing allowance through a salary reduction. Only the actual expenses for providing a home are excludable. It is the Minister's responsibility to keep adequate records and substantiate the deduction to the congregation or to the IRS. The proper approval of such an allowance in advance is required in order to qualify for this exclusion.

For Ministers of Word and Service, the IRS may, under certain circumstances, consider a portion of compensation paid to the Minister of Word and Service to be excludable from taxable income. However, the congregation and the Minister of Word and Service must consult with the Minister's tax advisor for a determination of whether a portion of compensation paid may be excluded from taxable income. The congregation and the Minister of Word and Service should follow the same rules as with the Ministers of Word and Sacrament, as noted above, to comply and qualify as excludable income, if applicable. Also, 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 be excluded from taxable income. (26 U.S.C. 119 – Meals or lodging furnished for convenience of the employer)

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 proceeds be retained for the purpose of assisting a Minister in financing a home.

### **Social Security and Medicare Tax (SECA) Allowance**

Ministers of Word and Sacrament are self-employed persons for Social Security and Medicare Tax purposes and must pay the full amount of their self-employed Social Security and Medicare Tax (SECA) on a periodic basis. Assuming that congregations have other staff, they would normally be required to contribute half of this tax for Ministers of Word and Service and other lay employees of the congregation, it is only equitable that the congregation provide a SECA allowance for Ministers equal to the rate that it pays for other employees. The allowance should be given to the Minister, or it may be paid directly for the benefit of the Minister. However, either way, this allowance is additional taxable income. To assist the Minister in paying their quarterly taxes, the congregation may also consider withholding an amount from the Minister's 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.

### **Income Taxes**

Being Self-employed persons, Ministers of Word and Sacrament are required to file estimated tax payments for both state and Federal tax purposes. Because of the complexities of determining taxable income and the calculation of the appropriate taxes, it may be prudent for the Minister of Word and Sacrament to consult with a CPA or other tax professional to assist in these computations. The congregation should limit its involvement in any such advice or calculations, but it may make appropriate deductions from the Ministers Cash Compensation and make the payments for the benefit of the Minister.

2024 Salary Schedule for Ministers of Word and Sacrament						
Years of Service	Base Salary - Low	Base Salary - High	Housing Allowance - 30% Low (1)	Housing Allowance - 30% High (1)	SECA Allowance - Low (2)	SECA Allowance - High (2)
0	\$ 41,547	\$ 42,542	\$ 12,464	\$ 12,763	\$ 4,132	\$ 4,231
1	42,229	43,824	12,668	13,148	4,198	4,358
2	42,918	44,996	12,875	13,499	4,268	4,475
3	43,601	46,302	13,080	13,891	4,336	4,605
4	44,293	47,565	13,288	14,269	4,405	4,728
5	44,954	48,863	13,486	14,661	4,471	4,861
6	45,626	50,094	13,688	15,025	4,538	4,982
7	46,288	51,304	13,886	15,391	4,603	5,102
8	46,957	52,532	14,087	15,759	4,670	5,224
9	47,622	53,751	14,287	16,125	4,736	5,346
10	48,291	54,971	14,487	16,491	4,803	5,467
11	48,952	56,195	14,686	16,858	4,868	5,589
12	49,618	57,411	14,885	17,223	4,934	5,709
13	50,293	58,634	15,088	17,590	5,002	5,831
14	50,955	59,861	15,287	17,958	5,067	5,953
15	51,624	61,058	15,487	18,318	5,134	6,072
16	52,289	62,255	15,687	18,677	5,200	6,191
17	52,954	63,464	15,886	19,039	5,266	6,311
18	53,619	64,661	16,086	19,398	5,332	6,431
19	54,288	65,869	16,286	19,761	5,399	6,551
20	54,957	67,062	16,487	20,119	5,465	6,669
21	55,626	68,278	16,688	20,483	5,532	6,790
22	56,283	69,479	16,885	20,844	5,597	6,910
23	56,949	70,677	17,085	21,203	5,664	7,029
24	57,618	71,877	17,285	21,563	5,730	7,148
25	58,282	73,086	17,485	21,926	5,796	7,268

*For more than 25 years of service, a range of 1.5%-2.5% a year increase in base salary 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.*

<sup>1</sup>*This figure is 30% of the base salary. Actual housing costs will vary from area to area.*

<sup>2</sup>*This is figured at the rate of 7.65% of base salary and housing.*

2024 Salary Schedule for Ministers of Word and Service				
Years of Service	BA Degree Low End	BA Degree High End	MA Degree Low End	MA Degree High End
0	\$ 43,271	\$ 45,246	\$ 45,510	\$ 47,152
1	43,921	46,318	46,679	48,668
2	44,598	47,400	48,399	50,132
3	45,243	48,509	49,016	51,595
4	45,925	49,707	50,184	53,059
5	46,569	50,911	51,352	54,523
6	47,252	52,084	52,521	55,987
7	47,902	53,198	53,662	57,293
8	48,573	54,338	54,803	58,862
9	49,256	55,399	55,944	60,325
10	49,900	56,364	56,982	61,685
11	50,550	57,224	58,123	63,065
12	51,227	58,298	59,264	64,387
13	51,877	59,377	60,378	65,736
14	52,554	60,613	61,497	67,090
15	53,231	61,796	62,611	68,386
16	53,881	62,920	63,610	69,740
17	54,541	63,997	64,724	70,932
18	55,213	65,339	65,838	72,338
19	55,868	66,628	66,952	73,635
20	56,529	67,917	67,957	75,098
21	57,195	69,047	69,016	76,342
22	57,855	70,283	70,075	77,639
23	58,538	71,572	71,189	79,045
24	59,182	72,734	72,303	80,237
25	59,859	74,044	73,417	81,643

*For more than 25 years of service, a minimum of a \$1.5%-2.5% a year increase is recommended.*

For additional information, go to the ELCA website at <https://www.elca.org> and search “Compensation” or “Compensation Guidelines”.

## Part II: Supplemental Benefits

### Retirement and Other Benefits Plan

Congregations are expected to provide Ministers with retirement and other benefits provided by the ELCA through Portico Benefit Services which includes the Retirement Plan, the Medical and Dental Plan, the Disability Benefits Plan, and the Survivor Benefits Plan in one bundled program. A bundled approach helps ensure that Ministers are protected against significant financial loss from a variety of risks.

Under the Medical and Dental Plan, Portico’s philosophy is to share the cost of benefits between the plan member and the congregation. On average, 20% of health benefit costs are assumed by the plan member under the structure of Portico’s plans through the utilization of deductibles, coinsurance, and copays. The ELCA offers options under this cost sharing arrangement that include Gold+ and Silver+ with HSA in Levels A and B. In the fall, congregations must select the option that best fits based on conversations with their sponsored plan members to determine the option that best fits their needs, and then make their selection during annual enrollment. A plan member may waive the medical and dental coverage if they have access to valid medical insurance coverage through

their spouse or another employer. It is anticipated that congregations will 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. However, conversations are encouraged regarding the ability of spouses and other family members to obtain coverage through their employers or by other means, which may impact the distribution of total compensation for the Minister. Current contribution rates are available on your EmployerLink on PorticoBenefits.org or by calling Portico at 800-352-2876.

Retirement planning is extremely critical for the future well-being of the Ministers who serve in the Synod. Congregations are required by the ELCA Retirement Plan Administrator to contribute 10% to the Retirement Plan, but a standard for the Nebraska Synod has been established 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 Retirement Plan. Congregations and 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.

For additional information, go to the Portico Benefits Services website at <https://www.porticobenefits.org>. Benefit Solutions”.

### **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**

An equitable way for a congregation to pay for the business travel expense incurred by the Minister 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 Minister’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 mileage rate allowed by the IRS. This should be done at least monthly. This method requires that the Minister maintain detailed records and report the business miles traveled for the period. Generally, the Minister should provide detail by day, listing the destinations, reasons for travel and the number of miles traveled.

Sometimes it is reasonable, 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 is not recommended because of 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 Ministers 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 Minister 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 Ministers 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 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 \$1,000 per year from the congregation and \$500 per year from the Minister is recommended for continuing education. These funds may be accumulated for up to three years as well. If the Minister accepts another ELCA call, all continuing education contributions should be transferred with the Minister.

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 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 Assembly 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**

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. Unless congregations have an established policy of allowing for vacations, 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 Synod 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. To avoid potential confusion, it should be established from the outset whose responsibility it is to keep track of vacation time accumulated, used and reported on a periodic basis, and the process by which vacation or other time off is arranged—that is, whether the Minister simply notifies congregational leadership a certain amount of time in advance, or seeks the permission of the Council or Executive Committee, etc.

### **Sick Leave**

Sick leave recommendation is one day a month, cumulative to 60 days. In the event of serious illness, and the Minister is covered by the ELCA retirement 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 Minister 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 parental leave when a new child is added to the family, either by birth or adoption. With changing parental roles, it is common for both parents to be actively engaged in their children's caregiving. Since each family's situation is unique, congregations are encouraged to be flexible and understanding in granting the necessary time for the Minister and their family to make this adjustment. Parental leave is a positive investment in the health and well-being of the Minister and the family, as well as a positive for the congregation. The following guidelines are suggested:

- Following the birth or adoption of an infant child, six weeks of paid parental leave will be granted to the Minister. For a Minister who adopts a child who is over three years of age, three weeks of paid parental leave will be granted.
- Accrued vacation may also be used to extend a parental leave. Ministers desiring additional leave, either prior to or following the birth of their child, may negotiate for unpaid leave.
- If both parents are serving the congregation(s), the weeks may be split between them.

### **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 may incur additional costs 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 a 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 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 Minister's absence. In addition, the Minister should develop some method to record and share significant key learnings gained during the sabbatical leave with 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 Minister should leave earlier than that, financial arrangements for repayment of congregation supported expenses 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 pulpit supply ministers and may provide additional compensation for other staff members whose responsibilities are increased during the sabbatical.

### **Pulpit Supply**

It is suggested that remuneration be at least \$225 for Sunday morning worship service, \$75 for each additional same day worship service and \$100 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 (e.g. severe weather), 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 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
  - Cable or satellite television
  - 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)
  - Internet
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 when 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 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 doghouse, 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. This should be negotiated with every change in Minister and reviewed periodically with the serving Minister. 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. 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 for the Minister's retirement plan. 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 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 taxable income. Reimbursement of documented expenses are not. Ministers must keep records of their expenses for reimbursement in as much detail as possible and provide them to the Congregation.

\*11. Congregations are strongly encouraged to reimburse auto expenses at the IRS rate.

12. The housing allowance is subject to SECA 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 consult with a CPA, attorney or other tax professional before implementing one of these enhancements as some of these suggestions could add taxable income for the Minister. If you are unacquainted with a tax advisor, Sharon M. Schwarz, CPA, of Schwarz and Associates, 4620 South 143<sup>rd</sup> Street, Omaha, NE 68137, (402) 330-6880, continues to be available to discuss your questions.

## Part V: Compensation Worksheet

Cash Compensation	2 Years <u>Prior</u>	<u>Last Year</u>	<u>This Year</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
1. Base Salary	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
2. Housing	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
3. Utilities	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
4. Furnishings	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
5. Other	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
6. SECA Allowance	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Benefits</b>				
7. ELCA Plans	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
8. Continuing Education	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
9. Housing Equity	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
10. Other	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
11. Automobile	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
12. Professional Expenses	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
13. Other	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Compensation to Minister (add lines 1 - 13)	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

**SERVING ARM UPDATES**



Carol Joy Holling Camp, Conference & Retreat Center, Ashland • Sullivan Hills Camp, Lodgepole

February 10, 2023

Nominating Committee  
Nebraska Synod Council  
6757 Newport Ave. #200  
Omaha, Nebraska 68152

Dear Members of the Nominating Committee:

I write, on behalf of the Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Board of Directors to request that you appoint the following people to our Board of Directors effective June 1, 2023:

Deacon Coco Lyons (Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church - ELCA/Lincoln) – First Full Term expiring 2026

Ms. Emily Meehan (Life Church/Omaha) - First Full Term expiring 2026

Mr. Conrad “Ted” Swanson (Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church - ELCA/Fort Collins) - First Full Term expiring 2026

Each of these individuals meets board member qualifications required by our organizational documents. I’ve attached bios for each of them to help you understand why they have been recruited as Board members.

Thank you.

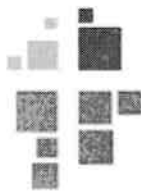
Jason Gerdes  
Executive Director

I am a campus minister at the UNL-Lutheran Center and my main responsibilities include cultivating the Upper Room community, leading Bible studies and worship, creating social media and email communications, event planning and managing the building maintenance and upkeep.

Outside of Lutheran Center responsibilities, I enjoy hanging out with my two cats, Cleocatra and Athena, and of course, my husband Rev. Jacob Krueger.

Previously, I was called to Saint Michael Lutheran Church in Omaha NE, where I brought my middle school confirmation students to camp throughout my three years there. Church camp has held a spot in my heart, growing up I attended a non-denominational Bible camp outside of my hometown in Northeastern Iowa. It was there that I grew in my faith through scripture, good food, and making lifelong friends.

I am excited to serve and partner in ministry with Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries!



## **Deacon Coco Lyons**

Campus Minister

[thelutherancenter.org](http://thelutherancenter.org)  
402-435-3897  
535 N 16th St Lincoln NE 68508



Emily Meehan

I started attending Carol Joy Holling when I was in middle school at Ranch Camp. I instantly loved being a camper and returned each year after. After my last year as a Winds camper, I decided that being a Summer staffer was my next step! I was a counselor for two summers and absolutely loved it. The cherry on top was that I met my husband during my first summer. CJH has always held a special place in my heart and will forever be one of the most meaningful places I've ever been a part of.

I graduated in 2018 with my bachelors of graphic design. I then began working for Swanson Russell, a Nebraska advertising agency. I have been with the company for 4.5 years and am now a senior designer.

## Biographical information—Conrad T. (“Ted”) Swanson

I grew up in Omaha, Nebraska. My father, Reuben Swanson, was a pastor at Augustana Lutheran Church, what was then called President of the Nebraska Synod from 1964 to 1978, and Secretary for the Lutheran Church in America.

I attended college in northwestern Minnesota (political science and economics, with an emphasis on accounting) and graduate school at the University of Chicago (Religion and Literature, Theology). While in graduate school I was an assisting lay minister at Augustana Lutheran Church and campus minister for the University of Chicago. Upon leaving Chicago, I served as Associate Pastor at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Omaha and taught part-time as adjunct faculty at Dana College in Blair, Nebraska.

After two years I left Omaha to pursue a long-time interest and attended law school at the University of Colorado. I then practiced law for thirty-two years, initially in Denver but for the last twenty-eight years in Fort Collins. The bulk of my practice was civil litigation (principally contracts, real estate, construction, and family law), but I also had some experience in complex estate planning, legal malpractice, and bankruptcy; I had slight experience with personal injury or criminal law.

While practicing law, my wife and I also owned and operated a cow-calf ranch that included owned land, leased land, federal grazing permits, and a grazing association. Although we are retired from actively raising and caring for cattle, we retain some interest in farms and a ranch in Nebraska and Iowa.

Aside from professional work I’ve been involved with several boards, both governmental and non-governmental, often serving as an officer or chair. Among the organizations I’ve served are: Legacy Land Trust (I was one of the initial board members; LLT is now part of Colorado Open Lands); Larimer County Stockgrowers Association; Larimer County Open Lands Board; Larimer County Agricultural Advisory Committee; Colorado Reined Cowhorse Association; and Church Council. I served with Mosaic for five years on the Foundation Board, six years (two as Chair) on the Mosaic Board, co-chair of the National Leadership Council for the Called to be Bold campaign, and currently co-chair of a five-year campaign that’s just starting. I also am a board member for a non-profit rural domestic water-supply company.

My primary recreational interests are training and showing horses, fly fishing, hunting, travel, visiting grandchildren, seeing friends, and reading.

I’d like to think that my experiences have helped develop some skills that might be beneficial in future service, including: analytic ability; understanding the importance of focusing on a mission or goal and determining how best to pursue that focus; being a team-player; being able to listen; having some knowledge of Christian thought and, more specifically, Lutheran thought; consensus building; understanding financial statements; not being easily

February 6, 2023

Bishop Scott Johnson and Nebraska Synod Council  
ELCA  
6757 Newport Ave #200  
Omaha, NE 68152

Dear Bishop Johnson and Nebraska Synod Council,

As an affiliated **social** ministry organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Mosaic is very **pleased** that Rev. Twila Schock is joining us in our ministry of service to people with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Please accept this letter as our request to the Nebraska Synod Council to extend a Letter of Call/Appointment to Rev. Schock to serve as Vice President of Church Relations and International Programming. The Vice President of Church Relations and International Programming will support Mosaic in a variety of spiritual matters as well as continuing our faithful service **within** the Church. I have enclosed a job description for your reference.

This appointment is to begin full-time effective March 6, 2023. If you have any questions, you can reach me at 402-880-4357.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda Timmons  
President & Chief Executive Officer

Attachment

cc: Parker McKenna, Senior Vice **President** of Human Resources  
Renee Coughlin, Senior Vice President of Mission **Advancement**  
Rev. Twila Schock

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

**JOB TITLE:** Vice President of Church Relations and International Programming

**STATUS:** Exempt

**PAY GRADE:** 13

**REPORTS TO:** SVP of Mission Advancement

**DATE:** 01/2023

### **PHILOSOPHY OF SERVICES ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

This job carries with it the obligation to fulfill Mosaic's mission of **relentlessly pursuing opportunities that empower people**. As One Mosaic, all staff members work together to provide the people Mosaic supports with a meaningful life in a caring community, ensuring they have a voice to share their needs and desires and to advocate for their rights. This job also carries the responsibility to be a good steward of our human and financial resources to create an environment committed to Mosaic's values of **belonging, connection, faithfulness and grit**. Staff members are also responsible for demonstrating Mosaic's 7 Essential Practices of Leadership as it applies to their position. A commitment to this philosophy of services should be demonstrated as job duties are performed.

### **JOB SUMMARY:**

Partners with regional and agency staff to enhance working relationships with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Assists agencies in bringing to life the identity of Mosaic. Also partners closely with those we are working with on the International Program, including leadership from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and Building a Caring Community (BCC).

### **ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS:**

- Work collaboratively with regional teams and local agencies to garner support of our ministry and develop effective working relationships with ELCA congregations and synods as well as other faith communities
- Foster partnerships between Mosaic and the ELCA congregations through being a liaison in order to strengthen Mosaic's position as an affiliated social ministry of the church and to foster understanding, appreciation and partnership between the organizations both in the United States and internationally
- Speak publicly on behalf of Mosaic and the executive team, to a variety of audiences to promote Mosaic's mission and the expansion of our ministry
- Provide spiritual support and consultation to agencies experiencing significant

**Resolution No. 2023-1**

**Resolution to terminate membership with Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) & the Nebraska Synod ELCA and join Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.**

**Be it resolved by the President of the Council and Council members for Trinity Lutheran Church, Bruning, NE:**

1. Trinity Lutheran Church will terminate its relationship with Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and its membership with the Nebraska Synod ELCA.
2. Trinity Lutheran Church-Bruning, NE will join Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC).
3. The annual congregational meeting was held on Sunday, January 15, 2023 at 10:48am. A motion was made by Jay Krehnke to take a congregational vote to ratify the constitution per a congregational vote in October 2022 to leave the ELCA and join the LCMC, seconded by Lloyd Bartles.

77

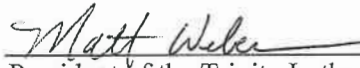
Yes, I vote to leave the ELCA and join the LCMC

7

No, I vote to stay with the ELCA

4. The Council Secretary shall cause a certified copy of this Resolution to be delivered to the synodical bishop of the Nebraska Synod ELCA.

Passed and Approved this 15th day of January, 2023.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the Trinity Lutheran Church Council

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Trinity Lutheran Church Council

---

## Fwd: Christ Lutheran Church of Pickrell

1 message

---

**Scott Johnson** <scott@nebraskasynod.org>  
To: Morgan Tranmer <morgan@nebraskasynod.org>

Thu, Mar 9, 2023 at 11:46 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <dzimmerman0854@gmail.com>  
Date: Sun, Jan 22, 2023 at 14:28  
Subject: Christ Lutheran Church of Pickrell  
To: <scott@nebraskasynod.org>  
CC: Carpenter, Greg <greg.carpenter@pioneer.com>

Thank you for coming to share your message on Sunday, January 15, 2023, at Christ Lutheran Pickrell. This is to inform you that we have taken a congregational vote for Church Affiliation on January 22, 2023. The result of the vote was 67 votes for LCMC Affiliation and 15 for ELCA affiliation.

If you should need any further correspondence, please forward to Greg Carpenter or myself.

Once again thank you for coming to Christ Lutheran and God's Blessings to you!

Nora Zimmerman, Church Council Secretary

Christ Lutheran Church Pickrell



Virus-free. [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)